



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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## **State Park First Day Hikes Offering Invigorating Start to New Year**

**Harrisburg, PA** – To promote a healthy start to the new year, the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources will sponsor free, guided hikes in 23 state parks on New Year's Day as part of America's State Parks First Day Hikes initiative in all 50 states.

“For the fifth consecutive year, First Day Hikes offer a great cure for cabin fever and a chance to burn off those extra holiday calories, and what better way to welcome the new year than with an invigorating walk or hike in one of our beautiful state parks?” said DCNR Secretary Cindy Adams Dunn. “We again are excited to showcase the beauty of our state parks while joining in hosting these hikes as part of a national effort to get people outdoors and into parks.”

Organized by the National Association of State Park Directors, the nationwide, New Year's Day hikes originated more than 20 years ago in Milton, Mass. The program was launched to promote both healthy lifestyles throughout the year and year-round recreation at state parks. State involvement has grown to the point where, for the first time in 2012, all 50 state park systems joined together to sponsor First Day Hikes.

“Last year, we hosted more than 1,200 people who hiked more than 2,881 miles in our state parks across Pennsylvania,” Dunn said. “The ‘Welcome Mat’ is out at our state parks. Whether you're staying close to home or traveling, join us New Year's Day!”

The following Pennsylvania state parks are participating during daylight hours Jan. 1, 2016: Bald Eagle, Black Moshannon, Caledonia, Canoe Creek, Delaware Canal, French Creek, Gifford Pinchot, Greenwood Furnace, Hills Creek, Jacobsburg Environmental Education Center, Jennings Environmental Education Center, Kings Gap Environmental Education Center, Lackawanna, Little Buffalo, Marsh Creek, Moraine, Nescopeck, Nolde Forest Environmental Education Center, Parker Dam, Prince Gallitzin, Pymatuning, Raccoon Creek and Sinnemahoning.

Presque Isle State Park will offer a New Year's Eve or “Last Night” hike for those who wish to ring in the new year while hiking. This 3-mile easy hike begins at 11 p.m. Thursday, Dec. 31, and will end around 1 a.m. Friday, Jan. 1.

“With this selection we hope to draw both novices and trail-hardened veterans alike into our state parks in what has become an annual salute to healthy exercise and the winter beauty and serenity of our 120 state parks,” Dunn said. “Weather will dictate activities at our state parks on Jan. 1, but different hikes will match different abilities. The accent is on enjoyment.”

Hikers are invited to share their experience on social media using #FirstDayHike and #OutdoorsinPA.

Pennsylvania State Park staff and volunteers are leading the hikes, which are usually about one or two miles, but can be longer depending on the park and its terrain. Additional details can be found at [www.dcnr.state.pa.us](http://www.dcnr.state.pa.us).

Click on State Parks under “Quick Links,” then select “Events Calendar” and the date. For information on Pennsylvania’s 120 state parks, click on “Find a Park.”

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