



Representatives/Senators:

The Pennsylvania State Camp Association (PSCA) requests that you become familiar with our organization. There are approximately 5,000 state lease camps in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania with an extensive number of members and associates.

The PSCA is dedicated to protecting the rights of state forest leased campsite owners and associates. Camp owners and associates are some of the original stewards of Pennsylvania forests and parks. The PSCA wants to ensure that the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources hears and considers the campsite owners' concerns when developing state forest management policies. PSCA strives to work hand-in-hand with DCNR to resolve or promote issues regarding 'camp life' and the environment. These camps are used seasonally for various outdoor activities and are a major part of the Pennsylvania Wilds program. PSCA is dedicated to protecting the camp heritage that has been enjoyed for generations.

Recently, the PSCA has had 'grave' concerns over the current and past long term practices of DCNR. Your proactive attention to our concerns is vital to the PSCA, residents and visitors to the commonwealth, and for the recreational and economic development of Pennsylvania.

DCNR has continuously strived to rid the commonwealth of the important heritage of the state lease camps, often making us feel like an 'enemy' of the state. On the contrary, State Camp lease owners, members, and guests greatly enhance the local economy in the surrounding lease location's and pay local and county taxes. Of our many concerns with DCNR, the following is just a small example of the harassment we have been dealing with over the years:

- Natural and Wild areas: without any type of legislative approval or notification, DCNR creates these areas and then adds additional regulations for camp owners to abide by, including the prohibition of additions.
- DCNR has continually harassed camp owners for having running water inside the camps. They cite obscure DEP regulations in attempting to enforce this issue. They have advised us to carry our water into the cabin, wash dishes, shower, etc., have the water drain into a bucket, and then take the bucket outside and dump it on the ground. They have advised us that DEP is making them enforce this regulation, but after contacting some of the upper echelon of DEP, they have never pressed this issue with DCNR and are essentially unconcerned about running water into a camp. The pollution factor is virtually zero. Not having running water basically prohibits recreational use, especially concerning females who are more ardent to personal hygiene. Camp visitation is then limited to a few days at most. [Note: PSCA met with some of the heads of DCNR in August of 2011 and was advised the running water and sewage enforcement was not a concern of theirs, however foresters are still issuing notices and harassing camp owners over running water. It should also be noted that gas companies dump hundreds of thousands of gallons of dish soap, (among other unknown substances), in the ground for fracking purposes].
- PSCA organized in 1999 due to DCNR's mandate for all camps to put in specified holding tanks in their outhouses at a cost of \$4,000 - \$6,000 per camp and that they were only following a request from DEP. AGAIN, we found out that DEP knew nothing about this. This was just another ploy to eliminate camp leases. Once a lease is eliminated, DCNR will not replace it. It was also discovered that with or without the newly mandated outhouse vaults, there was

virtually no difference in ground pollution due to the remoteness and limited seasonal use of the camps.

- Gas companies have virtually 'plowed' through the forest to accomplish their drilling goals with little interference from DCNR.
- DCNR has a record of misappropriating funds, i.e.: building multi-million dollar office buildings (Taj Mahals) that are on state land with septic and running water and are not open to the public; creating a ranger program without legislative approval when previously handled by the Pennsylvania State Police without any issues; etc.
- Forced removal of boat docks at the Promised Land state park. The docks have been there for over 50 years. After extensive debate and meetings on this issue, DCNR's final excuse was that the docks were detrimental to some rare endangered Chinese weed.
- DCNR started charging camp owners for water use, stating that they damaged a water line off a lease site and thereafter required maps of water lines. DCNR refused to acknowledge the location of this camp, even when PSCA offered to pay for the damage and any future damage to water lines at camp sites. They even refused to tell us why they were digging near a lease site with a back-hoe in the first place. The result yet another fee for camp owners.
- Recently one of our members had a footbridge wash away during the flooding last year. He stopped in at the Elk state forest DCNR building in Emporium to 'chit-chat' and mentioned his footbridge dilemma. The forester is now forcing him to replace the bridge with a 'public' use bridge instead of a regular footbridge, which will cost him several thousands of dollars to do. The district forester is pushing the issue on this public bridge requirement, but DCNR can put footbridges for public use anywhere they want. Our member is a retired senior citizen and his footbridge across a small stream was his only access to his camp. Now he has to wade through the

water with whatever camp supplies he brings with him. Furthermore, the only people to ever cross this bridge in the past 50 years were he or his family members.

- DCNR deliberately closes roads using the excuse that they do not have the funds to do the repairs, BUT they continually spend millions of dollars on buildings, equipment, and unnecessary personnel.
- State Camp owners/members are the most important major contributor supporting the 'Pa Wilds' program. However, DCNR continues to strive to harass camp owners and their guests thereby preventing the recreational use of state forest lands.
- In recent months, PSCA has surveyed our members to determine what positive actions DCNR has taken to assist or help state camp lease owners. So far, we have completed research dating back to just over 50 years, and we have yet to discover even one thing that DCNR has done for the benefit camp owners.
- PSCA has also interviewed and received information from retired and currently employed DCNR personnel that basically depicts camp owners as an enemy of the state. DCNR has informed their employees that they are not allowed to purchase, own, inherit, or have any financial interest in a state lease camp because it would be a conflict of interest. We have also been advised that a fair number of higher echelon staff are members of certain environmental groups with questionable past practices. Basically, they do not want anyone in the forest unless it's on foot.
- DCNR has rangers chasing ATV users as if they committed a capitol offense. They fail or deliberately ignore the recreational and economic boost that expanded ATV trail systems would bring to the commonwealth. Other states have already instituted these programs with great success. The increase to the already burdening commonwealth budget would be more than notable.

- Lease documents have been changed to reflect only one person as the agent. Any other members with financial interest are no longer listed on the lease. This resulted in the illegal sale of at least 3 camps the PSCA is aware of and required others to incorporate their camp at a considerable expense.
- Why is DCNR wasting millions of dollars on inspecting camps -- vehicles, salaries, hiring unnecessary personnel, fuel, etc.? Why not wait until they receive a complaint on a camp and then handle the complaint?
- PSCA has strived to work hand-in-hand with DCNR but to virtually no avail. We are requesting a meeting with the governors' office to discuss our concerns and also what we believe may be the criminal abuse of power given to a government agency. These agencies are required to work 'for' the people and not against them.
- DCNR and extreme environmental special interests have been wrongly influencing the Game Commission and other agencies for years. One major result of this influence is the nearly total destruction of hunting in Pennsylvania. This is just one reason PSCA supports H.B. 2083.

You can visit our Pennsylvania State Camp Association official Web page at www.pscla.org . The PSCA has been making great strides toward our ever increasing membership for those who own, are members of, or are associates of State Lease Camps.

Martin M. Salinas

President PSCA

{PSCA contact information is located on our web page}