Pennsylvania
Department of Conservation and Natural Resources

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Shapiro Administration Unveils New Plan to Protect Pennsylvania's Parks and Forests from the Impacts of Climate Change

The Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR)'s Climate Action Plan establishes measurable goals through 2050 to prepare public lands and recreation areas for climate impacts and reduce agency greenhouse gas emissions.

Governor Josh Shapiro and his Administration are committed to protecting Pennsylvania's environment and ensuring that future generations can enjoy the Commonwealth's natural resources and outdoor spaces.

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.









Spring Mills, PA – The **Shapiro Administration** is taking new steps to protect Pennsylvania's state parks, forests, and outdoor recreation areas from the growing impacts of climate change, while reducing the greenhouse gas emissions generated by the **Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR)**. Today, **DCNR Secretary Cindy Adams Dunn** unveiled a new **Climate Action Plan** at the Mira Lloyd Dock Resource Conservation Center, establishing measurable goals and actions to make the Commonwealth's public lands and DCNR operations more sustainable and resilient through 2050.

Pennsylvania is already experiencing the effects of a changing climate, including increased flooding, more extreme heat days, harmful algal blooms, and shifting seasonal patterns. These changes can threaten public safety, harm natural resources, and affect the places Pennsylvanians and visitors enjoy for outdoor recreation. The plan builds on work already underway and sets goals for making DCNR's operations and public lands more sustainable and resilient for future generations.

Governor Josh Shapiro and his Administration are committed to protecting Pennsylvania's environment and ensuring that future generations can enjoy the Commonwealth's natural resources and outdoor spaces, including upholding Pennsylvanians' constitutional right to clean air, pure water, and the preservation of the environment.

"Pennsylvania's state parks and forests are among our greatest natural resources, and we have a responsibility to protect them for generations to come," said **DCNR Secretary Cindy Adams Dunn**. "This plan builds on the work DCNR is already doing to prepare our public lands for the impacts of climate change, protect the natural resources Pennsylvanians depend on, and reduce our own emissions. We're setting clear goals and taking practical steps to ensure these special places remain safe, healthy, and accessible for everyone."

The 182-page plan outlines steps DCNR will take to prepare its lands and facilities for climate impacts, protect visitors, and help communities address climate-related risks. Drawing on findings from the **Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP)'s Climate Change Impact Assessment**, the plan identifies how changing weather patterns and more extreme conditions could affect DCNR's lands, operations, and mission.

The plan includes:

- Updated climate projections for Pennsylvania.
- A department-wide climate risk assessment.
- DCNR's first greenhouse gas inventory.
- Agency-wide and bureau-specific climate actions and performance indicators.
- Guidance on climate-resilient land management, carbon sequestration, and emerging technologies.

“As the effects of a changing climate continue to expand, DCNR’s work on their Climate Action Plan is another way that Pennsylvania is focused on the future,” said **DEP Secretary Jessica Shirley**. “DCNR’s tremendous work will help to preserve the natural and scenic beauty at state parks, forests, and public and private lands as guaranteed in Pennsylvania’s Constitution. As DCNR uses the plan to guide future actions, it will allow them to mitigate and adapt our public lands to continue to be an amazing resource for future generations.”

What’s in This Plan

The plan establishes specific goals and accountability measures, prioritizes support for vulnerable communities, and includes:

- Reducing greenhouse gas emissions directly resulting from DCNR operations by 80 percent by 2050.
- Generating or offsetting all electricity used by DCNR from carbon-free sources by 2035.
- Providing both general and specialized climate change training to all DCNR staff by 2030.
- Establishing 60 measurable climate action goals across the agency.
- Implementing 49 bureau-led actions to strengthen climate resilience in infrastructure, grant programs, operations, natural resources, recreational spaces, and other agency functions.
- Reporting progress each year to ensure transparency and accountability.

Helping Communities Prepare for Climate Impacts

DCNR designed the Climate Action Plan to serve as a resource for local governments, school districts, universities, and conservation organizations working to address climate change. It includes regional climate projections, a statewide climate risk assessment, and guidance on forest management, carbon sequestration, and climate-resilient recreation design. These tools can help communities identify and prepare for risks such as flooding, landslides, and extreme heat.

Building on Climate Action Already Underway

DCNR has already made significant progress in climate mitigation and adaptation. The agency has installed **40 small-scale solar arrays**, added **more than 50 public electric vehicle charging stations** across state parks and forests, built **18 high-performance LEED-certified buildings**, and converted about **10 percent of its vehicle fleet to electric or hybrid models**. DCNR’s Bureau of Facility Design and Construction consistently incorporates climate-resilient and sustainable design into its projects, including the rebuilt aqueduct at Delaware Canal State Park, which was engineered to withstand future storm events.

Adaptation efforts include upgrading trails and recreation infrastructure to withstand more severe storms, enhancing emergency response training, and expanding forest

management practices that reduce wildfire risk, control invasive species, and strengthen ecological resilience. DCNR serves as the lead agency for all wildfires in Pennsylvania and provides grants to volunteer fire departments to help equip and train crews across the state.

Investing in Communities and Local Resilience

DCNR invests millions of dollars each year through the Community Conservation Partnership Program to help local governments and nonprofits build climate-resilient parks, trails, and recreation areas, including a recent $81 million investment in community projects statewide. Since taking office, the **Shapiro Administration** has invested approximately $315 million in more than 1,100 park and recreation projects.

More than 70 percent of Pennsylvania's forests are privately owned, meaning the long-term resilience of the state's forests depends on the stewardship of private landowners. Through its network of county-based service foresters, DCNR provides technical assistance and guidance to landowners, communities, and forest managers on sustainable forestry practices that strengthen forest health, protect water resources, enhance wildlife habitat, and prepare forests for future climate challenges.

Here's what Pennsylvania's environmental and climate leaders are saying about the Climate Action Plan:

Lori Brennan, Executive Director, The Nature Conservancy in Pennsylvania and Delaware: "DCNR's new Climate Action Plan establishes a science-based and measurable roadmap to conserve Pennsylvania's natural resources against the most urgent threat facing people and nature. The actions outlined in the plan address the dual crises of climate change and biodiversity loss, emphasizing conservation, stewardship, and increased connectivity for wildlife across the Commonwealth's wild lands. DCNR also leads by example in our great commonwealth, demonstrating clean energy and other sustainable solutions at scale in its park facilities. TNC applauds DCNR for its proactive approach to climate change adaptation and mitigation across Pennsylvania."

Prepare PA, joint statement: "The 2026 DCNR Climate Action Plan responds to the pressing challenges of climate change by charting a course to protect Pennsylvania's natural resources, communities, and infrastructure from increasing threats such as extreme heat, wildfire, and flooding. Through a set of practical, actionable strategies, DCNR is demonstrating leadership in building resilience across the Commonwealth. We look forward to leveraging Penn State's research, educational, and outreach capabilities, together with our broad network of partners, to help advance these important efforts."

Andy Loza, Executive Director, WeConservePA: "Climate change threatens wildlife habitat, biodiversity, and the economic productivity of our forests. It jeopardizes human

health and safety with increased extreme weather events and flooding. WeConservePA greatly appreciates that DCNR is doing its part to proactively to address the problem."

Belle Sherwood, Clean Energy and Climate Advocate, PennEnvironment: "DCNR's new climate plan serves as a role model for ways that agencies can help reduce climate pollution and protect our planet. From the new solar panel installations to more electric vehicle chargers, it's clear that DCNR has already been a leader in making Pennsylvania cleaner and greener. PennEnvironment applauds DCNR's 'Forever Green' program and is looking forward to supporting the ambitious goals set out in this plan."

About the Mira Lloyd Dock Resource Conservation Center

The Mira Lloyd Dock Resource Conservation Center began as a small forest nursery in 1908 and has evolved into a statewide hub for reforestation and conservation support. DCNR staff collect native seeds to preserve genetic diversity, grow trees and shrubs for restoration projects, and collaborate with researchers to improve forest health — work that directly supports the climate adaptation and mitigation goals outlined in DCNR's Climate Action Plan. The center also houses DCNR's woodshop and sign shop, producing durable wood products and infrastructure used throughout state parks and forests.

Visit DCNR's website for more information about climate change and sustainability and check out the Calendar of Events for events on public lands.

See photos and video from the event at PAcast.com.

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