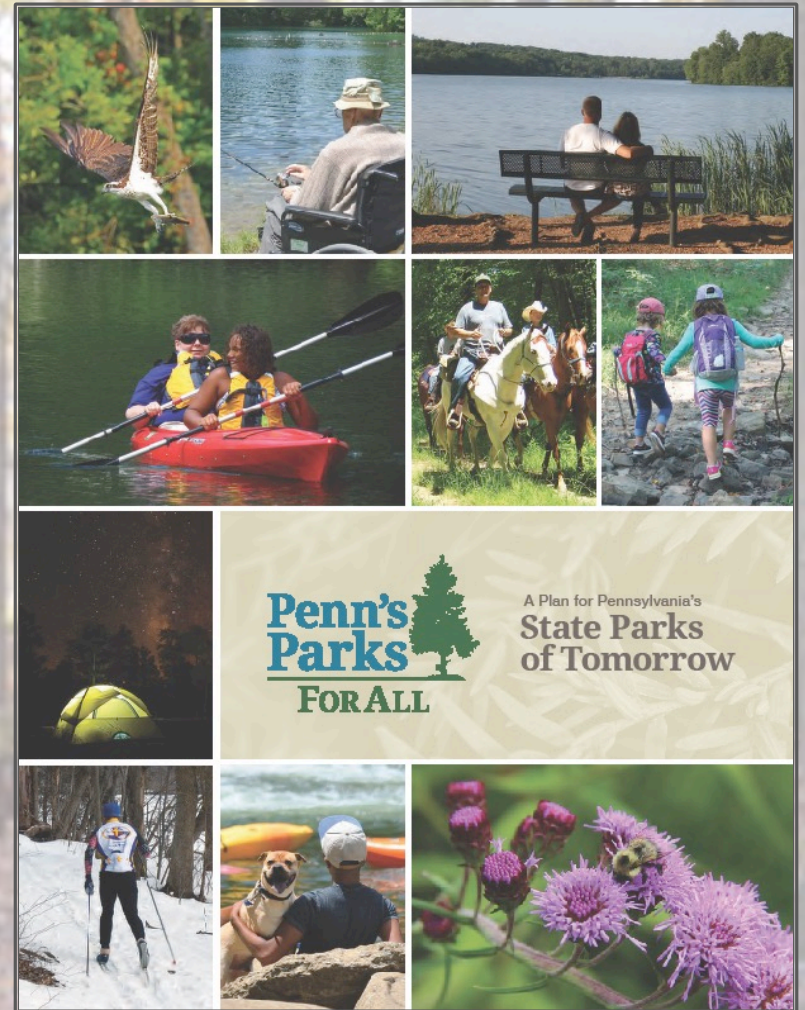




Planning for  
Pennsylvania's  
State Parks  
of Tomorrow

Just released our new strategic plan in July.

The Plan includes 87 strategies that will guide the state park system over the next 25 – 30 years.



It's been nearly 30 years since our last strategic plan.



Our goals for this planning process were twofold:

1. to develop broad strategies for how the Bureau will be managed over the next 25 years.
2. to use the publicity of the planning process and the final plan to help tell our story and raise the visibility of what we do.

## State Parks Staff Surveys

- Regional and park managers gave input in workshops at the beginning of the process to help identify public survey questions
- Separate all-staff online survey with different questions than the public survey

## Public Surveys for State Parks

PSU Department of Recreation, Park and Tourism Management (Andy Mowen)

- Public on-line survey (10,000+ received)
- Hard copy version in parks only (4,000+ received)
- Statewide Telephone Survey – representative sample; user & non-user questions
- On-line survey of young adults and minorities



## State Park Visitor Survey

Park # \_\_\_\_\_

Researchers from Penn State are working with Pennsylvania State Parks to help inform the strategic plan for the next 25 years. Your opinions, perspectives, and experiences as a visitor are important for informing State Parks' future management. Please fill out this survey and return it to a park office/visitor center or drop it in the mail. Your participation in this survey is voluntary and responses are anonymous. We appreciate your input.

How many **different** PA State Parks have you visited in the past 12 months? \_\_\_\_\_ different State Parks

How many **total visits** have you made to any PA State Parks in the past 12 months? \_\_\_\_\_ total visits

Today's date: \_\_\_\_\_

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Disagree nor Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
<b>Should we change the current outdoor recreation opportunities or experiences in State Parks?</b>					
Visitors to State Parks should expect a quiet, natural and/or wild experience	1	2	3	4	5
Some parks should offer more active adventure recreation activities	1	2	3	4	5
State Parks should continue to emphasize healthful outdoor recreation activities	1	2	3	4	5
The natural resources of some State Parks are being impacted by over use	1	2	3	4	5
When impacts of over use are evident at a State Park, participation should be limited	1	2	3	4	5
Travel and camping vacation packages for more programmed vacation experiences should be provided	1	2	3	4	5
Parks should develop additional "splash playgrounds" in some parks in place of swimming pools	1	2	3	4	5

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Disagree nor Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
<b>Should we enhance existing overnight accommodations in our State Parks?</b>					
Parks' modern family cabin or camping areas should include a central all-purpose social hall	1	2	3	4	5
Parks should designate entire campground areas for quiet, wild and remote camping experiences	1	2	3	4	5
Parks should construct larger cabins that can accommodate multiple families at once	1	2	3	4	5
Parks should develop a few more inns in carefully selected locations	1	2	3	4	5
Current State Park accommodations are sufficient	1	2	3	4	5

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Disagree nor Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
<b>How should we pay for our State Parks?</b>					
Parks should convert low-usage parks to primitive and rustic parks with minimal on-site staff and facilities	1	2	3	4	5
Parks should institute a new annual or daily entrance fee or parking permit system	1	2	3	4	5
Parks should increase the existing fees for camping, marinas, cabins, swimming pools, picnic pavilions etc. for all visitors	1	2	3	4	5
The commonwealth should allocate additional funding to reduce the backlog of State Park rehabilitation projects	1	2	3	4	5
Facilities that are expensive to operate and maintain should be closed	1	2	3	4	5
The operation of select park areas should be leased to private businesses or non-profit organizations to reduce costs	1	2	3	4	5



Planning for Pennsylvania's State Parks of Tomorrow



### Today's Parks – at a Glance

Pennsylvania's amazing system of 121 state parks making up nearly 300,000 acres of land across the commonwealth provides a network of green oases for outdoor recreation, spiritual renewal, education, and a great diversity of habitats and wildlife.

The mission of providing outdoor recreation and education includes the caveat that first consideration be given to conserving our natural and cultural values, so care must always be taken to balance the potential impacts of activities and facilities with the resources that exist within a park or a region.



Clear Creek State Park



State parks receive nearly 40 million visits each year: 36.3 million day visits and 1.6 million overnight visits.

**40,000,000**

# History and Natural Wonders of Pennsylvania State Parks

Valley Forge was Pennsylvania's first state park in 1893, which became part of the National Park System in 1976.

Throughout the early 1900s, parks for picnicking, swimming, and camping were carved out of state forests and known as "state forest parks." As the number of outdoor recreation sites continued to grow across the state, a separate Bureau of State Parks was created in 1929.



Caledonia State Forest Park, circa 1922



Hickory Run State Park's Boulder Field is one of seven National Natural Landmarks within the state park system that are federally designated as nationally significant natural areas.



Caledonia State Park is one of several historic iron furnace sites found in state parks.



Washington Crossing Historic Park is one of three state parks designated as National Historic Landmarks.

## PA Administrative Code of 1929

The Bureau of State Parks was officially created in 1929 and was charged with the purpose of "...promoting healthful outdoor recreation and education and making available for such use natural areas of unusual scenic beauty, especially such as provide impressive views, waterfalls, gorges, creeks, caves or other unique and interesting features..."

◀ Cook Forest State Park, which includes an old growth stand of hemlock and white pine, was our first state park acquired to protect a natural landmark (1927). The "Forest Cathedral" in the park was later designated as a National Natural Landmark.

# Categories of Survey Questions

- Outdoor Recreation
- Overnight
- Accommodations
- Paying for State Parks
- Protecting Our Parks
- Modern Conveniences

## Protecting Our Parks

"... the conservation of the natural, scenic, aesthetic, and historical values of the parks should be given first consideration."  
– From the PA State Parks Mission



**Definition of Values**

**Natural values** include well-functioning ecosystems and habitats, with native plants and animals, and clean water, soil and air.

**Scenic** means having pleasant or beautiful views of natural park scenery.

**Aesthetic** refers to all-around beauty, pleasant natural smells and sounds, the feel of sunshine, or the artistic qualities of a park's resources.

**Historical values** include the human history that took place within and around a park, going back as far as the first Native Americans' use of a site.

State parks provide habitat protection for many species of plants and animals.



Land management work, like this prescribed burn to restore native habitat, is coordinated by state park resource managers to keep healthy natural ecosystems in our parks. Hundreds of acres of habitat have been improved statewide.



Restoring and protecting aquatic habitat is an on-going need. In 2016 alone, invasive aquatic plant management projects took place at 25 parks; stream and lakeshore habitat projects were completed at 13 parks; and 30 acres of stream edge were improved with plantings and invasive plant removal.

### State Parks Strategic Land Acquisition Program

The current priority is to purchase land within or along a park boundary to:

1. Protect or enhance existing park resources;
2. acquire an inholding property;
3. or modify the boundary to improve park operations.

### Did you know?

- 23 "State Natural Areas" have been officially designated in parks throughout the state with special protections for those areas.
- 59 recreational lakes within parks have aquatic management plans, and dozens have received treatment for nuisance and invasive aquatic vegetation.
  - More than 250,000 acres (86%) of state park land and water is open to hunting.
  - Resource management plans have been developed for nearly every state park.

### Questions to consider:

- What is the appropriate balance between recreation and conservation of resources?
- Should some parks enlarge their boundaries to better protect park resources?
- Is there a greater role for volunteer groups to do resource conservation activities?
- Are water resources getting enough care and attention?

10 | Penn's Parks For All

## Questions to consider:

- *What is the appropriate balance between conservation and recreation?*
- *Should we invest in new recreational facilities, or are additional improvements needed to existing facilities?*
- *Should we invest in new interpretive programs, or are additional improvements needed to existing programs?*
- *Is the current level of volunteer involvement appropriate, or are additional volunteers needed?*
- *Are there any other issues that need to be addressed?*

## Questions to consider:

- *What recreational activities fit within the state parks' mission and could enhance your state park experience?*
- *What activities will diminish any of these valued resources for future generations?*
- *What actions should be taken if natural resources within a park are being harmed by over use?*

## Questions to consider:

- *Should state parks construct an all-purpose building within selected campgrounds and cabin areas where friends and families can gather?*
- *Are campgrounds getting too noisy for those desiring a quiet, wild camping experience?*
- *Are other changes needed for overnight accommodations or are park users satisfied with the current mix of options?*

## Questions to consider:

- *Have enough improvements been made to camping facilities, or are additional improvements needed?*
- *Should we invest in new interpretive programs, or are additional improvements needed to existing programs?*
- *Is the current level of volunteer involvement appropriate, or are additional volunteers needed?*
- *Are there any other issues that need to be addressed?*

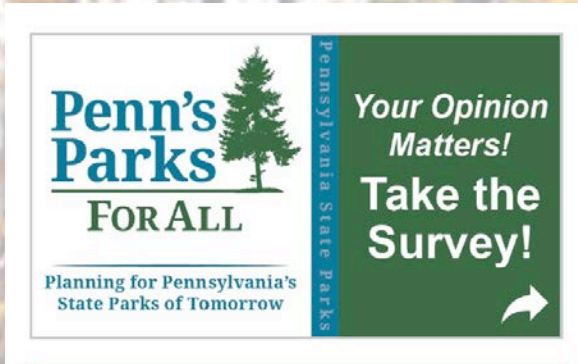
## Questions to consider:

- *What changes should be made if the general fund allocation continues to be less than is needed to properly operate and maintain all 121 state parks?*
- *Should any user fees be raised or should state parks receive more funds from elsewhere?*
- *Should some lower-utilized parks have reduced services and facilities so funds could be used at other parks that receive higher visitation?*



Business card to hand out at park events

Small poster to print out and post throughout the park



**Penn's Parks**  
FOR ALL

Pennsylvania State Parks

Your Opinion Matters!  
Take the Survey!

Planning for Pennsylvania's State Parks of Tomorrow

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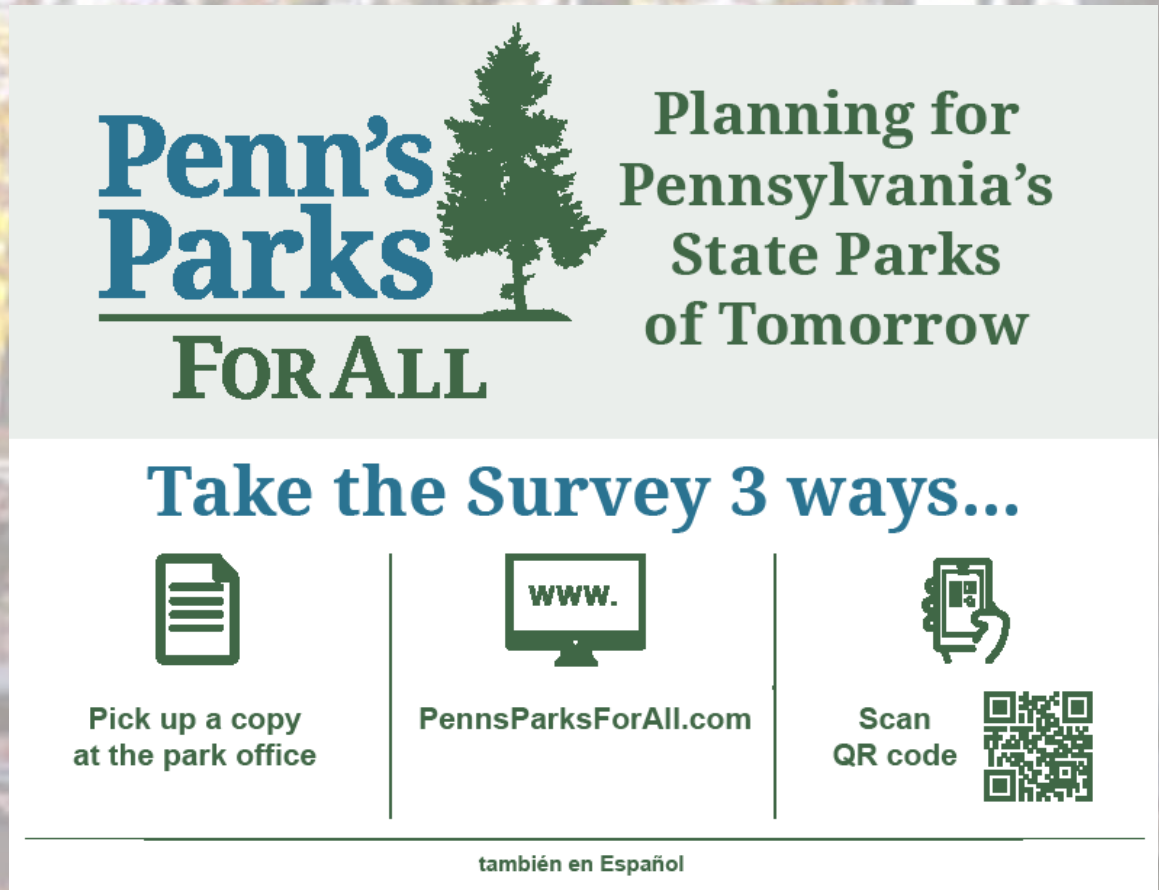


*Tell us what you think!*  
Visit our website:  
[www.PennsParksForAll.com](http://www.PennsParksForAll.com)  
to take a short, online survey.

Survey ends: 10/31/17






  
www.dcnr.pa.gov




**Penn's Parks**  
FOR ALL

Planning for Pennsylvania's State Parks of Tomorrow

**Take the Survey 3 ways...**

 Pick up a copy at the park office	 <a href="http://PennsParksForAll.com">PennsParksForAll.com</a>	 Scan QR code
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también en Español

# Additional Surveys

**2018 Statewide Telephone Survey** – to obtain a representative sample of 1,650 Pennsylvanians; users & non-users

**2018 On-line Minority/Ethnicity Survey** – 1,131 Latinos, Asians, and African Americans – all of varying age groups

# Survey Results

## OUTDOOR RECREATION

- Visitors want healthful outdoor recreation opportunities
- Protect park resources from overuse
- Upgrade the trail system statewide

## OVERNIGHT ACCOMMODATIONS

- Most like current options
- Some seeking quiet, wild, remote camping experiences
- Many want more cabins & full-service hookups
- Need to update some tired/crowded campgrounds

## SERVICES AND FACILITIES

- High satisfaction for current offerings
- More work could be done to improve transportation opportunities from urban areas

## NATURAL & CULTURAL RESOURCES

- Extremely high support for conserving natural and cultural resources – reason for coming
- High value for aquatic and terrestrial habitats

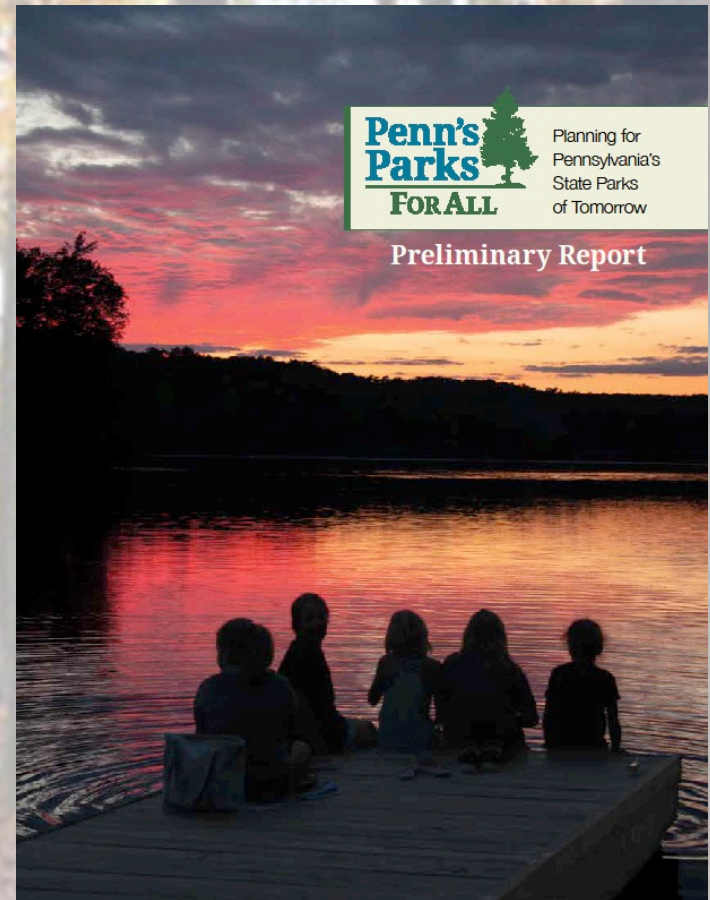
## PAYING FOR PARKS

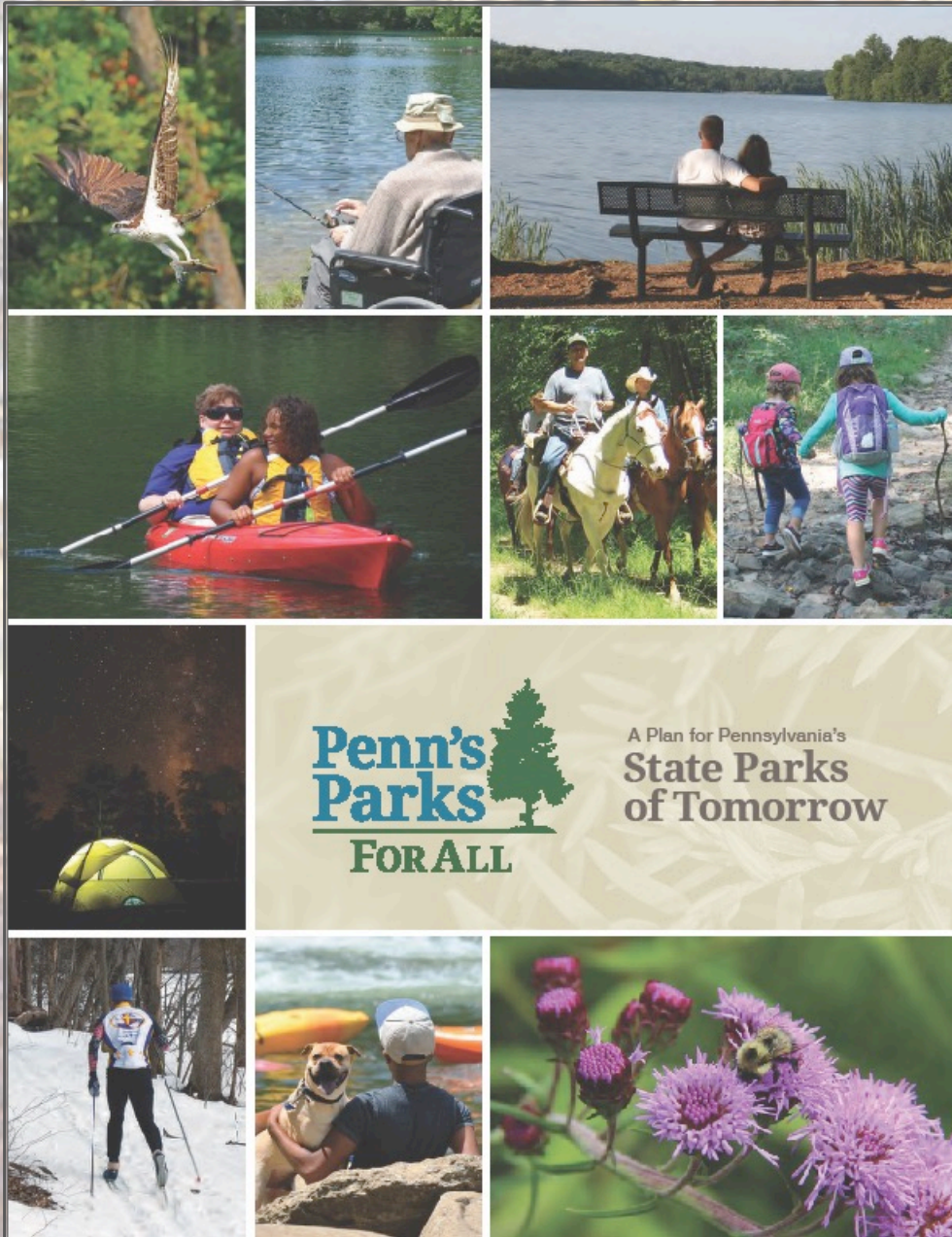
- Want more state gov't support for the \$500 million needed to address maintenance and facility upgrades
- Don't want entrance fee or increase in rental fees

***Preliminary Report*** was available to the public on the State Parks website, with an opportunity to comment on 47 proposed recommendations.

Local presentations and discussions took place in most state parks.

Also held a series of stakeholder group meetings.

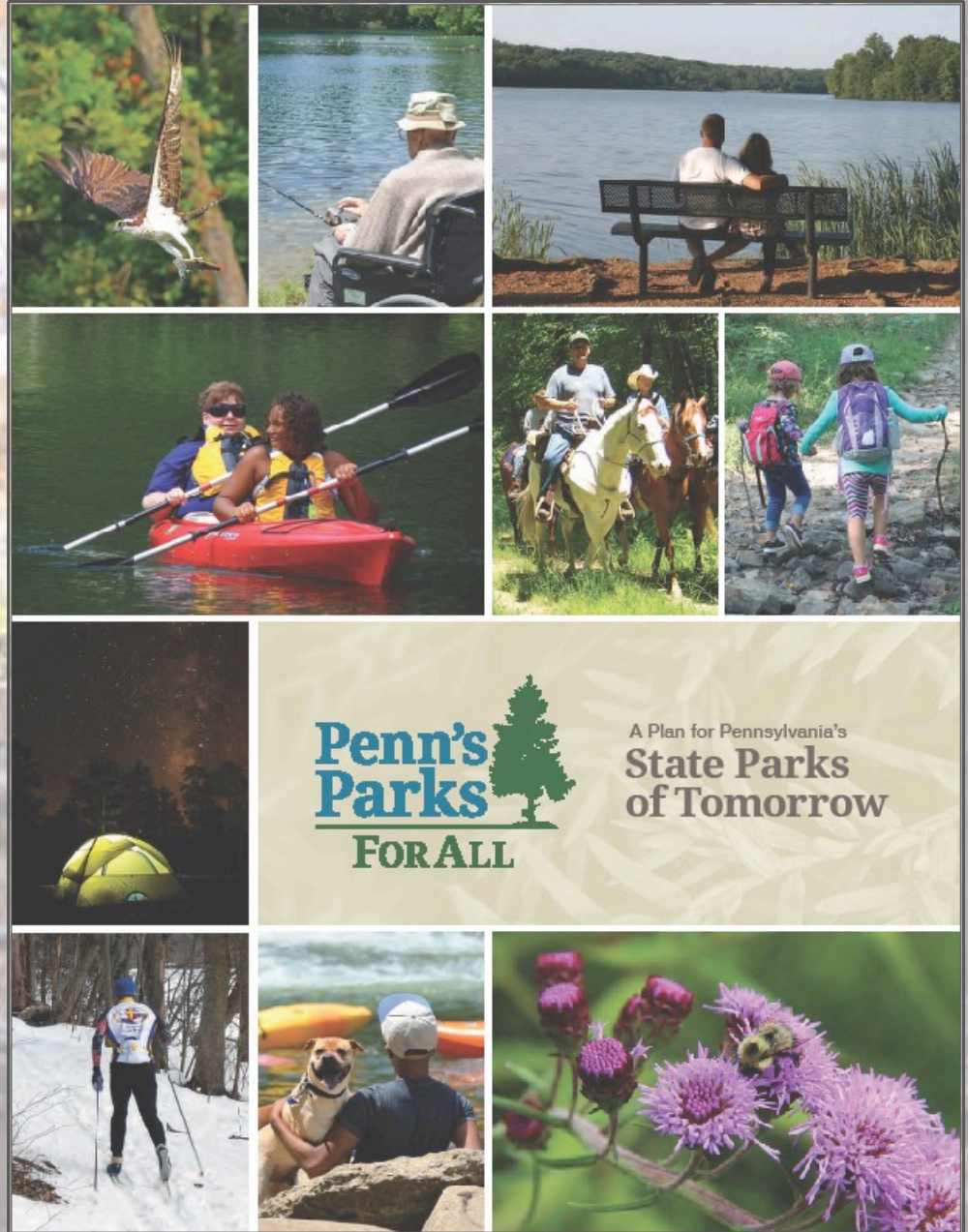




The ***Final Plan*** includes:  
Synopsis of public feedback received on the 47 preliminary recommendations

List of strategies that incorporate national profile issues and challenges:

- diversity, equity, and inclusion
- accessibility
- climate change
- overuse
- sustainable facilities



**Penn's  
Parks**  
FOR ALL

A Plan for Pennsylvania's  
**State Parks  
of Tomorrow**

FEATURED

# Plan for state parks' future holds promise for expanded recreation

By MARCIE SCHELLHAMMER marcie@bradfordera.com Jul 31, 2021



## Pennsylvania launches plan to sustain state parks



Home > Estados Unidos > Philadelphia

## Tom Wolf announced plan to improve Pennsylvania's state parks

"Penn's Parks for All" was developed with "extensive" input from the public

by Jose Espinoza — August 2, 2021

👍 0 👎 0 💬

A bicyclist rides in Point State Park in downtown Pittsburgh, Wednesday, Nov. 18, 2020. (AP Photo/Gene J. Puskar)

by: Kelsey Rogers

Posted: Jul 30, 2021 / 05:42 PM EDT / Updated: Jul 30, 2021 / 05:42 PM EDT

REGIONAL

## State parks: More money needed for maintenance, improvements



JOE NAPSHA | Monday, Aug. 2, 2021 12:01 a.m.

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## PA Launches Effort to Sustain State Parks, Make Them Welcoming to All

By Editor - August 1, 2021



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Governor Tom Wolf visited Pine Grove Furnace State Park in Cumberland County to highlight the importance of outdoor spaces to our well-being during the pandemic and announce a plan for Pennsylvania's state parks of tomorrow.

"Pennsylvanians can be proud that our state park system is among the best in the nation, and our

Constitution guarantees our right to a clean environment, now and in the future," Gov. Wolf said. "The opportunity to enjoy the beauty and recreational opportunities in state parks and forests was critical to our mental and physical health during the pandemic. As we get back

























