

BUCHANAN STATE FOREST DISTRICT

2024 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:

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RECREATION

Buchanan State Forest offers recreational opportunities across 72,700 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** – In 2023, maintenance staff graded and reshaped sections of the ATV trail along Old Fisher. In 2024, staff will conduct routine grading along most sections of the trail.
- **Martin Hill ATV Trail Improvements** – In 2024, staff will conduct routine grading along most sections of the trail. Limestone will be placed on to a section of Evitts Mountain Road which is part of the ATV and snowmobile trail systems.
- **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 and the Little Mountain reroute work is now progressing on the Broad Mountain Environmental Review. In 2023, most of the work to construct and connect trails on Broad Mountain to the other loops most of was completed. Signage and mapping will be finalized in 2024.
- **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 2024. We will continue to focus 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-acer 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 2024.
- **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** - 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. We are working on the environmental review and plan to have this trail included as part of our snowmobile trail as well as providing additional loop option 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, and Maryland Competition Riders hosting a licensed motorcycle ride on roads through state forest in mid-October.

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:

- **02-2020BC02 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.
- **02-2020BC05 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.
- **02-2020BC08 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.

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

- **02-2023BC08 WoodRidge** sale is located off Oregon Road in Fulton County. This sale is a 74-acre shelterwood to promote the regeneration of the oak stand.
- **02-2023BC01 Allen Trail** is located north of Cowans Gap State Park off the Mellott Road in Fulton County. This 74-acre sale is the overstory removal stage of the shelterwood treatment conducted with the 02-2015BC02 Allen Trail Sale that was designed to promote the regeneration of the oak

stand. The site has received spot herbicide treatments to manage the stiltgrass and Paulownia mostly found along the road edges.

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.
- **02-2024BC02 Winter Trail South** sale area is located off Pump Station Road in Fulton County. The 50-acre sale is being proposed for an overstory removal treatment to release oak regeneration.
- **02-2024BC01 BSB** is located off Bark Road, Fulton County. This area is being proposed as a two-age shelterwood buffer treatment to address mortality caused by anthracnose and begin the process to regenerate this nearly 100-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.
- 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 **Gilbert and Old Bear Valley Road** in Franklin County is being evaluated for an improvement cut.
- An area along **Hemlock Road** in Franklin County is being evaluated for a treatment to promote the regeneration of the oak stand.
- 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 **Route 75** in Franklin County is being evaluated for a treatment to promote the regeneration of the oak stand.

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** – 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 in 2025 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 Landscape Scale Restoration Project (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. To date we have completed burns on unit 4 in the spring of 2021, unit 3 in the spring of 2022, and units 5-6 in the spring of 2023. Weather permitting, we plan to treat unit 7 in 2024.

- 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 and have continued efforts to maintain and supplement these sites. Flowering had a good show this year with the number of species showing off was greater. Native grass plugs were added at two additional sites. We will continue working with the Ecological Services Section to implement treatment and seeding plans to create sites that will provide pollinator habitat, wildlife cover, and food sources.

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 Bear Valley Road and Gilbert Road are anticipated to take place during the year. Impact to road travel will be minimal.

PRESCRIBED FIRE

- **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. To date we have completed burns on unit 4 (spring 2021), unit 3 (spring 2022), units 5 and 6 (spring 2023). The current burn plan remains valid until March 13, 2026. We will monitor the site for appropriate burning conditions and anticipate that we will be able to apply fire to block 7 in 2024. 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 2023 survey did not identify any areas of Spongy Moth impact or any other major issues though some areas are being monitored for building populations.

- 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.

NATURAL GAS AND OIL DEVELOPMENT

- No projects have been proposed at this time.

SPECIAL PROJECTS

- The Forest Maintenance building at Chaneyville completed construction in 2023 and opened. Improvements and organization will continue throughout this year including the addition of a Solar Array.
- 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 Fire Cache Shed.
- We are continuing assessment of the new property along Carrick Valley Road and have plans to rehabilitate parts of the road in 2024.
- We hope to replace our remaining 1981 JD grader with a new grader.
- We are replacing two undersized and rusted culverts with new bridges along Oregon Road and Roaring Run Road. Closure notices will be placed on the website during the construction activities.

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
- Buchanan Forest District staff regularly participate in educational opportunities such as school field trips, youth field days, scout groups, Envirothon activities, county fairs, and opened other

environmental events throughout Fulton, Bedford, and western Franklin counties. Call the district office to arrange educational events.

- 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. Our office is staffed Monday through Friday 8:00 am to 4:00 pm except for federal and state holidays.

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

- **Chaneysville Forest Maintenance Headquarters Opens** – This building was bid in 2020. Construction started in mid-2021 and occupancy was granted in 2023. Staff were able to move and establish operations in the new building. This new maintenance facility offers a safe and efficient base of operations to service the state forest lands in Bedford County.
- **Sideling Hill Snowmobile Trail Improvements** – Staff added an addition of 1.8 miles to the Sideling Hill Snowmobile Trail system. A State Forest Environmental Review was approved in 2023 to add snowmobile trail from Rock Oak Road to Pittman Road using a combination of a recently completed timber sale area, skid trail, and a small section of construction. This construction and signage were completed in November 2023 just in time for the riding season. The Snowmobile maps and brochure were updated to show the new trail and can be found on our [Maps of Buchanan State Forest \(pa.gov\)](#) page. Additionally, portions of Garlick Road were graded and stoned in 2023.
- **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, , Sweet Root, Wasson, Refuge, Verbal, Pigeon Roost, Bear Gap, Fetters, Thomas, Valentine, Sally, Paddy, Big Mountain, Ash, Lawhead, Conrad, Rob, Red Pine, Silas, Heifer Lick, Cabin, Oak, Rose, Cabin Loop, Hemlock, Tobacco, Berger, Lehman, Smith, Green Spring, Little Mountain, Forney,

Nagle, Chad Strait, DeShong, Lincoln, Plank, King, Fore, Richmond, Pepper, Creek Crossing, Burd, Heath, Allen, Ellise, Burd Run, and Nagle.

- **Friends of Buchanan State Forest Improvements** – This year our Friend’s Group had two workdays and were able to complete maintenance work on Morris Trail in the Chaneyville Division as well as Laidig Springs Trail in the Sideling Hill Division.
- **Buchanan State Forest Bear Valley Bike Trail Improvements** – The volunteer mountain bike group maintained the 3 Bears Trail (est. 2021) and the Little Mountain Trail (est. 2022). In 2023, work has continued to establish two new trails - Broad Mountain Trail and North Mountain Trail. These multi-use trails are developed as to create sustainable track for mountain bike use. The 2024 plans will complete the construction on these trails, finalize signage, and create map to showcase these new hiking and riding areas.
- **Buchanan Forest District Supported Commonwealth Agencies** – The Buchanan Forest District provided a building for Pennsylvania Game Commission to use for the Bear Check Station.
- **Bear Gap Trail Road Rehab Project** – Bear Gap Trail had a dirt and gravel road rehabilitation project covering about 1700 feet of the road. The surface was built up with slate, two culverts were replaced, and about 900 tons of 2A stone was added to create more sustainable running surface.
- **Keefer and Bear Valley Road Rehab Projects** – The approaches to two bridges along Keefer Road were rehabilitated with the addition of geotextile and stone. While Bear Valley Road had two culverts replaced and about 2400 feet of the road was resurfaced in conjunction with this project.
- **Spring and Fall fire season activity** – In 2023 we reported a total of 43 fires. 41 fires occurred in the Spring for a total of 92 acres. The 2 fires in the Fall totaled around ¼ 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.