



**Budget Hearing
Testimony by Cindy Adams Dunn
Secretary
Department of Conservation and Natural Resources**

March 4, 2019

Good afternoon Chairman Browne, Chairman Hughes, and members of the Senate Appropriations Committee. Thank you for this opportunity to discuss the budget for the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources.

Governor Wolf's vision is to make Pennsylvania a leader in workforce development – providing opportunities for citizens and creating the talented workers that draw businesses to our communities.

In our commonwealth those workers can expect to find walkable cities with green spaces and nearby trails; small towns along rivers with parks close to home; breathtaking forests and landscapes for exploring in all four seasons -- a blend of economic development and quality of life.

These are the amenities that DCNR and its partners provide to Pennsylvanians. Our work both supports our recreational and tourism economy, and ensures that we are conserving our natural resources, protecting our people and the environment.

The department's many public services – collecting geological and seismic data, community firefighter training, forest pest management, development of

recreational trails – are all important to a government that works, and to ensuring a vital and healthy Pennsylvania for future generations.

DCNR's proposed budget includes an increase of 2.4 percent over current levels and will allow the agency to continue its programs and services. The governor's budget also proposes an increase of 12 positions, primarily within the state park system, to help us manage pressing resource needs.

This will be an exciting year for DCNR as we build upon our core work and expand upon accomplishments from the past four years, including:

Growing our efforts around youth engagement through DCNR's Pennsylvania Outdoor Corps. This program offers work experience, job training and educational opportunities to young people who complete recreation and conservation projects, mostly on Pennsylvania's lands. It helps them get real world experience on active work projects, and helps them gain skills that will make them more attractive and productive job candidates;

Engaging partners in putting acres of trees in the ground along streams to improve the quality of our water and prevent flooding;

Implementing practices that are responding to and lessening the impacts of climate change;

Continuing leadership on efficiency and green practices, including installing chargers for electric vehicles in state parks.

While separate and apart from the budget, we also look forward to Governor Wolf's Restore Pennsylvania infrastructure plan, which will provide significant funding to enable environmental projects and new recreational

opportunities across the state. Restore Pennsylvania will include infrastructure and maintenance projects in state parks and forests, creation and revitalization of new local parks, and funding for hiking, biking, and ATV trail projects. Restore Pennsylvania is the only plan that can truly address the commonwealth's infrastructure needs, including key environmental priorities.

The men and women of DCNR strive every day to welcome millions of visitors to Pennsylvania's public lands, enhance local communities and provide critical protections for and improvements to our natural resources. I'm proud to work with them.

We look forward to working with you over the coming year to make Pennsylvania a great place to live, work, and play.