

DCNR Speeds Up Environmental Review Times, ATV Permitting, and More – Making State Government More Efficient

By DCNR

The Department of Conservation and Natural Resources recently announced significant reductions in processing times across key environmental review areas, demonstrating the Shapiro Administration's commitment to streamlining state government operations for Pennsylvanians in the last two years.

This year, the Bureau of Forestry made notable improvements in processing times:

Environmental Reviews for Rare or Threatened Species: The Pennsylvania Natural Diversity Inventory (PNDI) environmental review applications are now processed in an average of 10 days, a 67 percent reduction from the 30-day average previously. These reviews are crucial for assessing potential impacts on sensitive ecological features before development projects can proceed, ensuring compliance with conservation regulations.

Northcentral Regional ATV Trail Permits: Processing times for Northcentral Regional ATV Trail (NRAT) Connector permits have been reduced to an average of three days, down from 14 days — a nearly 80 percent improvement. The NRAT system has generated \$23.5 million in revenue over its first three years, boosting tourism in the region.

Ginseng Certification: The Ecological Services Division has reduced the processing time for ginseng certifications to one day, down from five days. Ginseng harvesting is highly regulated, with strict seasonal and ecological guidelines to protect the species.

The department is also cataloging and prioritizing transactions that can easily be converted from paper to electronic processes to improve efficiency and better serve the public.

Pennsylvania's Outdoor Recreation Economy Grows to \$19 Billion

By DCNR

Pennsylvania's outdoor recreation industry saw significant growth last year, contributing \$19 billion to the state's economy — a 10 percent increase from 2022 — and representing 2 percent of the Commonwealth's gross domestic product. According to new data from the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis, the industry now supports over 168,000 jobs that provide \$9 billion in wages and salaries to Pennsylvanians, up from 164,000 jobs in 2022.

"My Administration is committed to supporting and growing the outdoor recreation industry, which strengthens local economies, creates jobs, and enhances the quality of life for Pennsylvanians and visitors alike," said Governor Josh Shapiro. "By investing in outdoor recreation, we're not just creating economic opportunity but also celebrating the natural beauty that makes Pennsylvania so unique. We will continue working to make the Commonwealth a national leader, where millions of visitors and residents can go to spend time outside with the people they love."

Since day one, Governor Shapiro has made strategic investments to elevate outdoor recreation, transforming it into a cornerstone of Pennsylvania's economy and communities. These efforts are driving economic growth, fostering entrepreneurial opportunities, and creating jobs across the Commonwealth.



Conservation Tip

By DCNR

The holiday season is here! No matter how you choose to celebrate, everyone can choose sustainability this season.

Wrapping paper, gift bags, tape, and tags often get tossed after their first use. Here are some ways to help make your gift wrapping and gift giving more eco-friendly:

Wrap it up -- Use newspaper, magazines, scrap fabric, reusable bags, or even your child's drawings to wrap gifts. Get creative! String, twine, or yarn can be used to hold everything together. You can find templates to make gift bags, gift boxes, and more out of pretty much anything you have lying around.

Save the scraps -- Save scraps of string, yarn, gift bags, and wrapping paper you receive to use next year. Use small bits of trimmings left over from your Christmas tree or other greenery as accents on your gifts or decor.

Reuse your cards -- Save your holiday cards to be reused or repurposed. Cut the back off a card to use it as a post card or create a custom shaped gift tag. Envelopes are another great source of craft paper for name cards, etc. Some charities also accept donations of used holiday cards.

Look for sustainable options -- Can't let go of your patterned wrapping paper? There are some recyclable and compostable wrapping paper and ribbons available.

Voting Begins for Pennsylvania's 2025 River of the Year

By DCNR

Online voting for Pennsylvania's 2025 River of the Year is open now through January 24, 2025, allowing Pennsylvanians to choose from three nominated waterways: the Delaware River, Youghiogheny River, and Perkiomen Creek.

The River of the Year program, administered by the Pennsylvania Organization for Watersheds and Rivers (POWR) with funding from DCNR, celebrates Pennsylvania's waterways while raising awareness of conservation needs.

The winning river's nominating organization will receive a \$10,000 DCNR grant to fund year-long celebrations, including paddling events and community activities. A commemorative poster will also be created to honor the 2025 River of the Year.

When it comes to housing,



little things shouldn't make a difference.

If you have children and a landlord refuses to rent to you, requires a higher security deposit, limits the use of facilities, or says you can only live in certain areas of a housing complex... that could be discrimination. And housing discrimination is against the law.

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