



Pennsylvania
**Department of Conservation
and Natural Resources**



Pennsylvania
Department of Health



Pennsylvania
Department of Environmental Protection

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Wednesday, July 2, 2025

MEDIA CONTACTS:

Wesley Robinson, DCNR: werobinson@pa.gov

Mark O'Neill, DOH: ra-dhpressoffice@pa.gov

Neil Shader, DEP: ra-epnews@pa.gov

Shapiro Administration Highlights Lyme Disease and Tick Bite Prevention Best Practices at Little Buffalo State Park in Perry County

Officials encouraged those visiting state parks and forests to be mindful of ticks, overall health while enjoying time recreating outdoors this summer.



Newport, PA — Representatives from the **Pennsylvania Departments of Health (DOH), Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR), and Environmental Protection (DEP)** visited Little Buffalo State Park in Perry County to highlight the importance of taking precautions to prevent Lyme disease and tick bites.

“Spending time outdoors supports physical and mental well-being. When outdoors, I encourage Pennsylvanians to take some simple steps to protect their health,” said **DOH Secretary Dr. Debra Bogen**. “Take a few extra minutes before heading out the door to

apply and carry sunscreen to prevent sunburns, bring water to prevent dehydration, and apply or carry an EPA-approved bug spray to prevent tick bites."

Pennsylvania typically ranks among the top 10 states in the country for Lyme disease cases per 100,000 residents. Last year, DOH recorded 16,620 lab-confirmed cases of Lyme disease. Most cases can be treated successfully with a short course of antibiotics, but if left untreated, Lyme disease can spread to joints, the heart, and the nervous system.

To help residents plan outdoor activities safely, DOH launched an [online dashboard](#) that shows where ticks are prevalent so people can take appropriate precautions.

"By taking simple preventive steps, people can enjoy the mental and physical benefits of spending time outdoors without the added worry – especially when it comes to ticks," said **DCNR Secretary Cindy Adams Dunn**. "It's essential to understand the risks and be prepared throughout the year, whether you're exploring one of Pennsylvania's state parks, hiking in our state forests, or relaxing in one of the more than 6,100 local parks right in your own community."

Ticks can be found in both urban and rural settings — typically in shrubs, weeds, leaf litter, and tall grasses — but they can be present anywhere there is foliage. Taking proper steps to reduce the chances of being bitten is key.

"Ticks that carry Lyme disease have been found in all 67 counties in Pennsylvania, and we constantly monitor other tick-borne diseases that may pose a risk to residents and visitors," said **DEP Deputy Secretary John Ryder**. "A little prevention goes a long way to keeping you and your family safe from ticks this summer."

Tips for tick bite prevention:

- Cover exposed skin and wear light-colored clothing to make it easier to spot ticks.
- Use EPA-approved insect repellent for tick prevention.
- Before heading outdoors, treat shoes, clothes, and gear with permethrin.
- After coming indoors, check yourself, children, and pets thoroughly for ticks and remove any promptly.
- Shower soon after spending time outside to help wash away ticks that may have gone unnoticed.
- Place clothes in the dryer on high heat to kill any remaining ticks.

The **Shapiro Administration** also reminds Pennsylvanians about the health benefits of enjoying the outdoors safely, which include:

- Improving cardiovascular health
- Strengthening muscles and bones
- Reducing the risk of chronic diseases
- Lowering stress and improving mental health
- Increasing social connection

For more information on Lyme disease, visit DOH's [Tickborne Diseases webpage](#).

Visit DCNR's website for more information about [what to do at state parks](#) and [where to go](#) on public lands, including local parks and for scenic views. DCNR encourages Pennsylvanians to check its [Calendar of Events](#) for seasonal programming happening across the state.

#