

Elk State Forest

2020 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.

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 Activity Plan is to communicate to the public about upcoming management activities, projects, and events that will be conducted to implement the SFRMP on Elk 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

- Lyme Easement boundary line, signage, and road improvements for public access
- Rehabilitation Work to Whitehead and Hunts Run Pavilions
- Thunder Mountain Equestrian Trail (Non-motorized shared use trail): hardening surfaces, stoning, signing, brushing
- Bucktail Path – Northern End Rehab (Brushing, Rerouting, etc.)
- Begin plan for potential interpretive trail at 3 Sisters
- Begin plan for snowmobile parking area and trail connector at 3 Sisters
- Continue yearly maintenance of all trails
- Organized Events:

ORGANIZED EVENTS MAY BE ON HOLD DUE TO COVID RESTRICTIONS

January/February: St. Mary's Snowmobile Association Dice Run

May: Sinnemahoning Sportsman's Fishing Derby in Brooks Run

August: Bicycle Race (Second Stage of County Triathlon)

September-Fall Weekends: Public Outreach-Hicks Run Wildlife Viewing Area
Gravel Bike Race

October: Ultra-Marathon (Third Stage of County Triathlon)

TIMBER MANAGEMENT

MARKED AND SOLD, POTENTIALLY ACTIVE TIMBER SALES

- 13-2017BC01 223 acre shelterwood West Hicks Run Road, Cameron and Elk Counties.
- 13-2017BC04 262 acre overstory removal and shelterwood Fee Hollow Road, Cameron Co.
- 13-2018BC01 210 acre shelterwood and overstory removal Rock Run, Cameron County
- 13-2018BC05 107 acre shelterwood Miss Oula Road, Elk County
- 13-2018BC08 181 acre shelterwood and overstory removal North Dividing Ridge Road, Cameron Co.
- 13-2019BC04 378 acre overstory removal and shelterwood Whiting and Sleepy Hollow Roads, Elk Co.
- 13-2019BC06 32 acre shelterwood Hooter Road, Elk County
- 13-2019BC07 73 acre shelterwood South Fork Road, Elk County
- 13-2019BC03 140 acre shelterwood and overstory removal, Steammill Road, Cameron Co.

PROPOSED, NOT SOLD YET

- 90 acre salvage shelterwood treatment and salvage clearcut Salt Run, Cameron County.
- 200 acre overstory removal Patterson Hollow, Elk County
- 79 acre overstory removal Briggs Hollow, Elk County
- 325 acre shelterwood off of Montour Road in Grove Township, Cameron County and Leidy Township, Clinton County
- 85 acre shelterwood in Lumber Township, Cameron County
- 140 acre shelterwood and overstory removal Steammill and Hackett Roads, Cameron County
- 80 acre overstory removal Doll Hill Road, Cameron County
- 146 acre shelterwood Buffalo Switch Road, Cameron County
- 153 acre shelterwood Bird Box and Crazy Woman Roads, Elk County

Other sales could potentially begin, but that activity can be hard to predict due to the length of timber sale contracts. Please contact the District Office at fd13@pa.gov or (814) 486-3353 for information on active sales.

REGENERATION PROJECTS

FENCE PROJECTS ON HOLD DUE TO COVID RESTRICTIONS

WOVEN WIRE FENCES TO BE CONTRACT INSTALLED

- 67 acre Jack Pine Ridge, Fox Township, Elk County
- 53 acre Chase Hollow, Elk County
- 23 acre South Whitehead Road, Cameron County

WOVEN WIRE FENCES TO BE CONTRACT DISMANTLED

- NONE

ELECTRIC FENCES TO BE INSTALLED

- NONE

ELECTRIC FENCES TO BE REMOVED

- NONE

HERBICIDE BLOCKS

- 74 acres McDonald Haul Road, Elk County
- 72 acres Marshall Farm Road, Cameron County
- 130 acres Canoe Run, Cameron County

- 128 acres Truman Area, Cameron County
- 102 acres Truman Area, Cameron County

RESTORATION AND HABITAT PROJECTS

- Blue Bird box maintenance – Maintain/Repair/Install bluebird boxes throughout the district
- Develop a Proposed Wild Plant Sanctuary in the East Branch Dam Area.
- Pad Gumboot Road to protect PA listed endangered plant
- Complete 3 Sisters Tract Plan for woodcock and grouse habitat
 - Apply for grant funding
 - Develop timber sale to create necessary edge habitat
 - Layout trail location, crib locations
 - Reach out to volunteers for crib and planting work project
- The District, in cooperation with the Pennsylvania Game Commission, maintains and enhances more than 40 food plots that encompass more than 450 acres that were developed, mainly for the elk herd, but used by many different species. Some of these food plots were initially funded through local and national wildlife organizations
 - Food plots to be sprayed, no-till seeded, and fertilized = 81 acres
 - Food plots to be mowed, maybe once or twice = 450 acres
 - Food plots to be limed = 46 acres
 - Vegetated roads to be mowed = 18 miles
 - Apple trees to be pruned = 10
 - Wood duck nesting boxes maintained = 6
- Staff cut aspen at Big Fill to regenerate the stand - approximately 20 acres
- The District will continue to locate, document and prune old apple trees.
- The District will continue to locate, document American chestnut trees.

ROAD AND BRIDGE PROJECTS

- East Cowley Run Road 3A base material added and 2A top dressing
- Crooked Run Road 2A placement
- Ridge Road DSA paver placement Crooked Run to Steammill on Ridge Road
- Ridge Road pipe replacement – Crooked Run north 1.5 miles
- Montour Road pipe replacement and drainage work
- Pennsy Grade drainage improvements

- Naval Hollow 2A placement from Briggs Hollow to end of road
- Miller Run access to food plot
- Various drainage improvements (pipe and under drain installation, stream bank stabilization, sloping, etc.) throughout district area
- Contracted road and bridge work: Boundary Line Road box culvert, Dents Run Road box culvert, Hicks Run Road box culvert, Straight Creek box culvert, Billy Buck box culvert, Cherry run box culvert, Fee Hollow culvert protection

PRESCRIBED FIRE

ON HOLD DUE TO COVID RESTRICTIONS

- 32 acres Whitehead Road, Cameron County
- 59 acres Montour Road (Sycamore Fences), Cameron County
- 60 acres Ridge Road (Red Pine Plantation), Cameron and Potter County
- 383 acres Ridge Road (McNuff and Hunting Shanty fences), Cameron and Potter Co.

INSECT, DISEASE, AND INVASIVE PLANT TREATMENT

- Review, update, and treat hemlock per the District Hemlock Plan
- Review, update, and treat ash per the District Ash Plan
- Review, update, and treat per to District Invasive Plan
- Planned Invasive Plant Treatment Areas Continue
- Work with PennDOT and McKean County Conservation District to treat Goats Rue along Rt./ 146 and 46 adjacent to state forest lands.
- Continue insect and disease monitoring from aircraft and ground truthing.

NATURAL GAS, OIL, AND OTHER GEOLOGIC RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

Severed Rights:

- Seneca Resources is proposing wells on current pads, but no new pads are anticipated.

TOWER AND RIGHT-OF-WAY PROJECTS

- NFG has several small new pipelines planned that will be located within existing right of ways with little impact anticipated.

- NFG is working through the FERC Process to potentially abandon (in place) their FM-100 line I the Ridge Road area.

SPECIAL PROJECTS

- Reestablished snake basking areas that were becoming overgrown.
- Rejuvenate aspen by cutting trees to regenerate stands
- Demolition of structures on the 3 Sister property and reseed
- Create habitat for woodcock and grouse and a trail on the 3 Sisters property.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

MANY OPPORTUNITIES ON HOLD DUE TO COVID RESTRICTIONS

- The District writes and disseminates weekly news releases to both papers and radio on proposed projects, completed projects and articles of interest.
- A yearly newsletter is created and sent to all camp lease owners and placed in local businesses.
- The District has a Facebook page.
- Recreational Stakeholders Meetings are held.
- Volunteer projects are planned and advertised for additional participation.
- Staff the Hicks Run Wildlife Viewing Area during peak visitation weekends.
- We attend the Bendigo State Park Winter Fest and have a booth.
- We host the Sinnemahoning Sportsman Fishing Derby.
- We attend the May Hollow Youth Field Day.
- We attend the Sinnemahoning Youth Field Day.
- We assist with the Envirothon.
- We host the Ultra Marathon which occurs almost entirely on state forest lands and we have a booth in town.
- We host the Gravel Race which is partially on state forest lands.
- We attend County fairs.
- We attend the Emporium Fire Company's fire prevention programs.
- We attend the Bavarian Festival.
- The District Office is open weekends on opening days of deer and bear season.
- We attend the "All About Nature" sponsored by the Cameron County Conservation District.
- We attend the Sportsman's' Clubs Meetings.

- We are on the St. Mary's Shade Commission Board.
- We sponsor and attend meetings and visit tree issues for *Tree City USA*.

RESEARCH

- Timber rattlesnakes – An assessment of the genetic variation and gene flow among timber rattlesnake populations throughout Pennsylvania.
- Timber rattlesnakes – Classify historic rattlesnake sites and provide accurate locational information and habitat boundaries and assess den viability and treats. In addition, blood samples will be collected. This is a collaborative project with the PA Fish and Boat Commission.
- Ginseng – Assessing American ginseng populations and sampling plant material for a regional study of genetic structure and habitat occupancy.
- Western Pennsylvania Conservancy Habitat Survey Completion in the Clermont Area.

MAJOR ACCOMPLISHMENTS FROM PREVIOUS YEAR

- Timber management on 608 acres. Producing 2,045,035 board feet and \$570,862.00.
- Created a wildlife viewing site along SR555 on the Elk Scenic Drive.
- 2 Educational panels were ordered, one at the Bucktail Overlook and one at the Hicks Run Canoe/Kayak Launch
- Worked on creating a new water trail map for the Bennett's Branch and Driftwood Branch
- Worked to create a working group with PennDOT and the McKean and Cameron County Weed Management Areas and Conservation Districts to focus on invasive
- Cleared and painted all trails in the district.
- We treated approximately 40 acres of invasive species - 22 different sites were treated. Treatment occurred for Japanese barberry, Japanese knotweed, goats rue, mile a minute vine, Japanese stiltgrass, bull thistle, and tree of heaven.
- Treated approximately 55 ash trees to protect them from the Emerald Ash Borer.
- Staff assisted with western wildfire suppression needs.
- Completed our District Forest Resource Management Plan and held a public meeting
- Rehabilitated Thunder Mountain Equestrian Trail (Big Elk Lick to Gray Hill Township Road)
- Replaced pipes on northern end of Ridge Road, Shortbend Road, Dents Run Road, and East Cowley Run Road.
- Assisted the public with information and education information.
- Invasive Plant Treatment Areas in 2019

- Hicks Run, Four Mile, East Cowley, Hoover Road, Pepper Hill, Fee Hollow, Ensign Run, West Hicks, Ridge Trail, Brooks Run, Bauer Hollow, Short Bend, Ridge Road, Norcross Road, and E. Branch Dam / Clermont Area