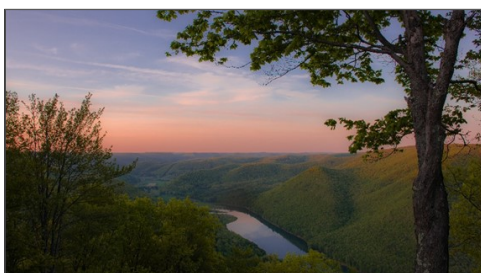


The Importance of Investing in Our State Parks and Forests

“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.” – Margaret Mead

The Legacy of Pennsylvania's State Park and Forests: The Future Is in Our Hands is a call to action for citizens and decision makers to understand the challenges facing our parks and forests and to launch a conversation to ensure a vibrant future for our public lands consistent with the Environmental Rights Amendment.



A scenic vista at Kettle Creek State Park

Research has shown time and again that investing in our state parks and forests is an investment in our local communities and the economic engine that is outdoor recreation, creating a quality of life that makes Pennsylvania a great place to live, work, and play; and keeping the state competitive in job creation, employee retention, and attracting business.

Pennsylvania stands at a critical juncture between handing our children a legacy in which we can all be proud and strapping them with a burden from which they will struggle to recover. An opportunity exists to continue the leadership that created our state park and forest system.

What's Next

In order to move the conversation about this crucial issue forward, the Pennsylvania Parks and Forests Foundation and our partners will:

- Create a page on the Foundation website to host information related to the report.
- Use social media to educate the public on the issues at hand.
- Work to empower a Recreation Advisory Committee for Pennsylvania to capitalize on Pennsylvania's position as 5th in the nation for outdoor recreation expenditures.
- Develop a 2-3 year outreach campaign to bring together thought leaders and decision makers to look at methods to addressing the needs in our parks and forests.
- Continue to gather data to create informational graphics that easily and precisely convey the depth of the issue.

- Work to build a pictorial database of issues across the state.
- Work with elected officials to:
 - Visit state parks and forests so they may see firsthand the needs that exist, the pressures on the resources, and the existing steps being taken to address these pressures.
 - Develop an understanding of the fiscal needs for both operations and maintenance—and the benefits these investments bring to the commonwealth.
 - Explore funding scenarios that may exist to address the maintenance needs.
 - Continue to protect special funds that are currently earmarked for park and forest infrastructure.
- Work with the general public to:
 - Keep them informed and provide avenues for involvement.
 - Develop an Ambassador Program to showcase our parks and forests—the good as well as the challenges that exist.
 - Provide volunteer opportunities for the public in our parks and forests.
 - Continue to establish friends groups and recruit volunteers for the Stewards of Penn's Woods program.
 - Host “Park and Forest Days” at the state capitol to connect constituents with their elected officials to discuss how lack of investments impact the local visitor experience and/or how access to parks and forests has benefited constituents.
 - Support parks and forests and the campaign through private philanthropy.
- Work with the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources to:
 - Build case studies related to completed projects and/or project needs and their impacts on people.
 - Maintain current and accurate records of needs.
 - Create opportunities for volunteerism.
 - Explore creative solutions to pressing problems.
- Work with the media to:
 - Create stories on state parks and forests.
 - Meet with editors to create opinion pieces on the needs within our parks and forests.
 - Create news stories related to challenges faced by our parks and forests.

