



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
January 8, 2018

Loyalsock Creek Named PA 2018 River of the Year in Public Voting

Harrisburg, PA - Home to legions of paddlers, anglers, and other outdoors enthusiasts in north central Pennsylvania, Loyalsock Creek has been voted the 2018 Pennsylvania River of the Year.

The public was invited to vote online, choosing from among five waterways nominated across the state. Results were announced jointly today by the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) and the Pennsylvania Organization for Waterways and Rivers (POWR).

Other waterways nominated were: Connoquenessing Creek, Lackawanna River, Little Juniata River and Lower Susquehanna River/Susquehanna Riverlands.

"There are winning qualities in all five of these waterways that their supporters recognize and respect," said DCNR Secretary Cindy Adams Dunn. "The number of waterways nominated, coupled with a vote tally that increases every year, showcases both the unique diversity of Pennsylvania's rivers and the strong community allegiances that protect and enhance them."

A total of 15,061 votes were cast, with the Loyalsock receiving 6,100; Connoquenessing Creek; 5,381; Lackawanna River, 1,676; Lower Susquehanna/Susquehanna Riverlands, 1,113; and Little Juniata, 791.

"This annual honor highlights our state's wealth of rivers and streams, and recognizes the core of dedicated folks who fight to protect them," Dunn noted. "Public awareness of the Loyalsock's value will be increased and initiatives along the waterway river will be underscored. Both serve economic revitalization by enhancing access to the stream; increasing tourism; and providing additional land and water-based recreational opportunities for area residents and visitors alike."

DCNR and POWR will work with the Middle Susquehanna RIVERKEEPER® Association Inc. to create a free, commemorative poster celebrating the Loyalsock Creek as the 2018 PA River of the Year. As applicant for the honor, Middle Susquehanna RIVERKEEPER, will receive a \$10,000 Leadership Grant to help fund year-long River of the Year activities.

"The Pennsylvania 2018 River of the Year competition truly showed the depth of the region's 'Loyalsock Love,'" said Middle Susquehanna RIVERKEEPER® Association Executive Director Carol Parenzan. "We are grateful to those who voted and encouraged others to vote as well, and we thank our lead partner -- Loyalsock Creek Watershed Association -- for its unending commitment and unlimited loyalty to this precious waterway, flowing from the Endless Mountain region of Pennsylvania to the West Branch Susquehanna River.

"In the past, Loyalsock Creek was a hidden gem, nestled in the mountains north of Williamsport and enjoyed by area residents and visitors to the 64-mile-long waterway and its watershed. Today, with this recognition, we are ready to share this timeless treasure with the rest of

Pennsylvania and beyond. For many years, paddlers have danced with her whitewater during spring runoff and families have created camping memories along the shores of the 'Sock at Worlds End State Park."

Noting the Loyalsock boasts a quality trout fishery and is home to the rare Eastern hellbender, Parenzan said the association plans an ambitious schedule of events and programs to showcase its attributes to the public throughout the year. Information will be posted at www.MiddleSusquehannaRiverkeeper.org, as well as Facebook pages for Middle Susquehanna Riverkeeper, Loyalsock Creek Watershed Association, and other supporting organizations and agencies throughout the region.

Loyalsock Creek flows through Worlds End State Park, a highly popular destination state park encompassing 780 acres, and Loyalsock Trail, a well-treked 59-mile trail providing vistas overlooking the stream below. Extraction of coal, lumber and natural gas all have presented conservation challenges, both past and present, to the waterway. Also, erosion and sedimentation issues continue to be addressed by government and private agencies and organizations.

In cooperation with DCNR, selection of public voting choices was overseen by the Pennsylvania Organization for Watersheds and Rivers, an affiliate of the Pennsylvania Environmental Council.

"POWR would like to commend everyone across the commonwealth for their support for the nominated rivers," said POWR Executive Director Janet Sweeney. "The River of the Year program is a wonderful opportunity to showcase all of the nominated rivers and the great work being done in Pennsylvania communities on these valuable resources. We are excited about this opportunity to promote the successes and challenges facing the Loyalsock Creek, as well as all of Pennsylvania's waterways."

POWR administers the River of the Year program with funding from DCNR. Presented annually since 1983, the 2017 River of the Year designation was awarded to the Allegheny River in southwestern Pennsylvania.

A commemorative River of the Year sojourn is among many paddling trips supported by DCNR and POWR each year. An independent program, the Pennsylvania Sojourn Program, is a unique series of a dozen such trips on the state's rivers. These water-based journeys for canoeists, kayakers and others raise awareness of the environmental, recreational, tourism and heritage values of rivers. For more information about the sojourn program, visit www.pawatersheds.org.

To learn more about the River of the Year program, the nominated waterways, and past winners visit www.pariveroftheyear.org.

To learn more about DCNR's Rivers Program, visit www.dcnr.pa.us (click on "Conservation" then "Water").

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