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## **DCNR Plans Final Public Meeting, Extends Public Comment Period on Draft State Forest Management Plan**

**Harrisburg, PA** – The Conservation & Natural Resources Advisory Council will sponsor the last of 12 statewide meetings held by the state Bureau of Forestry to seek continued public input on changes to its master management plan charting the course of Pennsylvania’s state forests for future generations.

The public session will be held 1 p.m. and 3 p.m. Wednesday, Nov. 18, in Room 105 of the Rachel Carson State Office Building, 400 Market St., Harrisburg. An effort will be made to hear all relevant comment, organizers said.

“The council is proud to host the final session in a series of public meetings that are so important in charting the future path of our state forest system,” said Conservation & Natural Resources Advisory Council Chairman L. Richard Sayles. “CNRAC has an extensive history of hosting listening sessions where citizens are asked to comment on Department of Conservation and Natural Resources plans, as well as working with Bureau of Forestry and other DCNR officials on protection and proper use of our state forests and state parks.

“To maximize long-term health, sustainability and economic use of Penn’s Woods for future generations, the council extends an open invitation to attend this presentation of the bureau’s State Forest Resource Management Plan, review it, and make public comment.”

Beginning Oct. 6, in the Wilkes-Barre/Scranton area, the bureau scheduled 12 public meetings across the state to seek comment on revisions to its forest management plan. The meetings specifically focus on proposed plan revisions. The plan can be found at <http://www.dcnr.state.pa.us/forestry/stateforestmanagement/sfrmp/2015sfrmp/index.htm>.

Buoyed by public interest and comment on the plan, and to maximize public feedback, DCNR Secretary Cindy Adams Dunn today announced the cut-off date for written public comment has been extended from Nov. 30 to Jan. 31, 2016.

“Either by written comment, or speaking next Wednesday, I invite all our state forest visitors to learn more about the woodlands they know and love,” Dunn said. “Public participation is crucial for the understanding of proposed updates, and these opportunities are in line with the bureau’s ongoing commitment to continuously interact with the public on state forest management.

“Gifford Pinchot defined conservation as ‘wise use of the earth and its resources for the lasting good of men,’ and that tenet is embodied in this plan.”

The secretary noted the state’s wealth of forestland provides an abundance of benefits to Pennsylvanians, including wildlife and aesthetic beauty, vital timber products, water purification, valuable revenue from gas extraction from existing leases, and a variety of healthful recreational

opportunities. Successfully balancing various forest uses, resources, and values requires thoughtful and deliberate measures, she said, which, since 1955, have shaped State Forest Resource Management Plans (SFRMPs) guiding both management and communication of its principles and goals to the public.

The latest management plan provides a broad framework from which the bureau can develop future district-level plans focusing on local resources and values, and incorporating increased public input.

The 2015 SFRMP also provides points of emphasis for future management, such as climate change, conservation of wild character, prescribed fire, lakes, river islands, cultural resources, and communication via social media and interpretative opportunities. Also, the latest plan has been stream-lined to make it more useable and accessible -- for both for staff reference and public consumption.

Written comments will be accepted until Jan. 31, 2016. Interested parties may submit comments at [StateForestPlan2015@pa.gov](mailto:StateForestPlan2015@pa.gov); at the final Nov. 18 public meeting; or by mail at: Bureau of Forestry Planning Section, P.O. Box 8552, Harrisburg PA 17105-8552. There is also a web-based survey, available at the above website that is a convenient way to provide feedback on the plan.

Originally established in 1995 by the same legislation creating DCNR, the Conservation & Natural Resources Advisory Council (CNRAC) is governed by a legislative charge to serve as the foremost source of quality advice to the department in sustaining the natural environment for all Pennsylvanians to enjoy and appreciate. Focus of the council is on the conservation and stewardship of Pennsylvania's natural resources, and there is no other entity broadly charged with providing citizen perspectives on issues affecting all DCNR-managed lands.

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