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## **Standing Stone Trail in Central Pennsylvania Named 2016 Trail of the Year**

**Harrisburg, PA** – Department of Conservation and Natural Resources Secretary Cindy Adams Dunn today announced the Standing Stone Trail, linking two state parks and three counties in central Pennsylvania, had been named the state's 2016 Trail of the Year.

"In testament to the vast walking and hiking opportunities Pennsylvania offers, almost two dozen trails were nominated during the third year of this very special designation," Dunn said. "Standing Stone was singled out for 2016 because of its quality, benefits to the region, tremendous dedicated volunteer network and a multitude of strong partnerships."

The trail designation is coordinated by the DCNR's Pennsylvania Trails Advisory Committee to elevate public awareness of the thousands of miles of trails available for public enjoyment in Pennsylvania. In honor of the achievement, the committee and DCNR will work to produce a poster and distribute it statewide.

"The Standing Stone Trail is not unlike a necklace, linking so many natural jewels in that section of the state," said Dunn, an avid hiker. "Two state parks, two state forests, two natural areas, a National Historical district, and four state game land tracts -- they're all there and easily reachable."

Stretching 84 miles through Fulton, Huntingdon and Mifflin counties, the trail traverses central Pennsylvania ridges and valleys from Cowans Gap State Park in the south, to Rothrock State Forest's Detweiler Natural Area and the Mid State Trail in the north.

"As president of the Standing Stone Trail Club, it is my pleasure to express our club's appreciation to the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources for bestowing this distinction upon the Standing Stone Trail," said Standing Stone Trail Club President James Garthe. "Our club membership is small, yet in the three decades since the trail's inception, our diligent members have carved out nearly 84 miles of premier footpath. I've been involved with numerous organizations over the years, yet I have never witnessed such a vibrant, energetic and fun-loving group of hikers and outdoors enthusiasts who, for some inexplicable reason, crave heavy duty trail work."

Standing Stone Trail is part of the 1,600-mile Great Eastern Trail, which starts at Flagg Mountain, Ala., extends to the Finger Lakes Trail in New York. More than 80 percent of the trail traverses state owned forest and Pa. Game Commission game lands. There is one Adirondack-style shelter on the trail, and it links to Greenwood Furnace State Park, Huntingdon County, and passes through designated Trail Towns of Three Springs and Mapleton.

For more information on the Standing Stone Trail, visit [www.standingstonetrail.org](http://www.standingstonetrail.org). For more information about the designation, visit [www.explorePAtrails.com](http://www.explorePAtrails.com) and choose the 2016 Trail of the Year slide. Featured on the site are almost 500 trails covering more than 11,000 miles in Pennsylvania.

The Pennsylvania Trails Advisory Committee includes different types of trail users, builders and advocates, and people with disabilities.

The committee's responsibilities are to advise DCNR on the use of trail funding in Pennsylvania; review and rank trail project applications; and present an annual report to the secretary on trail activities.

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