



photos-Dot Monahan

# Outdoor Recreation is Good for Our Bodies and Our Businesses

by Jessica Aiello

**H**ave you ever felt the stressors of daily living slip from your mind and body as you cast a line into a babbling stream or watched the sunrise over a lake as you eased your canoe onto the water in the early morning hours? If so, you experienced one of the best ways to reduce stress. Fortunately, outdoor opportunities exist everywhere in Pennsylvania.

“Spending time in the outdoors has repeatedly been shown to reduce stress while also benefiting our physical, mental, and emotional health,” said Marci Mowery, President of the Pennsylvania Parks and Forests Foundation (PPFF).

“Being outside and using outdoor recreation as a form of physical activity can lead to a lot of great physical benefits,” said Dr. Michael Suk, Chief Physician Officer for Geisinger System Services. “It can help control your heart rate or decrease your blood pressure. It can help your respiratory system by enhancing your breathing. And, overall, it can help you lose weight. Our parks and forests also promote mental



Anglers at Oil Creek State Park, Venango County.

health in the way that they allow the brain to relax. Being in or near a park can elevate your mood and elevate your outlook.”

One of the many Pennsylvania businesses benefiting from increased outdoor recreation is Hawghead Marine and Tackle Center, York County, near Gifford Pinchot State Park. Over the last couple years, owner Rick Anderson noticed an increased visitation to the park, which has “been positive to the business,” nearly doubling their revenue from 2019.

So, don't delay. Improve your health and the health of our economy through some good-for-you outdoor recreation. ☐

## Recreation and health videos:



[paparksandforests.org/our-work/education/the-outdoors-and-your-health](https://paparksandforests.org/our-work/education/the-outdoors-and-your-health)

## Economic benefits video:



[youtube.com/watch?v=c8LIbE7FTry](https://youtube.com/watch?v=c8LIbE7FTry)