



## **News for Immediate Release**

**May 15, 2014**

### **DCNR, Volunteers Install Floating Islands at Marsh Creek State Park**

**Eagle, Chester County** - Marsh Creek State Park visitors with a keen eye for scenery may notice a subtle change in lakeside topography today after park workers and community volunteers installed two floating islands to provide improved water quality and aquatic habitat.

The 15-foot-square islands were placed in Marsh Creek Lake as part of an ongoing effort to reduce nutrients in the 1,727-acre waterway. When covered with a variety of native wetland plants, the islands also provide attractive and beneficial habitat for fish and other aquatic species.

"Already established at four other state parks, these floating islands provide a viable and cost-effective means of eliminating excessive nutrients when needed," said Bureau of State Parks Director David Kemmerer. "Excessive algae blooms, especially during hot, summer periods, are not supportive of a healthy lake ecosystem and fishery. Each of the islands has the ability to filter about the same amount of nutrients as more than one acre of natural wetlands."

Comprised of a recycled plastic matrix, the islands float atop the water after being planted with wetland plants, including iris, sedges, rushes, pickerelweed and arrow arum. While the growing plants provide food and cover for fish, birds and other animals, their roots extend into the water. They, and the microbes developing around them, effectively remove nutrients from the water.

"By the end of the summer, it is our hope these plants will grow, mature and spread across Marsh Creek Lake's artificial islands," Kemmerer said. "To the visitor, what should be seen by summer's end would appear to be vegetated, natural, small islands in the lake, complete with wildlife using them as habitat."

Because lake water nutrients are taken up in the plant material over the growing season, the bureau plans to harvest plant growth over the winter when sufficient ice forms on the lake, allowing for a small mower or trimmer to cut the vegetation. It would then be raked and removed from the islands, ensuring additional nutrients are not added to the lake ecosystem.

A relatively new initiative for state parks, the bureau already has deployed two artificial islands at the following state parks: Raccoon Creek, Beaver County; Mt. Pisgah, Bradford County; Shawnee, Bedford County; and Frances Slocum, Luzerne County.

For more information on Marsh Creek and Pennsylvania's other 119 state parks, telephone 1-888-PA-PARKS from 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Saturday, or visit [www.dcnr.state.pa.us](http://www.dcnr.state.pa.us) (select "State Parks").

**Media contact:** Terry Brady, 717-772-9101

###