



News for Immediate Release

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DCNR Contests Aim to Foster Interest in Environment, Outdoor Activities

Harrisburg - Department of Conservation and Natural Resources Secretary Ellen Ferretti today announced two contests to foster the goals of *Kids in Nature*, a department-wide effort to introduce more families to outdoor adventures.

"As part of our *Kids in Nature* program, we will be offering contests designed to draw families to Pennsylvania's state parks and state forestlands," Ferretti said. "Running simultaneously over the next several months, the contests will encourage families to participate in hikes, environmental education programs and other activities. At the same time, we'll be encouraging visits to state parks and forests."

Unveiled in late April, the *Kids in Nature* program is committed to renewing family interest in the outdoors and combatting the public's mounting disconnect from the natural resources around them.

Contest requirements, entry forms and other details can be found at the program website at www.PaNatureKids.org. Participants earn the chance to win prizes or Facebook notoriety in competitive events that include:

Kids in Nature Contest, a traditional survey-completion contest that runs today through Dec. 31 and is open to families and individuals under the age of 21. Participants must enter by completing an online survey form and "earn" entry opportunities by visiting parks or forests and engaging in educational programs, hikes or other offered activities.

Prizes, to be determined in a January 2015 drawing, are:

Grand prize: a behind-the-scenes tour with Bureau of State Parks staff, and two nights of free camping at the winner's chosen state park; second- to fourth-place prizes (three): two nights of free camping; and fifth- to eighth-place prizes (four): 2015 Pa. State Parks calendars.

Capture the Flag, a social media twist on the childhood game. State parks will post a picture of a flag hidden within their park; provide a clue; and encourage participants to be the first to find it and post their family or child's picture with the flag on Facebook. Open to families and participants under 21, the competition runs through Sept. 4.

Aside from weekly announcements of individual winners, successful Capture the Flag entrants will not receive official prizes, but online provisions will enable them to enter the larger *Kids in Nature* contest.

“These contests are an extension of what DCNR staff does every day – work tirelessly to connect people of all ages to nature through the public lands we manage and help support,” Ferretti said. “*Kids in Nature* will step up our efforts to raise the environmental awareness of children and their families, and, hopefully, get them actively involved in recreation, educational programs and environmental careers.”

The department’s recently launched website -- www.PaNatureKids.org – is a source of information for parents and teachers about where to go outside, and what to do when you get there.

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