

BALD EAGLE STATE FOREST DISTRICT

2020 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 Activity Plan is to communicate to the public about upcoming management activities, projects, and events that will be conducted to implement the SFRMP on Bald Eagle 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

2020 Events

All 2019 recreational events with current activity agreements are expected to take place in 2020. Exact dates and times will be determined closer to the event, but will be in the same general timeframe as past years.

* COVID-19 has greatly affected DCNR Bureau of Forestry operations, including forest district activity planning. Within this plan you will notice many events and projects have been crossed out. This is due to COVID-19 related cancelations or the event/project has already taken place. The **yellow highlighted text indicates an update** to the original 2020 activity plan.

Organized Events

- ~~Durty Dabber's Great Adventure Dual Sport~~ Takes place the second week of June (450 riders). Saturday event in Bald Eagle & Tiadaghton State Forests and on Sunday in Sproul State Forest.
- PaTRA Seven Mountains Dual Sport - Takes place the third weekend in September (Poe Valley, Poe Paddy, and R.B. Winter State Parks to be impacted) (250 riders). **(Scheduled to take place in 10/12)**
- ~~Seven Mountains Conservation Corp.~~ (only Adventure Series Bikes) Takes place the last weekend in June. Lunch at Hairy Johns State Forest Picnic Area (200 riders).
- ~~Transylvania EPIC Mountain Bike Ride~~ Takes place over five days during the week of Memorial Day holiday (Rothrock State Forest and R.B. Winter state Park involved) (250 participants).
- ~~The Wilderness 101~~ Takes place in mid-July (200 participants).
- Bald Eagle Mountain Bike Association Jamboree & Ride - Takes place the first weekend in October.
- ~~Seven Mountains Enduro Mountain Bike Ride~~ Takes place first full weekend in September (150 participants).
- Boulder Beast - Takes place the first weekend in October (500 participants). **(scheduled to happen 9/19 pending legal review)**
- ~~Mile Run Challenge~~ Takes place last weekend in March (300 participants).
- Frozen Snot - Takes place the first weekend in February (200 participants).
- ~~Raven Trail Half Marathon~~ Takes place first weekend in September (200 participants).
- Dam Half Marathon - Takes place second weekend in September (500 participants). **(scheduled to happen 9/27 pending legal review)**
- ~~Relay for Life Horseback Ride~~ Takes place at Hall Mtn. Group camping area on last weekend in April (50 participants).
- Circle M Horseback Ride - Takes Place Memorial Day and Labor Day weekends). **(scheduled to happen 9/4-7 pending legal review)** (200 riders).

- Eastern Competitive Horseback Ride - Takes place the third weekend in October (75 riders).).(scheduled to happen August pending legal review)
- ~~Iron Cross Race - Takes place in the summer in both Tiadaghton and Bald Eagle State Forests (150 riders).~~
- ~~Wildfire Ranch Therapeutic Rides - Takes place throughout the summer months (50 participants).~~
- Overland Adventure Series Motorcycle Ride-Hundred plus mile Adventure Series motorcycle ride across multiple Forest Districts (75 participants).).(scheduled to happen pending legal review)
- unPAved Mountain Bike Ride – Takes place second weekend in October. Ride is divided into four segments using state, municipal, and state forest roads (700 riders). (scheduled to happen Columbus Day weekend pending legal review)

Recreational Events with Formal Agreements: On average, 20 events/activities that are small in nature are completed with a Letter of Authorization from the District Forester.

TIMBER MANAGEMENT

Marked and sold, potentially active

- Verizon Tower – This sale is 129 acres in size and located on the eastern end of the Shade Mountain tract along both sides of Shade Mountain Road in Perry Township. Small diameter red maple, black gum, witch hazel, and black birch have been treated and/or cut and treated with herbicide to prevent sprouts from becoming a competitive problem. The area is being treated with a shelterwood harvest. The sale was sold, but the logger was not able to carry through with the contract and so it was re-advertised for cutting in 2016. The sale has been awarded and cutting began in the fall (2018) and is active. We will monitor development of tree seedlings here and possibly erect a deer enclosure in a future year.
- Black Huckleberry Sale - This 140-acre sale is located along Pine Swamp Road, Penn Township, Centre County. It is all either overstory removal or two-age removal. The sale is completed, and the retirement work will be done in the spring of 2021. Plans for the sale area, a deer enclosure might be erected and a mixture of white and pitch pine will be planted spring 2021.
- Broken Truck Overstory Removal – Located on Old Sand Mountain Road, Gregg Township, Centre County. This sale will involve 57 acres of overstory removal within a deer enclosure. Plans could also involve a prescribed fire. This sale is currently active.
- Flat Gap Sale – Located on Black Gap Road in Miles Township, Centre County. This sale is will involve 12 acres of overstory removal and another 47 acres of shelterwood within existing woven wire deer enclosure. This sale is sold, but logging activity has not started.
- Conch Shell Sale – Nittany Mtn. Drivable Trail., West Buffalo Township, Union County. This will involve approximately 450 acres of mainly overstory removal. After the sale, plans include conifer

planting and prescribed fire to enhance mixed oak regeneration, scrub oak, and pitch pine. This sale is currently active.

- CACO Sale - Located on Buffalo Flat Road on upper flat of Little Mountain. This sale is 152 acres of overstory removal cut dependent on coppice regeneration with a deer enclosure planned at the end of the sale. This sale is currently active.
- For Pete's Sake Sale - Located on Greens Valley Road in Greens Valley. The 57-acre sale will be within two existing deer enclosures consisting of overstory removal and two age treatments. This sale is sold, but logging activity has not started.
- Aurand Sale - Located on the southeast facing lower slope of Buffalo Mountain off Whipperwill Hollow Road in Hartley Township, Union County. This 62-acre sale has 58 acres of overstory removal and 4 acres of buffer selection cutting going out for bid 2020. Regeneration is dependent on coppice regeneration to be protected by a future deer fence.

Marked but not yet sold

- Centennial Sale – Located on Middle Ridge between Green Gap and Lick Gap in Hartley Township, Union County and Spring Township, Snyder County. This 124-acre sale is comprised of 79 acres of clear-cut and 23 acres of two-age removal going out for bid 2020 two-age removal acres are within an existing deer fence. Plans include additional deer fencing, prescribed fire, and conifer planting.
- Kitten Ranch Sale - Rag Valley Road, Lamar Township, Clinton County. This 400-acre treatment area will involve 25 acres of shelterwood and 375 acres of overstory removal. 26 acres of removal will be inside an existing deer enclosure, which was previously treated with a broadcast herbicide treatment. The 25-acre shelterwood harvest was previously treated with a basal bark herbicide treatment. After the sale, conifer planting and additional projects to enhance regeneration will likely occur.

Proposed

- Shade Mountain Grouse Habitat - Located on the south side Shade Mountain Road on the flat of Shade Mountain. Approximately 250 acres are proposed for overstory removal with planned prescribed burns to encourage pitch pine and scrub oak habitat.
- Snowmobile Fence Removal - Located on Sand Mountain Road next to the Seven Mountains Parking area. This 34-acre sale is within an existing deer enclosure which has had one prescribed burn and a second burn is planned before the timber sale to reduce competing vegetation and to release the oak seedlings.
- Chipmunk Fences - Located off Blue Ball Road in Greens Valley Potter Twp. This sale is within existing deer enclosures and will be 88 acres of overstory removal

- Winklebleck Tram Sale - Located off Stony Run Road in Harley Twp. This 200-acre sale is planned to treat 19 acres with a two-age cut and 181 acres of shelterwood cut.
- Buck Rub Fence - Located off Hunter Road. This 57-acre sale is within a deer enclosure, planned to treat 12-acre buffer with a two-age cut and 45 acres with an overstory removal.
- Devils Hole Fence - Located off Siglerville-Milheim Pike. This 41-acre sale is within a deer enclosure, planned to treat 10 acres of buffer with a two-age cut and 31 acres with an overstory removal.
- RBW Sale - Located on Rt. 192, west of RB Winter State Park. This 65-acre sale is a planned buffer treatment with a two-age cut.
- Spruce Run Sale - Located off Spruce Run Road. These 78-acre is planned to treat 58 acres with a shelterwood cut and 20 acres with overstory removal cut.
- Shade Mountain Grouse Habitat - Located on the south side Shade Mountain Road on the flat of Shade Mountain. 250+ acres are proposed for overstory removal with planned prescribed burns to encourage pitch pine and scrub oak habitat.

Regeneration Projects

Most regeneration projects in the Bald Eagle State Forest are designed to reduce competition from other species to create conditions for oak species to regenerate and grow. In 2020 and 2021, we anticipate the following projects to be completed:

- Broadcast Spray Projects - Mountain laurel is the primary target species to be treated with a broadcast operation on 42 acres off Old Peet Bog Trail in Gregg/Potter Township, Centre County.
- Basal Bark/Cut Stump herbicide treatments – The purpose of these treatments is to reduce the amount of competition from low value, overtopping species, to advanced oak regeneration. In addition, these treatments allow acorns to be able to accumulate, grow and compete. In 2020, three different locations will receive this type of treatment, approximately 131 acres total. In 2021, only one project for 100 acres will receive this type of treatment.
- Deer Enclosure Fencing – Erected either prior to or after timber sales in areas where white tail deer herbivory will significantly reduce the amount of advance regeneration in the area. Wolf Trail Fence is 16 acres and the only one to be erected in 2020 due to funding issues. The location of the fence will be off Decker Valley Road near the Mira Lloyd Dock Center and Penn Nursery in Centre County. Two fences are proposed to be removed and should be completed by the end of March 2020. Three deer enclosures were removed before January 01, 2020; two off Sand Mountain Road and one off Old Sand Mountain Road. In addition, a fence on Round Top Road as well as one off Strong's Improvement Road will also be removed soon.

- Tree Planting – 8 tree planting projects will supplement or enhance natural regeneration already occurring. A total of 328,800 conifer seedlings are scheduled to be planted in April 2021. Most of the trees will be white pine, but pitch pine, pitch/loblolly, Norway spruce and Virginia pine will be planted as well.

ROAD AND BRIDGE PROJECTS

- Bridge replacements –
 - Snyder-Middleswarth SF Picnic Area Road over Swift Run
- Road Projects for 2020
 - Zimmerman Road - resurfacing 4,500 tons of DSA (driving surface aggregate) to approximately 2.5 miles of Zimmerman Road starting at Ohmeiss Gap Road travelling east.
 - Stony Run Road - resurfacing 6,500 tons of DSA (driving surface aggregate) to approximately 4.0 miles of Stony Run Road starting at the Pine Creek Hollow Road intersection (Four Winds Shale Pit) traveling south toward Sheesley Run Road.
 - Strongs Improvement Road - resurfacing 1,500 tons of 2A limestone aggregate to approximately 2.0 miles of Strong's Improvement Road starting at Treaster Valley Road and traveling north. (aggregate was delivered and stockpiled at designated sites. Lost funding to rent required equipment, so project will be delayed until funding is secured)

PRESCRIBED FIRE

- ~~Pipeline Prescribed Fire – Approximately 94 acres, located off Spruce Run Road and Grosses Gap Haul Road in West Buffalo Township, Union County. Purpose is to release existing advance oak regeneration and create favorable conditions to recruit additional regeneration with two separate deer exclosures that have been treated with a shelterwood harvest.~~
- ~~Big Poe – Approximately 55 acres located along Old Sand Mountain Road within a deer exclosure will receive a dormant season burn to release oak seedlings from competing vegetation.~~
- ~~Black Rattler – Approximately 35 acres of buffer area along Hunter Road will receive a prescribed fire to assist in reducing future potential competition from mountain laurel that was previously treated with glyphosate, but is resprouting. An approximately five acre portion will have received herbicide treatment only for comparison.~~
- ~~Faust Valley – Approximately 143 acres previously mowed is planned to keep competing vegetation at a manageable level. It is planned that this area will be part of a future landscape level Rx Fire.~~
- ~~Grass Mountain II – Approximately 57 acres previously burned in Snyder County above Hunter Road will receive a second fire to reduce vegetation that is beginning to compete with established oak seedlings in preparation for an overstory removal harvest soon.~~

- ~~Snowmobile Prescribed Fire~~ – Approximately 48 acres located along Sand Mountain Road in Potter township Centre County. This burn unit is within a deer enclosure, the purpose of the fire is to release existing oak seedlings from competing vegetation. This fire is anticipated for the spring of 2019.
- ~~An additional 502 acres prescribed fire is being planned for the area of Middle Ridge, Jacks Mountain, in Adams Township, Snyder County and Hartley Township, Union County, as well as approximately 600 acres in Potter Township, Centre County. The main goal of these projects is to restore the pitch pine mixed oak forest that was believed to have been prevalent centuries ago. This plant community is important to the ecology of the area because of the diversity and wildlife habitat it supplies. The pitch pine mixed oak forest is disappearing from the landscape due to the dramatic change in fire suppression policy in the early 1900's and the increase in white-tailed deer impacts. These fires are anticipated for the future pending appropriate funding.~~

INSECT, DISEASE, AND INVASIVE PLANT TREATMENTS

- District personnel will identify and treat invasive species giving priority to those areas located within and adjoining timber sales to minimize the spread because of disturbance.
- Plans are in place to treat numerous invasive plant species at multiple locations throughout the district through grant monies secured through the Bureau of Forestry's Ecological Services Section. Contracted applicators will focus on high priority locations and species.
- Ongoing monitoring by the bureau's Division of Forest Health and the PA Department of Agriculture for the potential of oak wilt in Greens Valley area.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

- Information is exchanged with the public through attendance at different events and fairs throughout the year. This includes the Beaver Fair and West End Fair. Numerous volunteers are engaged in activities such as the maintenance, improvement, or relocation of recreational trails; along with rehabilitation and improvement of state forest picnic areas. This work may be done by individuals, clubs, or through groups such as the Boy Scouts (Eagle Scouts). In addition, the district service forester and recreation forester work on a daily basis to educate the public regarding Bureau of Forestry goals, priorities, and regulations while listening to their concerns.
- Notification regarding district issues is accomplished through the district's web page, the district's Facebook page, press releases, and letters directly to concerned parties.

SPECIAL PROJECTS

- ~~Sand Mountain Fire Tower removal and creation of an interpretive demonstration fire tower site at the District Office.~~
- Removal of the former Laurelton Center's dilapidated greenhouse.

RESEARCH

- The district continues to cooperate with Penn State University, the PA Game Commission and USGS on the deer forest study in Snyder and Mifflin Counties within DMAP area 2108. Currently, PSU will be studying a basal herbicide site along Hunter Road, and a mowing and second basal herbicide site along Hoofnagle Road. The purpose is to compare and contrast with similar sites in the Rothrock State Forest and determine what effects various regeneration enhancement treatments have in light of reduced herbivory by white tailed deer.
- A long-term study, *Oak Forest Regeneration Study in Pennsylvania (ORSPA)*, has been ongoing in the forest since 1996. This Penn State University, School of Forest Resources, study includes 55 formerly oak-dominated stands, all of which were measured before regeneration treatments were conducted. The stands are presently at various stages in the regeneration process and have been periodically remeasured. The study has provided detailed information on pre-harvest oak seedling populations, the short-term development of oak seedling and stump sprouts, and understory conditions at the time of harvest. The study has also provided information on the effects of silvicultural treatments that was central to the development of the model-based guidelines for regenerating oaks in the central Appalachians under even-aged silvicultural systems. This study will continue to provide new information as stands are continuously monitored. The emerging information will be used to test and refine the guidelines.
- Pennsylvania Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit, Penn State University, is *collecting soil and common plant samples in conjunction with the current Deer-Forest Study* (noted above). This information will assist in studying the use of the forest floor indicators as predictor of site fertility for a variety of tree species. The information will also investigate linkages between soil fertility and whitetail deer health. The study ends on December 31, 2020.
- The Pennsylvania State University's Center for Private Forests has established permanent 1/10-acre plots within the Forest Demonstration Area. These will be used to teach landowners, interested members of the public, and others in learning how to measure plots for sampling forest density, regeneration, and to monitor change and growth over time.
- The Mid-Atlantic Center for Herpetology and Conservation amphibian and reptile survey was given approval to commence in March 2017. This data will update the current information in PARS and PNDI databases.
- *Long-Term Population Monitoring of the Timber Rattlesnake in Pennsylvania* study is being conducted by the Department of Biological Sciences, East Stroudsburg University (ESU), to devise a low-impact method of surveying populations that would allow the PFBC to monitor inhabitant's levels. ESU will work at these sites for as many as three full field seasons, or until the end of the summer of 2020.
- Bucknell University's former Civil and Environmental Engineering Department installed a gaging station on White Deer Creek in 1980 to predict the storm-induced sediment yield from highway construction. The station was abandoned in the late-1990's. Bucknell's Watershed Sciences and Engineering Program will refurbish the gaging station to being collecting 15-minute readings of air temperature, humidity, wind speed/direction, precipitation, water depth, pH, temperature total

dissolved solids, and turbidity. The study objective will *Monitor Changes in the Hydrology and Water Quality of White Deer Creek* and look for diurnal, seasonal, and annual, variations in weather, discharge, and water quality in the forested headwater region of the watershed. The refurbishing of the old gaging station is not expected to take long and can be completed by Spring 2018. We would like to collect data for the next 4 years, at which point we can reassess the project. March - April, 2018 - Restoration of the old gaging station will take place. Leaks in the roof will be repaired, the inside of the building will be cleaned and washed, and outside will be painted. May 2018 - installation of water quality sonde and weather station June 2018 - begin ongoing collection of data and regular maintenance of sondes.

MAJOR ACCOMPLISHMENTS FROM PREVIOUS YEAR

Large Infrastructure Enhancements - 2019

- Bridge replacements –
 - Riansares Road over Cooper Run
 - West Engle Road over Tunis Run
 - Winters Road over Cherry Run

- Old Shingle Road - resurfaced 4,000 tons of DSA (driving surface aggregate) to approximately 2.0 miles of Old Shingle Road starting 1.5-miles west of the Buffalo Mills Road (Mifflinburg water intake) intersection traveling west toward the Hook Natural Area boundary/Buffalo Flat Road.

- Pepper Run Road - resurfaced 3,000 tons of DSA (driving surface aggregate) to approximately 1.5 miles of Pepper Run Road starting at the paved township road travelling west toward the Low Place Road intersection.

- Pine Swamp Road & Poe Paddy Drive - resurfacing 6,200 tons of DSA (driving surface aggregate) to approximately 3.5 miles of Pine Swamp Road and Poe Paddy Drive, starting at Penn's View Vista on Poe Paddy Drive and traveling west toward the Siglerville-Millheim Pike intersection.

- ATV Trail Enhancements - added approximately 3 miles of Jacks Mountain ATV Trail expansion by resurfacing 2a limestone aggregate on the trail surface. The addition of a kiosk and loading ramp was also created in the new ATV parking lot.

- Roof Replacements - Roof replacements for Campsite #61 lean-to shelter, Bear Gap State Forest Picnic Area, Poe Mountain Fire Tower Cabin, Snyder-Middleswarth State Forest Picnic Pavilion, Rock Springs State Forest Picnic Pavilion, and (2) Hairy Johns State Forest Picnic Pavilions.

- The Hook Natural Area Foot Trail Enhancements - re-blazed and trail re-establishment on 14 miles of local district hiking trails, including replacement of a foot bridge crossing over North Branch of Buffalo Creek.

- Hall Mountain Group Campsite - addition of a pavilion and ADA enhancements to the Hall Mountain Group Campsite.