

# Forbes State Forest

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## 2015 MANAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

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.

The SFRMP is implemented at the local level by district-specific resource management plans that aim to balance many uses and values of the forest, while maintaining ecosystem health and the wild character of the forest.

The purpose of this Management Activities document 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. For questions, comments or more information about this plan, please contact:

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**NOTE:** This document was prepared October 30, 2014 and will be updated after our yearly goal planning meetings in December 2014.

### RECREATION

- Improve sections of Beam Road, which is used by snowmobilers, equestrian riders, bikers, hikers, hunters, etc.
- Install new latrines at Laurel Summit Warming Hut.
- Finish installing chimney at Laurel Summit Warming Hut.
- Install interpretive panel and new sign kiosk at Laurel Summit Warming Hut.
- Armor wet and eroded sections of trail to include sections of Towhee Trail, Wolf Rocks Trail, Tebolt Trail, Spruce Run Trail, Lippos Loop, Picnic Area Trail, Silvermine Trail, Locust Trail,

Beam Rocks Trail, Roaring Run Trail.

- Brush back sections of trail including but not limited to Grove Run Trail, Hobblebush Trail, Summit Trail, Fish Run Trail, Tower Road Trail, McKenna Trail, Roaring Run Trail, North Loop, Shafer Run Trail, Cole Run Trail.
- Blaze sections of trail including but not limited to Grove Run Trail, Summit Trail, Hobblebush Trail, Wolf Rocks Loop, Roaring Run Trail, Dan Carns Trail, North Loop.
- Re-route fall line on Grove Run Trail.
- Install remaining gabions on Fish Run.
- Re-design parking lot at Route 31 to better accommodate snowmobile rigs.
- Clear dam on Northwood's pond, possibly fix overflow on pond at Painter Rock Road.
- Develop and install interpretive signing, picnic tables, and continue sprucing up the old CCC site at Blue Hole.
- Install interpretive panels at Mt Davis CCC site.
- Fix sill on lower CCC cabin at Mt Davis.
- Install parking lot at Torrance Tract.
- Fix stone bridge on Summit Trail.

#### **Current Commercial Activity Agreements**

- Snowmobile Touring (Seven Springs)
- Wilderness Skills (True North)

#### **TIMBER MANAGEMENT**

- Timber management will include stands identified in the landscape exam process as high priority for treatment due to high levels of natural regeneration, stand health issues, and prior and ongoing regeneration projects. This information will be used to meet our timber allocation.
- Timber sales that were previously marked and sold that are likely to be active in 2015 include:

The 81-acre Ecosystem Restoration Buffer timber sale on Mt. Davis along Christner and South Wolf Rock Roads which was marked to salvage dead timber from the 2008 gypsy moth defoliation, reduce hazard trees falling on the roads, and prepare the site for a prescribed burn in 2016 to promote natural regeneration, including oaks.

The 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.

The 48-acre Memorial Drive timber sale in the Braddock Division south of Memorial Drive and north of Little Sandy Creek was marked as a two-stage 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.

The 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 two-stage 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.

The 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 treated with a shelterwood cut, fenced to protect the growing seedlings from deer, and prescribe burned to kill competing vegetation to help oak seedlings grow.

The 128-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 two-stage 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.

The 33-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, was marked as a two-stage 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.

- Timber sales that are being marked and may be active in 2015 include:

The 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 is currently being 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 harvest to stimulate new seedling growth. By removing the overstory trees now, the seedlings will be free to grow into the next forest stand. This sale will be sold in the spring of 2015 and logging may start in the summer of 2015.

The 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 is currently being marked to remove the overstory trees to allow regeneration space to grow into the next forest stand. This sale area was previously treated 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. This sale will be sold in the summer of 2015 and logging may start in the fall of 2015.

- Timber sales that are proposed and may be marked in 2015 include:

The 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 is currently proposed to remove the majority of the overstory trees. Some of this sale area was harvested several years ago with an improvement cut to favor the healthiest trees and some of the area was harvested with a two-stage shelterwood treatment to remove some of the trees to allow sunlight to stimulate regeneration on the forest floor, favoring oak seedlings.

The 46-acre Orchard Removal timber sale in the Braddock Division about a half mile east of Elliottsville, 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 harvested with a shelterwood cut to initiate seedling growth and fenced to protect the growing seedlings from deer.

The 135-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 the first stage of a two-stage shelterwood treatment to remove some of the trees to allow sunlight to stimulate regeneration on the forest floor, favoring oak seedlings.

The 80-acre Half Pint Removal 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 cut 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.

The 90-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 cut to initiate seedling growth and some of the sale blocks were fenced



to protect the growing seedlings from deer.

A 200-acre area in the Laurel Mt. 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 cut to initiate seedling growth and fenced to protect the growing seedlings from deer. An adjacent area is proposed with the first stage cut of a two-stage shelterwood treatment to remove some of the trees to allow sunlight to stimulate regeneration on the forest floor, favoring oak seedlings.

- Several regeneration projects are planned in 2015 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 30 acres of Town Line Run timber sale west of Town Line Run and east of North Wolf Rock Road on Mt. Davis. Tree plantings are conducted after the harvest of the overstory trees to help supplement natural regeneration to form the next diverse forest.

Plant seedlings in previously harvested 12 acres of Reed Hill timber sale, north of Rt. 30 and west of Ridgeview Road on Reed Hill in the Laurel Mt Division. Tree plantings are conducted after the harvest of the overstory trees to help supplement natural regeneration to form the next diverse forest.

Plant seedlings in previously harvested 18 acres of Rattlesnake Removal timber sale, east of J. E. Miller Road and west of Furnace Run across from Motorized Campsite 1 in the Laurel Mt. Division. Tree plantings are conducted after the harvest of the overstory trees to help supplement natural regeneration to form the next diverse forest.

Dismantle and remove the 28-acre Rock Run deer fence about 2.5 miles on the west side of Rock Run Road about 2.5 miles from the state forest gate on Weaver Road in the Laurel Mt Division since the desirable regeneration has grown out of the reach of deer.

Dismantle and remove the 50-acre Falling Ice deer fence about 1 mile east from intersection of Vought Rock Road and North Wolf Rock Road on the east side of Vought Rock Road on Mt. Davis since the desirable regeneration has grown out of the reach of deer.

Dismantle and remove the 48-acre Sneaky Bobcat deer fence about half a mile east from intersection of Vought Rock Road and North Wolf Rock Road on the south side of Vought Rock Road on Mt. Davis since the desirable regeneration has grown out of the reach of deer.



Herbicide 38 acres of the previously cut Gas Well 201 timber sale at the headwaters of Mill Run east of Skyline Drive and south of Shepherd Road and north of Kirby Road to control the undesirable competing fern and saplings to give more room and sunlight to the established desirable regeneration to grow.

Herbicide a 32-acre area about a half mile south of Lick Hollow Picnic Area and east of Lick Run that is overrun with undesirable competing greenbriar in order to initiate seedling growth in anticipation of a future timber sale in this area.

### **RESTORATION AND HABITAT PROJECTS**

- 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 if necessary.
- Continue to work with the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission to daylight several rattlesnake gestation sites on state forest land where pregnant female rattlesnakes need to bask in the sun. These sites are in danger of growing shut with tree and shrub growth. We will be aiding the PFBC in cutting and herbiciding unwanted vegetation.
- Continue planning to restore a very large 600-acre area of state forestland that has stagnated in a Mt. Laurel dominated understory with poor quality overstory trees which includes dead oak from the 2008 gypsy moth defoliation. This area is on Mt. Davis east of South Wolf Rock Road and west of Christner Road and north of Laurel Run.
- Continue work on a 240-acre Woodcock Habitat Management Plan in the brushy areas east and west of Rt 381 near the intersection of Hunter Lane and Rt. 381 southwest of Kregar, PA in the Laurel Mt. Division. 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.
- Enhance some old well openings and timber sale landings on Mt. Davis by testing the soil, liming and fertilizing if necessary, and planting wildlife food plots with clover mixes.
- Continue to plant apple saplings and fence them to protect from deer around edges of openings on Mt. Davis and near the Mt. Davis maintenance shop.

### **ROAD AND BRIDGE PROJECTS**

- Complete three bridge replacements at Mt Davis, which are currently being constructed.
- Oversee two bridge replacements at Lick Hollow State Forest Picnic Area (currently in design phase)

- Re-design/improve entire drainage system on Jones Mill Run Road
- Rehabilitate three sections of North Wolf Rock Road: from its intersection with Camp Bucky Road: Remove trees/brush from road edge; remove stumps, chip brush, shape banks and remove rocks to aid mowing; replace culverts; top dress with 1000 tons 2A aggregate. Rehabilitate approximately 1 mile of North Wolf Rock Road in two other areas, near Tower Road. This will involve shaping, grading and scarifying the road surface and incorporating an additional 750 tons of 2A aggregate into the existing roadbed.

### **PRESCRIBED FIRE**

- We plan to conduct a prescribed burn on 15 acres on (previously shelterwood cut and fenced to keep deer out) Airglow timber sale a quarter mile south of the intersection of Laurel Summit Road and Locust Camp Road bordering the east side of Laurel Summit Road in Laurel Mt Division in the spring of 2015 in order to control competing vegetation, like black birch, fire cherry, and red maple, to allow existing oak seedlings to grow and gain advantage prior to cutting the overstory trees in a future timber sale.
- We plan to conduct a prescribed burn on 31 acres of (previously shelterwood cut and fenced to keep deer out) Potter School timber sale just south of Potter School Road (T-351) and just west of Stuckslager Road and east of Rt. 381 in the Braddock Division in the spring of 2015 in order to control competing vegetation, like black birch, fire cherry, and red maple, to allow existing oak seedlings to grow and gain advantage prior to cutting the overstory trees in a future timber sale.
- We plan to conduct a prescribed burn on a 53-acre area called the Bear's Den prescribe burn at the headwaters of Lick Run three quarters of a mile north from the intersection of Skyline Drive and Pine Knob Road on the west side of Skyline Drive in the Braddock Division in the spring of 2015 in order to control competing vegetation, like Mt. Laurel, huckleberry, and greenbriar, to promote oak and pitch pine regeneration. Pitch pine is currently a dominant tree in the overstory but when one dies out, there are none in the understory to take its place. Without fire, pitch pine will eventually be eliminated from the stand altogether. With a lack of conifer cover on the Forbes State Forest, it is desirable to maintain the pitch pine in this forest stand.

### **INSECT, DISEASE, AND INVASIVE PLANT TREATMENT**

- Insect and disease monitoring and reporting will continue in 2015 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.

- With the help of our Forest Pest Management section, we will monitor the 2014 treatment of 10 acres of hemlock 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.
- With the help of our Forest Pest Management section, we will monitor and potentially treat in June of 2015 about 1-acre of white ash with the chemical Tree-age to help stop the invasive and exotic Emerald Ash borer from killing white ash in the previously shelterwood cut Owl Lodge timber sale west of Savage Road and east of the state forest boundary on Mt. Davis. This chemical will also be applied on a 1-acre area north of South Wolf Rock Road and south of the state forest boundary about half a mile to the west of the Mt. Davis maintenance shop and a small area within Laurel Hill State Park. This will help protect the little remaining white ash we have 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 are working with West Penn Power and consultant firm, 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. We will be spot treating the mile-a-minute with an herbicide.
- 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 AND OIL DEVELOPMENT**

- We will continue to work with Dominion in the management of the North Summit Natural Gas Storage Field located in the Braddock Division. This large gas storage field has many wells and several pipelines on the Forbes State Forest. We are notified of projects for the coming year in late winter. In the spring, we will be directing Dominion to restore recently drilled gas wells UW-209 and UW-210 along Kirby Road with wildlife trees and shrubs around the edges of the well openings.
- We work with different natural gas companies to manage several gas pipelines and some shallow natural gas wells on the Forbes State throughout the year.
- Presently, there are no Marcellus wells drilled on the Forbes State Forest

### **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 February through October, dates and descriptions of these programs are advertised in newspapers, Facebook, and a bi-monthly program manual.
- Pondfield Open House, fall 2015.
- Many opportunities for public engagement are listed as they are planned on our Facebook page.
- We participate in County Fairs, Sportsmens 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 on the Forbes State Forest where hunters can acquire additional doe tags in order to help us lower deer numbers and reduce deer browse to enhance desirable seedling growth. We collected scientific data from 50 survey plots throughout the Forbes State Forest in 2014 and will collect data on ten of those plots in 2015, another 10 plots in 2016, and so on, in order to continually monitor if the DMAP blocks are necessary.
- Penn State University (PSU) researchers will 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, PA Fish and Boat Commission, and

Bureau of Forestry.

- West Virginia University researchers are conducting research on the population of rare 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.