



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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DCNR Secretary Joins in Celebration of 570-acre Addition to Bald Eagle State Forest

Centre Hall, Centre County, PA - Department of Conservation and Natural Resources Secretary Cindy Adams Dunn today joined Bureau of Forestry and ClearWater Conservancy officials in applauding acquisition of a 570-acre tract that expands Bald Eagle State Forest to more than 197,000 acres.

“This invaluable addition to the state forest system comes at a time when more and more people are being drawn to these woodlands by a variety of interests and activities,” Dunn said, speaking on the Centre County site popularly known as the Decker Tract.

Located just outside the borough of Centre Hall, the new state forestland is key to watershed protection and increased recreational access, and benefits all Bald Eagle State Forest visitors, the secretary said.

“Conservation of this land will improve protection of water quality within the Penns Creek watershed and protect habitat for several species of concern,” Dunn said. “It is a very diverse property ranging from highly productive soils with excellent growth potential in the lower slopes to poor quality stands at the highest elevations. Farm fields in the lower part of the property may be planted with trees or kept as wildlife openings.”

DCNR’s Bureau of Forestry worked with ClearWater Conservancy to place a sales option on the property and then transfer the option to DCNR when acquisition funding was available. Finalized May 14, the \$1.71 million sale, including a variety of buildings, was financed through the bureau’s Oil and Gas Fund.

“This is a great acquisition for the ClearWater Conservancy, the Bureau of Forestry and the Decker family,” Dunn said. “It is only fitting that future plans for this tract call for an extension of the Ray Decker Trail with the state forest’s Greens Valley Tract and the James Cleveland Memorial Trail.

“District Forester Amy Griffith also tells me this land will provide recreational access for the public to state forest land directly from Route 192 for hiking, hunting, mountain biking, and horseback riding. A trailhead parking lot also is planned.”

Now part of Bald Eagle’s Green Valley block, the Decker property at 2823 Lower Brush Valley Road is accessible from Route 192, just east of Centre Hall.

“ClearWater is excited to be actively involved in the conservation of the Decker property due to three essential interlocking pieces of the project,” said Clearwater Conservancy Land Conservation Manager Kevin Abbey. “Land: the property fits ‘hand-in-glove’ with Bald Eagle’s Greens Valley tract, providing convenient access to the public directly from Route for the first time. Stewardship: the state forest team has the passionate commitment and track record to care for the abundant natural resources within the Decker property;

“And, finally, family: the Decker family can turn over ownership and management of the land to Bald Eagle State Forest with confidence and trust, knowing they still can come back to enjoy the land, and that the family tradition of open hunting access, so important to their family, will continue.”

Details on Bald Eagle and Pennsylvania’s other 19 state forest districts can be found at www.dcnr.state.pa.us (select “Forestry” at upper right).

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