

For Immediate Release:

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## **WALK IN PENN'S WOODS**

The new informal partnership for **Penn's Woods, Working for You**, announces a statewide **Walk in Penn's Woods** on Sunday, October 1<sup>st</sup>, 2017. Rural, urban and suburban woods, state and national forests and parks, municipal watersheds, conserved areas, private lands and industry in the state's 67 counties will hold open houses and guided woods walks showcasing the multiple values and diverse uses of our state's priceless forest resources.

As the fall season arrives this year, the first Sunday in October will feature mentored woods walks across the state, providing entrée to land that is not always open to the public along with easy access to expert forest and wildlife professionals. A Walk in Penn's Woods may also schedule children's activities, showcase management for wildlife or watersheds, exhibit the results of harvesting or planting, demonstrate the results of urban tree cover, showcase riparian buffers or reveal the fascinating innards of a local sawmill.

The partnership coordinating the events includes the Pennsylvania Forestry Association, the Penn State Center for Private Forests, Penn State Natural Resources Extension, the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, The Pennsylvania Forest Stewards, and the Pennsylvania Sustainable Forestry Initiative. These partners, along with a number of additional supporters, are working energetically to fashion a group of diverse, informative, and exciting events to entice individuals, families, friends and neighbors, out into Penn's Woods for an enjoyable experience.

Pennsylvania literally means Penn's Woods. A grant from King Charles II to William Penn in March 1681 established the colony; *Sylvania* is a Latin word that means "forest land." Penn recognized the value of his Pennsylvania forests and, shortly after receiving the grant as payment of debt owed his father, issued his Charter of Rights. In this document he ordered colonists to leave one acre of trees for every five acres of land cleared.

After Penn's death, settlers disregarded his edict and by 1907 had reduced the original forest from 27 million acres to less than nine million. Over the last century, however, Pennsylvania has regained much of its historic forest land, reaching approximately 17 million acres during the last two decades. This is the largest amount of forest to stand in Pennsylvania since it became a state and it includes some of the most intact and bountiful hardwood forest lands in the temperate world.

Penn's Woods is one of the state's prized Crown Jewels. Not only does it provide a spectacular and valuable regenerating timber resource, but it provides incalculable value as a water resource, pollution filter, carbon store, wildlife habitat and biodiversity reserve, urban refuge, and a priceless source of recreational and aesthetic enjoyment. It is also a resource challenged by invasive plants and diseases, climate change, mismanagement, development pressure and legacy issues.

The Partnership for Penn's Woods invites all Pennsylvanians to learn about the many ways that Penn's Woods works for all of us on October 1<sup>st</sup> by participating in one of the mentored walks and events across the state, by downloading additional information, or even by documenting your own learning adventure in our woodlands on their website.

Find more about this October's Walk in Penn's Woods at [www.walkinpennswoods](http://www.walkinpennswoods). We also invite you to participate by volunteering a venue, being a mentor, demonstrating a skill, or showcasing your stewardship. Please contact us at (814) 865-3208 or [abm173@psu.edu](mailto:abm173@psu.edu) for additional information.

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Use website photo

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