



News for Immediate Release

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'Prowl the Sproul' State Forest Hiking Activities Set for July 18-20

Harrisburg - The Department of Conservation and Natural Resources' Bureau of Forestry invites hikers and other visitors to sample the rugged beauty of Sproul State Forest when a three-day "Prowl the Sproul" series of hikes steps off Friday, July 18.

Marking its 11th year, the increasingly popular hiking program links forest visitors with guides from the Bureau of Forestry, Keystone Trails Association and local civic and sportsmen's groups.

"Who could ask for a more perfect destination than thousands of mountainous, unspoiled acres to explore? That's exactly what keeps 'Prowl the Sproul' participants coming back year after year from across the state," said DCNR Secretary Ellen Ferretti. "This unique invitation is extended by the folks who best know this forest district amid the Pennsylvania Wilds."

A wide variety of trails in Sproul State Forest has been selected to offer hikers a variety of terrain and scenery before Prowl the Sproul events close Sunday, July 20.

DCNR and KTA guides have selected many of the most popular trails in the state forest, including the Donut Hole, Chuck Keiper, T-Squared, Jack Paulhamus/GARBY, and several trails featured in Tom Twaites' book, "50 Hikes in Central Pa." This year, the event will again feature new hikes, and guides will lead hikers off the beaten path to see some of the lesser-known, natural jewels of Sproul State Forest.

Ferretti noted hikes are planned to waterfalls, overlooks, old railroad grades, unique woodlands and flora that "make Sproul truly unique among our 20 state forest districts." Guided hikes ranging from 3.9 to 12 miles offer hikers a variety of difficulty levels, terrain and scenery.

"If a newcomer to the joys of hiking, there's no better way to be introduced than with skilled, knowledgeable group leaders guiding you to some of the most scenic hiking areas in the state," Ferretti noted.

In total, the weekend will feature 18 guided hikes: three on Friday; 10 Saturday; and five Sunday. Participants are advised to register early as each hike will be limited to 20 participants.

Seasoned veterans or those seeking to challenge themselves can sign up - limited to the first 20 individuals - for the Chuck Keiper Slackpack, where they will cover

the entire 50 miles of the Chuck Keiper Trail over the three-day weekend. Register via the KTA website at www.kta-hike.org.

Organized in 1956, KTA is a 1,300-member umbrella organization made up of 44 hiking and outdoors organizations in and around Pennsylvania.

Besides KTA, DCNR's Bureau of Forestry is teaming up with the Western Clinton Sportsmen's Association to introduce association members and the public to the wealth of hiking opportunities found in north central Pennsylvania.

Also, the PA Trail Dogs will host the sixth annual Prowl the Sproul 10K on Saturday, July 19. The course features a grueling 3-mile climb from the Western Clinton County Sportsmen's Environmental Education Center to the top of Little McCloskey Hollow and then 3.5-miles of downhill trail. Organized by sponsors of the Hyner View Challenge, the race is billed as among the most challenging 10Ks in the state. Participants can register on the KTA website or by emailing Craig Fleming at patraildogs@yahoo.com.

Food and lodging options are available for the weekend, but reservations must be made. Visit the KTA website -- www.kta-hike.org -- to download a registration form. For general information, contact Sproul State Forest District Office, 15187 Renovo Road, Renovo, 570-923-6011; or visit DCNR online at www.dcnr.state.pa.us.

Media contact: Terry Brady, 717-772-9101

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