



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

November 20, 2020

DCNR Requires Out-of-State Visitors to Have Negative COVID-19 Test or Quarantine Before Visiting Parks

Masks must be worn outdoors when park visitors are unable to adequately social distance

Harrisburg, PA – Today, Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) Secretary Cindy Adams Dunn announced changes to operating procedures for state park and forest facilities that will require out-of-state visitors to comply with orders intended to prevent the spread and mitigate the impacts of COVID-19.

“Since the beginning of efforts to address the pandemic we have kept our state park and forest lands open to all so that people can safely enjoy outdoor recreation as a way to maintain positive physical and mental health, and that will continue to be the case,” Dunn said. “We are making some changes to our overnight stays for out-of-state-visitors and our programming to help decrease the spread of COVID-19.”

For the safety of visitors and staff, DCNR will be requiring guests to cancel and refunds will be issued if they are unable to honor mitigation efforts:

- Anyone who visits from another state must have a negative COVID-19 test within 72 prior to entering the commonwealth;
- If someone cannot get a test or chooses not to, they must quarantine for 14 days upon arrival in Pennsylvania before visiting a state park or forest; and
- Pennsylvanians visiting other states are required to have a negative COVID-19 test within 72 hours prior to their return to the commonwealth or to quarantine for 14 days upon return.

Out-of-state visitors cannot use state park overnight facilities to meet the 14-day quarantine requirement. Out-of-state residents visiting for the day also must comply with the mitigation efforts.

Visitors who don't comply may be fined between \$25 and \$300.

Visitor center exhibit halls and interpretive areas will be closed, and all indoor programs will be canceled. Restrooms will continue to be available.

Masks are required to be worn:

- In park and forest offices;

- In any other indoor public space including restrooms;
- During both indoor and outdoor special events and gatherings; and
- Outdoors when visitors are unable to adequately social distance.

All outdoor environmental education and recreation programs will be limited to 20 people, to include staff and volunteer leaders. Masks must be worn by all participants, and services will be denied if visitors cannot comply.

These changes are effective today, and will remain in effect until at least January 15, 2021.

Dunn noted that visits to Pennsylvania state parks have increased by more than a million visitors a month since the start of mitigation efforts, and that interest is expected to hold strong through the winter and spring.

“We encourage people to embrace being active outdoors, even in the winter, because there are so many benefits associated with enjoying nature,” Dunn said. “With the appropriate clothing and preparedness, winter is among the most beautiful and peaceful times in our parks and forests.”

To help avoid exposure to COVID-19 and still enjoy the outdoors:

- Don't hike or recreate in groups – go with those under the same roof, and adhere to social distancing (stay 6 feet apart)
- Take hand sanitizer with you and use it regularly
- Avoid touching your face, eyes, and nose
- Cover your nose and mouth when coughing and sneezing with a tissue or flexed elbow
- If you are sick, stay home

Visitors can help keep state parks and forest lands safe by following these practices:

- Avoid crowded parking lots and trailheads
- Bring a bag and either carry out your trash or dispose of it properly
- Clean up after pets
- Avoid activities that put you at greater risk of injury, so you don't require a trip to the emergency room

Pennsylvania has 121 state parks and 20 forest districts, and they are all open year round.

Information about state parks and forests is available on the [DCNR website](#). Updates also are being provided on DCNR's [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) accounts.