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DCNR Secretary, Others Dedicate Former Lackawanna State Forest District in Honor of Gifford Pinchot

Thornhurst, Lackawanna County, PA - Department of Conservation and Natural Resources Secretary Cindy Adams Dunn today joined Bureau of Forestry officials and others in formally dedicating the Pinchot State Forest District, renamed in honor of Gifford Pinchot, conservation pioneer and creator of forestry practices that continue to shape and benefit Pennsylvania's state forests to this day.

"It is so fitting that this state forest district now bears the name of a man who introduced so many innovative forestry practices to a nation when it desperately needed sound conservation guidance," said Dunn. "Distinguished forest management is synonymous with Pennsylvania, and Gifford Pinchot laid the groundwork for what we now have."

Addressing a gathering at the Pinchot Trail trailhead off Bear Lake Road, not far from the village of Thornhurst, the secretary noted DCNR actually renamed the Lackawanna State Forest District on Aug. 11, 2015, to mark the forestry icon's birth date.

"That move marked the 150th anniversary of the conservation pioneer's birth and saluted his creation of forestry practices that continue to shape and benefit Pennsylvania's state forests to this day," Dunn said. "Pennsylvania is blessed with 20 state forest districts and this one -- bearing a new name in the northeast area of the state personifies Gifford Pinchot's crusade for healthy, sustainable woodlands, to be enjoyed and appreciated by all."

Noting Pinchot district has grown from an initial 2,854 acres in 1902 to 46,278 acres today, Dunn said:

"With this renaming, we not only commemorate Pinchot's conservation ethic, we also establish a new and separate identity for a district that should be recognized for its significant increases in state forestland in recent years."

State Forester Dan Devlin pointed out the district encompasses all that its namesake held dear: extensive forestlands reaching into Lackawanna, Luzerne, Wyoming, Susquehanna and Wayne counties; easily accessible to the public; and protecting two major watersheds – the Lackawanna and Susquehanna.

"The conservation legacy of Gifford Pinchot can't be overstated," Devlin Said. "He helped to shape forestry and land management practices at the national and state level. Naming this state forest district in his honor is a tribute to his lasting impact on conservation."

Formerly known as Lackawanna State Forest District, the Pinchot State Forest District began in 1902 when 2,854 acres were purchased in Lackawanna County. Some 100 years later, state forest acreage had increased to almost 11,000 acres, and two major state forest tracts had been created in Lackawanna and Luzerne counties.

In the 1895, Pinchot accepted appointment as forester in the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and helped lead the national campaign for the conservation and rational use of the nation's forests. In 1905 Pinchot became head of the new United States Forest Service.

Working with President Theodore Roosevelt, he played a major role in shaping American conservation policy and significantly expanding the nation's western forest reserves. These were tremendous accomplishments, but Pinchot realized early on that the nation needed "American foresters trained by Americans in American ways for the work ahead in American forests."

After leaving the U.S. Forest Service in 1910, Pinchot enjoyed a long and productive career that included two years as the Pennsylvania Commissioner of Forestry and two terms as governor of Pennsylvania. In the end, however, it was for his work in forestry that Pinchot hoped to be remembered. "I have ... been a governor every now and then," Pinchot wrote in his memoirs, "but I am a forester all the time."

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