



Pennsylvania  
**Department of Conservation  
and Natural Resources**  
Bureau of Forestry



## Cultivating Conservation

by Cindy Adams Dunn, DCNR Secretary

The Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) Bureau of Forestry provides guidance on the management of Pennsylvania's 11.5 million acres of privately owned forest land. As managers of roughly 70 percent of the forest land in the Commonwealth, private forest landowners play a vital role in conservation.



I was pleased to congratulate a champion of private forest land conservation recently at the 2025 Pennsylvania Farm Show. Troy Firth of Spartansburg was recognized as the 2024 Pennsylvania Leopold Conservation Awardee. This award honors farmers and forestland owners who exemplify responsible management of natural resources on working land. Founder of the Foundation for Sustainable Forests (a grantee of DCNR for land conservation easements), Firth practices what he preaches by utilizing land management methods that would be certain to make Aldo Leopold (the award's namesake) proud. Some of Mr. Firth's "land ethic" includes using draft horses for skidding logs, selection of lower quality trees to harvest (instead of the best), and gap silviculture, whereby smaller patches of forests are targeted for logging to reduce environmental impacts.

Troy Firth's example of stewardship reaches beyond his own lands. He was instrumental in the conservation of thousands of additional acres of working forests and can often be found sharing his knowledge with others so they can optimize the management of their lands. As operator of his own maple products business, Firth also models how to sustainably produce non-timber goods from the forest.

Pennsylvania's private forests need more leaders like Troy who wish to improve their woodlands. Well managed forests, public and privately owned, provide many benefits to our economy and local communities. Clean water, sustainable forest products, wildlife habitat, and various other services make Pennsylvania's forests a critical resource. We call on all forest landowners who wish to improve their forest management to reach out to us. DCNR service foresters work with landowners in every county to advance their management objectives while increasing forest health.

To find a DCNR service forester:

<https://elibrary.dcnr.pa.gov/GetDocument?docId=3593430&DocName=Service%20Forester%20List%20March%202024.pdf>

For more on Mr. Troy Firth: [FSF Founder Troy Firth receives PA Leopold Conservation Award - Foundation for Sustainable Forests](#)

DCNR grants: <https://www.pa.gov/agencies/dcnr/programs-and-services/grants.html>