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## **DCNR Names New Director of the Bureau of State Parks; Appointee John Hallas Served as Assistant Director the Past Three Years**

**HARRISBURG, PA** - Department of Conservation and Natural Resources Secretary Cindy Adams Dunn today announced Bureau of State Parks Assistant Director John Hallas has been named to head an award-winning state park system that oversees 120 parks across Pennsylvania.

Hallas, who has served as assistant bureau director the past three years, will oversee park facilities totaling almost 300,000 acres.

“After joining the DCNR team in 2000, John was assigned key administrative posts at several large and demanding state parks across the state, all the time displaying the intelligence, enthusiasm and energy needed to oversee the Bureau of State Parks,” Dunn said. “A system’s already excellent record of resource management, visitor satisfaction, and varied recreation and education can only get even better under John’s leadership.”

A native of Homestead, Allegheny County, Hallas takes over the reins of a park system that is nationally recognized as one of the best in the nation. In 2009 it received the National Gold Medal Award for Excellence in Park and Recreation Management, awarded by the American Academy for Park and Recreation Administration, in partnership with the National Recreation and Park Association.

“This appointment and the opportunity to continue serving Pennsylvania’s state parks leaves me deeply honored,” Hallas said. “The privilege of working with an exemplary and deeply committed team of professionals to conserve our natural and cultural heritage in the commonwealth always has been at the center of my passion for my career.

“With this new stewardship role, I enthusiastically look forward to leading the bureau’s efforts in providing the highest quality outdoor recreation, interpretation and education experiences on our treasured state parklands.”

Hallas, 48, succeeds David L. Kemmerer, who retired at the end of the year after working 42 years with the bureau.

Joining the DCNR team in 2000 as a park manager trainee, Hallas served at various parks throughout his career. In 2001, he was promoted to assistant park manager at Hickory Run State Park Complex, based in Luzerne County, and was promoted again in 2003 to park manager at Tobyhanna State Park Complex, headquartered in Monroe County. Beginning in

2004, he served six years managing Ohio State Park, Fayette County, followed by three years as regional manager of State Park Region Two, based in Butler County. In January 2013, he was appointed to his most recent assistant director post, working out of the bureau's Harrisburg headquarters.

A graduate of the University of Pittsburgh, Hallas holds bachelor degrees in natural science, with a concentration in geology, and anthropology, with a concentration in archeology.

A veteran of eight years service with the U.S. Army, Hallas served two years in the reserves in a Combat Engineers unit, followed by six years of active duty, serving in a Field Artillery unit at Fort Bragg, N.C., and an Infantry unit at Schofield Barracks, Hawaii. He was honorably discharged in 1993 with the rank of Sergeant.

Married and the father of two daughters, Hallas resides with his family in Camp Hill.

Known for their beauty and unique natural resources they protect, the 120 state parks Hallas will oversee provide unique opportunities for outdoor recreation of all types -- hunting, fishing, swimming, picnicking, kayaking, biking, hiking, wildlife watching -- as well as environmental education. With their statewide distribution of one within 25 miles of every Pennsylvanian, state parks are economic engines for local communities, generating almost a billion dollars in economic activity each year.

For more information on Pennsylvania's state parks call 1-888-PA-PARKS, or visit the DCNR website at [www.dcnr.pa.gov](http://www.dcnr.pa.gov) and select "Find a Park."

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