



Pennsylvania
Department of Conservation
and Natural Resources

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Friday, August 21, 2026

MEDIA CONTACT:

Maddy Neff, madneff@pa.gov, 717-585-3136

**Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources
Honors Rangers, Civilian Who Helped Save Mountain Biker's Life at
Swatara State Park**

Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) Ranger Ellen Secor and Ranger Emily McCoy, along with civilian Sean Nam, each received Secretarial Citations acknowledging their quick action during a cardiac emergency that helped save a fellow park visitor's life.

DCNR rangers are sworn law enforcement officers trained in emergency response, public safety, and protecting the Commonwealth's 125 state parks and 2.2 million acres of state forestland, which are free and open to the public every day.

Grantville, PA – Quick action by two **Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR)** rangers and a trained paramedic helped save the life of a mountain biker who suffered sudden cardiac arrest at [Swatara State Park](#) this spring. Today, **DCNR Secretary Cindy Adams Dunn** recognized Ranger Ellen Secor, Ranger Emily McCoy, and civilian Sean Nam for their lifesaving response.

"Ranger Ellen Secor, Ranger Emily McCoy, and Sean Nam demonstrated extraordinary bravery, quick thinking, and professionalism during a life-threatening emergency," said **Secretary Dunn**. "DCNR rangers are sworn law enforcement officers who play a critical role in public safety across Pennsylvania's state parks and forests. Their dedication, training, and readiness allow millions of people to enjoy our public lands with confidence. We are deeply grateful for the actions taken that day and for the commitment each of them brings to serving the people of the Commonwealth."

In May, Sean Nam and his friend Bill Blandford were mountain biking on the trails at Swatara State Park when Blandford suffered sudden cardiac arrest. Nam, a trained paramedic, immediately recognized the severity of the emergency. He called 911 to activate the emergency response and began chest compressions, providing essential care until DCNR rangers arrived.

Ranger Ellen Secor and Ranger Emily McCoy responded quickly to the scene with an automated external defibrillator (AED). Upon arrival, they continued cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and administered defibrillations while coordinating with additional

emergency medical personnel. Their professionalism, calm under pressure, and rapid assessment were critical in providing Blandford the chance to survive this life-threatening event. Blandford was transported to Lancaster General Hospital, where he received further treatment.

"This story is a powerful reminder that saving a life doesn't happen in just one place — it happens in a chain of quick decisions and skilled hands, from the trailside to the treatment room," said **Penn Medicine Lancaster General Health CEO Michael Barber**. "We're proud of the exceptional care our Heart and Vascular Institute team provided, and just as proud to stand alongside the DCNR rangers and the bystander whose fast action gave Mr. Blandford a fighting chance before he ever reached our doors."

Both rangers received Secretarial Citations acknowledging their dedication, readiness, and commitment to public safety. Nam received a citation recognizing his bravery, quick thinking, and decisive action. The DCNR Ceremonial Unit participated in the ceremony.

Bill Blandford, who attended the event, shared his gratitude for the efforts that saved his life. "Thank you to Sean, Ellen, Emily, and all of the first responders who literally got me out of the woods and saved my life," said **Blandford**.

DCNR rangers serve as sworn law enforcement officers responsible for protecting Pennsylvania's state parks and forests, ensuring public safety, and supporting outdoor recreation. There are 232 DCNR rangers statewide who play a vital role in protecting public lands, educating visitors, and ensuring safe and welcoming outdoor spaces for all. To prepare for this work, ranger trainees complete a 19-week academy focused on visitor services, educational programming, equipment use, and law enforcement training, including enforcement of park rules and Pennsylvania law. This level of preparation ensures DCNR rangers are fully equipped to protect public lands and support safe, high-quality outdoor experiences for all visitors.

Pennsylvania state parks are equipped with AEDs to support emergency response, with devices located at all staffed state parks and in every State Park Officer vehicle. In addition, DCNR staff are trained in first aid and CPR, a requirement for all DCNR rangers, managers, resource rangers, and educators, strengthening emergency readiness across the state.

[Swatara State Park](#) covers more than 3,500 acres in Lebanon and Schuylkill counties and offers visitors a wide range of outdoor recreation opportunities, including hiking, biking, fishing, and paddling. The park's mix of forest, fields, and scenic waterways makes it a popular destination for both day-use visitors and outdoor enthusiasts.

###