



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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New Visitor Center, Pennsylvania Wilds Gift Shop Ready for Fall Tourists at Kinzua Bridge State Park, McKean County

Mount Jewett, McKean County – Department of Conservation and Natural Resources Secretary Cindy Adams Dunn today joined local legislators and partners for a dedication ceremony for the new visitor center and park office at Kinzua Bridge State Park, McKean County, in the Pennsylvania Wilds.

“Hundreds of thousands of visitors annually stop at Kinzua Bridge State Park to stroll out onto the skywalk and peer through the glass bottom observation area on the remaining half of the railroad bridge impacted by a tornado in 2003,” Dunn said. “Starting this fall that experience will be even better thanks to a welcoming visitor center with interpretive information to help them understand the history of the bridge, industry and the area, as well as the outdoor adventures that are possible in the park and the region.”

The visitor center includes 2,800-square feet of space in two exhibit halls and a lobby; park administrative offices; public restrooms; and classroom space.

“The Kinzua Bridge Foundation is pleased to witness another historic moment in time at the Kinzua Bridge State Park. This new visitor center and park office will house the mammoth history that has revolved from this historic engineering marvel, which was advertised as the ‘Eighth Wonder of the World’ when originally built,” said Foundation Executive Director Mary Ann Burggraf. “Our sincere congratulations to all involved in the development of this superb state of the art visitors center.

Themes for the exhibits include the geography of the area; the viaduct as a symbol of engineering industry advances that supported the Industrial Revolution, and as an inspiring reminder of the inventiveness, resourcefulness and “can do” spirit of the people of the late-1800s; and the unique opportunities for experiencing natural beauty, observing wildlife and participating in recreational activities at Kinzua Bridge State Park and the greater Pennsylvania Wilds.

“To further support the local economy, Kinzua Bridge will be the location for the first ‘PA Wilds Conservation Shop’ that will offer visitors items from local artisans and businesses, and materials that are branded for the region,” Dunn said, adding that the shop is a public private partnership with the non-profit PA Wilds Center for Entrepreneurship.

“The PA Wilds Center is very excited about this new partnership with DCNR,” said the nonprofit’s executive director, Ta Enos. “Marrying local products with the region’s major attractions enhances the visitor experience while also fueling growth of unique local businesses.”

Shop proceeds will support the PA Wilds Center's business and community development programs and resources.

"The new center is a wonderful addition to the Kinzua Bridge State Park. It offers visitors a year-round destination where they can enjoy learning about the storied history of the original Kinzua viaduct while enjoying the spectacular views of the Kinzua Gorge from the skywalk," said Allegheny National Forest Visitors Bureau Executive Director Linda Devlin.

"This day is especially exciting for DCNR as it completes a series of strategic investments made in our facilities in the Pennsylvania Wilds meant to draw nature tourists to the region for incredible outdoor experiences including dark sky gazing, wildlife and elk watching, and all types of outdoor activities such as paddling, hunting, hiking and fishing," Dunn said.

Other signature destinations include the Elk Country Visitor Center; the Nature Inn at Bald Eagle; the Tiadaghton Forest Resource Management Center in the Pine Creek Valley; and the Wildlife Center at Sinnemahoning State Park.

Dunn noted the visitor center is seeking LEED certification, and if successful will become the 14th facility in the DCNR system that is certified. Earlier this week, the secretary participated in an announcement that Point State Park in Pittsburgh is committing to dramatically reduce its energy and water consumption by 2030, and a dedication of a new solar array supplying energy to Presque Isle State Park in Erie.

The visitor center at Kinzua Bridge includes efficient plumbing fixtures; a geothermal heating and cooling system; regionally sourced materials with a high level of recycled content; sustainably certified wood; and diversion of construction debris and waste to recycling centers instead of landfills.

The 339-acre Kinzua Bridge State Park features remnants of the 2,053-foot long viaduct that was first built of iron in 1882, and then rebuilt of steel in 1900. The viaduct, commonly referred to as a railroad bridge, is a series of arches that carry the railroad over the wide valley.

The bridge was originally constructed as an alternative to laying an additional eight miles of track over rough terrain along the line leading to McKean County's coal, timber and oil lands.

For more information about Kinzua Bridge State Park visit the DCNR website at www.dcnr.state.pa.us (choose Find a Park) or call toll-free 888-PA-PARKS. For more information about the Pennsylvania Wilds visit www.pawildscenter.org; and The Wilds Cooperative of Pennsylvania at www.pawildsartisans.com.

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