

# **BUCHANAN STATE FOREST DISTRICT**

## **2023 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:

Jason Hall  
Buchanan District Forester  
Buchanan State Forest  
25185 Great Cove Road, McConnellsburg, PA 17233  
717-485-3148  
FD02@pa.gov

## RECREATION

Buchanan State Forest offers recreational opportunities across 72,000 acres forest lands in western Franklin, Fulton, and Bedford Counties. Buchanan hosts picnic areas, scenic drives and vistas, hunting, fishing, and trails for hiking, mountain biking, horseback riding, snowmobiling, ATV riding, and cross-country skiing. Continual maintenance and improvement of these assets for sustainable recreation is an annual a priority.

- **Sideling Hill ATV Trail Improvements** – The Meredith Trail reroute was completed in 2022 and will be open to ride during the 2023 season. Updated maps will be coming soon. In 2023, maintenance staff will fix grading and reshape sections of the ATV trail along Old Fisher and Garlick Roads.
- **Martin Hill ATV Trail Improvements** – In 2023, staff will conduct routine grading along most sections of the trail and plan to seek funds to add shale to the Evitts Mountain section.
- **Bear Valley Multi-Use Trail System** – This trail system in the Bear Valley Division is being designed for mountain biking but is open for multi-use. It will connect to existing trails and make the trails in the Bear Valley Area much more user friendly. Building on the success of the 3 Bears Trail, part 4 of the first Environmental Review, the Little Mountain reroute, was completed in the fall of 2022. Additionally, the volunteer submitted a second Environmental Review to construct and connect trails on Broad Mountain to the other loops. The Environmental Review was approved and work on these sections will continue through 2023.
- **Buchanan Campsite Upgrades** – The Bureau of Forestry transitioned designated campsites to the Reserve America system in the fall of 2022. Buchanan State Forest will utilize funding to evaluate and make upgrades to campsites through 2023. We will begin by focusing on areas that have water or access issues.
- **Welsh Road DEI Observation Platforms** – The Town Hill Tract has an area that will be developed to provide an accessible trail and platforms for wildlife viewing. The project will include a roughly 5-acre opening that will be planted with a native seed mix to benefit pollinators and wildlife. Plans are being developed over winter and work will continue through 2023.
- **Evitts Mountain Tract Infrastructure Improvements** - Evitts Mountain Tract continues to undergo infrastructure assessment for recreation and timber. A seasonal parking area provides access during hunting season. Planning continues to improve and provide more access to this tract.
- **Rosenberry Tract Infrastructure Improvements** - The Rosenberry Tract, located in Franklin County near Upper Horse Valley Road, was acquired at the end of 2020. Budget and personnel restrictions permitting, plans are being developed to develop trail connections to Gilbert Road and Bear Valley Ski Trail and to create a parking access for this area. There is potential to have this trail included as part of our snowmobile trail as well as providing additional loop options for the local mountain bike users.
- **Organized Events** - The following events are proposed for this year
  - Special Activities Agreements / Letters of Authorization - various weddings, Scout group activities, Capital Hang Gliding and Paragliding Association to use several locations for their activities, Holy Cowans Gap 50k on State Park and State Forest Lands Memorial Day weekend
  - Commercial Activities Agreements - Wild Wanderer's PA to use parts of State Forest Land for guided youth tours and activities.

## TIMBER MANAGEMENT

Buchanan State Forest manages forest lands in western Franklin, Fulton and Bedford Counties. To meet our goal of balancing forest age classes and establish a productive, sustainable forest the harvesting of standing timber is occurring in the areas listed below. These harvests include shelterwood and overstory removal treatments as well as a few other treatment types. Shelterwoods are designed to encourage the growth of new tree seedlings in the forest to replace ones that died or have become mature and will be harvested. Overstory removals harvest the main canopy to release established tree seedlings to grow in the full sunlight and develop into the next forest stand. Most harvests listed below fall into one of these two categories.

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

- **02-2018BC01 Rock Oak** sale located off Bark Road near Rock Oak Road in Fulton County. This sale is 318 acres of various treatments. The sale includes 144 acres of overstory removal designed to release the ample regeneration in this area, 87 acres of first stage shelterwood treatment in an oak stand that will receive an accompanying herbicide treatment for problem mid-story species, and 87 acres of two-age road buffer treatment designed to regenerate oak.
- **02-2020BC02 MHN** sale located off Blankley Road, Bedford County. This sale is a two-age shelterwood to regenerate this 47-acre area back into a healthy oak stand. The site has received a prescribed burn treatment to remove an interfering midstory and an herbicide application in 2019 to eliminate fern.
- **02-2020BC03 Akersville Road** sale located off Akersville Road, Fulton County. This sale is a combination of a two-age buffer treatment and an overstory removal treatment to address mortality caused by anthracnose and regenerate this 125.8-acre area back into a healthy oak stand. The site has received herbicide treatments to manage the stiltgrass along the road edges and prevent incursion into the forest.
- **02-2020BC06 Summit Road Salvage 2** is part of a 5-sale complex located off Summit Road, Fulton County. This sale is a two-age buffer treatment to address mortality caused by anthracnose and regenerate this 110.3-acre area back into a healthy oak stand. The site has received herbicide treatments to manage the stiltgrass and mile-a-minute spots along the road edges and prevent incursion into the forest.
- **02-2020BC07 Summit Road Salvage 3** is part of a 5-sale complex located off Summit Road, Fulton County. This sale is a two-age buffer treatment to address mortality caused by anthracnose and regenerate this 172-acre area back into a healthy oak stand. The site has received herbicide treatments to manage the stiltgrass and mile-a-minute spots along the road edges and prevent incursion into the forest.
- **02-2020BC05 Summit Salvage 1** is part of a 5-sale complex located off Summit Road, Fulton County. This sale is a two-age shelterwood buffer treatment to address mortality caused by anthracnose and begin the process to regenerate this 167-acre area back into a healthy oak stand. The site has received herbicide treatments to manage the stiltgrass and mile-a-minute spots along the road edges and prevent incursion into the forest.
- **02-2021BC02 Fairview Trail** is a 99-acre sale that will be part overstory removal and part shelterwood located off Blankley Road, Bedford County. The overstory removal treatment will address mortality and release the regeneration scattered over the stand. The shelterwood area will be treated for competing vegetation and invasive species. The site has received herbicide treatments to manage stiltgrass and mile-a-minute spots located in various openings in the stand.



- **02-2021BC01 Anderson Trail** sale area is part of the 5-sale complex located off Summit Roads, Fulton County. This sale is an overstory treatment to address mortality caused by anthracnose and begin the process to regenerate this 193.4-acre area back into a healthy oak stand. The site has received herbicide treatments to manage the stiltgrass and mile-a-minute.
- **02-2022BC03 Cicada Salvage** sale is located off Route 30 near Waltz Trail in Fulton County. This sale is 88.7 acres of salvage treatments designed to remove mortality. The mortality occurred after the harvest 02-2019BC02 Artistry in Motion due to damage from 2021 cicada population. Removing this mortality should have minimal impact to the regenerating oak.

**Recent sales that are less likely but could potentially see activity this year are:**

- **02-2020BC08 Summit Salvage 4** is part of a 5-sale complex located off Summit and Enid Roads, Fulton County. This sale is a two-age shelterwood buffer treatment to address mortality caused by anthracnose and begin the process to regenerate this 94.6-acre area back into a healthy oak stand. The site has received herbicide treatments to manage the stiltgrass and mile-a-minute spots along the road edges and prevent incursion into the forest.
- **02-2022BC01 Browning Trail** sale is located off Abey Road in Bedford County. This sale is 49.5 acres including 23.0 acres of overstory removal and 24.4 acres of shelterwood. The overstory removal will release the established regeneration scattered over the maturing oak stand while the shelterwood area will increase the regeneration. This site has received herbicide treatments to manage stiltgrass and will be monitored for future treatment needs.

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

- **02-2022BC02 Ragged Mountain** sale area in Bedford County is being evaluated for a removal sale to treat the aging pine plantations and adjacent stands along Ragged Mountain Road across from the Pine Ridge Natural Area.
- An area around **Dickens Trail** in Bedford County is being evaluated for an overstory removal treatment to treat the maturing oak stand.
- An area around **Mount Zion Road** in Bedford County is being evaluated for an overstory removal treatment to treat the declining larch stand. Invasives species treatments will be needed prior to harvest.
- An area along **Allen Trail** in Fulton County is being evaluated for an overstory removal. This site had received a shelterwood treatment with the 02-2015BC02 Allen Trail Sale that was designed to promote the regeneration of the oak stand.
- An area along **Woodridge Road** in Fulton County is being evaluated for a shelterwood treatment to promote the regeneration of the oak stand.
- An area near **Winter Trail** in Fulton County with oak regeneration will be evaluated for a treatment.
- An area between **Jerry Road** and US Route 30 in Fulton County will be evaluated for a shelterwood treatment designed to remove mortality and an interfering midstory to allow for regeneration.
- An area along **Hemlock Road** in Franklin County is being evaluated for a treatment to promote the regeneration of the oak stand.
- An area along **Route 75** in Franklin County is being evaluated for a treatment to promote the regeneration of the oak stand.
- An area along **Gilbert and Old Bear Valley Road** in Franklin County is being evaluated for an improvement cut.



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

- **Deer Fence Installations** – No fence installations are planned this year.
- **Deer Fence Removals** – No fences are in place on Buchanan State Forest.
- **Herbicide Projects** – The following sales have herbicide applications included as part of the contract to reduce problem mid-story species: **02-2018BC01 Rock Oak**. District staff continue to treat the invasive species found in sale areas prior to harvest and any post-harvest recurrences. Significant treatments of ailanthus have been conducted in the Bedford County area and will be treated again this year at those sale locations. The district will request funds for contract treatments of two sale areas to treat a variety of invasive species prior to proposing harvests.
- **Planting Projects** –No planting projects are planned for this year.

**RESTORATION AND HABITAT PROJECTS**

- **Tuscarora Summit LSR.** - The Tuscarora Summit LSR is a wildlife treatment area near the Fulton/Franklin County line encompasses parts of the area around the Ernie Gish Road and Tower Roads. These areas were targeted due to the low-quality habitat that had been found there. The 02-2017BC01 Gish Rehab sale, 02-2013BC03 Grouse sale and the 02-2007BC03 CCO sale are being coupled with activities funded by a 2018 Drummer Fund grant from the Ruffed Grouse Society and LSR funds. With the funding we were able to complete a hand mowing block to remove the gum and birch components and a dozer contract that constructed the fire lines needed for our burn plans. These activities will allow us to establish a nearly 700-acre area of rotating early successional and Pitch Pine Scrub Oak ridge top forest that is good for many types of wildlife but especially Ruffed Grouse and Golden Winged Warbler. We were able to burn unit 4 in the spring of 2021 and unit 3 in the spring of 2022. Weather permitting, we plan to couple blocks together for additional burn acreage in 2023.
- The PA Game Commission’s **Deer Management Assistance Program (DMAP)** offers us the opportunity to help us focus deer management efforts on Buchanan State Forest and reduce deer browse to enhance desirable seedling growth. We plan to continue offering our **DMAP block 1884 which is in LU Lands in Bedford County** that contains all the state forest land east of the Chaneyville Forest Foreman Headquarters and West of Purcell. Scientific data is collected on survey plots throughout Buchanan State Forest that allow us to monitor the habitat conditions and determine if the DMAP blocks are necessary.
- Currently we have several wildlife habitat plots that we are maintaining. The occurrence of CWD in the areas around our state forest has complicated the planning, number, and location of these areas as we wish to improve wildlife habitat without creating congregation areas that encourage the spread of disease. We were able to seed several sites in late spring of 2020. We will continue working with the Ecoservices Section to implement treatment and seeding plans to create sites that will provide pollinator habitat, wildlife cover, and food sources. We had some good results for the second-year flowering and hope to see more this coming year.

**ROAD AND BRIDGE PROJECTS**

- **Culvert Replacements** - Several small culvert replacements are anticipated to take place during the year. None of these small projects will impact road travel for more than one day.
- **Road Rehabilitation** – Sections of road along Welsh Road and Garlick Road are anticipated to take place during the year. Impact to road travel will be minimal.

## PRESCRIBED FIRE

- **Oregon Road Prescribed Fire** - The Oregon Road Prescribed Fire located in Fulton County was treated with a prescribed burn in the spring of 2022 to reduce competing regeneration and allow the oak seedlings to thrive. We will monitor the results of the burn over the coming years.
- **Tuscarora Summit LSR Prescribed Fire Block** – The Tuscarora Summit LSR located in Fulton County will continue activity this year. Dozer lines were installed by contract in 2019. We were able to treat block 4 in the spring of 2021, and block 3 in 2022. The burn plan has been developed and will be updated this winter. We will monitor the site for appropriate burning conditions and anticipate that we will be able to apply fire to additional areas in 2023. The fire goal in this area is habitat improvement and conversion to a Pitch Pine and Scrub Oak forest.

## INSECT, DISEASE, AND INVASIVE PLANT TREATMENT

- Insect and disease monitoring will occur throughout Buchanan this year and any information will be submitted to the Forest Health Division.
- Aerial surveys for significant populations of defoliators, diseases, and mortality will be conducted in late June. The 2022 survey did not identify any areas of Spongy Moth impact or any other major issues.
- Control efforts for invasive plants will continue at locations across the district. 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 Aughwick Road, Oregon Road, and Blankley Road will be monitored and treated as needed. We plan to continue various treatment projects for Japanese stiltgrass at several timber sale locations and along several roadsides. Mile-a-minute control efforts along mowed roadways, trails, and timber sales will continue to be priority treatment sites. Weevils were released at various locations across the district in 2010, 2014, and 2015. 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 projects have been proposed at this time.

## SPECIAL PROJECTS

- The new Forest Maintenance Headquarters for Chaneyville plans were put out to bid in late 2020 and the contract was issued in early 2021. Construction started in mid-2021 and is planned for completion in 2023.
- Buchanan State Forest has worked with The Nature Conservancy to move toward the acquisition of approximately 400 acres in Metal Township, Franklin County for an addition to Buchanan State Forest. This parcel is on track to transfer to the state in 2023, thanks to the 2021 Community



Conservation Partnerships Program Grant. Plans will then be developed to create trail connectors and provide access to this parcel.

- Buchanan State Forest staff will continue to work towards the removal of the Kinton Knob Fire Tower and transfer road maintenance responsibilities back to the landowners.
- Plans are being developed to replace metal roof on the SH HQ's and Bug Shed.
- Most of the work has been completed to rehab the Single Engine Air Tanker (SEAT) Base located at the Bedford County Airport with assistance from Forest Fire Protection Division and the great cooperation of the airport authority. Remaining tasks include an external paint refresh to match the other airport facilities.
- We hope to replace our remaining 1981 JD grader with a new grader.

## OPPORTUNITIES FOR PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

- Buchanan State Forest Staff will assist the Pennsylvania Game Commission to provide a **Bear Check Station** at the maintenance building located just off Route 915 N on the right just after you turn from Route 30 just east of Breezewood. Dates are pending the announcement of the upcoming Bear season. The check station is not open to the public, only to hunters with bears to check.
- Buchanan Forest District 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 Forestry and Wildlife Conference. Details on programs hosted in partnership with WOSA can be found on their web site at [www.thewosa.org](http://www.thewosa.org)
- Buchanan Forest District staff regularly participate in educational opportunities such as school field trips, youth field days, scout groups, Envirothon activities, county fairs, and other environmental events throughout Fulton, Bedford, and western Franklin counties.
- Buchanan State Forest 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.
- We are happy to answer questions via phone and email.

## RESEARCH

- Buchanan Forest District is assisting the PA Game Commission by providing study locations in the CWD endemic area in Bedford and Fulton counties. The PA Game Commission, in cooperation with Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit at Penn State and the Wildlife Futures Program at Penn Vet, is conducting a multi-year [CWD Research project](#) from 2023 to 2026. Research will include fieldwork to trap and collar deer with GPS collars. Data collected will help the PA Game Commission understand the difference in the movements, behavior, survival, and causes of mortality between deer infected and not infected with CWD. Currently, nearly 1 in 5 hunter-harvested adult deer from this area are CWD positive. Collaring both infected and uninfected deer will allow us to study and compare movements, behavior, and survival. If you harvest a research deer, they will have a GPS collar around their neck and ear tags just contact the number on the ear tag for more information.



- 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

- **Sweet Root Natural Area Dedication** – In the spring of 2022, the Sweet Root Natural Area was recognized as part of the Old-Growth Forest Network. This designation will call attention to the important history and heritage of the Sweet Root Natural Area. Less than 1% of eastern forests have remained undisturbed long enough to develop and maintain old growth ecosystem characteristics.
- **Sideling Hill Snowmobile Trail Improvements** – Staff retired a section of the Sideling Hill Snowmobile Trail that continually caused maintenance issues due to wet soils. The trail reroute will follow a nearby old haul road. This reroute connects to several other old haul roads that have also been added to the trail to provide additional mileage and loop options. The Snowmobile maps and brochure were updated to show these new areas.
- **Big Cove Creek Habitat Restoration** - We worked with the Fulton Co Conservation Dist, Trout Unlimited, and Penn DOT on the Big Cove Creek Habitat Restoration (Kerper Tract) project to improve trout/stream/wildlife habitat as well as protect the Penn DOT Road.
- **Trail Improvements** - As part of our ongoing efforts to increase the accessibility of our recreational infrastructure numerous trails received maintenance including nearly all the trails that can be maintained mechanically and many of the footpath trails. Some the trails that received maintenance this year are as follows: Thermostat, Hinish, Peck, Cliff, Deer Hill, Bald Hill, Roaring Run, Friends, South Penn RR, Reichley RR, Snow Field, Huckleberry, Telegraph, SH Cross Country Ski Trail, Shaffer, Boundary Line, Sweet Root, Wasson, Refuge, Verbal, Pigeon Roost, Bear Gap, Fetters, Somerlot, Johnson, Carnes, Wright, Wertz, Sawmill, Bowman Trail, Jay, Lashley, Hinkle Trail, Hiram, Hines, Thomas, Valentine, Sally, Paddy, Big Mountain, Ash, Lawhead, Conrad, Rob, Red Pine, Silas, Heifer Lick, Cabin, Oak, Rose, Chaneyville Old School Nature Trail, Cabin Loop, Hemlock, Tobacco, Berger, Lehman, Smith, Green Spring, One Mile, Two Mile, Little Mountain, Forney, Nagle, Chad Strait, Deshong, and Dickey's Mountain.
- **Friends of Buchanan State Forest Improvements** – This year our Friend's Group worked on trail maintenance on Mitchell Trail in our Sideling Hill Division as well as Fetters Trail in the Chaneyville Division.
- **Buchanan State Forest Bear Valley Bike Trail Improvements** – The volunteer mountain bike group maintained the 3 Bears Trail that they completed in 2021 and completed their updates to the Little Mountain Trail. The constructed a series of switchbacks along the western side of the mountain that provides much easier access for hikers and hunters to the northern end of Little Mountain and creates a sustainable track for mountain bike use. In 2023, the group plans to continue their work proposal with work upgrades to the Broad Mountain section of trails.
- **Buchanan Forest District Supported Commonwealth Agencies** – The Buchanan Forest District provided a building for Pennsylvania Game Commission to use for the Bear Check Station and provided office space for Penn DOT to utilize during their very large resurfacing project on RT30.
- **Spring and Fall fire season activity** – In 2022 we reported a total of 24 fires. 21 fires occurred in the Spring for a total of 42.2 acres. The 3 fires in the Fall totaled just over 1 acre. Most of the fires were caused by debris burning. No injuries were reported. Around 40 inches of precipitation was recorded at the RAWS station located close to the RMC.