

FORBES STATE FOREST DISTRICT

2016 MANAGEMENT ACTIVITY PLAN

The mission of DCNR Bureau of Forestry is to conserve the long-term health, viability and productivity of the Commonwealth's forest and to conserve native wild plants. One of the ways the bureau carries out this mission is through the [State Forest Resource Management Plan](#) (SFRMP), a document that guides the management of the 2.2 million-acre state forest system. The SFRMP is updated approximately every 5 years and includes an extensive public engagement process.

One of the policies in the bureau's strategic plan ([Penn's Woods: Sustaining Our Forests](#)) includes, "Public participation will be an integral part of the management of state forest lands." The purpose of this Management Activity Plan is to communicate to the public about upcoming management activities, projects, and events that will be conducted to implement the SFRMP on Forbes State Forest. This document will be revised at the start and middle of each calendar year to provide sufficient time for public review, questions, and feedback. The bureau is committed to considering the views and perspectives of the public and stakeholders and strives to accommodate public interests in planning management activities and decision making. We encourage comments or questions regarding planned or proposed activities be directed to the state forest district conducting the activity.

For questions, comments, or more information about this plan, please contact:

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RECREATION

Trails

- Improve Mt. Streams Trail between Sky and Auckerman Roads
- Make sure 1/3rd of trails in each division brushed back and re-blazed
- Rehabilitate ditches on snowmobile trails north of Turnpike
- Tiger mow snowmobile trails north of Turnpike
- Fix hill on Towhee Trail at intersection with Lippos Loop connector
- Resurface bottom of Bill Alberts Trail and Towhee Trail to hill
- Open and resurface Locust Trail as needed to ski slopes
- Armor approx. 50' of Roaring Run Trail at parking lot (County Line)
- Replace foot bridge on Mill Run Trail
- Rehabilitate culverts on Gary Run [Connector] Trail

Projects

- Install small map board at Hillside Trail in Roaring Run Natural Area
- Finish installing chimney on Warming Hut
- Assist as needed with Latrine construction at Laurel Summit Warming Hut
- Check for/remove hazardous trees at Motorized Camp Sites
- Install new grills as needed at Lick Hollow State Forest Picnic Area
- Check for/remove hazardous trees at State Forest Picnic Areas
- Install High Pointers bench
- Install Kiosk at Fall Run lot
- Install sign board at Fall Run lot
- Construct/install new (larger) backing boards for new Rules/Regs where needed
- Hunter gates opened for bear, deer season
- Install Kiosk – Eagle Scout Project – LS Road

Organized Events

- Commercial Activities Agreements (Seven Springs, True North, Wilderness Voyageurs, American Adventure Sports)



- Special Activities Agreements/LOA's (Summer's Best Two Weeks, US Army LandNav at Quebec Run, Rolling Ridge Snowmobile Club, Presbyterian Church, Center Church, Boyce Middle School, Penn Trafford School District, Derry Middle School, North Star School District, various weddings, Scout groups, etc.)

TIMBER MANAGEMENT

Marked and sold, potentially active

- 147-acre Elk Lick timber sale on Mt. Davis south of Vought Rock Road and north of Elk Lick Run just west of the 1998 tornado blow down was marked to salvage dead timber from the 2008 gypsy moth defoliation and initiate the site to regenerate the next forest stand. This sale area will be planted with new seedlings after the sale is complete to supplement natural regeneration to form the next diverse forest stand.
- 75-acre Kirby Road timber sale in the Braddock Division east and west along Kirby Road just south of a new gas well was marked as a shelterwood treatment to remove some of the poor quality, low value, and dying trees to allow more sunlight to the forest floor to stimulate regeneration, favoring oak seedlings.
- 91-acre Wharton Furnace Removal timber sale in the Braddock Division bordering and extending east of the intersection of Fayette Springs Road and Wharton Furnace Road was marked to remove the overstory trees to allow regeneration space to grow into the next diverse forest stand. This sale area was previously cut with a shelterwood, fenced to protect the growing seedlings from deer, and prescribe burned to kill competing vegetation to help oak seedlings to grow.
- 32-acre Compartment 33 timber sale in the Braddock Division bordering and extending east of Gibbon Glade Road approximately 1.3 miles north of Gibbon Glade, PA, was marked as a shelterwood treatment to remove some of the poor quality, low value, and dying trees to allow more sunlight to the forest floor to stimulate regeneration, favoring oak seedlings.
- 275-acre Little Run timber sale in the Laurel Mt Division just southeast of Kregar, PA, extending east from Rt. 381 with sale blocks north and south of Indian Creek was marked to remove the majority of the overstory trees and salvage blow down from a wind shear weather event that passed through the area. Most of this sale area was cut several years ago with a shelterwood cut to stimulate new seedlings to grow. By removing the overstory trees now, the seedlings will be free to grow into the next forest stand.
- 40-acre Cole Run Removal timber sale in the Blue Hole Division south of Cole Run Road and just west of Cole Run and Cole Run Falls was marked to remove the overstory trees to allow regeneration space to grow into the next forest stand. This sale area was previously cut with an improvement cut to favor the healthiest trees, then fenced to protect growing seedlings from deer, and prescribe burned to kill competing vegetation to help oak seedlings grow.

Marked but not yet sold

- 139-acre Gas Well 110 timber sale in the Braddock Division east of Lick Run and west of Skyline Drive and Gas Well 110 was marked as a shelterwood treatment to remove some of the poor quality, low value, and dying trees to allow more sunlight to the forest floor to stimulate regeneration, favoring oak seedlings.
- 117-acre Panhandle Removal timber sale in the Laurel Mt Division south of Hall Springs Road with sale blocks east and west of Beam Road was marked to remove the majority of the overstory trees. Some of this sale area was cut several years ago with an improvement cut to favor the healthiest trees and some of the area was cut with a shelterwood treatment to remove some of the trees to allow sunlight to stimulate regeneration on the forest floor, favoring oak seedlings.

Proposed (not marked yet)

- 48-acre Memorial Drive timber sale in the Braddock Division south of Memorial Drive and north of Little Sandy Creek was marked as a shelterwood treatment to remove some of the poor quality, low value, and dying trees to allow more sunlight to the forest floor to stimulate regeneration, favoring oak seedlings.
- 47-acre Orchard Removal timber sale in the Braddock Division about a half mile east of Elliotsville, PA, and a half mile north of Rt. 381 is currently proposed to remove the overstory trees to allow regeneration space to grow into the next forest stand to include tulip poplars, red oaks, and red and sugar maples. This sale area was previously cut with a shelterwood to initiate seedling growth and fenced to protect the growing seedlings from deer.
- 134-acre Point Breeze timber sale in the Braddock Division just north of Point Breeze bordering and extending east from Kirby Road is currently proposed with shelterwood treatment to remove some of the trees to allow sunlight to stimulate desirable regeneration on the forest floor, favoring oak seedlings.
- 80-acre Tower timber sale on Mt. Davis about a half mile north from the intersection of Vought Rock Road and North Wolf Rock Road on the west side of North Wolf Rock Road is currently proposed to remove overstory trees to allow regeneration space to grow into the next forest stand. This sale area was previously treated with a shelterwood treatment to initiate seedling growth and fenced to protect the growing seedlings from deer. An area that includes dead timber from the 2008 gypsy moth defoliation will be included to salvage this dead timber and initiate the site to regenerate.
- 180-acre Singing Veery Removal timber sale in the Blue Hole Division south of the Laurel Highlands Hiking Trail shelter area and west of Blue Hole Creek and east of Gary's Run is currently proposed to remove overstory trees to allow regeneration space to grow into the next forest stand to favor oak. This sale area was previously treated with a shelterwood treatment to initiate seedling growth and some of the sale blocks were fenced to protect the growing seedlings from deer.



- 93-acre Fire Tower timber sale in the Braddock Division around the Braddock Division Forest Foreman's Headquarters is currently proposed with a shelterwood treatment to remove some of the trees to allow sunlight to stimulate desirable regeneration on the forest floor, favoring oak seedlings and expanding natural white pine regeneration.
- 241-acre Jones Mill Run timber sale in the Kooser Division north of Laurel Hill State Park and Beltz Road extending three quarters of a mile along Red Oak Trail is currently proposed to remove overstory trees within a couple deer fences to allow regeneration space to grow into the next forest stand. Some of this sale area was previously treated with a shelterwood treatment to initiate seedling growth and fenced to protect the growing seedlings from deer. An adjacent area is proposed with a shelterwood treatment to remove some of the trees to allow sunlight to stimulate regeneration on the forest floor, favoring oak seedlings.
- 15-acre Shepherd Road Buffer district forester permit timber sale in the Braddock Division along both sides of Shepherd Road .37 mile west of the intersection of Camp Whyel Road and Shepherd Road from McIntire Run to the state forest boundary is currently proposed to daylight Shepherd Road upon Wharton Township's request to reduce the amount of snow and ice buildup on the road to make for safer vehicle travel.

Regeneration projects

Regeneration projects are planned in order to address issues and problems that impede the development of desirable regeneration in areas we want to eventually begin to grow new seedlings in conjunction with future timber sales:

- Plant seedlings in previously harvested 96 acres of Middle Hill timber sale in Laurel Mt Division north of Route 30 and west of Ridgeview Road and north of Furnace Run. The timber in this area was salvaged in 2014-15 following a Fall Cankerworm outbreak that killed a majority of the overstory trees, leaving very little desirable natural regeneration. A variety of tree seedlings will be planted in this timber sale to supplement natural regeneration to form a new diverse forest of mature trees.
- Dismantle and remove the 50-acre Lincoln deer fence in the Laurel Mt Division at the headwaters of Beam Run about 3.7 miles along Beam Road from the intersection of Beam Road and Laurel Summit Road since desirable regeneration has grown out of the reach of deer.
- Dismantle and remove the 32-acre Renegade 1 and 30-acre Renegade 2 deer fences in the Laurel Mt Division on the north side of Auckerman Road about .9 mile west from intersection of Auckerman Road and Sky View Road and east of Mt Streams Trail since desirable regeneration has grown out of the reach of deer.
- Dismantle and remove the 19-acre Quarry deer fence in the Laurel Mt Division just northeast of the intersection of the PW&S Grade and Beam Road since desirable regeneration has grown out of the reach of deer.
- Dismantle and remove the 21-acre Panhandle 1 and 19-acre Panhandle 2 deer fences in the Laurel Mt Division about .5 mile southwest on Beam Road from the intersection of Beam Road and Hall Springs Road and .3 mile east of Beam Road since desirable regeneration has grown out of the reach of deer.



- Herbicide the 31-acre Stand 107 area in the Braddock Division about .25 mile west of Brethren Summit Road and .50 mile east of Mill Run and just north of the state forest boundary to control undesirable competing fern and invasive species, multiflora rose and Japanese barberry, to allow more sunlight to the forest floor to initiate desired seedling growth in anticipation of a future shelterwood cut.
- Herbicide the 31-acre Stand 45 area in the Braddock Division about .6 mile southeast of the Lick Hollow Picnic Area and .25 mile east of Lick Run to control undesirable competing green briar, multiflora rose, and birch to allow more sunlight to the forest floor to initiate desired seedling growth in anticipation of a future shelterwood cut.

RESTORATION AND HABITAT PROJECTS

- Continue to plant balled and burlap trees in the Mt. Davis Picnic Area and Lick Hollow Picnic Area to beautify both picnic areas and provide shade for picnic area users. Continue to monitor the health of the mature trees in the picnic areas and remove unhealthy trees when necessary.
- Continue to work with the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission to daylight timber rattlesnake gestation sites on state forest land where pregnant female timber rattlesnakes must bask in the sun in order to give birth to healthy young rattlesnakes. These sites are in danger of growing shut with tree and shrub growth and could no longer provide this critical rattlesnake habitat. We will be aiding the PFBC in cutting and herbiciding unwanted vegetation. We treated six sites in 2014, three sites in 2015, and plan to inspect four sites in 2016.
- Continue work on a 240-acre Woodcock Habitat Management Plan in the Laurel Mt Division in the brushy areas east and west of Rt 381 near the intersection of Hunter Lane and Rt. 381 southwest of Kregar, PA. This project is a collaboration of the Bureau of Forestry, PA Game Commission, Woodcock Management Institute, and the Mellon Foundation. This project will enhance woodcock/grouse/songbird/wildlife early successional habitat in this unique low lying bottomland brushy habitat. We created approximately 20 acres of early successional habitat and planted 157 trees/shrubs in 2015. We plan to treat approximately 40 acres and plant 50 trees/shrubs in 2016.
- Enhance some old well openings and timber sale landings in the Mt Davis Division by testing soil, liming, fertilizing and planting wildlife food plot mixes.
- Continue to plant apple tree saplings and fence them to protect them from deer around edges of wildlife openings.

ROAD AND BRIDGE PROJECTS

- Repave Laurel Summit Road, open culverts, install markers
- Complete Rt. 31 parking lot expansion
- Expand parking lot on top of Tunnel Road



- Oversee bridge construction at Lick Hollow State Forest Picnic Area
- Evaluate/install new parking lot (Mt. View Road) for Ruane tract
- Improve Cole Run Parking Lot (to accommodate three vehicles)
- Assist (as needed) with Bridge Construction on North Wolf Rock Road
- Install parking lot at Torrance Tract

PRESCRIBED FIRE

- We plan to prescribe burn the 639-acre Ecosystem Restoration burn in the Mt Davis Division west of South Wolf Rock Road and east of Christner Road and north of Laurel Run in the spring in order to reduce competing vegetation (mountain laurel) to provide growing space for new desired regeneration to become the dominant component of the future stand. This area has stagnated in a mountain laurel dominated understory ranging from 3-6 ft tall along with patches of fern and blueberry with scattered large boulders with very little desirable regeneration and poor quality overstory trees including a lot of dead oak from a 2008 gypsy moth defoliation. Early successional habitat and snags will be created to benefit various species of song birds and wildlife. We will artificially plant many various tree seedlings in spring 2017 to supplement natural regeneration after the burn.
- We plan to prescribe burn the 53-acre Potter School timber sale in the Braddock Division that was previously shelterwood cut and fenced to keep deer out just south of Potter School Road (T-351), west of Stuckslager Road, and east of Rt. 381 in the spring in order to control competing vegetation, like black birch, fire cherry, multi-flora rose, and red maple and allow existing oak, yellow poplar, and sugar maple seedlings to grow and gain advantage prior to cutting the overstory trees in a future timber sale.

INSECT, DISEASE, AND INVASIVE PLANT TREATMENT

- Insect and disease monitoring and reporting will continue in 2016 and will focus on the priority list provided by the Division of Forest Pest Management (FPM). Report forms will be forwarded to FPM Area Specialist from the District I&D coordinator for ground truthing and possible control efforts for reported insect and disease problems. Aerial survey flight(s) will be conducted in late June to detect possible problem areas as well.
- We will monitor the 2014 treatment of approximately 111 hemlock (10 acres) trees with the chemical Imidacloprid to help stop the invasive Hemlock Woolly Adelgid from killing hemlock trees along the beautiful Shirey Run about one mile east from the intersection of Shirey Run and Township Road (T-972) in the Torrance Tract. This will help protect this critical streamside forest and wildlife habitat.

- We will monitor the 135 white ash trees we treated in the summer of 2015 with the chemical Tree-age to help stop the invasive and exotic Emerald Ash borer from killing white ash in five locations on the Forbes State Forest; South Wolf Rock Road, Owl Lodge Sale, Mt View Look Trail, Brethren Summit Road, and Forbes District Office. This will help protect a very small number of remaining live white ash on the Forbes State Forest from dying and create a future seed source. The Emerald Ash Borer has killed ash trees across much of the District. We plan to treat an additional 4 to 5 white ash in the Lick Hollow Picnic Area in the summer of 2016.
- Other unwanted invasive species such as multi-flora rose, tree-of-heaven, Japanese barberry, oriental bittersweet, autumn olive, bush honeysuckle, Japanese knotweed, garlic mustard, common privet, Japanese honeysuckle, Japanese stilt grass, reed canary grass, Canada thistle, bull thistle, and crown vetch are present to some degree on the Forbes State Forest and are continually monitored for future treatment.

NATURAL GAS, OIL, AND OTHER GEOLOGIC RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

- We will continue to work with Dominion in the management of their North Summit Natural Gas Storage Field located under portions of the Braddock Division. This large gas storage field has many wells and several pipelines on the Forbes State Forest that put gas into the storage field and takes gas out of the storage field. We are notified of projects for the coming year in late winter.
- Continue to monitor the 147 wildlife trees/shrubs planted in the spring of 2015 on gas wells UW-209 and UW-210 in the Braddock Division along Kirby Road in order to restore these openings.
- We work with different natural gas companies to manage several gas pipelines and some shallow natural gas wells on the Forbes State Forest throughout the year.
- Presently, there are no Marcellus gas wells drilled on the Forbes State Forest.

TOWER AND RIGHT-OF-WAY PROJECTS

- Continue working with West Penn Power and WHM Consulting, Inc. to eradicate a 12-acre invasive undesirable mile-a-minute plant population on the Forbes State Forest along the 138 kV Albright-Bethelboro electric line right-a-way just south of Wharton Furnace in the Braddock Division. One of the most effective ways to control this invasive plant is through targeted herbicide treatments.
- Work with West Penn Power on maintaining the vegetation encroaching onto their 500 kv Hat-Bo electric line right-of-way in Fayette County just south of Elliottsville, PA in the Braddock Division. WPP uses targeted herbicide treatments and also mechanical equipment (including helicopters) to treat, trim, and remove trees and brush from interfering with the electric line.
- Continue to work with multiple companies who have leases for antenna towers on state forest land. We coordinate company access and maintenance.

- Work with Iberdrola on the maintenance of their electric line right-of way that follows the north side of West Penn Power's 500 kv Hat-Bo electric line in Fayette County just south of Elliottsville, PA in the Braddock Division. We receive regular site inspection reports to identify invasive species taking hold on the new right-of-way and recommend treatment.
- Continue to work with Somerset Rural Electric on expanding their electric line right-of-way on state forest land that follows the north side of Savage Road in Somerset County in the Mt Davis Division. The expansion is to accommodate new and taller electric poles with additional and upgraded service to the area.
- Continue to work with multiple companies who have gas pipeline right-of-ways that cross state forest land. We coordinate company access and maintenance.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

- Conduct 3 to 4 organized volunteer trail maintenance days for the Laurel Mountain Volunteer Group, dates for these are set at the planning meeting held in the spring, and relayed to DCNR Conservation Volunteers and groups through the volunteer program.
- Conduct numerous Environmental Education programs and Recreation Programming February through October, dates and descriptions of these programs are advertised in newspapers, Facebook, and a bi-monthly program manual.
- Pondfield Open House, fall 2016.
- Many opportunities for public engagement are listed as they are planned on our Facebook page.
- We participate in County Fairs, Sportsmen's shows, and many other events. We conduct tours for many groups including Woodland Owner groups. We answer questions via phone and email.

RESEARCH

- We will continue to monitor our 2013 Butternut planting project south of Sky View Road in the Laurel Mt. Division. We planted 1-acre with 24 DNA tested 100% pure butternuts and 26 additional suspected 100% pure butternuts provided by our Penn Nursery. These butternuts will be monitored for their resistance to the Butternut canker disease that infects and kills butternut trees.
- We will continue to monitor our 2014 American chestnut planting project east of Tunnel Road in the Laurel Mt. Division. We planted and fenced to keep the deer out 1-acre of the newest American Chestnut hybrids provided by the American Chestnut Foundation and grown by our Penn Nursery. These chestnuts will be monitored for their resistance to the Chestnut Blight that killed millions of American Chestnut trees along the Appalachian Mountains in early 1900 after the fungus was introduced into America.

- We continue to participate in the PA Game Commission's Deer Management Assistance Program (DMAP). We have two DMAP blocks, 544 and 1195, on the Forbes State Forest where hunters can acquire additional doe tags in order to help us focus management efforts and reduce deer browse to enhance desirable seedling growth. We collected scientific data from 50 survey plots throughout the Forbes State Forest in 2014, collected data on ten of those plots in 2015, and will collect data on another 10 plots in 2016 in order to monitor and justify if the DMAP blocks are necessary.
- Penn State University researchers may be conducting research on prescribed fire effects as they relate to timber rattlesnakes, vernal pools, and Indiana bats. This research will be conducted on any number of sites at and near planned prescribed burns in the district. This is a cooperative research project with PSU, PFBC, and Bureau of Forestry.
- We continue to participate in research on the population of eastern Golden Eagles in North America. The goal of this project is to estimate population size, understand the role of demographic variability for the population, learn migration and winter ecology of this rare species, focus on threats from development of wind energy, environmental contaminants and persecution, and increase public education of the golden eagle. We contribute to this research each winter.
- We may be participating in the PA Game Commission's research of Wood Thrushes. This is a multi-state State Wildlife Grant application for a Wood Thrush forest treatment study in the Appalachian Mountains headed by Cornell Lab, the Smithsonian, and American Bird Conservancy. The project goal is to assess "uneven age" treatment and see if it helps Wood Thrush populations.
- We continue to participate in on-going research of Wild Ginseng with Penn State University's Dr. Eric Burkhart. When we find a population of wild ginseng we relay the location to Dr. Burkhart for further study.
- We are assisting Dr. Carol Bocetti, Department of Biological and Environmental Sciences, California University of Pennsylvania with researching and monitoring the response of wildlife including golden-winged warbler and American woodcock on the 240-acre Woodcock Habitat Management Plan in the Laurel Mt Division.