

Here's what people are saying about PA's new Director of Outdoor Recreation

"We are thrilled to see Pennsylvania announce Nathan Reigner as the state's first Outdoor Recreation Director. As outdoor participation continues to expand, the value of a strong outdoor recreation ecosystem is undeniable – it spurs economic growth, brings new mental and physical health benefits, and creates new jobs and career paths. There is great opportunity in Pennsylvania to join state outdoor recreation directors across the country in galvanizing the outdoor economy and amplifying the importance of outdoor recreation. We look forward to working closely with the director as he establishes his role and continues the expansion and strengthening of a thriving outdoor recreation industry in Pennsylvania."

Lise Aangeenbrug, Executive Director of the Outdoor Industry Association

"The appointment of Nathan Reigner is a huge step forward for outdoor recreation in Pennsylvania," said "His leadership will be invaluable to growing the outdoor recreation economy in the state - already the sixth largest in the country - as well as supporting rural economies and increasing access for all residents and visitors. We look forward to working with him for years to come."

Jessica Turner, President of the Outdoor Recreation Roundtable

"The appointment of an Outdoor Recreation Director continues DCNR Secretary Cindy Dunn's push to bring recognition of Pennsylvania's \$29 billion outdoor industry into focus for decision makers across the board. While this is about making the outdoors more accessible to all, it is also about giving the thousands of outdoor businesses in the commonwealth more of the recognition and understanding that they deserve. From small shops to national players, service providers to manufacturers, they are critical drivers of Pennsylvania's economic health and making the state a great place to live, work, and play."

Davitt Woodwell, President of Pennsylvania Environmental Council

"The outdoor recreation industry is complex in that it is a public-private partnership model that touches a lot of different kinds of businesses and disciplines, from service sector to manufacturing, to conservation and public lands management. The things being developed or stewarded – companies, recreation assets, public lands -- are often hyperlocal, but to really succeed they need to connect to regional, national and global economies. It takes resources to connect all these dots, and it is great to see the Commonwealth is investing alongside other states in building that capacity.

"Outdoor rec is a huge economic force nationally, but it is also a tremendous community and economic tool to help revitalize distressed rural areas. You see that across Appalachia, and certainly here in rural PA. We have the greatest concentration of public lands in the commonwealth in the PA Wilds. The question is, how do you leverage those lands to support vibrant rural communities? Outdoor rec is at the nexus of it. We've been working with DCNR and other partners for many years now to grow this industry, with winning results, and we can't wait to tap into Dr. Reigner's expertise."

Ta Enos, CEO of the nonprofit PA Wilds Center

"The Pennsylvania Parks and Forests Foundation applauds the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources for its forward thinking in creating an executive level position focused on the important role outdoor recreation plays in Pennsylvania. From health benefits to economic benefits, from legacy to quality of life, the outdoors is an integral component of what it means to be Pennsylvania and a Pennsylvanian."

Marci Mowery, President of the Pennsylvania Parks and Forests Foundation

"This is an exciting moment for those of us who care deeply about the intersection of outdoor recreation and the economy. In his new role, Dr. Reigner will have the opportunity to serve as a convener of the various stakeholders in the outdoor economy, including the thousands of private businesses that generate economic impact, jobs, and tax revenue by sustainably leveraging Pennsylvania's incredible public lands. Although Pennsylvania's outdoor economy is already one of the largest in the nation, we have an opportunity—through Dr. Reigner's leadership and facilitation—to fully leverage this crucial economic sector by tying it even more closely to our commonwealth's pressing economic concerns, including business and talent attraction, workforce development, environmental infrastructure, and public health."

Silas Chamberlin, Vice President, York County Economic Alliance

"Outdoor recreation is invaluable to Pennsylvania - as a major contributor to the state's economy and powerful influence on the quality of life enjoyed by its residents. The Commonwealth's investment in this prominent position will pay great dividends in the form of new partnerships, greater recreational opportunities, heightened participation, and enhanced stewardship of natural assets. As leader of a statewide hiking and trails organization, I am excited about Dr. Reigner's appointment to this important role."

Brook Lenker, Executive Director, Keystone Trails Association

"We're thrilled to hear of DCNR's newest hire, a Director of Outdoor Recreation. Recreation and open space add significant value to our regional economy through tourism by supporting talent and corporate acquisition, healthy lifestyles, and household tax savings ... all contributing to the quality of life for our residents. Lehigh Valley ranks among the top in the state for visitor spending from recreation, contributing to a higher quality of life, making residents and our communities happier and healthier. It's important that as we increase accessibility and use of our outdoor assets that we also put the resources needed into protecting and maintaining them for future generations, and with the new position, we can collectively work on this together."

Alex Michaels, President and CEO of Discover Lehigh Valley®