

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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## **State Park First Day Hikes Offering Invigorating Start to New Year**

Harrisburg, PA – To promote a healthy start to the new year, Department of Conservation and Natural Resources Secretary Cindy Adams Dunn will join hikers Jan. 1 at Pine Grove Furnace State Park as her department again sponsors free, guided hikes in 28 state parks on New Year's Day as part of America's State Parks First Day Hikes initiative in all 50 states.

Dunn and other hikers will step off at 1 p.m. Sunday, Jan. 1, at the state park near Gardners Cumberland County. Other DCNR officials will be participating in First Day Hikes planned at Cambria County's Prince Gallitzin and other state parks across the state.

"For the sixth consecutive year, First Day Hikes offer a great cure for cabin fever and a chance to burn off those extra holiday calories, and what better way to welcome the new year than with an invigorating walk or hike in one of our beautiful state parks?" said Dunn. "State parks offer so much, regardless of the season, and we are excited to showcase their winter beauty by joining in this national effort to get people outdoors and into parks."

Organized by the National Association of State Park Directors, the nationwide, New Year's Day hikes originated more than 20 years ago in Milton, Mass. The program was launched to promote both healthy lifestyles throughout the year and year-round recreation at state parks. State involvement has grown to the point where, for the first time in 2012, all 50 state park systems joined together to sponsor First Day Hikes.

"In prior years we have hosted more than 1,200 people who hiked almost 3,000 miles in our state parks across Pennsylvania," Dunn said. "The winter 'Welcome Mat' is out at our state parks. Whether you're staying close to home or traveling, join us New Year's Day!"

The following Pennsylvania state parks are participating during daylight hours Jan. 1, 2017: Beltzville, Caledonia, Canoe Creek, Codorus, Cowans Gap, Delaware Canal, French Creek, Greenwood Furnace, Gifford Pinchot, Hills Creek, Jacobsburg Environmental Education Center, Jennings Environmental Education Center, Keystone, Kings Gap Environmental Education Center, Little Buffalo, Lyman Run, Moraine, Nescopeck, Nolde Forest Environmental Education Center, Parker Dam, Pine Grove Furnace, Prince Gallitzin, Pymatuning, R.B. Winter, Shawnee and Sinnemahoning.

Presque Isle State Park will offer a New Year's Eve or "Last Night" hike for those who wish to ring in the new year while hiking. This 3-mile easy hike begins at 11 p.m. Thursday, Dec. 31, and will end around 1 a.m. Friday, Jan. 1. Also, Bald Eagle State Park is offer an evening hike Dec. 31 that will focus on owls in the park.

"With this selection we hope to draw both novices and trail-hardened veterans alike into our state parks in what has become an annual salute to healthy exercise and the winter beauty and serenity of our 120 state parks," Dunn said. "Weather will dictate activities at our state parks on Jan. 1, but different hikes will match different abilities. The accent is on enjoyment."

Hikers are invited to share their experience on social media using #FirstDayHikes and #GetOutdoorsPA. Pennsylvania State Park staff and volunteers are leading the hikes, which are usually about one or two miles, but can be longer depending on the park and its terrain. Additional details can be found at on the DCNR Calendar of Events.

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