



Pennsylvania
Department of Conservation
and Natural Resources

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Thursday, September 24, 2026

MEDIA CONTACT:

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

Shapiro Administration Marks Completion of \$5.2 Million in Improvements at Cherry Springs State Park, Protecting Dark Skies and Advancing Sustainable Infrastructure on Public Lands

The new improvements demonstrate DCNR's commitment to sustainable design, dark sky protection, and high-quality public access on the Commonwealth's public lands.

Since taking office, Governor Josh Shapiro and his Administration have committed more than \$238 million to modernize state parks and forests through critical infrastructure improvements.

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

Coudersport, PA – Today, **Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) Secretary Cindy Adams Dunn** announced the completion of **\$5.2 million in new improvements at Cherry Springs State Park**, an International Dark Sky Park in Potter County. This major investment enhances visitor accessibility and safety while protecting the park's world-class dark skies — advancing the Commonwealth's commitment to modern infrastructure, outdoor recreation, and sustainable public lands management.

“Cherry Springs is one of the most remarkable places in our state park system, where generations of visitors have come to experience a night sky that most people in the world will never see,” said **DCNR Secretary Cindy Adams Dunn**. “This park comes alive after dark, and we have a responsibility to conserve that experience for the future. These improvements help us meet the needs of a park that shines at night and ensure we can continue offering an outstanding dark sky experience with thoughtful, sustainable infrastructure that reflects the best of what Pennsylvania's public lands can provide.”

The project redesigned how visitors move through the park at night, reduced artificial light, and expanded facilities to support astronomy, education, and large events.

Project improvements include:

- Relocated parking lot entrances to improve traffic flow, pedestrian safety, and protect dark sky quality.
- Adjusted visitor circulation patterns for improved safety at night and to preserve dark skies.
- Enhanced headlight-blocking mounds to prevent light shining into the astronomy field.
- Installed two electric vehicle (EV) charging stations.
- Constructed a new Contact Station to welcome visitors and support program logistics.
- Upgraded the programming area with an improved amphitheater, increased seating, and a pavilion featuring telescope storage, solar panels, and flexible covered space.
- Built a 10,000-gallon water storage tank and modern water treatment system to increase capacity during large events.
- Added electric service for vendors at large events.

Cherry Springs State Park is named for the black cherry trees historically found in the area and is surrounded by the 262,000-acre [Susquehannock State Forest](#). The park earned **Gold Level International Dark Sky Park** status in 2008 and is one of the world's premier destinations for viewing the Milky Way, planets, and other astronomical phenomena. It is located within the [Pennsylvania Wilds Conservation Landscape](#) and the [Pennsylvania Route 6 Heritage Corridor](#).

Since taking office, **Governor Josh Shapiro and his Administration** have committed **more than \$238 million** to modernize state parks and forests through critical infrastructure improvements. Currently, projects in construction total more than \$168 million with approximately \$70 million in projects to be awarded in 2026. **Governor Shapiro** has prioritized investments that improve Pennsylvania's state parks and forests, grow the [outdoor recreation economy](#), and enhance quality of life for residents. Outdoor recreation in Pennsylvania generates **\$20.4 billion** annually and supports more than **177,000 jobs**.

DCNR is taking a phased approach to major restoration and rehabilitative projects on public lands to ensure present and future generations' have access to Pennsylvania's natural beauty. In March, DCNR announced it would take phased approaches to campground improvements at [Cook Forest](#), [Gifford Pinchot](#), [Lackawanna](#), and [Ricketts Glen](#) state parks to allow for camping at these popular campsites during the construction. Critical work to improve the [Kinzua Bridge State Park Skywalk](#) is also being addressed with a phased approach to allow visitors to enjoy the scenic beauty of [fall foliage](#) from one of the most renowned viewpoints in the Pennsylvania Wilds.

DCNR's Bureau of Facility Design and Construction manages design and construction of Pennsylvania's state park and forest infrastructure projects and has been a leader in implementing DCNR's commitment to [LEED Certified Buildings](#) and [sustainable infrastructure on public lands](#) —including a \$7.5 million new visitor center at [Marsh Creek State Park](#) seeking LEED certification. Learn more about buildings on public lands on [DCNR's website](#).

Visit the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources website for more information about [Cherry Springs State Park](#) and check out DCNR's [Calendar of Events](#) for events on public lands.

#