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## Oak Hall Regional Park Opens with Tobacco Free Grounds

*Boalsburg, Pa.* – Centre Region Parks & Recreation Authority recently added Oak Hall Regional Park to its list of tobacco-free managed properties. During the Oak Hall Regional Park Dedication Ceremonies held on Saturday, May 2<sup>nd</sup>, Jenny Wagner of the North Central Tobacco Control Coalition officially recognized the Authority for protecting park patrons and staff from the dangers of secondhand smoke and presented the organization with a *Young Lungs at Play!* certificate of recognition.

*Young Lungs at Play* is a statewide initiative funded through a grant from the PA Department of Health to help communities create tobacco free parks, playgrounds and recreational areas for children. Compliance with outdoor clean air policies is publicized through free signage to inform visitors of areas where a *Young Lungs at Play* policy exists.

"We want to thank the Centre Region Parks & Recreation for joining the *Young Lungs at Play* program and creating a safe, healthy environment at Oak Hall Regional Park, free of secondhand smoke and tobacco litter," Wagner announced as she addressed the crowd at the Park Dedication Ceremonies. Ron Woodhead, Director of CRPR, and Sue Mascolo, Chair of CRPR, graciously accepted the certificate on behalf of the Board of Directors. "We adopted the program for our other parks and facilities in 2011 and we remain pleased to be advocates for this important program", remarked Mr. Woodhead.

The Surgeon General reports that secondhand smoke is a serious health hazard with no safe level of exposure. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency classifies tobacco smoke as a Class-A carcinogen. Exposure to secondhand smoke is estimated to cause at least 50,000 deaths each year in the United States and more than one million illnesses in children. In addition, cigarette butts are the most littered item in the world and costly to cleanup. Small children and animals are at risk of swallowing, choking, or burning themselves with discarded butts and poisoning themselves with the drug nicotine. Tobacco-free parks provide children with a clean and healthy place to play.

The Pennsylvania Department of Health also reminds citizens about tobacco prevention and cessation services that can help individuals who want to quit smoking. Resources include a toll-free quit line, 1-800-QUIT-NOW. For more information about the *Young Lungs at Play* initiative, visit [www.extension.psu.edu/young-lungs](http://www.extension.psu.edu/young-lungs) or contact Jenny Wagner at [jwagner@coginc.org](mailto:jwagner@coginc.org) or 570-628-6990.

North Central Tobacco Control Coalition (NCTCC) is a cooperative effort of government, non-profits, corporations and individuals dedicated to the elimination of tobacco use in the region which includes Bradford, Centre, Clinton, Columbia, Lycoming, Montour, Northumberland, Potter, Snyder, Sullivan, Tioga and Union counties.



(L to R) Jenny Wagner of the North Central Tobacco Control Coalition displays a *Young Lungs at Play* sign after presenting Director Ron Woodhead and Board Chair Sue Mascolo of the Centre Region Parks & Recreation Authority with a Certificate of Recognition at the Oak Hall Regional Park Dedication on May 2nd, 2015. Photo by Niki Tourscher, CRPR.