

J. BOYLE CORMAN  
SENATE BOX 20000  
THE STATE CAPITOL  
HARRISBURG, PA 17105-2000  
PHONE: 717-787-1577  
FAX: 717-772-3145

CENTER COUNTY DISTRICT OFFICE  
617 EAST SHIPLEY STREET  
P.O. BOX 376  
BELLFONTS, PA 16803  
PHONE: 814-379-0677  
FAX: 814-385-0900

LEWIS COUNTY DISTRICT OFFICE  
31 WEST THIRD STREET  
LEWISTOWN, PA 17044  
PHONE: 717-842-2010  
1-800-392-7222

PLEASE USE THE ADDRESS OF  
THE SENATOR



Senate of Pennsylvania

October 14, 1997

**COMMITTEES**  
TRANSPORTATION, CHAIRMAN  
BANKING & INSURANCE, VICE CHAIRMAN  
LOCAL GOVERNMENT  
GAMES & FISHERIES  
RULES & EXECUTIVE NOMINATIONS  
TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION  
  
MAJORITY CAUCUS ADMINISTRATOR  
PHEAA BOARD MEMBER

Original: 1886

Copies: Smith

Sandusky

Legal-2

Notebooks-2

McGinley

Warren A. Ely, Chief  
Division of State Forest Management  
Department of Conservation and Natural Resources  
Post Office Box 8552  
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania 17105-8552

Dear Mr. Ely:

I write to comment on the Proposed Amendments to 17 Pa. Code, Chapter 21 (relating to State Forests - General provisions). While the proposed revisions as noted in your document's Preamble are to "better manage the use of State Forest land and to protect fragile ecosystems," my comments are to ensure that these Public lands are managed in a "user friendly" fashion. A fashion which allows our state taxpayers to utilize their forest system, yet protecting its future through sound eco-management. To that end, I offer the following comments:

**21.21(b) Driving on roads, trails or other areas not specifically designated and posted for motor vehicle traffic unless authorized in writing by the District Forester or his designee.** Is it the Department's intention to clearly post all open forestry roads? Would it not be better to post all closed roads which have not already been secured by gates? It has been my observation that such public posting is extremely hard to maintain in heavily used areas, and would be more needless clutter in other areas which should have as few signs as possible.

Warren A. Ely, Chief  
October 7, 1997  
Page Two

In removing subsection (4) concerning parking limitations, combined with **Section 21.25 Parking** and from comments made by the District 10 Forester at his Public Meeting on these proposed amendments to the Code, it seems to be the intent of the Bureau to severely limit the public from parking vehicles at any location except at an official Bureau parking facility. I am told that "all violators will be ticketed." This is certainly not "user friendly" nor is it practical. I can understand a more severe interpretation in areas of high public participation. However, in more remote areas I see no need for the public to fear a summary offense for pulling off the road to further explore the beauty of our state forests. I am led to believe that the casual pull-off areas that have developed over the years by the public will not be allowed under this new management scheme. On a recent trip through the Wykoff Run area near the Quehanna Wild Area, I noticed many of these pull-off areas recently seeded. Is this an attempt to keep the public out of their forest system? To ask the public to park only at a few authorized facilities is overkill at its worst and is far from practical. It is certainly my hope that our state's management system would allow for practical, everyday use and enjoyment. In our zeal to protect the forest for the generations to come, we should not lock out the citizens who pay for its upkeep. Also, by forcing everyone into certain pre-determined parking areas you will create "Cluster Use," forcing all users into specific areas of use.

Further on parking violations, there is no mention of "warning" tickets or "warning" citations. Issuing a warning would be user friendly. Issuing a ticket will be confrontational. While we want to protect our system, we do not want to chase the public out, or do we? When questioned at his Public Meeting, the District 10 Forester noted that "tickets will be issued in all cases." Sounds like we are more interested in confronting any public user as opposed to welcoming and sharing this wonderful wilderness treasure.

Warren A. Ely, Chief  
October 7, 1997  
Page Three

**Section 21.61. Camping permit.**

**Camping is defined as overnight lodging using standard camping equipment. Camping without a current camping permit issued by the District Forester or his designee is prohibited. [ ; provided, however, that primitive backpack campers not using developed facilities shall not need a permit if they stay no more than one night at any campsite.]**

The removal of the third sentence above which provided for easy, permitless camping for overnight backpackers is entirely too prohibitive. Will your offices be easily accessible to the occasional camper on weekends? No. Will Bureau personnel be permitted to issue permits on the spot as opposed to issuing a ticket? No. Your District Forester confirmed this when he noted that there would be no exceptions, and there would be no way for the spur of the moment camper or hiker to utilize this public forest system. Again, if it is the intent of the Bureau to keep the public out, these changes should certainly accomplish that end. To tell a young father from Bellefonte that he cannot take his son camping Saturday night in the Sproul State Forest without first getting a permit from the District Forester in Shintown and certainly not after hours or on weekends, is not acceptable. Please, let us be practical and friendly. After all, it is the public's forest and we should allow them access.

**Section 21.65. Target shooting.**

**Target shooting with firearms, [or] bows and arrows [at other than approved targets and in conformity with the Pennsylvania game laws shall be prohibited.] or devices capable of launching projectiles and causing injury to persons or property in prohibited at any location where it could cause or threaten injury, damage or disturbance to any person, animal, living tree, sign, structure or equipment.**

My only concern about this language change is for those who will interpret it. Good common sense should prevail and allow for safe public recreation.

Warren A. Ely, Chief  
 October 7, 1997  
 Page Four

**Section 21.70a. Snow plowing.**

**The plowing or removal of snow from State Forest land without written authorization of the District Forester or his designee is prohibited.**

At the District 10 Public Meeting the District Forester noted that there would be no attempt by his office to notify those who currently are plowing Forestry Roads which access private property. This is unacceptable. If the Bureau is going to place such restrictions in place, you should have the common decency to inform your neighbors of your intent and to make adequate provisions for them to receive the needed authorization.

Where are we going with this "police state" regulations which will further restrict the public's use of our public forest system. Whatever happened to the concept that a person, whenever they were moved to do so, could simply walk into our public forest and be at peace with God and all of his wonderful creations? In the future, under your proposed regulations, a person will have to get a permit first, drive to an authorized parking area and by all means be sure that the road you travel is posted "open." While well intentioned, I believe way off base.

Thank you for the opportunity to offer these comments. In general, it is my position that the Bureau should have an active "user friendly" policy and attempt, when possible, to extend the invitation for more public participation on our forest lands, not less.

Sincerely yours,



J. DOYLE CORMAN

JDC/jre

Copy: The Honorable John C. Oliver  
 John Plonski, Executive Deputy Secretary for Parks & Forestry  
 Joe Graci, Leg. Liaison, DCNR