



Pennsylvania
Department of Conservation
and Natural Resources

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Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources Celebrates Third Annual *Outdoors for All Day* in Harrisburg

More than 15 Harrisburg outdoor recreation and conservation organizations came together to offer hands-on activities, opportunities to get out on the water, education, and community connection at the event.

A series of four events, one more Outdoors for All event is scheduled for Pittsburgh on August 15.

The Department of Conservation and Natural Resources manages Pennsylvania's 125 state parks and 2.2 million acres of state forestlands, which are free and open to the public every day.

Harrisburg, PA – Today, the **Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR)** marked the Commonwealth's third annual *Outdoors for All Day* at Italian Lake Park in Harrisburg, highlighting the **Shapiro Administration's** commitment to ensuring all Pennsylvanians have access to parks, forests, trails, and outdoor recreation.

"Today's event and the Outdoors for All celebrations are about connecting DCNR to the energy and community spirit that happens when people and organizations come together to celebrate the simple joy of being outside," said **DCNR Deputy Secretary Mike Walsh**. "These events show what access to the outdoors can mean for people, from the sense of belonging it creates to the mental and physical benefits that come from connecting with nature. This is what Outdoors for All is all about, and it is why we are committed to making sure every Pennsylvanian can enjoy the outdoors in a welcoming and meaningful way."

This year's event brought together more than 15 regional organizations and community groups for a free, family friendly celebration at Italian Lake Park. Visitors enjoyed interactive activities, environmental education, games, music, yoga, dance, food, and the chance to try rowing on the water.

"In a city like Harrisburg, our green spaces are truly invaluable," said **Harrisburg Mayor Wanda R.D. Williams**. "Our residents and visitors enjoy walking, biking, and connecting

with the nature around us. Outdoors for All is a reminder to celebrate the parks and recreation options in our community. The City of Harrisburg is beyond grateful to the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources for bringing Outdoors for All here and for everything they do to enrich outdoor recreation experiences.”

Participating organizations included City of Harrisburg Parks and Recreation, Capital Area Greenbelt Association, Office of Governor Josh Shapiro, Pennsylvania Parks and Forests Foundation, Pennsylvania Environmental Council, Pennsylvania Human Relations Commission, Pennsylvania Interscholastic Cycling League, Keystone Trails Association, Canoe Club of Greater Harrisburg, PASA Sustainable Agriculture, Pennsylvania Association of Environmental Educators, Scouting America, American Rivers, Harrisburg YMCA, Dab of Fun Facepainting, Community Yoga Space, DJ Gotfather, Mammaz Meltz, and Rita’s Italian Ice.

Celebrating Outdoors for All

Outdoors for All Day is traditionally held on the third Saturday in July, but this year’s celebration was rescheduled due to poor air quality and inclement weather. The day is designed to highlight Pennsylvania’s commitment to welcoming, inclusive access to nature for all residents and visitors. What began as a single celebration in Pittsburgh in 2024 has grown into four events across the Commonwealth.

These events also reflect DCNR’s broader *Mosaic* initiative to strengthen community connections and ensure all people are represented and welcomed on Pennsylvania’s public lands. This year’s theme for Outdoors for All highlights the importance of expanding water access and creating more opportunities for water recreation. **This year’s capstone event is also free and will take place on August 15 at Allegheny Commons Park, West Ohio Street, Pittsburgh, PA 15212.** The event will have Spanish and American Sign Language interpreters onsite to provide free language interpretation services for attendees.

Accessibility and Inclusion in State Parks and Forests

DCNR continues to expand accessible recreation opportunities across Pennsylvania through **new infrastructure, improved trip planning tools, and enhanced visitor resources**. The agency recently launched **expanded accessible recreation website pages that outline accessibility features at more than 100 state park and forest locations** and include a new search tool to help visitors find facilities that fit their needs.

On the ground, new improvements include **communication boards, colorblind glasses, Handy Talker communication cards**, and other tools to support visitors with diverse abilities and communication needs. DCNR also continues to invest in accessible trails, boat launches, playgrounds, wildlife viewing areas, hunting areas, and other recreation sites. **Pennsylvania now offers more than 120 miles of ADA accessible trails in state parks and 82 miles in state forests**, with additional projects underway.

Investing in Communities Through Statewide Recreation and Conservation Grants

DCNR's **Community Conservation Partnerships Program (C2P2)** provides funding for local governments and nonprofit organizations to support recreation and conservation projects. Grants help communities develop and rehabilitate parks, plan and build trails, protect land and water resources, conduct conservation planning, and strengthen regional partnerships.

Earlier this year, the Shapiro Administration awarded [nearly \\$82 million in C2P2 grants across the Commonwealth](#), including \$238,400 to the Pennsylvania Interscholastic Cycling Association to coordinate and manage the Pennsylvania Interscholastic Cycling League (PICL), expanding engagement, supporting new teams and riding opportunities, providing a bicycle purchase assistance program, expanding the Teen Trail Corps Stewardship Program, and other related initiatives. PICL - pronounced "pickle" is a youth development organization welcoming students in grades 6 - 12 from across the state.

"PICL is proud to support expanding access to the outdoors through cycling, and we are grateful to DCNR for its support of our mission," said **Ryan Oelkers, Director of Communications and Outreach for the Pennsylvania Interscholastic Cycling League**. "Last year our 1,413 student athletes across 80 teams completed 7,557 hours of trail work-- an impact of \$180,000. More importantly, we were able to connect our young people to volunteering and protecting our environment."

Since 1995, DCNR has invested nearly **\$1.5 billion into more than 10,000 outdoor-related projects** in Pennsylvania. In 2026, the Shapiro Administration [announced](#) a nearly **\$82 million investment in new state funding** to support [more than 295 recreation and conservation projects](#) across Pennsylvania. These investments align with DCNR's [2025-29 Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan \(SCORP\)](#): [Outdoor Places, Shared Spaces](#), which outlines a roadmap to improve outdoor access, equity, and sustainability throughout the Commonwealth and meet the outdoor recreation needs of Pennsylvanians.

In 2025, these grants enabled the development or rehabilitation of **165+ parks**, the protection of **7,155 acres for recreation and habitat**, and the construction or rehabilitation of **nearly 70 miles of trails**, including closing **eight Priority Trail Gaps**.

Since the program began, **more than 440,000 acres** have been permanently protected, **40 percent of local parks** have received funding, and over **90 percent of Pennsylvanians live in a municipality with at least one DCNR grant project**.

If a nonprofit organization or local government is interested in applying for a C2P2 grant, DCNR staff are available to assist with questions, site visits, and guidance on preparing competitive applications. Applicants are encouraged to [contact their](#)

[regional advisor](#) before starting a proposal. For more information visit [DCNR's Community Conservation Partnerships Program webpage](#).

Outdoor Recreation and Pennsylvania's Growing Economy

The outdoor recreation industry contributed **\$20.4 billion** to Pennsylvania's economy in 2024 — representing 2 percent of the state's GDP. Under Governor Josh Shapiro's leadership the sector supports **more than 177,000 jobs** and generates **\$9.5 billion in wages**, [according](#) to the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis.

With more than **14,000 miles of trails**, **6,500 local parks**, **125 state parks**, and **2.2 million acres of forest land**, Pennsylvania boasts one of the largest public trail systems in the eastern U.S. — positioning the Commonwealth as a leader in four-season recreation, a hub for active tourism, and making it [The Great American Getaway](#).

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