

## **iConservePA aims to inspire and engage citizens in conservation**

More than 100 years ago, environmental stewards like Joseph Rothrock -- the father of Pennsylvania forestry -- recognized that Pennsylvania's precious natural resources were in extreme peril. He, along with others that followed him like Gifford Pinchot, is credited with an environmental movement whose effects are still being felt today— one of the largest state parks systems in the country, 2.1 million of state forest land, and a commonwealth that is blanketed with lush forests and abundant wildlife.



Today, new challenges like global warming, invasive species, energy independence, and “nature deficit disorder” present a similar crossroads for our natural resources. Citizens are now faced with many choices in their lives that can help – or hurt — our natural resources.

“We are at an important crossroads for the environment, much as Pennsylvanians were 100 years ago when mountains were stripped of their woodlands, and waterways were choked with debris, sediment and pollution,” Department of Conservation and Natural Resources Secretary Michael DiBerardinis said. “Our issues are different, but the future of our natural resources still depends on how we react to them now.”

To help build awareness and interest in a 21<sup>st</sup> century conservation movement, DCNR has developed a new program called **iConserve Pennsylvania** to remind everyone, that as individuals, we play a critical role in the future of our natural resources. Our actions – whether large or small – make a difference.

The program’s web site, **iConservePA.org**, aims to inspire Pennsylvanians to conserve, protect and enjoy natural resources. The web site includes information and tips on conservation, the importance of our natural resources, opportunities to get involved, and suggestions on where and how to explore Pennsylvania’s lands and waters.

PA iCons — people who already do things in their everyday lives to help address alarming environmental trends — are the focal point of the web site. Twelve “founding” iCons demonstrate some of the conservation practices needed to combat Pennsylvania’s core environmental challenges. Other citizens are building on the founding iCons examples and sharing their own conservation stories by filling out profiles with their own tips, stories and favorite places in Pennsylvania.

Web site visitors can subscribe to a free monthly electronic newsletter, **SEEDS**, that includes quick facts, ideas, events and green tips. Also featured are simple commitments, next steps and lifestyle change ideas that can help anyone become familiar with conservation, grow their interest, and take action.

Secretary DiBerardinis said **iConserve Pennsylvania** is looking expand to include partnerships with organizations and businesses that want to become more active in promoting conservation and stewardship of the state's natural resources.

Visit [www.iConservePA.org](http://www.iConservePA.org) to explore why conservation is needed and what each person can do to make a difference.

For more information on the **iConservePA** program, contact DCNR's Office of Education, Communications and Partnerships at (717) 772-9101.