



DCNR Finalizes ATV Trail Policy

By DCNR

Harrisburg, PA -- The Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) today outlined final changes to its internal policy on ATV trails on state forest lands to respond to increasing demands for riding opportunities, local and county government interest in expanding recreational tourism, and legislative action.

The announcement was made at the meeting of the Conservation and Natural Resources Advisory Council this week, where the proposed changes were first introduced for public comment.

"This policy provides guidance to DCNR when acquiring, developing and managing lands for ATV use," DCNR Secretary Cindy Adams Dunn said. "The major change will allow the careful consideration of strategic new riding opportunities on state forest lands to connect regional trail systems."

Where there was a moratorium on new trail development in the previous policy, the revisions now authorize DCNR to explore the potential for new ATV trails and connectors on state forest lands. Other changes include: Allowing the Secretary to designate portions of the state forest road system as temporary, seasonal or permanent ATV trails.

Allowing the department to request public comment for projects that have broader impacts on the community/region.

Supporting acquisition of lands specifically for motorized recreation use.

DCNR received 857 comments on the proposed changes. Responses to those comments (PDF) can be found on the DCNR website.

The policy is effective immediately. Implementation will be guided by a set of overarching ATV Management Principles (PDF) developed by the DCNR Bureau of Forestry.

"With the principles guiding the work, the department will be doing an assessment of potential new riding opportunities that could benefit communities and businesses, and provide continuity to regional trail systems while balancing protection of the natural resource and other values and recreational uses of the public lands," Dunn said.

A focus of the assessment will be the northcentral part of the state due to the prevalence of state forest lands, a relatively high number of township roads open to ATV use, and proximity to other DCNR ATV trail systems.

Pennsylvania currently has more than 260 miles of ATV trails in state forests.

DCNR plays a multi-faceted role with ATVs: registering their use statewide through a cooperative agreement with PennDOT; managing registration-generated fees for maintenance, enhancement, and enforcement of trail opportunities on state forest lands; and distributing grants to provide new recreational ATV trails and facilities.

Pennsylvania has around 285,000 registered ATVs. On state forest lands, ATV riding is allowed only on designated trails.

The Conservation and Natural Resources Advisory Council released a report in January 2019 to provide recommendations on how DCNR and others could enhance motorized recreation in Pennsylvania (PDF).

The ATV Trail Development and Management Policy (PDF) is on the DCNR website, as is more information about ATV riding in state forests.

EPA Qualified Outdoor Wood Furnaces

A new generation of clean

When John Hanley built his 4,000 square foot log home in a small Ohio township 17 years ago, he chose propane for heat and domestic hot water because it was an economical choice.

But, when propane prices increased and his annual fuel bill reached \$6000, he dropped the thermostat to 63°F to manage his costs. His wife, however, suffered with severe arthritis and lowering the ambient temperature caused her discomfort. He began looking for a more affordable home heating solution. His research led him to outdoor wood furnaces.

Today's outdoor wood furnaces, also called wood boilers or wood-fired hydronic heaters are a clean, cost-effective alternative to the safety, mess and health concerns of indoor wood burning, while also providing a ready supply of domestic hot water.

The outdoor furnace heats water in an insulated water jacket surrounding the firebox. The heated water circulates through underground pipes to a forced-air furnace, boiler or radiant floor heating system that distributes even, adjustable and comfortable heat.

Hanley knew some townships placed restrictions on the installation of outdoor wood furnaces to address smoke emission issues. It was important for him to set a good example in his own community

by choosing a unit that was EPA qualified. Central Boiler, an American-owned company in business since 1984, helped create the EPA Hydronic Heater Program. Their E-Classic was the first outdoor wood furnace meeting Phase 2 of the program.

Central Boiler's new E-Classic models utilize a three-stage gasification technology and a self-regulating thermostatically controlled system that burns wood so completely that combustion efficiencies approach 100%. This means the owner burns less wood, with very little residual ash and virtually no smoke. By minimizing the emissions, this cleaner generation of outdoor furnaces is the optimum choice for people concerned with the environment.

Hanley chose an E-Classic to heat a 2,500 square foot barn/garage in addition to his home and hot water. Now, Hanley's wife keeps the ambient house temperature at 76°F. "She's happy and she has endless hot water for her whirlpool bath," he says.

Company reliability was also a factor in his choice. "Central Boiler stands behind their products and this sort of warranty service is really important to me."

Finally, because he cuts his own wood, he has eliminated his home heating costs enabling him to redirect the money saved to their children's university educations.

"This furnace is the way to go. You can't beat it," says Hanley.



In 2002, concerns regarding smoke emissions from outdoor wood furnaces prompted a number of manufacturers to form the Outdoor Furnace Manufacturers Caucus and ultimately partner voluntarily with the EPA to create a program that gave homeowners choices for cleaner, more efficient models. EPA states that outdoor hydronic heaters that are EPA Phase 2 program qualified are 90% cleaner than unqualified units.



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Hunting Safety Tips

Safety Tips for this Hunting Season

By Rep. Joe Emrick

BANGOR - As you prepare to head out to our fields and forests, be sure to keep safety in mind. The Pennsylvania Game Commission offers these important tips:

Basic Safety

- Positively identify the target. Be sure you are shooting at legal game and not another hunter. And never shoot at sounds or movement.
- Know your zone of fire and never shoot at game moving between you and someone else.
- Wear the mandated amount of fluorescent orange clothing and use layers of clothing that wick moisture, insulate and block wind or rain to help keep you safe and comfortable.
- Let someone know where you are hunting and when you will return. They should alert authorities if you do not return at the appointed time.
- Carry a basic survival kit and know how to use it.

Firearms Safety

- Handle all firearms as if they're loaded. Never assume they are unloaded and double check to be sure.
- Always point the muzzle in a safe direction and don't put your finger on the trigger until you are ready to shoot.
- Unload and place your firearm on the ground before crossing a fence, log or other obstacle, or climbing a tree.
- Shoot only when a safe and adequate backstop exists. Don't shoot at hard, flat surfaces, water or a target on the horizon.

For more information, visit the Pennsylvania Game Commission website at www.pgc.pa.gov.

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