

CLEAR CREEK STATE FOREST DISTRICT

2024 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 Clear Creek 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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CLEAR CREEK STATE FOREST TRACT LOCATIONS

Clarion River Tract – Consists of approximately 2,040 acres in Millcreek, Highland, and Farmington townships, Clarion County and Barnett township, Jefferson County

Clear Creek & Callen Run Tracts – Consists of approximately 9,876 acres in Heath, Polk, Eldred, and Warsaw townships, Jefferson County

Kennerdell Tract - Consists of approximately 3,324 acres in Clinton and Victory townships, Venango County

Maple Creek Tract – Consists of approximately 1,116 acres in Barnett township, Forest County

McKeever Tract – Consists of approximately 201 acres in Lake township, Sandy Lake township, and Sandy Lake Borough, Mercer County

Wolf Creek Tract - Consists of approximately 65 acres in Wolf Creek township, Mercer County

RECREATION

Implement the following recreational trail projects

- Kennerdell Tract:
 - Repair erosion issues on the upper portion of Blunder Trail
 - Reroute Ridge Trail to Five Points Parking Lot
- Wolf Creek Tract: Establish Phase 1 of a new 1.3 mile, shared-use trail loop
- McKeever Tract: Install an information kiosk at the McKeever-Goddard Trailhead
- Clear Creek Tract: Trap Run Trail culvert removal

Other

- Maple Creek Tract: Improve ADA hunter access locations and designate parking areas
- Kennerdell Tract: New ADA single occupancy latrine at the Danner Primitive Camping Area
- Clear Creek Tract: Beartown Rocks Overlook railing will be replaced

TIMBER MANAGEMENT

Timber management goals are based on the district timber management plan that ranks treatment areas based on current and anticipated future conditions. Through stand examinations, treatment areas were chosen to advance the regeneration process and ultimately create a new, diverse, young forest.

The district's harvest allocation model is the foundation for developing the management plan. Overstory removal and shelterwood harvest acres were calculated to be on target at the end of a 20-year period. Meeting these allocation goals will help the district balance its age-class distribution while creating early successional habitat.

Active Timber Sales as of January 2024

Timber Sale Contract: 08-2021BC03 (Waltz Lane)

Locations: Callen Run Tract, SR-949 near Waltz Ln. and west of Callen Run Rd.

Harvest Type: 116 Acres Shelterwood, 25 Two-Age, 26 Selection = 167 acres

Volume: 518,550 board feet

Price: \$339,899.00

Purchaser: Cherry Ridge Forest Products

Timber Sale Contract: 08-2021BC04 (Bone Yard)

Location: Clear Creek Tract, South of SR-949 and west of Pine Run Rd.

Harvest Type: 62 Acres Overstory Removal

Volume: 433,667 board feet

Price: \$228,500.00

Purchaser: Brownlee Lumber, Inc.

Timber Sale Contract: 08-2022BC01 (Last Straw)

Location: Callen Run Tract, East of Callen Run Rd.

Harvest Type: 68 Acres Overstory Removal, 74 Shelterwood, 11 Buffer = 153

Volume: 821,063 board feet

Price: \$462,449.00

Purchaser: Northwest Hardwoods

Timber Sale Contract: 08-2023BC01 (McKinley)

Location: Clear Creek Tract, Spring Creek Rd. and Gilbert Rd intersection

Harvest Type: Two-Age Removal of 70 acres

Volume: 322,811 board feet

Price: \$256,702.00

Purchaser: Brownlee Lumber, Inc.

Timber Sale Contract: 08-2023BC02 (Mill Creek)

Location: Clarion River Tract, Mill Creek Dr.

Harvest Type: 1st entry Shelterwood Harvest of 130 acres

Volume: 165,774 board feet

Price: Out for Bid

Purchaser: N/A

Regeneration Projects

- There are currently 26 deer fences in the district and 4 of them will be removed in 2024.

RESTORATION AND HABITAT PROJECTS

- Monitor and control invasive plant populations on approximately 4 acres of native pollinator habitat, warm season grasses, and soft edges that benefit wildlife and insect habitat at the Laurel Fields, Clear Creek Tract
- Continue old field restoration by mowing and herbicide treatment of 4 acres of reed canary grass at the Wolf Creek Tract

ROAD AND BRIDGE PROJECTS

- Little Clear Creek Rd, Jefferson County: Driving Surface Aggregate (DSA) will be applied to 2.2 miles of the road in the upcoming year. The ideal time of placement would occur while the soil and road surface conditions are stable. DSA is applied with a tracked paving machine to a final compacted depth of 4 inches. The affected section of road will be closed to vehicle traffic until the material has adequately dried.
- Public Use Roads: Continual maintenance activities will occur on all state forest roads during 2024. These activities include road grading, culvert replacement, aggregate placement, and ditch clearing. During these activities the roads will generally remain open but may have short-term closures during the workday.
- Seasonally-Open administrative roads, typically gated and open to vehicle access only during hunting season, will have erosion and sedimentation control work done to address muddy sections of road, to remove standing water in low spots, and to provide for appropriate drainage.

PRESCRIBED FIRE

- Jennings Environmental Center: Assist the Bureau of State Parks in meeting their goals and objectives pertaining to the management of their remnant prairie through prescribed fire.

INSECT, DISEASE, AND INVASIVE PLANT TREATMENTS

- Herbicide and mechanical treatment of Ailanthus, Multiflora Rose, and other invasive species on the Kennerdell Tract with a concentrated effort in the Oil Pumping Station area

- Use mechanical and herbicide spot treatments to target the Japanese knotweed, oriental bittersweet, multiflora rose, and other invasive plant species populations at the Wolf Creek Tract
- Herbicide treatment of approximately 175 acres of invasive species on the McKeever Tract
- Treatment of approximately 37 ash trees to prevent mortality from Emerald Ash Borer

NATURAL GAS, OIL, AND OTHER GEOLOGIC RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

- General maintenance of oil and gas wells and infrastructure will occur throughout the year. No wells are predicted to be plug or drilled this coming year.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT:

The Forest District supports local schools, universities, the Clarion County Stewardship Committee, and the Mercer County Woodland Owner Association (MCWOA).

- “Caring for Your Woods Workshop” at Thiel College in Greenville on January 20th
- Clarion County Forest Landowners Conference at Clarion University on February 10th
- Second annual Field and Forest workshop with the Mercer County Conservation District on March 23rd and a second date in June
- Administer forestry tests for all our county Envirothon competitions in April
- Third annual Forest Bird Field Day in May with students from Brookville Middle and High Schools
- “Walk in Penn’s Woods” events on the first Sunday in October
- Present forestry information to local post-secondary education institutions, including Slippery Rock University and Butler County Community College
- Partner with state park environmental education staff to present tree identification and other forestry information to the public during state park events
- S-130 Spring Field Day with Slippery Rock University
- S-130 Fall Butler County Community College Training
- S-130/S-190 Spring Training: Clear Creek Forest District Conference Room, Clarion
- FI-110 Spring Training: Clear Creek Forest District Office Conference Room, Clarion

SPECIAL PROJECTS

- Collect data from Vegetation Impact Protocol (VIP) Plots on Kennerdell and Clear Creek tracts

RESEARCH

- Western Pennsylvania Conservancy has been contracted by DCNR to provide Natural Heritage Program (PNHP) with inventory, survey and monitoring of rare, threatened, and endangered species, plant communities and other ecological resources of significance on state forest land. The mission of the PNHP is to provide scientific information, expertise, and assistance to support the conservation of biological diversity.

MAJOR ACCOMPLISHMENTS FROM PREVIOUS YEAR

- Improved 150-foot trail tread with box steps on path to Beartown Rocks Overlook
- 140 feet of underdrain to prevent erosion and sedimentation into the Allegheny River was installed on River Road
- Installed trailhead signage for the McKeever-Goddard Trail and the McKeever Center entrance sign
- Annual Forest Bird Field Day with middle school students from Clarion and Jefferson Counties was conducted in May and presentations to approximately 60 students were given
- Five Points parking lot was resurfaced with 500 tons of 2A limestone and a new sign for the Kennerdell Tract was installed
- The bridge across McCutcheon Run at the McKeever Tract was redecked and improved
- S-130 Field Days for Slippery Rock University and Butler County Community College were conducted