



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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DCNR Secretary Names Centre County Nature Center Green Park Award Winner for 2016

Champion, PA - Department of Conservation and Natural Resources Secretary Cindy Adams Dunn today announced Millbrook Marsh Nature Center in Centre County is the Green Park Award winner for its demonstrated commitment to environmental education, diverse park uses and restoration of a natural environment.

“Millbrook Marsh Nature Center is the embodiment of the Green Park Award, an outstanding community park demonstrating green and sustainable practices,” said Dunn. “In its 16-year existence, the center has emerged as a statewide leader in incorporating green and sustainable practices in all criteria areas, while demonstrating the compatibility of diverse park uses with recreational opportunities and restoration of a natural environment.”

The secretary joined other state and local parks and recreation officials in announcing the award recipient at a luncheon hosted by the Pa. Recreation and Parks Society (PRPS) at Seven Springs Mountain Resort, Champion, Somerset County.

Co-sponsored by DCNR and the PRPS, the award recognizes statewide excellence in a public park community that demonstrates green and sustainable practices. Judges include DCNR staff from the department’s bureaus of Recreation and Conservation and State Parks, the secretary’s office, and PRPS.

Occupying 62 acres at 548 Puddintown Road, College Township, the nature center was established in 1997 through cooperative efforts of the Centre Region Parks & Recreation Authority, Centre Region Council of Governments and the Pennsylvania State University. It is operated by the Centre Region Parks & Recreation Authority.

The award was accepted at today’s luncheon by Ronald J. Woodhead, director of the Centre Region Parks & Recreation Authority, and Melissa Freed, the center’s supervisor.

“The Centre Region Parks & Recreation Authority is honored that the vision, efforts and donations of so many community members and groups will be recognized by this award for Millbrook Marsh Nature Center,” Woodhead said. “We are also thankful that the state Department of Conservation and Natural Resources has assisted by providing valuable guidance and support since the nature center was established in 1997.”

The Millbrook Marsh property includes a 12-acre farmstead and an adjacent 50-acre wetland area. The farmstead consists of a renovated 1850's bank barn and the recently constructed LEED-certified Spring Creek Education Building. The marsh is preserved primarily for wildlife habitat, and boardwalk pathways give visitors a view of the marshland while minimizing disturbance to the ecosystem.

The nature center hosts thousands of visitors every year, and received nearly 13,000 visitors attending organized programs in 2015. Its wetland property contains three high quality streams protected by the marsh, which also helps prevent flooding during storm events. Other marsh areas have been restored to protect water quality and reduce erosion from local urban runoff. The farmstead has rain gardens, swales and permeable trails and parking areas to promote infiltration, and the barn also has rain barrels providing water for native plantings.

In 2015, DCNR presented the Green Park Award to the Delaware River City Corporation and Philadelphia's Parks and Recreation Department for their role in developing Lardner's Point Park, a riverfront improvement project that showcases a rebounding Delaware River to the multitude of visitors drawn to its banks in Philadelphia's Tacony section.

For more information on DCNR's Green and Sustainable Park Initiative, visit <http://www.dcnr.state.pa.us/brc/grants/greening/greeninggrants.aspx>.

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