



Pennsylvania
Department of Conservation
and Natural Resources

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ICYMI: Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources Closes Out Third Annual *Outdoors for All* Celebration in Pittsburgh

More than 25 Pittsburgh-area 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.

Saturday's event capped off series of four Outdoors for All events across the Commonwealth this summer celebrating the importance of the outdoors in communities across Pennsylvania.

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.

Pittsburgh, PA – The **Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR)** marked the Commonwealth's third annual *Outdoors for All Day* at Allegheny Commons in Pittsburgh 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 have focused on 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 Claire Jantz**. "We are committed to Outdoors for All and making sure every Pennsylvanian can enjoy the outdoors in a welcoming and meaningful way. These events showed 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 year's event was presented in collaboration with Outdoor Inclusion Coalition, Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy, and CitiParks, and brought together more than 25 regional organizations and community groups for a free, family friendly celebration at Allegheny Commons Park. Visitors enjoyed interactive activities, environmental

education, games, music, yoga, dance, food, and the chance to try paddling on Lake Elizabeth.

"An event like this really demonstrates when the city, the Commonwealth, and community organizations work together," said **Eric Sloan, Director of Pittsburgh Parks and Recreation**. "Every day [in Pittsburgh] our team is creating opportunities for people of all ages to get active and connect with their communities. That happens through our pools and rec centers, youth sports, outdoor programming, green spaces and so much more. We continue to look for ways to expand and evolve these opportunities and introduce more Pittsburghers to everything our parks system has to offer. Partnerships like the ones represented here today, and the regional partnerships we're building throughout Southwestern Pennsylvania allow us to reach more people, share resources and create even more opportunities to experience the outdoors."

Participating organizations included City of Pittsburgh Parks and Recreation, Riverlife, American Rivers, Pittsburgh Park Rangers, BikePGH and POGOH, National Aviary, Allegheny Land Trust, Penn State Extension Master Watershed Steward Program, Live Oak Kids Occupational Therapy, , Sierra Club Allegheny Group, Allegheny County Park Rangers, Western Pennsylvania Conservancy, Southwest Pennsylvania Climbers Coalition, Pennsylvania Interscholastic Cycling League, Project Destiny, Children's Museum of Pittsburgh, YMCA of Greater Pittsburgh, Allegheny GoatScape, Age-Friendly Greater Pittsburgh, Azure Family Concerts, Pennsylvania Association of Environmental Educators, Mad Science Pittsburgh, Drum Nexus, Representative Aerion Abney's Office, facepainting, an airbrush tattoo artist, a Disney activity, and Reading is FUNdamental.

Celebrating Outdoors for All

Outdoors for All events are 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.

"Parks and outdoor spaces should be places where we all feel welcome," said **Ross Chapman, chief operations officer for the Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy**. "These are the kinds of events that we think are not only central to the way to the way in which Pittsburgh as a community needs to thrive ... this is the spirit of Pittsburgh. We want to build a foundation where we can continue to do this type and bring in everybody into the community parks we have in Pittsburgh."

Saturday's Outdoors for All event was in collaboration with the [First Try Collective](#) summer event series, aimed at providing free, beginner-friendly outdoor experiences for residents of all ages and abilities. The First Try Collective launched in 2026 with more than 20 events designed to make outdoor recreation more welcoming and accessible, providing a low-pressure opportunity for participants to try new activities. The initiative aligns with findings from the Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan, which identified "no one to go with" as the third-highest barrier to outdoor recreation for Pennsylvanians.

"I am really thankful for DCNR for putting together such a beautiful event — the collaboration, the vigor of our partners that are here at the table and participating alongside community is something that cannot go unnoticed," said **Marcus Shoffner, president and CEO of the Outdoor Inclusion Coalition**. "I'm very appreciative of everyone showing up and participating — and not just giving back but wrapping their arms around community, which is one of the most intentional acts we can have with welcoming the next generation of outdoor recreationists outside."

What Pennsylvanians are reading and watching about Outdoors for All:

- **Pittsburgh Post-Gazette:** [Outdoors for all: More people are outdoors, but what are they not doing? | Pittsburgh Post-Gazette](#)
- **CBS 21:** [Outdoors for All celebration brings families, community together in Harrisburg](#)
- **ABC27:** [Community, officials celebrate rescheduled Outdoors for All Day in Harrisburg | ABC27](#)
- **Yahoo News:** [Community, officials celebrate rescheduled Outdoors for All Day in Harrisburg](#)
- **PennWatch:** [DCNR Celebrates Third Annual Outdoors for All Day in Harrisburg - PennWatch](#)
- **Warren Times Observer:** [Outdoors for All Day celebrates state's natural gems - Times Observer](#)
- **MyChesCo:** [Pennsylvania Expands Outdoor Access as Recreation Economy Grows - MyChesCo](#)
- **WGAL:** [Lancaster's Reservoir Park at the center of reimagining effort - WGAL](#)
- **ABC27:** [State, local officials celebrate 'Outdoors for All' in Lancaster | ABC27](#)
- **Yahoo News:** [State, local officials celebrate 'Outdoors for All' in Lancaster](#)

- **Penn Watch:** [DCNR Celebrates Outdoors for All in Lancaster - PennWatch](#)
- **Forth:** [Department of Conservation and Natural Resources Celebrates Outdoors for All in Lancaster | Pennsylvania Gov. Josh Shapiro | Forth](#)
- **Penn Watch:** [DCNR Kicks Off 3rd Annual Outdoors for All Celebration in Philadelphia - PennWatch](#)
- **MyChesCo:** [Pennsylvania Expands Outdoors Campaign as Recreation Industry Grows - MyChesCo](#)
- **Explore Clarion:** [State Officials Kick Off Third Annual 'Outdoors For All' Celebration - exploreClarion](#)

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.

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](#).

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.

Photos and video of the event can be found at [PAcast.com](#).

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