

# Pennsylvania Parks and Forests Foundation Seeks Nominations for 2021 Annual Awards

*Pennsylvania Parks and Forests Foundation seeks "COVID-19 Champions". Individuals or groups that made a difference in state parks and forests this year.*

CAMP HILL, PENNSYLVANIA, UNITED STATES, December 8, 2020 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The Pennsylvania Parks and Forests Foundation (PPFF), the only non-profit whose mission is to inspire stewardship of Pennsylvania's state parks and forests is seeking nominations for their 2021 Annual Awards.



Volunteers plant a tree at Canoe Creek State Park.

The foundation plans to distribute 50 awards across the commonwealth to recognize outstanding service, programs, and people to remind everyone of the exemplary work happening in our state parks and forests. The awards are open to individuals of all ages, groups, organizations, businesses or companies. The number of awards pays tribute to the 50th anniversary (May 18th) of the Environmental Rights Amendment added to the Pennsylvania constitution in 1971. The amendment states that: The people have a right to clean air, pure water, and to the preservation of the natural, scenic, historic and esthetic values of the environment. Pennsylvania's public natural resources are the common property of all the people, including generations yet to come. As trustee of these resources, the Commonwealth shall conserve and maintain them for the benefit of all the people.

Pennsylvania Constitution  
Article 1, Section 27

While much of the economy and our personal and business lives stalled as a result of quarantines and physical distancing during the pandemic, it has been universally recognized that outside was (and is) the place we need to go for mental health and physical release. And so the

use of our outdoor spaces exploded during 2020.

Pennsylvania state parks and forests provide a safe space to improve our physical, mental, and emotional health. Our parks and forests also support local economies through visitations, consumer purchases of outdoor recreation equipment, and through projects and services at parks and forests.

The words of the ERA were never more evident than they were during 2020. Pennsylvanians instinctively knew that their right to clean air; pure water; and the natural, scenic, historic and esthetic values of their environment would see them through these difficult times. The Pennsylvania Parks and Forests Foundation plans to celebrate both the anniversary of the ERA and the contributions of the people who made staying healthy during the pandemic possible with the COVID Champions.

Nominations are encouraged for awards to volunteers, Friends Groups, organizations, parks/forests staff members, business owners, medical providers, or elected or appointed officials who:

- Went above and beyond to improve the visitor experience and create a welcoming environment;
- Created or continued an innovative program or project for user comfort, safety, or enjoyment;
- Worked to highlight the ongoing needs of our parks and forests even before the onset of the pandemic and the overwhelming use it brought to our public spaces; or
- Showed unusual leadership or creativity in support of their park or forest, or the outdoors in general.

"Spending time in the outdoors has long been recognized as a means for improving human health," said Marci Mowery, President of the Pennsylvania Parks and Forests Foundation. "With the COVID Champions award program we look to recognize the innovate spirit, the commitment, and the tenacity of staff, volunteers, decision makers, and businesses who saw to it that our parks and forests remained safe and welcoming environments for all users."

"Never has the value of our state parks and state forests shined brighter than during these most difficult times when we see unprecedented numbers seeking the needed solace and escape of the unspoiled outdoors," said Department of Conservation and Natural Resources Secretary Cindy Adams Dunn. "Our facilities never could meet that need without the invaluable services, programs and people recognized in these annual awards. We salute all and all that they do!" Nominations are open until December 31st and can be submitted at

<https://paparksandforests.org/get-involved/2021-annual-awards/>

About the Pennsylvania Parks and Forests Foundation

Founded in 1999, the Pennsylvania Parks and Forests Foundation works with 121 state parks and 2.2 million acres of forest by coordinating volunteers, activities and donations and serving as a

non-profit umbrella to more than 40 chapters. The mission of the foundation is to inspire stewardship of Pennsylvania's state parks and forests. [paparksandforests.org](http://paparksandforests.org) @PaPFF

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