

# FORBES 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 Forbes 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**

Some of the recreation-related improvement projects scheduled to be completed this year are listed below.

### **Trail Projects**

- At least 1/3<sup>rd</sup> of trails in District are brushed back and re-blazed
- Clear downed trees from all trails in District as necessary
- Groom Snowmobile Trails in season – December through March
- Mow roadsides of snowmobile trails
- Expand parking lot to LHHT shelters along Tunnel Road to settle winter recreation problem
- Grading, drainage, and re-surface work on Mountain View Loop Trail
- Continue to resurface Gary Run Connector Trail with stone
- Birch Rock Loop Trail construction in Roaring Run Natural Area
- Resurface 300 feet of Spruce Run Trail, between Laurel Summit Road and Towhee Trail
- Resurface Wolf Rocks Trail near campsite #1
- Remove pipe on Loop Trail

### **Other Maintenance Projects**

- Check for/remove hazardous trees/limbs at Motorized Camp Sites
- Check for/remove hazardous trees/limbs at State Forest Picnic Areas
- Maintain and paint 1/5 of boundary line in District
- 100% Design and Development of interpretive panels at Mt Davis
- Continue work to bring State Forest signs into compliance with Sign Manual

### **Organized Events**

The Forbes State Forest authorizes many organized events throughout the course of the year through Commercial Activity Agreements, Special Activity Agreements or Letters of Authorization depending on the request. A sample of these agreements are listed below.

- Commercial Activities Agreements (Seven Springs, True North, etc.)
- Special Activities Agreements/LOA's (Summer's Best Two Weeks, US Army LandNav at Quebec Run, Rolling Ridge Snowmobile Club, Presbyterian Church, Center Church, Boyce Middle School,

Penn Trafford School District, Derry Middle School, North Star School District, various weddings, Scout groups, etc.)

## **TIMBER MANAGEMENT**

Timber management will include stands identified in the landscape exam process as high priority for treatment due to high levels of natural regeneration, stand health issues, and prior and ongoing regeneration projects.

### **Marked and sold, potentially active:**

- The 121-acre Singing Veery Removal timber sale (#04-2016BC02) in the Blue Hole Division south of the Laurel Highlands Hiking Trail shelter area and west of Blue Hole Creek and east of Gary's Run was marked to remove most of the overstory trees to allow tree seedlings room to grow into the next stand of mature trees, favoring oak species. This sale area was previously treated with a shelterwood treatment in 2005 (Timber sale #04-2002BC05) to initiate seedling growth and some of the sale blocks were fenced to protect the growing seedlings from deer browsing in 2006. The fence was removed in 2015.
- The 89-acre Green Giant Removal timber sale (#04-2023BC02) in the Kooser Division north of Laurel Hill State Park and Beltz Road near the intersection of Red Oak Trail and Beltz Road was marked to remove most of the overstory trees to allow tree seedlings room to grow into the next stand of mature trees to include tulip poplars, red oaks, red maples, and sugar maples. Blocks 2 and 3 received a shelterwood harvest (Timber sale #04-2002BC07) to initiate seedling growth and were fenced in 2006 to protect the growing seedlings from deer browsing. The fence was removed in 2019. The western half of this timber sale was treated with herbicide in 2009 (Regeneration project 040834) to remove competing vegetation (hay scented fern and New York fern) in the understory to help desirable regeneration become established. Blocks 4, 5, and part of 15 received a selection harvest in 1975 and 1978.
- The 204-acre Canaan Church Removal timber sale (#04-2021BC01) in the Braddock Division east of Canaan Church Road and south of a large 500 KV power line right of way and just east of the intersection of Rt. 381 and Canaan Church Road was marked to remove most of the overstory trees in a previous 128-acre shelterwood treatment (Timber sale #04-2009BC04) cut in 2011 to allow developing tree seedlings room to grow into the next stand of mature trees, favoring yellow poplar. An area north of the previous 128-acre shelterwood was added to this timber sale to avoid access problems to this area in the future bringing the total sale acres to 204.
- The 162-acre Grindle Ridge Removal timber sale (#04-2021BC02) in the Blue Hole Division north of Grindle Ridge Road and south of Blue Hole Road just west of the intersection of Grindle Ridge Road and Blue Hole Road was marked to remove most of the overstory trees in a previous 158-acre shelterwood treatment (Timber sale #04-2007BC01) cut in 2012 to allow developing tree seedlings room to grow into the next stand of mature trees. The area along Grindle Ridge Road

had a selection treatment (Timber sale #04-1957BC04) completed in 1957 to remove a few select trees.

- The 149-acre Bathtub Removal timber sale (#04-2020BC03) in the Laurel Mt. Division south of Weaver Road just west of the intersection of Weaver Road and Rock Run Road was marked to remove most of the overstory trees in a previous 52-acre shelterwood treatment (Timber sale #04-2003BC04) cut in 2005 to allow developing tree seedlings room to grow into the next stand of mature trees. The area was herbicided in 2006 (Regeneration project 040509) to remove competing vegetation (hay scented fern and New York fern) in the understory to help desirable tree seedlings become established. The area was also fenced in 2006 to protect the growing seedlings from deer browsing. The deer fence is still currently in place. The remaining 97 acres were added to this timber sale to salvage mature black cherry trees showing signs of decline which will only get worse over time and may lead to tree mortality in the future. We hope to initiate a new healthier stand by removing the declining black cherry trees. This area was herbicided in 2022 (Regeneration project 042104) to remove competing vegetation (hay scented fern, New York fern, striped maple, and black birch) in the understory to help desirable tree seedlings become established.

**Marked but not yet sold:**

- None

**Proposed (not marked yet):**

- The 45-acre Stuckslager Road timber sale (#04-2022BC01) in the Braddock Division just north of Gibbon Glade Road bisected by Stuckslager Road will be marked to remove most of the overstory trees on both sides of Stuckslager Road in a previous 23-acre selection treatment block (Timber Sale #04-2003BC08) cut in 2007. This will initiate desirable tree seedlings to grow and eventually replace the mature trees that are being removed. Several overstory trees will be left along the road buffer for diversity and aesthetics. This area was herbicided in 2020 (Regeneration project 041902) to kill competing and invasive vegetation (multiflora rose, Japanese barberry, hay scented fern, and New York fern) in the understory to help desirable tree seedlings become established. A small portion east of Stuckslager Road was prescribed burned (PA-RX-04201605) (Regeneration project 041707) in 2018 to help stimulate oak seedling growth. In addition, most of the overstory trees in a 11-acre clearcut block east of Stuckslager Road will be removed to allow desirable tree seedlings (tulip poplars, red maples, sugar maples, and hickories) room to grow into the next stand of mature trees.
- The 86-acre Apple Hill Removal timber sale (#04-2023BC03) in the Kooser Division west of Jones Mill Run Road and north of the intersection of Cherry Trail and Jones Mill Run Road will be marked to remove most of the overstory trees in several blocks totaling 47 acres to allow tree seedlings room to grow into the next stand of mature trees. One block was treated previously by an improvement treatment (Timber Sale #04-1982BC01) and the other blocks by shelterwood treatments in 2006 (Timber sale #04-2001BC06) and 2009 (Timber sale #04-2007BC07). In

addition, most of the overstory trees will be removed along a 26-acre buffer of Cherry Trail to allow tree seedlings room to grow into the next stand of mature trees. This will establish a 150-foot aesthetic buffer along Cherry Trail, a district multiple use trail and gated administrative road. The 150-foot aesthetic buffer will include 30 foot adjacent to the trail as no cut except for human safety followed by 120 feet where several overstory trees will be left for diversity and aesthetics. Part of this site was treated with an herbicide application in 2009 (Regeneration project 040815) to kill competing hay scented fern in the understory to help desirable tree seedlings become established. And most of the overstory trees will be removed in a 13-acre block south of Cherry Trail and north of a small stream to allow desirable tree seedlings (yellow poplar, red maple, red oak, black cherry, and cucumber) room to grow into the next stand of mature trees. This block contains high concentrations of American beech trees infected with beech bark disease and black cherry trees infected with black cherry decline. We want to salvage the dying black cherry and American beech and regenerate this stand before further decline makes getting desirable tree seedling growth more challenging and expensive.

- The 250-acre Big Burn timber sale (#04-2024BC01) on Mt. Davis just south of the intersection of South Wolf Rock Road and Christner Road, west of South Wolf Rock Road and east of Christner Road will be marked to remove most of the overstory trees to initiate desirable regeneration to grow and eventually replace the mature trees that are being removed. This area has become stagnant with lower quality mature timber with little to no desirable tree seedlings in the understory due to the shade caused by thick Mt. laurel. This area has not been treated with any type of harvest in the past nor with any regeneration projects. The mountain laurel over a large portion of this area was mowed in 2023 (Regeneration project 042101) to help sunlight reach the desirable tree seedlings to initiate growth after the area is harvested and enable foresters to access the areas that were thickest with laurel to collect stand data and eventually mark the trees for removal. Mt. laurel was retained in the areas that were too rocky for equipment to mow, thus maintaining future wildlife habitat. Note, most of the overstory trees along the road buffer of Christner Road and South Wolf Rock Road that border this sale were removed previously in 2015 with timber sale #04-2013BC01.
- The 68-acre Owl Lodge Removal timber sale (#04-2023BC01) on Mt Davis bordering Savage road on the east side and the state forest boundary on the west side about one third of a mile to the west of the intersection of Christner Road and Savage Road will be marked to remove most of the overstory trees in a previous 62-acre shelterwood treatment (Timber sale #04-2006BC02) cut in 2009 to allow developing tree seedlings (yellow poplar, red oak, red maple, sugar maple, black cherry, and cucumber) room to grow into the next stand of mature trees. This area was herbicided in 2011 (Regeneration project 041023) to kill competing and invasive vegetation (hay scented fern, New York fern, and striped maple) in the understory to help desirable tree seedlings become established. 27 mature white ash trees within the sale area will be reserved so we can continue to chemically treat the ash to prevent them from dying at the hands of the Emerald Ash Borer.

- The 91-acre Lick Run timber sale (#04-2024BC02) in the Braddock Division bordering the east side of Pine Knob Road just a half mile north of the intersection of Pine Knob Road and Skyline Drive will be marked to remove most of the overstory trees in a 90-acre area that was herbicided in 2012 (Regeneration project 041125) to kill competing and invasive vegetation (black birch, witch hazel, hay scented fern, and New York fern) in the understory to help desirable tree seedlings become established. Soon after the herbicide treatment, this area was treated with a 97-acre low shade mechanical site preparation treatment (Regeneration project 041226) to remove small diameter trees and vegetation in 2013 to allow additional sunlight to the forest floor to help oak and other desirable tree seedlings grow. The mature chestnut oak in the overstory in this area are showing signs of dieback and mortality further prompting us to harvest the stand to initiate a new crop of trees to include red oak, chestnut oak, tulip poplar, and red maples.

### **Regeneration Projects:**

Regeneration projects are planned to address issues and problems that impede the development of desirable regeneration in areas we want to eventually begin to grow new seedlings in conjunction with future timber sales:

- Mow the 41-acre Fall Creek area (Regeneration project 042401) in the Blue Hole Division near Pletcher Road to reduce competing vegetation (mountain laurel, black birch, and black gum up to 5" diameter) to provide growing space for new regeneration to become established ahead of a planned timber sale in this area.
- Mow the 46-acre Beam Run area (Regeneration project 042402) in the Laurel Mt. Division 1.4 miles on Beam Road north of the intersection of Beam Road and Hall Spring Road to reduce competing vegetation (mountain laurel, black birch, black gum, witch hazel, and striped maple up to 5" diameter) to provide growing space for new regeneration to become established ahead of a planned timber sale in this area.
- Dismantle and remove the 26-acre Gobbler's Knob deer fence (Regeneration project 042403) in the Laurel Mt. Division about three tenths of a mile southwest of the intersection of Hickory Flats Road and Marshall Field's Trail since desirable regeneration has grown out of the reach of deer.

### **RESTORATION AND HABITAT PROJECTS**

- Continue to monitor the health of the mature trees and recently planted balled and burlap trees in the Mt. Davis State Forest Picnic Area and Lick Hollow State Forest Picnic Area and remove unhealthy trees when necessary. Trees in the picnic areas beautify the landscape and provide shade for picnic area users.

- Continue to work with the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission to daylight timber rattlesnake gestation sites on state forest land where pregnant female timber rattlesnakes must bask in the sun to give birth to healthy young rattlesnakes. These sites require regular maintenance to clear tree and shrub growth that would shade this critical rattlesnake habitat. We aid the PFBC with cutting and herbiciding unwanted vegetation.
- Monitor the ten acres of native wildflowers planted in 2023 to improve pollinator habitat in an opening on Laurel Ridge State Park along the east side of Fire Tower Road just north of Koring Trail.
- Plant several old log landings with native wildflowers to create pollinator habitat this year and monitor several old logging skid roads rehabilitated in 2023 on the Barron Tract.
- Work with Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) on the discoloration/staining in Blue Hole Creek discovered near the end of 2021. Water samples are being analyzed and the source causing the discoloration is being investigated.
- Monitor the Large Woody Material (LWM) in-stream habitat improvement project for a portion of a 6,739 ft section of Camp Run starting at the intersection of Camp Run and Indian Creek and going east to the State Forest boundary east of Mt. Streams Trail completed in 2022. Camp Run is an Exceptional Value (EV) and Class A Trout stream that supports a population of wild trout of size/abundance to support a long-term and rewarding sport fishery and is a PFBC 'Priority 1' stream for habitat improvement. The project goal was to restore the natural ecological conditions of both the riparian and aquatic communities of Camp Run by restoring the large woody material component to the stream. This project improved stream habitat, riparian vegetation development, and helped restore the hydrology by assisting the connection of the stream to the floodplain. The woody material creates a diversity of habitats within the stream. Carefully selected trees were cut along stream bank into the waterway to improve aquatic life with a target of four 'structures' of multiple pieces of LWM per 100 ft of stream length.
- Finish a Large Woody Material (LWM) in-stream habitat improvement project for a portion of a 11,475 ft section of Jones Mill Run starting at Koring Trail and going south to the State Forest boundary started in 2023. Jones Mill Run is an Exceptional Value (EV) and seasonally trout stocked stream and is a PFBC 'Priority 2' stream for habitat improvement. The project goal is to restore the natural ecological conditions of both the riparian and aquatic communities of Jones Mill Run by restoring the large woody material component to the stream. This project will improve stream habitat, riparian vegetation development, and help restore the hydrology by assisting the connection of the stream to the floodplain. The woody material will result in a diversity of habitats within the stream. Carefully selected trees will be cut along stream bank into the waterway to improve aquatic life with a target of four 'structures' of multiple pieces of LWM per 100 ft of stream length. This project can be worked on from Jan. 1<sup>st</sup> to Feb. 28<sup>th</sup> and from June 16<sup>th</sup> to Sept. 30<sup>th</sup>.

- Continue to assist Trout Unlimited and Linn Run State Park with placing lime into Linn Run on Laurel Mt. to improve the water quality.
- Continue to plant apple tree saplings, when available, around edges of wildlife openings. Newly planted apple trees are fenced to prevent unwanted deer browse.
- Continue to mow herbaceous openings throughout the Forbes state forestland to enhance wildlife foraging habitat.
- Continue to monitor and maintain two bat boxes on state forestland to provide brooding areas for bats. Bat numbers have plummeted due to a disease known as White Nose Syndrome.
- Monitor one acre of native wildflowers planted to improve pollinator habitat in an opening in the Mountain Streams Woodcock Habitat Management Area near the Hunter Lane bridge.
- Continue to work with the Pennsylvania Game Commission (PGC) to enhance woodrat habitat around selected rock outcrops in the Torrance Tract.
- Continue to gate the entrances to Barton Cave, Lemon Hole Cave, and Coon Cave on state forestland during the winter months to help protect hibernating bats from disturbance and possible complications with White Nose Syndrome.
- Continue to conduct Timber Stand Improvements (TSI) in selected previously harvested 20–25-year-old state forest stands. We pick out the best quality highly desirable young trees we want to form the next mature forest and cut the lesser quality trees to give the best trees more room and sunlight to grow.
- Continue to work with Laurel Hill State Park to identify and remove unhealthy trees.
- Continue to maintain two deer fence enclosures and three smaller fence cages protecting rare plants on the Forbes State Forest.
- Erect a deer fence enclosure on the Forbes State Forest to protect a native parasitic shrub that is rare in the eastern United States.
- Work with DEP's Bureau of Abandoned Mine Reclamation and Powdermill Nature Reserve operated by the Carnegie Museum of Natural History to renovate and expand the Laurel Run acid mine drainage (AMD) passive treatment system along the headwaters of Laurel Run on the Forbes State Forest in Westmoreland County east of Rt. 381 and north of Felgar Road constructed back in 1997. This will improve water quality and aquatic habitat in Laurel Run.

## ROAD AND BRIDGE PROJECTS

- Maintain all roads in District including grading, ditch work and turnouts, culverts and leaf blowing



- Grade and resurface road to Shafer Run warming hut with 2A modified
- Grade and resurface Lick Hollow Picnic Area Road with 2A modified
- Continue to resurface Locust Camp Road with stone past shale pit
- Replace several culverts on South Wolf Rock and Blue Hole Roads
- Rebuild headwalls and tail walls on culverts on Blue Hole and Glade Road
- Install 24" culvert on access road to Fall Run CCC site and replace headwall
- Grade and compact district joint-use gravel roads
- Open hunter access roads for rifle bear and deer seasons
- Open fisherman access road in Barron Tract for trout season and fish stocking

## **PRESCRIBED FIRE**

- No prescribed fires are planned on the Forbes State Forest in 2024.

## **INSECT, DISEASE, AND INVASIVE PLANT TREATMENTS**

- Insect and disease monitoring and reporting will continue in 2024 and will focus on the priority list provided by the Division of Forest Health (FH). Our District forest insect and disease coordinator will forward tree insect and disease reports to our FH Area Specialist for potential investigation and possible follow-up control. Aerial survey flight(s) will be conducted in late June to detect possible problem areas as well.
- We will monitor the 2014 treatment of approximately 111 hemlock (10 acres) trees for possible re-treatment in 2024. This treatment will help stop the invasive Hemlock Woolly Adelgid from killing hemlock trees along the beautiful Shirey Run about one mile east from the intersection of Shirey Run and Township Road (T-972) in the Torrance Tract. This will help protect this critical streamside forest and wildlife habitat.
- In 2024, we will treat several white ash trees we treated first in 2015, and then again in 2018, to help stop the invasive and exotic Emerald Ash borer from killing white ash in five locations on the Forbes State Forest: South Wolf Rock Road, Owl Lodge Sale, Mt View Look Trail, Brethren Summit Road, and Forbes District Office. These trees must be re-treated every three years to keep them alive. This project protects a very small number of white ash on the Forbes State Forest from dying and creates a future white ash seed source. The Emerald Ash Borer has killed almost all the ash trees across our district, the Commonwealth of PA, and across the entire natural range of ash trees in the United States.

- Other unwanted invasive species such as multi-flora rose, tree-of-heaven, mile-a-minute, Japanese barberry, oriental bittersweet, autumn olive, bush honeysuckle, Japanese knotweed, garlic mustard, common privet, Japanese honeysuckle, Japanese stilt grass, reed canary grass, Canada thistle, bull thistle, crown vetch are all present to some degree on the Forbes State Forest and are continually monitored for future treatment. Mile-a-minute was more recently discovered on the Forbes state forest in the Braddock Division and has the potential to spread rapidly and cause a lot of damage to native vegetation and will be monitored closely. Poison hemlock, Japanese angelica tree, and wavyleaf basketgrass are invasive species on our watch list for 2024.
- We will not be spraying any areas in 2024 on the Forbes State Forest to help lessen the impact of spongy moth populations. The spongy moth populations on the Forbes collapsed in 2023 at the hands of the introduced fungus, *Entomophaga maimaiga*.

## **NATURAL GAS, OIL, AND OTHER GEOLOGIC RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT**

- We will continue to work with Eastern Gas Transmission & Storage, Inc. in the management of their leased North Summit Natural Gas Storage Field located under portions of the Braddock Division. This large gas storage field has many wells and several pipelines on the Forbes State Forest that put gas into and out of the storage field. We are notified of projects for the coming year in late winter.
- Work with natural gas companies to manage several pipelines and shallow natural gas wells on the Forbes State Forest throughout the year. Presently, there are no unconventional (Marcellus) natural gas wells drilled on the Forbes State Forest, nor plans to do so in the foreseeable future.
- Continue to work with Heidelberg Materials, who operates the limestone quarry near the Torrance Tract, on the large sink hole that formed on the surface, partly on state forest land, due to a partial underground mine collapse in 2020. A six-foot-high woven wire fence was recently constructed around the sink hole to prevent people from getting injured by falling into the sink hole.
- Work with Oil Well Shares to properly abandon an underground three-inch natural gas pipeline along Beam Road in the Laurel Mt Division near the Laurel Mt. Warming Hut.

## **TOWER AND RIGHTS-OF-WAY PROJECTS**

- Continue to monitor a 12-acre mile-a-minute (MAM) plant population on the Forbes State Forest along the 138 KV Albright-Bethelboro electric line right-a-way just south of Wharton Furnace in the Braddock Division. This MAM population was treated by West Penn Power for several years with herbicide and, in 2016, weevils were released that eat the MAM to try a

more natural treatment. The MAM was also herbicided in 2023 with Regeneration project 042204.

- Work with West Penn Power (WPP) on maintaining the vegetation encroaching onto their 500 KV Hat-Bo and 138 KV Alb-Beth electric line rights-of-way in Fayette County in the Braddock Division. WPP uses targeted herbicide treatments and mechanical equipment (including helicopters) to treat, trim, and remove trees and brush from interfering with the electric line.
- Continue to work with multiple companies who have leases for antenna towers, gas pipeline rights-of-way and electric line rights-of-way on state forest land. We coordinate company access and maintenance.

## OPPORTUNITIES FOR PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

- Conduct 3 organized volunteer trail maintenance days for the LMVG, dates for these are set at the planning meeting held in the spring and relayed to DCNR Conservation Volunteers and groups through the volunteer program. This is an opportunity to engage the public, as well as accomplishing projects using the volunteers.
- Conduct numerous Environmental Education programs and Recreation Programming, dates and descriptions of these programs are advertised in newspapers, Facebook, and a bi-monthly program manual.
- Continue implementation of the Trail Steward Program using volunteers to help assess and maintain adopted trails.
- Service foresters meet with and provide advice to private landowners and communities throughout Allegheny, Westmoreland, Somerset, Fayette, Greene, and Washington counties.
- Pondfield Open House, fall 2024.
- Many opportunities for public engagement are listed as they are planned on our Facebook page.
- We are organizing a private landowner sustainable backyard workshop called 'Making the Most of Your Piece of Nature' to educate landowners and the public how they can enhance habitats for nature on their property no matter how small of a parcel of land they own.
- Upon request, we take prospective high school and college students on job shadows to show them what being a forester is like.
- We hire a college student every summer as an intern to help our staff complete forestry-related projects and educate him or her on basic forest ecology, silviculture, timber marking, recreation, forest health, GIS, GPS data collection, wildfire prevention and suppression, and private woodland stewardship.

- We participate in County Fairs, Sportsmen's shows, speaker requests, and many other events. We conduct tours for many groups including Woodland Owner groups. We answer questions via phone and email.

## **SPECIAL PROJECTS**

- Final site grading and gravel at new Shafer Run latrine
- Final stonework and grading around High Point Observation Tower
- Finish groomer shed construction at Laurel Ridge State Park (FD & C project)
- Assist with Carroll Cabin rehabilitation project - procure logs for workshop
- Maintain Cemeteries, Helispots, map boards, and deer fences throughout District
- Continue to clear brush from Hunt Springs Ponds
- Herbicide Wharton Furnace vegetation
- Replace decking on bridge over Chaney Run
- Demolish illegal campsites in Quebec Run
- Seed and mulch log landings in Barron Tract
- Remove graffiti at Wolf Rocks with pressure washer
- Stain all the maintenance buildings at Laurel Mountain Maintenance Headquarters
- Assist PA Fish and Boat Commission with trout stocking along Indian Creek
- Improve access to White Rocks

## **RESEARCH**

- We will continue to monitor our 2013 Butternut planting project south of Sky View Road in the Laurel Mt. Division. We planted one acre with 24 DNA tested 100% pure butternuts and 26 additional suspected 100% pure butternuts provided by our Penn Nursery. These butternuts will be monitored for their resistance to the Butternut canker disease that infects and kills butternut trees.
- We will continue to monitor our 2014 American chestnut planting project east of Tunnel Road in the Laurel Mt. Division. We planted and fenced one acre of the newest American Chestnut hybrids provided by the American Chestnut Foundation and grown by our Penn Nursery. These chestnuts will be monitored for their resistance to the Chestnut Blight that killed millions of American Chestnut trees along the Appalachian Mountains in early 1900 after the fungus was introduced into America.
- We continue to participate in the PA Game Commission's Deer Management Assistance Program (DMAP). We have one DMAP block (544) on the Forbes State Forest where hunters

can acquire additional doe tags to help us focus management efforts and reduce deer browse to enhance desirable seedling growth. We collected scientific data from 50 survey VIP plots throughout the Forbes State Forest in 2014 and continue to collect data on ten of those VIP plots each year to monitor and justify if the DMAP blocks are necessary.

- We continue to assist with research of the many historical features found on the Forbes State Forest, such as the Ruane Tract Powdermill, Morrow Jones Cabin, and PW&S Railroad to name a few.
- Continue to look for additional 'lingering' white ash trees that have somehow survived being killed by the Emerald Ash Borer (EAB). It is very rare to find mature white ash trees that are living among EAB killed white ash trees that have been dead for many years in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. We were fortunate to locate two healthy 'lingering' white ash trees on state forest land and collected branch and bud samples (scions) in 2023 to send to the U.S. Forest Service for research.