DATE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

For additional information contact NAME at PHONE NUMBER or EMAIL

**Celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the Environmental Rights Amendment with Pennsylvania’s State Parks and Forests!**

CITY, PA – The NAME OF FRIENDS GROUP asks, what will you be doing on May 18, 2021? Did you think that date was just like any other? Well, it is much more than that… it is the 50th anniversary of the Environmental Rights Amendment (ERA) in Pennsylvania… and that means it is a time to celebrate!

The ERA states that:

**INSERT TEXT BOX / INFOGRAPHIC WITH FULL AMENDMENT LANGUAGE HERE**

At XYZ park/forest friends group, the ERA means \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to us. Include a quote from chapter leader here.

You can learn more about the genesis of the ERA and its creator, Franklin Kury, in [the Spring 2021 Pennsylvania Parks and Forests Foundation newsletter](https://paparksandforests.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/PPFF_2021SpringNewsletter_web.pdf). Thanks to the ERA, environmental rights are on equal footing with the rights of freedom of speech, freedom of the press, and freedom of religion, among others. At first you might wonder, are environmental rights really as important as the right to free speech? But think about it…consider the mental and physical health benefits we get from a clean environment, not to mention myriad economic benefits as well.

Pennsylvania is lucky to have a wealth of public lands that are free and open to anyone to use. Did you know that there are 121 state parks and 2.2 million acres of state forest land in the commonwealth? Spending time in these places is great for your health. Studies show that outdoor recreation reduces stress, anxiety and depression, lowers the risk of obesity, helps regulate blood sugar and cholesterol levels, and reduces your risk of cardiovascular issues.

The trees in our state parks and forests remove pollutants in rainwater before it can reach our rivers and streams, and from the air before we breathe it in. These same trees help to reduce flooding, by slowing the rate of water movement, reducing flood control and water treatment costs.

“Each year, more than 40 million people visit our state parks and forests, generating more than $1 billion a year for our economy through visitor purchases of hotel rooms, dinners, souvenirs, and other amenities,” said PPFF Board Chair, Brad Mallory. “In fact, a 2012 study by Penn State University showed that the return on taxpayer investment in our state parks alone was estimated at nearly $12.41 for every $1 invested. As you can see, having the right to a clean environment does us good!”

To celebrate the ERA 50th anniversary, at XYZ park/forest we plan to…

The Pennsylvania Parks and Forests Foundation (PPFF) invites you to participate in a different engagement activity each month to show your support for environmental conservation and public lands. In April, you are invited to write a haiku on “what the preservation of natural value” means to you. In May, you are invited to submit a piece of visual art on the topic of “what does preservation of the scenic value” mean to you? Along with the monthly art and writing submissions, now through August 1, 2021 people can submit to a song contest. View the complete list of ways to engage at <https://paparksandforests.org/our-work/education/era50> and be sure to follow #PAEnviroRights50 to find more ways to engage with and celebrate this landmark piece of legislation.