

Tuscarora State Forest

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 forest district-specific plans that aim to balance the many uses and values of the forest through ecosystem management.

The Bureau of Forestry is committed to considering the views and perspectives of the public and various stakeholders. [Penn's Woods: Sustaining Our Forests](#) defines the strategic vision of the Bureau of Forestry, and states, "Public participation will be an integral part of the management of state forest lands." Public notification and input is solicited in many ways, including public meetings, newsletters, social media, advisory committees and participation in outreach events. The purpose of this Management Activities document is to communicate upcoming forest management activities, projects and events being conducted to implement the SFRMP on Tuscarora State Forest. This document will be populated in January to include projects planned for the upcoming year and then revised again in July to reflect any changes for the remaining 6 months of the year.

Districts strive to accommodate local-level interests in planning management activities and making decisions when it is possible to do so. Comments or questions regarding planned or proposed activities are most appropriately directed to the local state forest district initially. Should questions remain following local consultation, please provide them to PAForester@pa.gov. The Forest Resource Planning and Information Division will coordinate with the State Forester's Office to review the situation and provide feedback.

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

Gene F. Odató, Tuscarora District Forester
Tuscarora State Forest
4455 Big Spring Road Blain, PA 17006
717-536-3191
ra-fd03@pa.gov

Assistant District Foresters:
Stephen Wacker and Andrew Glodek

RECREATION

- CCC Fountain refurbishment – This project involves the refurbishment of what appears to be a water fountain made out of stone by the CCC camp located at Bell Furnace in Huntingdon County. The fountain is located in the area of the former County Line Picnic Area along West Licking Creek Drive. The intention is to get it back into working condition by fixing the stone work and the water line. It will be a nice attraction for state forest visitors.
- Flat Rock Trail – Due to significant erosion issues associated with portions of the trail this trail will be refurbished using BMP's from the bureau's "Erosion and Sedimentation Guidance for State Forest Management." The trail assessment form will be completed prior to developing a plan for establishing the BMP's. DCNR staff and volunteers will do the work by fall 2015.
- Campsite improvements – In 2014 DCNR staff and a volunteer assessed campsites in both the north and south blocks. Campsites were evaluated for accessibility, wear and tear, components, location, drainage, and surface material. Improvements will be made to campsites, our brochures and our web page and Facebook page.
- Auto Tour – This project involves the refurbishment of the existing auto tour stations and brochure. This 26 mile auto tour is located in the south block of the Tuscarora SF situated entirely in Perry County. The current 12 key locations need maintenance and new signs. An assessment of the route will allow district staff to add or subtract points of interest. The brochure will be updated with new and current information to better serve the public. The Facebook page will be updated so people can download the brochure at their convenience.
- The Hoverter & Scholl Box Huckleberry Natural Area has a nature trail with accompanying brochure that the District plans to update during 2015. The trail has several steps that need maintenance and the sign and map box need repaired. Some invasive plants in the Southeast end will also be treated.
- SORR Enduro TBD (late June 2015)
- 2nd Annual Tuscarora Ultra 50K; March 28th 2015
- Tuscarora Trails 50K TBD (Fall 2015)
- Tuscarora Off Road Weekend TBD (Mtn. Bike event in spring 2015)

TIMBER MANAGEMENT

Active Timber Harvests:

- 03-2013BC03 overstory removal West Licking Creek/Bell Furnace area on the Northwest slope of Blacklog Mt. Most of this area has been previously treated with fencing and herbicide to improve the size and composition of the advanced regeneration. The goal varies for each block but generally favors oak and yellow poplar regeneration. This sale will

also involve some road improvement and new road construction through the previously harvested area at the head of Wire Fence Hollow. Total 225 acres.

- 03-2014BC01 Overstory removal on the top of Blue Mt along Blue Mt Road, in the vicinity of 3 Square Hollow Road. This is a lower quality sale which is designed to favor early successional species such as pitch pine and golden-winged warbler. Total 213 acres.
- 03-2013BC01 Overstory removal and shelterwood treatments in the area of the headwaters of Spruce Run. This includes areas previously treated with a shelterwood and also some new areas and a short extension of the haul road. Active harvesting began in 2014. Total 182 acres.
- 03-2013BC04 Overstory removal near Houck Trail, off of Rt 274. This is an area previously treated with a shelterwood and the advance oak regeneration is now well established. 29 acres.
- 03-2013BC06 Overstory removal along Orchard Trail inside the fence and along Big Knob Trail which was also recently treated with herbicide to reduce the witch-hazel, striped maple and ironwood and improve conditions for oak seedlings. 61 acres.
- Due to upgrades to the Penelec distribution lines along Rt 274 to service the new pump station, trees along both sides of the highway will be removed in late 2014 or early 2015. This will include most of the Norway spruce lining the roadway.

Areas where timber harvesting is being proposed:

- Along Holderman Haul Road off of Wynn Gap road, a combination of shelterwood and overstory removal is proposed. The fence will likely be removed as well. 169 acres.
- Within Big Spring State Park/Picnic Area for hazard tree removal of dead and dying oak and hemlock.
- Along Laurel Run Road for ash pre-hazard tree removal.
- Overstory Removal within fences along North Slope Haul road and Cider Path.
- Just off Rt 274 west of Bryner Road. This area has a lot of ash mortality and harvesting would benefit early successional species such as golden-winged warbler and woodcock.
- We are investigating the possibility of a timber sale in Kansas Valley on the South side of Tuscarora Mt. near Robber Hollow trail. Herbicide treatment is also planned for 2015.
- We are looking at a future timber sale in Sugar Valley, but it will require more herbicide work to reduce red maple and black birch and increase the size of oak seedlings. This sale will also promote yellow poplar and sugar maple regeneration.
- Plans are to remove 4 fences in 2015: one on Blacklog Bench Road, one on Perry Lumber Co. Road, one on Amberson Ridge along Shermans Trail, one on Holderman Haul Road off of Wynn Gap Road.
- We may install one new fence in the Hoverter tract off of Rt 233.

RESTORATION AND HABITAT PROJECTS

- The Permanent Herbaceous Opening just off Gunter Road & 3 Square Hollow Rd will be renovated and seeded with a mixture of warm season grasses and forbs. It has already been treated in 2014 to remove and control invasive weeds.
- Several herbaceous openings will be treated with herbicides to control invasives and woody stems especially black locust including along Rt 274 near the District Office, Cedar Hill, Hickory Ridge, Skinner Ridge, Elk Hill Rd, and Back Hollow Road. This is in addition to the routine periodic mowing of herbaceous openings.
- The Allegheny Woodrat is prevalent in the Tuscarora SF. Work will begin on a guidance document by the bureau's wildlife biologist.

ROAD AND BRIDGE PROJECTS

- Summer 2015 – Driving Surface Aggregate placement on Laurel Run Road 1.75 miles total– Starting at the far eastern State Forest Boundary line and heading west approximately 0.20 miles west of the intersection with Elk Hill Road.
- Summer/Spring 2015 – Full depth reclamation of pavement on West Licking Creek Road 0.50 miles total– starting approximately 0.50 miles east of the west end of the road and going to the far western end of the road.
- Summer - 2015 – Bridge replacement on Steltzer Road.
- Summer - 2015 – Bridge replacement on Spectacle Gap Road.

PRESCRIBED FIRE

- At this time there are no plans to utilize a prescribed fire treatment for forest regeneration.

INSECT, DISEASE, AND INVASIVE PLANT TREATMENT

Regeneration Treatments:

- 472 acres are planned to be treated with basal spray herbicide treatments by contractors in the following areas:
 - 56 acres at the end of Chestnut Flats Haul Road, off of Gifford Rd.
 - 79 acres along Steltzer Road
 - 33 acres between Laurel Run and Second Narrows Road.
 - 84 acres near Robber Hollow trail and the Texas Eastern Pipeline
 - 13 acres off of Loop Road
 - 20 acres off of Spectacle Gap road

- 41 acres on Shultz Ridge
- 22 acres along Shearer Dug Trail
- 50 acres inside deer fence along Pine Ridge Road.
- Several sites throughout the District will be treated with herbicides to control high priority invasive plants including poison hemlock, mile-a-minute, Japanese knotweed, barberry, and oriental bittersweet.
- Hemlock trees will be treated with imidacloprid for suppression of hemlock wooly adelgid in priority areas.
- Due to the rapid progress of the emerald ash borer and the especially high risk posed by dead ash, potentially hazardous ash will be removed throughout the forest near roads, camps, parking areas, and trails.

NATURAL GAS AND OIL DEVELOPMENT

- Sunoco Pipeline – The Sunoco Pipeline Co. plans to install a new pipeline in the existing right of way. The ROW traverses the state from Pittsburgh to Philadelphia carrying natural gas eastward. A new pump station is nearing completion along the line in Toboyne Township, Perry County.
- Presently there are no natural gas and or oil well development activities taking place on the Tuscarora State Forest.
- It is expected that Sunoco Logistics Corp. will be proposing construction of a new pipeline in or beside the existing ROW which crosses the Tuscarora State Forest. An official proposal has not been received at this time.

SPECIAL PROJECTS

- State Route 274 Highway Beautification Project – This project involves the planting of Flowering White Dogwood Trees and Redbuds along both sides of the highway beginning at the state forest boundary by the district office and ending at the Big Spring State Forest Picnic Area. Several hundred trees have been planted since 2010. We will continue to use DCNR staff to place new trees in tree shelters along the highway as it approaches the picnic area and replace ones that have died since last year. Tree shelters will be removed on the trees that are growing out of the tube. The intent is to have a long row of flowering trees along the highway for people to enjoy.
- Wildflower plantings – Native wildflowers will continue to be planted in areas of high visibility and new bridges. The district has installed 9 new bridges and has planted erosion control grasses and native wildflowers on the construction sites. Two new bridges are scheduled to be built in the north block located in Juniata County. Wildflowers will be

planted at those locations after project completion. Native wildflowers will continue to be planted at the vistas, district office, Bryner HQ and ELC HQ.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

- Blain Vista – This vista was created to allow a view of the Sherman’s Creek valley and the town of Blain. The vista is located on the Conococheague Mountain in Perry County north of Blain. The vista is accessed by a trail off of Kansas Valley Road just below the Big Knob Tower site, one of the highest points in the state forest. A log landing will be improved to facilitate parking, a trail will be improved to allow easier access, vegetation will be cut and treated improve the view, a flat area with a picnic table will be established for visitor comfort. The environmental review has been completed for this project. DCNR staff and volunteers will work on this project together. Volunteers from the local area will be approached to help with this effort.
- Doubling Gap Vista – This existing vista overlooks the Doubling Gap in the Blue Mountain in Perry County and Cumberland County. This popular vista is often visited by people touring the state forest by automobile. It needs a new sign and vegetation control to maintain the view. DCNR Staff and volunteers will work together to improve this popular vista.
- Comment Cards – This district has implemented the comment card system at 6 key locations to date. There are two additional locations where it would suit to place a comment card box. The district will acquire two new plexiglass boxes and place comment cards in them to capture public input.
- Facebook page – The district’s Facebook page will be updated to include information about management activities. Timber sales, fence construction and herbicide treatments will be updated quarterly.
- DCNR Tuscarora State Forest web page – The district’s webpage will be updated to include 2015 management activities to inform the public.
- Throughout the year staff are invited to schools in the area for guest lectures, special programs, fire prevention programs, and career days.
- The Tuscarora State Forest is involved in many school programs throughout the year. These are important opportunities for interactive engagement that encourages appreciation and understanding of the forests of Pennsylvania. It also provides an opportunity to receive feedback not only from students but also from teachers, administrators and parents. Some of the more significant school programs that staff participate in each year are:
- Envirothons, one for Perry county and one for Mifflin & Juniata counties. The Perry County Conservation District Envirothon will be held at Big Spring Picnic Area in May 2015.
- The Tuscarora State Forest also hosts fourth graders from Perry County for an outdoor classroom at Hickory Ridge that includes grade appropriate information about a full range of

forestry subjects.

- Several elementary schools that participate in the Trout in the Classroom program with Trout Unlimited and the PGC come to the State Forest to release their fry and learn more about forest and stream interconnections.
- Spring 2015 – Volunteer Day
- Throughout the year 2015 – Patrols will be conducted for illegal ATV use on the state forest.
- Spring and Fall 2015 – 4 meetings with the Tuscarora Forest Property Owners Association

MAJOR ACCOMPLISHMENTS FROM PREVIOUS YEAR 2014

- August 2014 – The 28 year old district office was retrofitted with new siding to protect the building from carpenter bees and woodpeckers.
- August 2014 – The district office parking lot was repaved and drainage was improved. Paved parking areas were added near the district's fire building to facilitate parking the emergency equipment and ATV trailer.
- October 2014 – The 75 yr old West Licking Creek HQ building received a new roof, improved drainage, new garage doors, concrete apron, windows were boarded.
- September 2014 – The Borough of Mt. Union removed the old buildings and water system equipment at WLC.
- October 2014 – Completed work on the Search and Rescue Trailer. The trailer is equipped with either an ATV or a snowmobile, rescue trailer, radios, heat, lights, generator, first aid kit.
- March 2014 – Through conversations with the local F&BC WCO, Rich Morder, it was determined that there was a desire to improve trout stocking access in East Licking Creek. Local camp lessees and sportsmen were consulted and they eagerly supported the idea. In 2013 and 2014 improved access was developed at several key points to allow fish to be stocked at previously inaccessible locations along East Licking creek between Spectacle Gap road and Karl Guss Picnic Area.
- August 2014 – partnered with the Community Partnerships RC&D to educate the public about the problems with pollination in this country. Bee boxes, signs and Facebook information was provided.
- October 2014 – Comment cards were updated and distributed to 8 locations on the state forest.
- Year round 2014 – Trail cameras were deployed to capture wildlife and criminal activity. Wildlife videos were seen on international media outlets and Facebook. Photographs of criminal activity were used to apprehend and prosecute burglars.
- September 2014 – DCNR Ranger provided crucial assistance to PA State Police that led to the apprehension of an alleged murderer.

- May 2014 – The Juniata County Conservation District held the County Envirothon at Karl Guss Picnic Area.
- July 2014 – Two new vistas were built on Blue Mountain in Juniata County. The Short Mt. vista provides a view to the south and the Anderson Gap vista provides a view to the north.

RESEARCH

- Golden Eagle migration research – The Tuscarora SF cooperates with West Virginia University on a golden eagle migration research project throughout the winter months. Trail cameras and a bait station are situated on the state forest to document golden eagles migrating back and forth to Canada. Tens of thousands of photographs are analyzed by the researchers and some are shared on Facebook.
- Black Bear – The Tuscarora State Forest cooperates with the PA Game Commission to capture black bears as part of their ongoing research. Bear traps are deployed throughout the state forest beginning in April and continues into the late summer. Data such as overall health, gender, age, young of the year and numbers are recorded.
- The Oak Regeneration and Soil research project will continue at several sites across the southern part of the Tuscarora State Forest. It involves soil and foliage analysis and seedling monitoring. Evidence of this project includes digging soil pits, plastic fencing, flagging, and some tree removals. This project is funded by the Bureau of Forestry and involves principle investigators from the U.S. Forest Service and Penn State University as well as many cooperators.
- A second major research project involves a federally listed endangered species, *Scirpus ancistrochaetus* (northeastern bulrush). This project involves monitoring hydrology and increasing sunlight to improve habitat for this plant.
- As part of the Oak Regeneration Study in PA, Penn State has several sites they are monitoring in the Tuscarora State Forest. Generally these sites are at regeneration treatment areas such as fences and herbicide sites.