



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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DCNR Secretary Joins in Dedication Of Ridley Creek State Park's New Equestrian Arena

Media, PA – Department of Conservation and Natural Resources Secretary Cindy Adams Dunn today joined Bureau of State Park officials and equestrian enthusiasts in dedicating a new indoor equestrian arena that will extend riding opportunities at Ridley Creek State Park, near Media, Delaware County.

“Regardless of season or weather, this carefully constructed building will permit and encourage year-round services and a more consistent revenue stream,” Dunn said. “We know equestrian enthusiasts take their pursuits very seriously, just as we know Ellie and Tom Chidester, owners and operators of Hidden Valley Farm, have put their heart and dedication into developing a premiere concession that operates a full-service equestrian center here at Ridley Creek.

“We at DCNR are proud to enable them to offer so much more to visitors. No longer forced to rely on the elements and an outdoor lesson ring arenas, this beautiful indoor equestrian arena allows park patron to come indoors and ride to their heart’s content.”

Hailing the building as the “ultimate in private public partners,” the secretary noted the indoor arena has created an increase in visitor services at the park and strengthened a partnership between concessionaire and park. Under a long-term lease agreement, the Chidesters have operated Hidden Valley Farms of New Town Square at Ridley Creek State Park since 1999.

“This unique facility expands an equestrian legacy at historic Ridley Creek State Park that reaches back to the times of Sam Riddle, owner of famous race horses, Man O’ War and War Admiral,” Dunn said.

“Having this facility built has been so exciting for my husband and I -- from groundbreaking day to today’s grand opening,” said Ellie Chidester of Hidden Valley Farm. “To tell you the truth, we are overwhelmed by it all. It is something that we have dreamed about for the past 10 years.”

The secretary noted that, just as the equestrian facilities are an integral point of Ridley Creek State Park, horseback riding and equestrian trails are engrained in both state park and state forest public use across the state.

“DCNR’s 2.2 million acres of state forestland have almost unlimited opportunities for horseback riding, which has become a rapidly growing activity,” Dunn said. “In addition to 1.9 million acres available for cross-country riding, 12 state forests maintain over 3,000 miles of shared-use trails

that can be explored on horseback, and more than 30 state parks have designated horseback riding areas.”

ADA accessible, the new DCNR-designed facility can accommodate Girl Scout and Boy Scout gatherings; programs for inner-city groups; and a variety of horse training and instruction. The arena was built by King Construction at a cost of \$600,000.

Details on Ridley Creek and Pennsylvania’s other 119 state parks can be found at www.dcnr.state.pa.us (select “Find a State Park.”)

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