



TAKE ACTION FOR PENNSYLVANIA STATE PARKS AND FORESTS

GET ACTIVE OUTDOORS

Pennsylvania ranks as the 17th most obese state in the country, and according to the Penn State University study, “Obesity Threatens America’s Future,” by 2020, 57 percent of Pennsylvanians will be obese and related health care costs will surpass \$13.5 billion. There is strong evidence that when people have access to parks and forests they exercise more, leading to a reduction in obesity. In addition, the National Institutes of Health have shown that being more fit leads to a reduction in time spent being sick. In fact, studies show visiting state parks and forests can reduce medical costs as 60 to 90 percent of doctor visits are attributed to stress-related illnesses and symptoms. Spending time in Pennsylvania’s state parks and forests can reduce feelings of depression and anxiety, lower your blood pressure, and help you achieve a healthier lifestyle.

There are so many opportunities for outdoor recreation at one of the 121 Pennsylvania State Parks or 20 State Forests: biking, hiking, horseback riding, camping, fishing, boating, hunting, disc golfing, skiing, picnicking... the list goes on and on. To find out about these and other opportunities, visit www.dcnr.pa.gov. When being active in a state park or forest, document your activity and post to social media using the following hashtags: **#PARKSFORESTS125** and **#PAPARKSANDFORESTS**

VOLUNTEER

Volunteering at a state park or forest can be good for your mental and physical health. You can help maintain a trail, pick up trash, plant trees, help organize a festival, or lead an educational program, among many other tasks. One option for volunteering is through the Pennsylvania Parks and Forests Foundation (PPFF). This organization has 41 friends groups across the Commonwealth that volunteer within a specific state park or forest. To see a list of all friends groups, go to: www.paparksandforests.org/friends-groups/what-is-a-friends-group. If your favorite state park or forest doesn’t yet have a friends group, consider starting one. PPFF has resources to assist you. You can also become a Stewards of Penn’s Woods, agreeing to steward an area for at least a year.

Visit www.paparksandforests.org/initiatives/stewards-of-penns-woods to learn more about the places available for stewardship. Join a friends group or PPFF for a volunteer day. All volunteer opportunities are listed on PPFF’s calendar of events...and you can even sign up there and invite friends to join you!

EMAIL YOUR LEGISLATOR

Legislators are busy people, of whom many demands are made. Help your elected officials understand the importance of investing in state parks and forests by emailing them information about the benefits and needs of our state parks and forests and inviting them to visit a state park or forest for a firsthand look.

If you are compelled to do so, contact your elected officials and voice support for stable, long term state park and forest investment. You can find your representative at www.legis.state.pa.us/cfdocs/legis/home/findyourlegislator and modify our sample email that can be found [HERE](#).

SPEAK WITH YOUR LEGISLATOR

If legislators are not hearing from concerned citizens about the condition of our state park and forest infrastructure they may not understand the value their constituents place on these resources. Help them to understand that Pennsylvanians appreciate these assets and want them maintained for future generations.

Calling their district office and/or scheduling an in-person meeting with your legislator or their staff can be an effective means of engaging with them on the benefits and needs of Pennsylvania’s state parks and forests. To find your legislator’s contact information, go to www.legis.state.pa.us/cfdocs/legis/home/findyourlegislator and modify our sample phone script that can be found [HERE](#).

BECOME A STATE PARK OR FOREST AMBASSADOR

The Pennsylvania Parks and Forests Foundation are looking for ambassadors—people who are willing to work with the Foundation to educate elected officials on the challenges and opportunities facing our state parks and forests. This sound like you? To get more information, email 125anniversary@paparksandforests.org.

TELL OTHERS ABOUT OUR STATE PARKS AND FORESTS

You love our state parks and forests, so why not tell everyone you know why you care about these public lands so that they, too, can become stewards of these resources? One way to do this is by posting our suggested 125-year anniversary tweets and graphics to your Facebook, Twitter, and other social media pages. Those resources can be found in our social media toolkit.

READ THE NEW REPORT

PPFF released *The Legacy of Pennsylvania's State Parks and Forests: The Future Is in Our Hands* report in April 2018 to discuss the historical legacy of our state park and forests system; how funding and support for it has ebbed and flowed over the decades, leading to a billion dollars in maintenance needs and upgrades. This comprehensive document will provide you with information to share with your legislators, friends, and family to show why Pennsylvania state parks are so important and why additional funding is needed to continue the 125-year legacy far into the future. You can read the report on PPFF's website or request a hard copy by 125anniversary@paparksandforests.org.

SIGN UP FOR THE PPFF NEWSLETTER AND BLOG

Want to be sure to know if the legislature passes a bill that affects our state parks and forests? Want to stay up-to-date on volunteer days and other events at state parks and forests? Then be sure to sign up for Penn's Stewards, the quarterly newsletter of PPFF, as well as the Save our Parks and Forests blog. Both can be found at www.paparksandforests.org. The Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR), the state agency responsible for state parks and forests, also has a bi-monthly newsletter, Resource, which you can sign up for at www.dcnr.pa.gov/Subscribetoresource/Pages/default.aspx.

BECOME A MEMBER OF PPFF

Join like-minded people in speaking out on behalf of our parks and forests. Your membership invests in the conservation of our parks and forests for the next 125 years. There are several ways that you can participate. For instance, there are various levels of membership in PPFF, from a "friend" level at \$25 per year to a "family" membership at \$35, all the way up to the Conservation Legacy Society membership at \$25,000, no sum is too small or too large to help Pennsylvania's state parks and forests. Members receive invitations to special events, discounts at participating businesses, and more. Join today at: www.paparksandforests.org/join/.

DONATE TO PPFF

When you help raise money for or donate to PPFF, you can be confident knowing that your funds will go to direct improvements within state parks and forests. Donations can support volunteer projects, such as the restoration of Hammonds and Buzzards Rocks in the Michaux State Forest. Donations can upgrade an existing facility to make it more accessible, such as the placement of Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) kayak launches within a state park, or donations can be used to support the work of the foundation, strengthening the voice for parks and forests, building friends groups, and engaging volunteers.

You can make living gifts to support specific projects such as playground construction, vegetation for a native plant gardens, and adoption of a Civilian Conservation Corp (CCC) structure, or memorial gifts to recognize the passing of someone important in your life.

There are also options for planned giving, workplace giving, and corporate giving. The options are nearly endless. Visit www.paparksandforests.org/support/ways-to-give to learn more about these options. Or you can support a specific need in a park or forest by reviewing the state park and forest needs list at www.paparksandforests.org/support/parks-forests-needs-list.

BUILD THE PPFF LIBRARY OF IMAGES

A picture speaks a thousand words. Help us to promote parks and forests, show the needs in parks and forests, or celebrate the diversity of people and activities by sharing your images of parks and forests. You can do this by using the following hashtags: #PARKSFORESTS125 and #PAPARKSANDFORESTS, by entering the PPFF photo contest: www.paparksandforests.org/get-involved/photo-contest/, by emailing photos to: 125anniversary@paparksandforests.org, or by sharing your images directly with staff. Photographers are always credited for the images that we use.

PREFER WORDS?

Have a favorite hike, paddle, disc golf course or other special place? Share it in 100 words or less for PPFF to promote special places. The more we can get folks into the outdoors, the more advocates we have for our parks and forests.

Perhaps you would prefer to write a letter to the editor? We have templates available that you can tweak to educate about the 125th anniversary, the need for infrastructure investments, and more. To learn more about supporting critical infrastructure needs, go to www.paparksandforests.org/initiatives/infrastructurestudy. Review our statewide parks & forests needs list at www.paparksandforests.org/support/parks-forests-needs-list.

If posting images to social media, please use the following hashtags:

#PAPARKSANDFORESTS #PARKSFORESTS125

Facebook: @PENNSYLVANIAPARKSANDFORESTSFOUNDATION Twitter: @PAPFF Instagram: @PAPARKSANDFORESTS
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