

PA Environment Digest

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DCNR Renames Tuscarora Forest Tract In Honor Of Late James Nelson

The [Tuscarora State Forest Wild Area](#) in Juniata County was renamed Wednesday in honor of the late James C. Nelson, Pennsylvania state forester from 1989 to 1994.

Nelson's family members joined Department of Conservation and Natural Resources representatives in unveiling a new sign identifying the 5,382 acre-tract straddling the Juniata-Perry county line as the James C. Nelson Wild Area.

Nelson, who died in March at the age of 81, worked 42 years with the Bureau of Forestry and is credited with shaping many innovative state forest management principles. A native of Kane, McKean County, he last resided in East Berlin, Adams County.

"Forests such as the one behind me serve as beacons for recreation, watershed protection, employment and so much more," DCNR Secretary Richard Allan said. "Mr. Nelson knew that. He worked tirelessly to make them shine."

Located on the eastern end of Tuscarora Mountain, the former Tuscarora Wild Area consists of a single tract, a section of which borders the Juniata River. Timbered between 1902 and 1917, the tract was purchased by the state in 1964. Except for the remains of a logging railroad, there is little evidence of man-made disturbance, making primitive backpack camping in the area a popular pastime.

"I understand this was one of Mr. Nelson's favorite areas, and he often talked about why he felt it should be set aside as a wild area," Allan said. "It is truly fitting that it will now be known as the James C. Nelson Wild Area."

Nelson is credited with creating and developing many new and groundbreaking forestry programs in Pennsylvania, including the State Forest Resource Management Plan; even-age timber management; Pennsylvania Heritage and Stewardship programs; Society of American Forester's Sustainability Report; and the bureau's Natural and Wild Area designation program.

Bureau of Forestry Director and State Forester Daniel Devlin identified his predecessor as "a pioneer" in so many ways.

“Many of the programs we work on today are a result of Jim’s foresight and vision,” Devlin said. “He was a great historian, and more importantly, loved to share his knowledge with anyone and everyone.”

Across Pennsylvania, the state forest system contains 14 wild areas and 61 natural areas. All support unique biologic, geologic, scenic and historic features while often encouraging enjoyment of hiking, hunting, fishing and the pursuit of solitude. To retain the undeveloped character of the area, no permanent development is permitted.

NewsClip: [DCNR Renames Tuscarora Forest For James Nelson](#)