



United States Department of the Interior

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Susquehanna River Water Trail Recognized as National Recreation Trail

Harrisburg, PA, 7/14/08--In honor of National Trails Day and the 40th anniversary of the National Trails System, Secretary of the Interior Dirk Kempthorne recently designated 24 trails in 16 states as National Recreational Trails (NRT), including the middle and lower sections of the Susquehanna River Water Trail.

“One of my priorities at Interior is to reconnect American families to nature,” said Secretary Kempthorne. “The National Trails System, including these additions, provides an excellent link to the outdoors, particularly for children. National Recreation Trails exemplify partnerships and are providing a path to fitness and stewardship for Americans of all ages.”

The Middle and Lower Sections of Susquehanna River Water Trail, from Sunbury to the Maryland border, was one of only two National Recreation Trails designated this year in Pennsylvania. This portion of the Susquehanna River Water Trail, which is a 103-mile part of the larger 440 mile long Susquehanna Greenway in Pennsylvania, is one of only three water trails in the state to achieve National Recreation Trail status and joins a statewide NRT network of 51 trails totaling more than 1500 miles. The Susquehanna Greenway Partnership, on behalf of the Susquehanna River Trail Association and the Lancaster – York Heritage Region, spearheaded the effort to seek recognition of the water trail as a National Recreation Trail.

The Middle Section of the Susquehanna River Water Trail, from Sunbury / Northumberland to Harrisburg, was the first water trail in Pennsylvania, established in 1996, and is managed by the Susquehanna River Trail Association. In cooperation with the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resource’s Bureau of Forestry, this segment of water trail has a network of 21 island campsites, and exciting

features such as the Wade Island Heron Rookery, one of the most important nesting sites for the Great Egret in the state. A map and guide is available for the water trail at local retailers and outfitters.

National Recreation Trails are components of the National Trails System and recognize already existing trails that connect people to resources and improve their quality of life. The program is jointly administered by the National Park Service Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance Program and the U.S. Forest Service in conjunction with other federal and nonprofit partners, notably American Trails. These new additions become part of a national network of more than 1,000 trails encompassing more than 12,000 miles.

National Recreation Trails benefit from the prestige and increased visibility of being a part of the National Trail System. New designations are announced annually by the Secretary of Interior as part of the nationwide celebration of National Trails Day the first Saturday in June, and recognized at the National Trails Symposium. Other national publicity includes such events as the annual NRT Photo Contest, sponsored by American Trails, which has attracted hundreds of entries from across the country.

Successful applicants receive a letter and certificate signed by the Secretary of the Interior, designating their trail as an NRT. Trail managers are entitled to use the NRT logo in settings like signage and trail publications. All NRTs are included in the on-line National Registry of Trails on the www.AmericanTrails.org website which includes descriptive information, maps, and pictures for trail users.

Other benefits include:

- access to technical assistance from NRT Program partners (such as the National Park Service Rivers and Trails program);
- access to networking and training opportunities;
- assistance with recognition and special events highlighting the trail;
- letters of support for fundraising and trail protection efforts, and
- access to funding opportunities available from the NRT Program partners. For example, trails with NRT designation are eligible for funding support from the National Park Service Challenge Cost Share Program.

For more information:

Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission / Pennsylvania's water trails system
www.fishandboat.com/watertrails

Susquehanna Greenway Partnership www.susquehannagreenway.org

Susquehanna River Trail Association www.susquehannarivertrail.org

National Park Service Rivers and Trails Program www.nps.gov/rtca

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