



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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DCNR Secretary Joining Paddlers in Observing Pa. Rivers Month, Honoring Susquehanna North Branch as River of the Year

Harrisburg, PA - Department of Conservation and Natural Resources Secretary Cindy Adams Dunn will join hundreds of Susquehanna River supporters Saturday as they paddle more than 45 miles in a salute to Pa. Rivers Month and the waterway's designation as 2016 River of the Year.

Sponsored by the Susquehanna Greenway Partnership, the three-day Lower North Branch Susquehanna Sojourn will take canoeists, kayakers and other paddlers from Shickshinny, Luzerne County, to Danville, Montour County. Saturday's session is within Columbia County, beginning at Test Track Park, Berwick, and ending at Indian Head Campground, Bloomsburg.

"I could think of no better way to observe Pa. Rivers Month than to spend a day on the free-flowing Susquehanna River North Branch, a waterway steeped in beauty and recreational and historical prominence," Dunn said. "Shaping countless community lifestyles in the past while emerging as a recreational treasure of the future, this 2016 River of the Year highlights how Pennsylvania is blessed with a wealth of rivers and streams, and a core of dedicated folks who fight to protect them."

Dunn commended the Susquehanna Greenway Partnership and Endless Mountains Heritage Region for their work in earning the North Branch the 2016 River of the Year title. They, like other watershed groups across the state, have worked to plan a variety of annual paddling sojourns, riverside events and educational efforts to gain recognition for more than a dozen waterways across Pennsylvania.

"Through the North Branch and other sojourns, public awareness of a waterway's value is heightened," said Dunn. "There is a vital connection among the rivers and streams and area residents and visitors, and these sojourns and other activities planned by river advocates can only strengthen those bonds."

In support of that goal, Governor Tom Wolf has proclaimed June as Rivers Month in Pennsylvania, the secretary noted.

Highlighting the recreational and economic value of waterways, upcoming sojourns include:

June 18-25, Delaware River Sojourn: Find Your River: Celebrating 100 Years of the National Park; June 18 – 19, French Creek Summer Solstice Sojourn; June 19 – Aug. 28, First Waves on Pittsburgh waterways; June 25- 29, Lehigh River Sojourn, a 20th anniversary salute to the Lehigh River; July 15-16, Philadelphia Community River Day, River Performance Project; July 19-22, Outdoor Stew at Erie's Presque Isle State Park; July 21, Kids Paddle on the Schuylkill River, Phoenixville area; and Sept. 30-Oct. 2, Ohiopyle Over the Falls Festival at Ohiopyle State Park, Fayette County.

Complete listings of future sojourn details, key contacts and other information can be found at <http://pawatersheds.org/on-the-water/2016-sojourns/>.

Sojourn programs are coordinated by the Pa. Organization of Waterways and Rivers (POWR) in partnership with DCNR, as well as dozens of local organizations.

Statewide annual paddling events encompass more than 500 river miles, span more than 50 on-the-water days, and engage more than 4,000 participants.

Since 1983, a state River of the Year has been featured on posters sent to watershed organizations, local municipalities and interested individuals throughout the state to encourage a statewide focus on Pennsylvania's waterways.

A 15-mile stretch of the 2016 River of the Year flows from New York into Pennsylvania's Northern Tier, and continues south 166 miles to join the river's West Branch at Shikellamy State Park in Northumberland County. The Susquehanna River North Branch is a prominent regional feature, running through Susquehanna, Bradford, Wyoming, Lackawanna, Luzerne, Columbia, Montour, and Northumberland counties.

To learn more about the River of the Year program, other nominated waterways and past winners, visit www.pariveroftheyear.org. To learn more about DCNR's Rivers Program, visit www.dcnr.state.pa.us (click on "Conserve," then "Waterways").

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