

RED/YELLOW/GREEN—WHAT DOES IT ALL MEAN?

The Governor’s Reopening Strategy in Parks and Forests

Parts of Pennsylvania have started to reopen as the number of COVID-19 cases begins to decline. With this comes the gradual reopening of our state parks and forests. All DCNR lands including trails, lakes, streams, forests, roads, and parking areas statewide can be accessed for recreation; however, the availability of restrooms, offices, and campgrounds varies.

Know Before You Go

Before venturing out, check out the interactive DCNR map outlining what is available: dcr.pa.gov/FacilitiesMap/Pages/default.aspx

Get out your colored pencils and show your sign!



Download yours at PAParksAndForests.org/News/Color-Your-Sign-for-Parks-and-Forests-Week

Closed

Playgrounds, nature play areas, interpretive areas, group camping/cabins, class and meeting spaces, and pavilions will be closed until a county goes to the green phase.

Parks and forests in red counties have canceled all events and large gatherings until June 15th. In yellow counties, any event with more than 25 people will be cancelled; if under 25 participants and outdoors, it will be permitted to occur.

Cabins in counties currently designated as yellow will reopen on June 12th.

Guidance on pools and beaches is soon to be released.

Volunteerism

Volunteers in parks and forests in the yellow counties are returning to their parks and forests for stewardship work and limited gatherings of under 25 people.

Watch the Pennsylvania Parks and Forests Foundation website for opportunities to steward our parks and forests after the heavy use that they have received. The Foundation is also planning clean-up events in heavily used areas or trails that need some “love.”



Litter, dumping, and vandalism have become a problem in remote forest areas. Volunteers will be needed for clean-ups!

Volunteer days follow the safety protocol set forth by the Department of Health and includes social distancing, masks, frequent hand washing, and limited use of shared resources. If you do not feel well, please do not volunteer—we would prefer you to stay healthy.

Visit PAParksAndForests.org/About-Us/Board to meet our new board members



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From the Desk of the President

May 2020

PARKS AND FORESTS WEEK A TIME TO CELEBRATE

An Anniversary and A Beginning

Each year, Memorial Day is an important marker on the calendar. Adding to its historic place as a day to honor the men and women who have given their lives in defense of the nation (and its less somber place as the unofficial start of summer), in 2018 Memorial Day weekend also took its place as the kickoff for State Parks and Forests Week in recognition of the 125th anniversary of our state parks and forests.

Need a refresher? A bill signed in 1893 formed the Pennsylvania Forestry Commission, tasked with the control of forest fires and to establish a forest

reserve system. The system began with the purchase of 7,500 acres in Clinton County to be used to “furnish timber, protect the water supply of Young Woman’s Creek, and to provide recreation for citizens.”

Our first state park, Valley Forge, was also established in 1893, recognizing the importance of putting aside places of cultural and natural significance for the benefit of all – recognition that we truly do live in a Commonwealth. And while we may have “lost” Valley Forge to the national parks system, the parks and forests continue to grow and thrive.

This year, the 127th anniversary of the parks and forests system also marks the tentative beginnings of a return to open facilities and volunteer opportunities. (See p. 4) It has been a long and silent spring in ways not even Rachel Carson could have imagined. We look forward—as we are sure you do—to getting back to favorite places and longed-for activities with family, friends, and random people enjoying the outdoor experience.

It will be a while until things are totally normal and we will all need to be

patient for a time longer but there is a sense that perhaps a corner is being turned and the worst may be behind us.

At PPF, we are grateful to you for *hanging in there* with us, for your financial contributions, your words of goodwill for the programs we have undertaken, and your interest in getting back out there with us.

Stay tuned. The rest of 2020 awaits us!

FIND PPF ON YOUR FAVORITE SOCIAL MEDIA RESOURCE

-  Facebook.com/PennsylvaniaParksAndForestsFoundation
-  [@ppff](https://twitter.com/ppff)
-  [@paparksandforests](https://www.instagram.com/paparksandforests)
-  Pinterest.com/ppff
-  YouTube.com/PAParksandForests
-  LinkedIn.com/company/Pennsylvania-Parks-and-Forests-Foundation



You rock! 1,000 masks for parks and forests staff sewn in two weeks by 40-some terrific volunteers.

LUNCH & LEARN SERIES

A quarantine is a great time to learn something. View PPF’s Lunch & Learn series on Facebook and YouTube—archived and upcoming—and join the conversation.

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|------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| <u>Archive</u> | <u>Coming Attractions</u> |
| How to plant a tree | 5/22: Forest bathing |
| Creating Purple Lizard maps | 5/26: Environmental education |
| Ticks and Lyme disease | 5/29: Advice from a DCNR Director |
| The value of parks & forests | 6/2: Stewardship of public lands |
| Outdoor photography | |
| Meet the staff and board | |

A SOCIAL WEEK

Check in with PPF social media during Parks & Forests Week for “The Seven Wonders of PA Parks and Forests”
Do you wonder what’s wonderful?

YOUR PARKS AND FORESTS ARE IMPORTANT TO YOU

Stories of Connection and Care

PPFF friends and followers have plenty of reasons to voice their support in the face of threats to their favorite places. These are but a small sample of the stories we received recently.

My wife and I are in our mid-late 70s, so we are compelled to stay home during the lockdown. Fortunately for us, we live on the edge of Forbes State Forest, and very close to Laurel Hill State Park. What a blessing these sanctuaries have been. Long walks through the woods have made our confinement tolerable, and even enjoyable. We don't know how people who don't have access to these places are able to manage.



Spring in the Laurel Highlands is always a miracle as the woods come alive with the songs of nesting birds, emerging wildflowers, and the beautiful shades of green in the trees. We believe that during this difficult time we have all learned anew what a treasure we have. The natural world is where we all began and each return, however brief, reconnects us with our real selves.

-Stokes Clarke



For almost 20 years, state park camping trips have been a tradition in our family. We have a favorite site at Ricketts Glen, but also have many fond memories of climbing the boulder field at Hickory Run, and camping at Locust Lake, Black Moshannon, Leonard Harrison, Promised Land, and others.

There was the snake eating a toad whole at Leonard Harrison over the course of more than a day, and surviving a derecho on the same trip. Listening to Mennonites sing in evening worship. Learning about owls from a rescue volunteer. Making new friends and catching butterflies with them on the Old Growth trail. The bear that came to dinner uninvited when my then 5-year-old daughter earned the nickname "the bear scarer." Dad's "shortcut trail" that was 3 times longer. The week (more than one) when the only time it wasn't raining was when we were setting up and tearing down.

And all the fun we had just the same. We hope to continue that tradition as our daughters pass through college, and perhaps create families of their own. Please keep our PA Parks strong.

- John Adamson



My family and I frequent our PA State Parks and Forests quite often—sometimes many times per week. We camp only in State Parks or the State Forest, hike, fish, hunt, ride ATVs on the designated trails, and spend many days of our weekends in nature.

Our kids, now 18 and 20, still spend many hours, days, and weekends with us in the parks and forests. We have taught our kids how to respect the land, water, and animals; have taught them

how to read maps and hike; all because we have the greatest parks and forests to do so!

-Melaney Stremmel

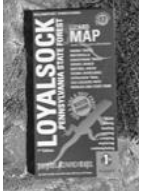
We have been avid hikers for over 10 years, both human and canine joy evident as we loaded dog and gear early on weekend mornings. In March, right after the school districts in the state closed, our beloved dog died just two weeks after we took him for his last hiking trip to Michaux. Otter was a member of our community. He went to school with me once a week; students and staff visited him for a little break.



It was a tough time for us as we struggled through our grief. We healed through hiking. The same activities that brought us joy with Otter also brought healing. [Last week] we hiked the Joyce Kilmer Trail on Bear Run Road in Bald Eagle State Forest. There were tears, but we did it and we were able to talk about how much he would have loved it.

-Wendy Seifert

READY TO PLAN YOUR NEXT OUTING? PPFF HAS THE TOOLS



The latest addition to the Purple Lizard family of Pennsylvania maps (the Loyalsock) and the *Pennsylvania State Parks and Forests Passport* are in stock at ppff.gives/store.



EDUCATION CORNER

PROTECT THE FUNDS THAT KEEP OUR PARKS AND FORESTS SAFE

General Assembly Seeks Control Over Fund

In what seems to be an annual assault on the Keystone Recreation, Park & Conservation Fund and the Environmental Stewardship Fund, legislation is moving that could remove these funds from their intended purpose of keeping our parks and forests safe. HB 2004 passed out of the House Environmental Resources & Energy Committee and removes annual allocations to the agencies who implement the Keystone Fund and

places the money in the hands of the General Assembly. On other fronts, an amendment to an important bill freezes 16 different conservation, environmental and agricultural funds for an indefinite amount of time.

Read the news page of our website at ppff.news/save-our-parks-forests to learn more about these bills and our position on them. We encourage you to contact your legislator and oppose freezing or removing these important funds. If we can't fix leaking sewage

systems, if we can't keep our dams safe, if we can't repair leaking fuel tanks, our parks and forests will become unsafe and unusable.

Visit KeystoneFund.org where the briefest of reviews will reveal the sheer number, scope, and breadth of the projects it has made possible over the years. Armed with that knowledge, contact your legislators and tell them to keep their mitts off our money.



PROTECT OUR PARKS AND FORESTS

New Website Outlines the Problem, Action

While the legislative tours and the enlightening public educational opportunities they presented have had to temporarily cease during the pandemic, PPFF has been hard at work building a new resource to share information on the issue of \$1 billion in maintenance costs across the parks and forests system.

ProtectOurParksAndForests.org has been launched.

The website allows us to succinctly outline the problems DCNR faces on issues as diverse as dams and roads, water treatment and buildings, staffing and visitor services and outline the needs for protecting

funding. It will be a ready reference when the legislative tours begin again, a way to both salute and chastise actions impacting our public lands, and give you a way and a place to become involved in helping to protect the places that mean so much.

Your support has never been more important than right now.

PPFF is working hard on behalf of all state parks and forests.

You are the power of PPFF. Please help.

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Clip and return this coupon with your check, made payable to PPFF, to 704 Lisburn Road | Suite 102 | Camp Hill, PA 17011

Give online at <https://ppff.gives/2020-parks-forests-week>

The official registration and financial information of Pennsylvania Parks and Forests Foundation may be obtained from the Pennsylvania Department of State by calling toll free within Pennsylvania, 1-800-732-0999. Registration does not imply endorsement.