

NEWS RELEASE

COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA

Department of Conservation and Natural Resources

Commonwealth News Bureau
Room 308, Main Capitol
Harrisburg, PA 17120

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: Terry Brady
DCNR Deputy Press Secretary
(717) 772-9101

LEHIGH RIVER NAMED PENNSYLVANIA'S 'RIVER OF THE YEAR'

HARRISBURG (April 10, 2007) — Conservation and Natural Resources Secretary Michael DiBerardinis today named the Lehigh River as the commonwealth's River of the Year for 2007.

The designation recognizes the watershed's role in eastern Pennsylvania history and its promising recreational future. The Lehigh River drains portions of 10 counties and stretches more than 100 miles.

"The Lehigh River is alive and thriving, with water quality better now than it has been the last 150 years," DiBerardinis said. "There are scores of partners working to preserve, protect and enhance this great state resource, and its resurgence has pumped new life into the communities surrounding it.

"Once a historic transportation corridor for coal bound from Carbon and Luzerne counties to Philadelphia, New York and beyond, the Lehigh River helped fuel America's Industrial Revolution," DiBerardinis said. "Now, mountain bikers, hikers and hunters are seen where mules and canal barges hauled coal and other cargo. Where dams once contained the mighty river, anglers in great number now seek trout, American shad and other species found in a healthy waterway."

DCNR annually designates a "River of the Year" to applaud local residents, governments, non-profit and conservation organizations working to improve waterways and the quality of life in their watersheds across the state.

The Lehigh River winds 104 miles from its headwaters near Gouldsboro, Wayne County, to its junction with the Delaware River in Easton, Northampton County. Its watershed drains Berks, Bucks, Carbon, Lackawanna, Lehigh, Luzerne, Monroe, Northampton, Schuylkill and Wayne counties. The Lehigh is the Delaware's second largest tributary.

With this year's designation, the Lehigh River will be the subject of a Rivers Month poster to be issued in June and an annual River Sojourn, sponsored by the Emmaus-based Wildlands Conservancy and planned for Friday through Wednesday, June 22-27. A sojourn is a water-based journey for canoeists, kayakers and others to raise awareness of the environmental, recreational, tourism and heritage values of rivers.

For details on the sojourn, as well as other activities involving the Lehigh River throughout the year, visit the conservancy's web site at www.wildlandspa.org.

For more information on DCNR's rivers program, visit www.dcnr.state.pa.us and click on "Rivers." For more details on sojourns planned on at least 11 other state waterways, visit www.pawatersheds.org.

###

2007