



November 20, 2024

Cindy Dunn,
Secretary DCNR
400 Market Street
Harrisburg, PA 17105

Dear Ms. Dunn,

Franklin Township's Board of Supervisors oppose any plans to equip Big Elk Creek State Park with a campground, R.V. facilities, overnight occupancy buildings or facilities, visitors / education center, or entertainment facilities that have been proposed by DCNR. While public toilets, a maintenance and office structure, such as those currently at the White Clay Creek Preserve, are acceptable the extensive construction proposed by DCNR is not.

The increased traffic, noise and light pollution, road damage, litter, and increased demands on fire, police, and ambulance services that will result from transforming Big Elk Creek from an untouched, lightly developed preserve into a full service State Park will put an undue burden on our township.

Franklin Township is not alone in these concerns. Each local Township touched by this proposed State Park realizes the damage and financial demands DCNR's plans will cause. Those concerns have been very clearly communicated to DCNR, so there should be no doubt that we are committed to stopping the negative impact these plans will have on our communities.

Our Township has a small operating budget that cannot accommodate the increased demands on our roads, stormwater management infrastructure, and public services that the proposed State Park would create. Every public service our Township utilizes - particularly the requisite Fire and Ambulance services - are already requesting increased funding. Many of our resident struggle to meet their current tax obligations, and the Board of Supervisors works yearly to contain costs and to avoid tax increases that would cause further hardship. The strain on our community from the proposed State Park would make it impossible for us to contain these costs.

Further, the Pennsylvania State Police have also warned us of the need for increased coverage due to traffic from cars and recreational vehicles the park would create.



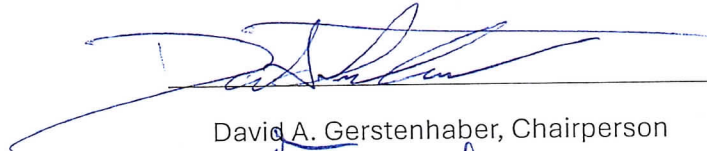
We understand that public toilets, trail maintenance, riparian repair, and a maintenance/office structure may be necessary. Overnight accommodations and accompanying extensive infrastructure to support those accommodations are not.

Any such development would cause irreparable harm to our communities and the natural balance within the preserve. DCNR should consider, not only how their development plans will negatively impact the community, but what this land was intended to be, a largely untouched nature preserve.

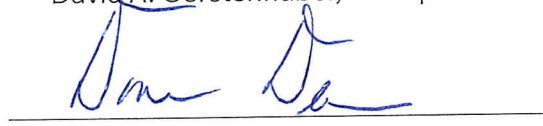
To conclude, for the sake of our community and its residents, the Franklin Township Board of Supervisors strongly requests the redesignation of Big Elk Creek State Park to a State Preserve with the understand of what that word means: the preservation of Big Elk Creek as a natural and lightly developed refuge for all.

We ask that DCNR reconsider its planning for this valuable resource and publicly announce a plan to redesignate this land as a Preserve.

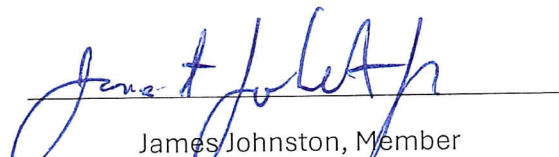
With concern,



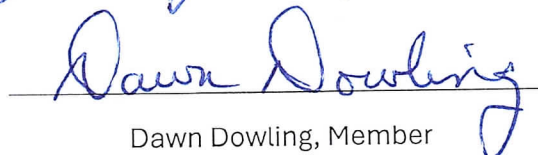
David A. Gerstenhaber, Chairperson



Donna Dea, Vice Chairperson



James Johnston, Member



Dawn Dowling, Member



Betsy Odgers, Member

CC: Governor Josh Shapiro