

# **BUCHANAN 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 Buchannan 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**

- **Sweet Root Trail** - A trail connector is being evaluated to re-establish a connection in the Sweet Root Natural Area. This project has not yet undergone an environmental review, but if approved would reestablish a lost portion of the Sweet Root Road, used only as a hiking trail, that is present at both the top and bottom the Sweet Root gap. This project went through the SFER process and received approval on 03/28/2016. All the work for the project was completed by June and the trail is now open for public enjoyment.
- **Roaring Run Trail Improvements** - A trail reroute is being proposed for the Roaring Run Trail to move a portion of the trail that runs adjacent to the creek to higher ground where the water table and surface water will have less of an impact on trail conditions. This will hopefully allow the trail to be part of the multi-use trail system again and become part of a horseback route. This project is in progress and should be completed by the end of July.
- **Martin Hill ATV Trail Improvements** - A \$96,219 Community Conservation Partnership Program (C2P2) grant was received to reroute the ATV trail in Bedford County to move to eliminate 3 stream crossing and move the trail upslope to a better sustainable soil structure.
- **ATV Bridges** will undergo repairs as part of routine maintenance and to more safely accommodate the classes of vehicles permitted to use our trail system.
- **Sideling Hill ATV Trail Improvements** - The Sideling Hill ATV Trail along Tarkiln Trail will receive additional maintenance attention this year that may have a short term impact on users. The trail width will increase slightly to increase the riding pleasure and the trail surface will undergo some rehab work for safety and erosion control.
- **Town Hill Tract Infrastructure Improvements** - The development of a handicapped accessible hunting and wildlife viewing area is proposed for the Town Hill Tract. The plan is to use existing infrastructure from past timber sales and improve the area to allow access by a variety of mobility devices.
- **Blaknley Picnic Area Infrastructure Improvements** - In cooperation with the Bedford County Vo-tech, the fireplaces / chimneys located at the Blankley Picnic area will be repaired. This will entail the dismantling and reassembly of the stones that make up the chimneys.
- **Hardwood Trails Tract Infrastructure Improvements** - The new Hardwood Trails tract in located in the vicinity of Lake Koon and Lake Gordan in Bedford County that was acquired in 2014 will undergo assessment of current infrastructure and planning for recreation and timber resources will occur throughout 2016. Budget permitting, the development of a parking and access area is proposed to begin this year.
- **Hawbaker Tract Infrastructure Improvements** - The development of a parking and access area is proposed for the new Hawbaker Tract in Fulton County that was acquired at the end of 2014. The plan is, budget permitting, to use existing infrastructure from past timber sales and improve the area to allow safe access for hunters and other recreation.
- **Tower Road Infrastructure Improvements** - The Tower Road vista was rehabilitated in an effort to make the site more accessible for those with limited mobility.
- **Letterkenny Tract Infrastructure Improvements** - Two parking lots at the Letterkenny Tract were stoned with 2RC, to stabilize the areas.
- **Kerper Tract Infrastructure Improvements** - Three students from the Central Fulton High School are working on their Public Service requirements by rehabbing foot bridges on several trails in the State Forest.

## **TIMBER MANAGEMENT**

### **Previously marked sales that are likely to be active in 2016 include:**

- 02-2013BC02 Bear Valley Ski Trail sale located across from the Bear Valley Foreman Headquarters in Franklin County,
- 02-2013BC03 Grouse sale located off Tower Road along the Fulton Franklin County line,
- 02-2013BC06 Aspen sale located off of Betsy Road in Fulton County,
- 02-2013BC08 Sugar Mountain sale located off of Bark Road on Fulton County,
- 02-2013\_C09 Drum located off of Reddinger Road and Bowman Trail in Bedford County
- 02-2014BC01 Indian Grave 2 sale located off of Indian Grave Road in the area of McKees Gap in Fulton County,
- 02-2014BC02 Pump Station Road sale off of Pump Station Road near Winter Trail in Fulton County,
- 02-2014BC03 Burned sale off of Pittman Road in Fulton County,
- 02-2014BC04 Paddy Mountain sale off of Big Mountain Road, Bedford County,
- 02-2015BC01 Broad Mountain sale located off Broad Mountain Road in Franklin County,
- 02-2015BC04 Old Mid State Trail sale located off of Elbinsville Road in Bedford County.
- And 02-2015BC05 Enid sale located off of Enid and Thermostat Roads in Fulton County

### **Recent sales that are less likely but could potentially see activity in 2016 are:**

- 02-2015BC02 Allen Trail sale located off of Aughwick and Mellott Roads in Fulton County,
- 02-2015BC03 Blankley Rehab sale located of the Blankley Road in the vicinity of Cabin Trail in Bedford County,
- and 02-2015BC06 Lower Ross sale located off of Summit Road in Fulton County.

### **Areas under evaluation for future sales are as follows:**

- an area in the vicinity of Heath Trail in Fulton County that has abundant advanced oak regeneration,
- an area off of Forbes Road in Fulton County as the 2007 shelterwood sale has responded nicely and will be proposed for an overstory removal treatment,
- an area in the vicinity of Big Mountain Road in Bedford County is being proposed for an improvement treatment,
- an area in the vicinity of Shaffer Road in Bedford County to treat a deteriorating pine stand,
- and area off of Waltz Trail in Fulton County will be evaluated for a sale with accompanying herbicide treatment for problem mid-story species,
- an area off of Jerry Trail in Fulton County will be evaluated for an oak regeneration treatment.

### **Regeneration Projects planned for this year are as follows:**

- **Deer Fence Installations** - No fence installations are anticipated this year.
- **Deer Fence Removals** - 10 fences covering a total of 256 acres in Fulton and Bedford counties with 50,106 linear feet of fence will be removed over the course of this year. Removals are anticipated to begin in October and be completed by early 2017. The fences include the following areas:
  - Mellott Road – 5 fences, 63 acres



- Garlick Road – 2 fences, 94 acres
- Gabriel’s Knob Road – 2 fences, 53 acres
- Craford Trail – 1 fence, 46 acres

## RESTORATION AND HABITAT PROJECTS

- The 02-2013BC03 Grouse sale located off Tower Road along the Fulton Franklin County line and the adjacent sale, 02-2007BC03 CCO, that was previously harvested are part of a treatment area to create and promote habitat suitable for both Golden Winged Warbler and Ruffed Grouse. These areas have a low site quality for timber, but have great potential for maintaining quality habitat for both of these species. Post-harvest each of these areas will be treated with a cycle of prescribed burns to promote the desired habitat.
- Rehabilitation is being planned for water jacks at several locations along two creeks in the Buchanan State Forest. The proposed locations are in Trout Run in Franklin County near the Bear Valley Picnic Area and in Sweet Root Creek near the Chaneyville Forest Foreman Headquarters.
- 2 food plots were constructed/rehabilitated, a 3ac plot off Blankley Road in Bedford County, and a 1 acre plot off Hinish Trail in Fulton County. A combination of beets, turnip, rape, and clover was planted. An additional 1.5 acre food plot was herbicided and prepped for future planting, along the Blankley Road.

## ROAD AND BRIDGE PROJECTS

- **Hardwood Trails Infrastructure Development** - An access road and parking area will be constructed at the new Hardwood Trails tract located in the vicinity of Lake Koon and Lake Gordan in Bedford County. Once complete this will be the primary access for recreational opportunities in this area.
- **Keefer Road DSA Project** - Approximately 1.5 miles of the Keefer Road will have DSA (Driving Surface Aggregate), paver placed, between the Bear Valley Foreman Hq’s and Smith Trail. This project was completed as of June 2016.
- **Oregon Road DSA Project** - Approximately 1.5 miles of the Oregon Road will have DSA, paver placed, between RT30 and the Sproat Trail. This project was completed as of June 2016.
- **Oregon Road DSA Project Continued** - A DSA project has been submitted for approval, using Dirt and Gravel Road funds, to continue the paver placed DSA on the Oregon Road between the Woodridge Trail and Red Bank Trail.
- **Blankley Road DSA Project** - A DSA project has been submitted for approval, using Liquid Fuels funds, for paver placement of DSA on the Blankley Road from the intersection with Martin Hill Road and working towards SR326, for about 1.2 miles.
- **Oregon Road Culvert Replacement** - The replacement of two culvert pipes, through the Oregon Road near the abandoned PA Turn Pike overpass, is being planned and designed. The current plan is to replace the existing culverts with prefabricated concrete box culverts.
- **Culvert Replacements** - Several other small culvert replacements are anticipated to take place during 2016: Gilbert Road, Bark Road, Wertz Road, and Northcraft Road.

## PRESCRIBED FIRE

- **Horton Road Prescribed Fire** - The Horton Road Prescribed Fire located in Fulton County will hopefully be treated with a prescribed burn in the spring of 2016 to reduce competing regeneration and allow the oak seedlings to thrive. The burn plan is being developed and the site is being monitored for appropriate burning conditions. We achieved desired burning conditions in April and successfully executed this prescribed burn. We are monitoring the site and it seems to be responding favorable to the treatment. This area will receive systematic measurements several times over the next few years to continue to monitor the results.
- **CCO Prescribed Fire** - The CCO Prescribed Fire along Tower Road near the Fulton Franklin County line will hopefully be treated in the spring of 2016 pending burn plan approval and weather permitting. This burn is being conducted for wildlife habitat improvement for Grouse and Golden Winged Warbler. We were unable to treat this area with a burn this spring as further evaluation of the site lead us to determine that conditions are not favorable to burning at this stage of development.

## INSECT, DISEASE, AND INVASIVE PLANT TREATMENT

- Insect and disease monitoring will occur throughout the Buchanan in 2016 and any information will be submitted to Forest Pest Management.
- Aerial surveys for significant populations of defoliators, diseases, and mortality will be conducted in late June. The aerial survey was completed on June 28<sup>th</sup> with no areas of large scale defoliation from gypsy moth or other pest noted. But, neighboring districts had high populations of gypsy moth last year so we will continue to monitor for gypsy moth egg masses.
- Control efforts for invasive plants will continue at locations across the district in 2016. Spot treatments will occur at the locations of many current and recent sale areas for ailanthus, mile-a-minute, Japanese barberry, and a few other problem species. Ongoing Japanese barberry treatment sites along Oregon Road and Aughwick Road will be monitored and treated as needed. We plan to start a pilot treatment project for Japanese stilt grass at several timber sale locations and along one roadside. Mile-a-minute control efforts along mowed roadways and trails will continue to be priority treatment sites. Weevils have been released at various locations across the district in 2010, 2014, and 2015, and volunteer weevils have been found at several other sites. We will continue to evaluate sites for future releases.
- Emerald Ash Borer has been confirmed in our area since 2010, and most of the populations of ash have already been impacted. Surveys for any additional roadside or trailside ash mortality will be conducted and hazards will be removed.

## NATURAL GAS AND OIL DEVELOPMENT

- No gas or oil development is anticipated in the Buchanan State Forest at this time.

## SPECIAL PROJECTS

- The new Buchanan State Forest Resource Management Center broke ground late in 2015 and will hopefully stay on track to be completed before the end of 2016. This facility will be located in Knobsville which is 5 miles north of McConnellsburg along Route 522.
- The new Forest Maintenance Headquarters for Chaneyville is in the planning process and final plans should be completed in 2016.
- Supported local Bedford County PennDOT with equipment and Technical expertise at a location that typically piles up with woody debris and floods a portion of a State Highway.
- With help from the DFFP, provided a short chainsaw safety program/demonstration for the Fulton County PennDOT Safety Training day.

## OPPORTUNITIES FOR PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

- Buchanan State Forest Staff will assist the Pennsylvania Game Commission to provide a Bear Check Station at the Sideling Hill Forest Foreman Headquarters along Route 30 just east of Breezewood. Dates are pending the announcement of the 2016 Bear season. The check station is open to the public.
- The Buchanan State Forest Service Forester is available to provide technical assistance to woodland owners and educate anyone on forest management activities. The public can contact the district with individual questions or to schedule group events.
- The Service Forester partners with the Woodland Owners of the Southern Alleghenies (WOSA) to provide additional educational opportunities including an annual Woodland Owners Conference. Details on programs hosted in partnership with WOSA can be found on their web site at [www.thewosa.org](http://www.thewosa.org)
- The Buchanan State Forest regularly participates in educational opportunities such as school field trips, youth field days, scout groups, Envirthon activities, and other environmental events throughout Fulton, Bedford and western Franklin counties.
- The Buchanan State Forest now has a Friends Group that meets regularly and schedules work projects for improvements to the recreational infrastructure. Visit the Group's Facebook page at "Friends of Buchanan State Forest" or contact the district office for upcoming meeting dates.

## RESEARCH

- Researchers from Penn State University are conducting surveys on Buchanan State Forest this year as part of the State Forest Visitor Use Monitoring (VUM) report. The report is part of a 5-year agreement (2011-2016) with Penn State which will evaluate 10 State Forest Districts and 30 state parks. Pennsylvania is the first and only State Forest system to adopt this approach from the US Forest Service for monitoring recreation use. For more information on this study visit the Bureau of Forestry web page at <http://www.dcnr.state.pa.us/forestry/recreation/VUM/index.htm>. Recreational users on the Buchanan may encounter Penn State surveyors and are encouraged to participate.
- Researchers from Penn State University are conducting research on the success of oak regeneration 10-years after the harvest. This research is part of state-wide research project that looks at all forest districts that complete oak forest type regeneration harvests.

**MAJOR ACCOMPLISHMENTS FROM PREVIOUS YEAR**

- The Buchanan State Forest was selected by the PA Parks and Forestry Foundation as the Forest of the Year in May.
- 2 bridges on Keefer Road in Franklin County were replaced.
- A CCC era culvert on Abey Road at the edge of the Pine Ridge Natural Area in Bedford County was replaced with a single-span bridge.
- State Forest clean-up projects allowed for the gathering and removal of over 22 tons of scrap metal that was taken to recycling facilities.