

Sproul State Forest

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 Sproul 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

- **Whiskey Springs ATV Trail** - This project involved the reclamation of approximately 100 acres of unreclaimed strip mines using a DEP contract administered by the Bureau of Abandoned Mine Reclamation. The heavy truck traffic associated with this project required the closure of the atv area for the 2015 riding season. The project was completed in August 2015. There are still some minor contracting issues that need to be dealt with on the site. The Whiskey Springs ATV Trail will open for the atv riding season on May 27, 2016.
- **Dry Run Snowmobile Trail** – The trail was constructed by XTO Energy in Fall of 2014 due to Marcellus Shale development impacts. The NPDES permit was closed for this project in August 2015. The District staff has made some minor changes to the trail system to facilitate the riding experience. The trail is open for the 2016 riding season.
- **Dick McKinney Snowmobile Trail** – This trail was constructed by Endless Mountain Energy in Fall of 2014 due to Marcellus Shale development impacts. The NPDES permit was closed for this project in August 2015. The District staff has made some minor changes to the trail system to facilitate the riding experience. The trail is open for the 2016 riding season.
- **Donut Hole Trail (DHT)** – The section from Rattlesnake Run to Hyner View was constructed through the 2015 field season. A major portion of the trail is routed on lands owned and managed by The Nature Conservancy. This is a reroute made to help mitigate impacts from the Marcellus Shale development in the Grugan and Gallagher Township areas. A ribbon cutting ceremony is planned for the Friday of the 2016 Prowl the Sproul weekend.
- **Eagleton Mine Camp Trail** – The majority of this trail is being planned for use in an adventure hike planned for October 9, 2016. This is the first year of this event which will be headquartered on the Sons of Italy property in Bald Eagle Township. The majority of the event will be on State Forest Land and will consist of a 25k and 50k race. This event is planned to replace some of the opportunities lost through changes to the Megatransect event in another portion of Clinton County.

2016 Organized Events:

April Saturday, 23th; Hyner View Trail Challenge



- June** Sunday, 5th, Durty Daubers Trail Ride
Saturday, 11th, Cruise for a Cure Trail Ride
- July** 29th to 31st, Prowl the Sproul Hiking Weekend
31st Brandywine Rattlesnake Enduro Ride
- August** West Branch of the Susquehanna Sojourn
Eastern States 100 Trail Race
- October** 9th Eagleton Mine Camp Trail Challenge

TIMBER MANAGEMENT

Marked and sold, potentially active

- Sixteen timber sales were proposed in 2015. These sales have been approved and will be cut within the next two years, which is the typical length of a timber sale contract. The acreage, 1868, is above the district’s goal of 1500 acres. The district sold 17 timber sales in 2015 for \$1.5 million. The sales were both 2014 & 2015 timber sales. It was unique in that the district’s proposed timber sale acreage in 2015 matched the number of acres sold in 2015 considering the majority of the sold sales were proposed/marked in 2014. This consistency is key in sustaining the flow of forest products into the future.

Marked but not yet sold

- Five sales are currently marked and not yet sold. They are located on Marsh Creek Trail, Lebo Road, Panther Road, Red Buck Road and Dry Run Road. They encompass approximately 500 acres.

Proposed (not marked yet)

- Timber sales in the planning process for 2016 include: Dry Run Road – 150 acres shelterwood, Slaughtering Ground Trail – 2000 acres salvage overstory removal, State Line Road – 75 acres shelterwood, Marsh creek Trail – 300 acres salvage, Petes Run Road – 100 acres overstory removal, Cattaraugus Road – 400 acres shelterwood.

Regeneration Projects

- The district currently has 140+ deer enclosure fences with 15 to be erected in 2016. The average fence size is 60 acres and around 7,000 lineal feet. Height growth of the

regeneration is the determining factor on the life of the fence. The regeneration has to be out of the reach of deer before the fence can be removed. On average, district fences remain in place from 7 to 12 years. Twenty eight fences are scheduled for dismantling in 2016. The fencing program was established in 1996 and the majority of the 140+ fences were erected from 1996 to 2006 as foresters erected fences not only on current sales they were working but prior sales that needed protection from deer browsing, especially the Oak Leaf Roller salvage sales that occurred in the 1970's.

- Inhibiting ground cover in the form of mountain laurel, fern, and stripped maple is a huge problem in regenerating trees on the district. In 2015 herbicide (Oust & Accord) was applied to 365 acres to control fern on 7 sites, Mill Run (58 acres), Fork Hill Road (60 acres), Hicks Road (99 acres on 3 sites), and Eddy Ridge Road (64 acres). For 2016, 239 acres are scheduled for herbicide application and the average acres sprayed per year over the last five years is 400 acres. Mountain Laurel is controlled for seedling establishment in the form of mowing and one 50 acre site (Hyner-Slide Point Hollow) was completed in 2015. One block, 252 acres is scheduled for mowing in 2016 in the spring run area.
- Tree planting is conducted mainly on salvage timber sales where there is no regeneration present or live trees to produce seed. Also, trees are planted to increase species diversity and this usually occurs inside a deer enclosure. In 2015, 70,000 trees were contract planted. Species planted include: Red Pine, White Pine, Red Oak, and White Oak. For 2016 the district will plant 123,200 trees with the contract planter with the above listed species.
- Five timber sales were initiated in 2015 to salvage White Ash killed by EAB. Acreage total was approximately 200.

RESTORATION AND HABITAT PROJECTS

- Pennsylvania Forestry Association Tree Planting Ramble – An older failed clearcut from the oak leaf roller days will be planted with a mixture of seedlings. This will be the 27th year of this event.
- Janenne Rock Road Drivable Trail – Approximately 20 acres of abandoned strip mines will receive dredge material from Sinnemahoning State Park. Approximately 70,000 cubic yards of material will be removed from the lake at the park, trucked to the site and applied using Appalachian Region Reforestation Initiative (ARRI) techniques to the sites. One site was a Priority 2 strip mine that was rehabilitated in 2015 using funding from DEP. Current plans are to begin trucking dredge material in late summer 2016.
- Wildlife openings established in previous years continue to be maintained through a mowing.
- Japanese knotweed will be controlled along the Cattaraugus, Crowley, Kingston and Petes Run Public Roads.

- Susquehanna River Basin Commission (SRBC) will be constructing a passive treatment system to improve the water quality of Sandy Run. Construction is planned for July and August of 2016.

ROAD AND BRIDGE PROJECTS

- Two Mile Road Driving Surface Aggregate (DSA) placement from Kettle Creek Road to Robbins Farm Road.
- Right Branch Young Womans Creek Road Reclamation from township section to Seven Mile Road.
- Tamarack Tower Road DSA placement.
- Two pipe replacements with box culverts on Cole Run Road over Camp and Rock Runs.
- Pipe replacement with box culvert on Coon Run Road over Swamp Branch Big Run.

PRESCRIBED FIRE

- A burn plan is being prepared for the large scrub oak stand south of Allen Dam Road. This project is in partnership with the Pennsylvania Game Commission. Burn will occur in the summer of 2016.
- A burn plan is being prepared for an elk food plot in the Logway Run Strip Mine Complex. The burn and other needed treatments will occur in the 2016 field season.

INSECT, DISEASE, AND INVASIVE PLANT TREATMENT

- The staff treated 87 White Ash trees on six (6) sites in the hopes of saving a White Ash seed source from the devastating effects of the Emerald Ash Borer, **EAB**. The site locations are at Halls Run, Bakers Run, Cooks Run, Hyner Run, Rattlesnake Run, and Holland Run. These trees will be monitored yearly for EAB presence and will be retreated in the future. The district is currently writing an Ash Management Plan with guidance from the statewide plan.
- Aerial surveillance flights are conducted each year in June. Most forest insect pests are cyclical in nature, i.e. gypsy moth, and the flights enable us to get a sense of any population build up.
- Monitoring/control of Japanese Knotweed and Mile a Minute will occur if the need arises. Mile a Minute has been found on private land adjacent to state forest Land. The banks of the West Branch of the Susquehanna River seem to be a conduit for the establishment of invasive species on the district. Japanese knotweed and Mile-A-Minute Weed control will continue on the recently acquired Goodling/Knarr property in Chapman Township, Clinton County.

NATURAL GAS, OIL, AND OTHER GEOLOGIC RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

- Anadarko, Exco and XTO have no plans for constructing well pads along with the associated access roads and pipelines for 2016. NCL has not constructed a new shallow gas site since 2007. They have been actively plugging approximately a dozen wells per year. We expect those operations to continue into 2016. Dominion continues to upgrade their infrastructure within the Leidy and Tamarack Storage Fields. We expect several sites to be worked on in 2016.

Anadarko will begin pipeline restoration activities throughout their lease holdings.

Anadarko rehabilitated the Tract 252D Pad using Appalachian Region Reforestation Initiative (ARRI) techniques in the Fall of 2015. Plans are to plant the 4 acre site with conifer species in the spring of 2016. The 6,000 tons of stone that was removed from the pad was used for subbase material on Barney's Ridge Road. Anadarko plans to rehabilitate a significant portion of the Tract 231 Compressor Pad in 2016. The stone will be applied to roads in the Marsh Creek Trail area for subbase material. This site will also be restored using the ARRI method.

Anadarko is also planning on removing Pad B on Tract 344 off Shoemaker Road, Pad D on Tract 653 off Eagleton Road and a pad on private property off Beech Creek Road. The District plans on using the stone coming off these pad reclamation projects as sub base on several State Forest Roads in the general area. All the State Forest pads will be reclaimed using ARRI techniques and planted with trees in the spring of 2017.

- Exco rehabilitated Pad 10 near Allen Dam Road in the Fall of 2015. This pad was planted with a seed mixture preferred by elk and will be managed as a food plot. The pad is adjacent to a large failed clearcut and presents opportunities for expansion. These opportunities will be explored in 2016.

TOWER AND RIGHT-OF-WAY PROJECTS

Columbia Gas of Pennsylvania – Postponed the construction a 16 inch diameter pipeline on approximately one mile of State Forest Land. This was the first phase of a pipeline to State College to help facilitate the conversion of Penn State University's campus steam heating system from coal to natural gas. Associated with this project will be a buried electrical service into a new meter station. The company is exploring other options for meeting the demand at PSU.

Columbia Pipeline Group (Ni Source) – Constructed three new generator stations on the 1711 pipeline for cathode protection on the pipeline. The stations are on Beech Creek Road, Benjamin Point Road and DeHaas Road within their existing right of way. They

removed and restored the site of their current generator station near leased campsites on Benjamin Run Road. They will be conducting noise level testing for the new generator sites in 2016.

Superior Pipeline constructed their pipeline along the Snow Shoe Township portion of the Kato-Orviston Road and through the Logway Run strip mine complex to the Texas Eastern/Dominion pipeline corridor during the 2015 field season. There are minor issues that need resolved during the 2016 field season from this project. The company also provided approximately heavy equipment time to help prepare the Logway Run Food Plot.

Williams will continue planning for the 3.5 mile looping pipeline which is part of the larger Atlantic Sunrise project in the Summerson Mountain Area of Chapman Township. They are also planning a series of integrity digs on their pipeline corridor for the 2016 field season.

Betchel Corporation is currently evaluating the feasibility of building a large natural gas fired electrical power plant in Renovo utilizing the site of the former railroad repair facilities. If this plant is built it will require a 16 to 20 inch natural gas pipeline to provide the needed fuel. Three different pipeline routes would impact varying degrees of State Forest Land. An initial meeting was held with the company in the Fall of 2015. Discussions will continue through 2016 on the potential pipeline routes.

Enterprise Products conducted a major tree removal and trimming operation on their pipeline for aerial reconnaissance. A number of issues this project created will need to be resolved in 2016.

SPECIAL PROJECTS

- Several rights of way are in the process of being acquired from private landowners to facilitate public and administrative access to the Sproul State Forest.
- The Lewis, Goodling/Knarr and Gerfen Tracts which were all acquired in 2014-2015 are being stand typed, maintenance needs categorized and the boundary lines marked for full incorporation into the State Forest System.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

- Sproul Tree Planting Ramble – Saturday, April 30th, this event is sponsored by Pennsylvania Forestry Association and involves approximately 50 volunteers planting trees on selected sites.
- Numerous school programs throughout the year featuring fire prevention, Birth of a Tree, conservation field days and other programs for schools within the District.
- Leased Camp Owners Meeting – Sunday, November 27th. Meet with leased campsite

owners in a central location to discuss changes to the lease program.

- Participation in the Centre County and Clinton County Natural Gas Task Forces and associated sub committees. Meetings held throughout the year.
- Participate with the Clinton County Economic Partnership Tourism Committee. Meetings held throughout the year.
- A public meeting on the State Forest Resource Management Plan will held in 2016 on a date and site to be determined.

RESEARCH

- There are many research projects currently active on the Sproul State Forest. These projects range from habitat studies for various species to impacts from the Marcellus Shale Gas development. The Bureau maintains a database of all active and approved research projects.

MAJOR ACCOMPLISHMENTS FROM PREVIOUS YEAR

- June 2015 – Maintenance crew placed 7,417 tons of DSA on Hensel Fork Road
- July 2015 – Maintenance crew placed 4,375 tons of DSA on Eagleton Road.
- August 2015 – Maintenance crew placed 7,120 tons of DSA on Mill Run Road (north).
- August 2015 – Contractor repaired bridge on Birch Island Road.
- August 2015 – Maintenance crew finished major rehabilitation project on Bloody Skillet ATV Trail.
- September 2015 – Maintenance crews complete relocation of Donut Hole Trail.
- September 2015 – Contractor installed box culvert on Barney’s Ridge Road.
- September 2015 – Contractor completed rehabilitation of Tract 252 Pad D off Coon Run Road.
- October 2015 – Contractor completed rehabilitation of Exco Pad 10 near Allen Dam Road.
- October 2015 – Superior Pipeline Company complete majority of work on their pipeline project.
- October 2015 – Contractor installed box culvert on State Line Road.
- December 2015 – Contractor completed earth moving activities on 14 acre strip mine reclamation project in the Sandy Run Watershed.