

LOYALSOCK 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 five 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 Loyalsock 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

- **Bridle Trail Improvements:** This project involves continued brushing, blazing, signing, and stabilization projects on portions of the 52-mile trail system. The majority of the work will occur along portions of the trail in Forks and Hillsgrove Townships, Sullivan County. The stabilization work is highly weather dependent and persistent wet summer weather for the past 6 years or more has delayed significant progress to date.
- **Old Loggers Path Improvements:** This project involves the ongoing replacement of carved letter, wooden signage along entry points to the Old Loggers Path in McIntyre, McNett and Cascade Townships, Lycoming County, the improvement of small parking areas at points where the trail crosses public use roads and the construction of an overflow parking area in Masten.
- **Roadside Camping Program:** The forest district made significant changes to the camping program by instituting an even/odd numbered campsite system. Each site is rested for a 6-month period to address ongoing sanitation concerns. Currently there are 55 even sites open for first half of year, 51 open for second half and 23 open year-round. There currently are no defined statewide standards for campsite layout and design but the forest district will make efforts to improve the sites since patrons are now paying to utilize them and have higher expectations.
- **Drift Mine Trail:** Work will continue on the district's newly designated mountain bike trail interior to the Coal Mine Road loop. Trail is currently open but work will be performed to add signage, several bridges, delineate parking areas and further stabilize the trail in sensitive areas.

Organized Events

- **Trail Running Events**
 - Smith Knob Scramble – a 9-mile trail race utilizing portions of the Loyalsock Trail in Plunketts Creek Township, Lycoming County. Held the second Saturday in June.
 - Worlds End Ultra-Marathons – a rugged semi-professional 50K and 100K trail race held on portions of the Loyalsock Trail and State Forest and State Park trails in Forks and Hillsgrove Townships, Sullivan County. To be held on June 1, 2024.
 - Worlds End Fall Classic – a rugged half-marathon run on portions of the Loyalsock Trail and State Forest and State Park trails in Forks Township, Sullivan County. Held in September.
 - Iron Forged Runners – Fun Run and Trail Workday – to be held on portions of the Loyalsock Trail and State Forest and State Park Trails in Forks and Hillsgrove Townships, Sullivan County. Date to be determined.
 - Sharp Top Ultra-Marathon – a proposed 50K and 100K trail run along the Old Loggers Path and adjoining trails in McNett, McIntyre and Cascade Townships, Lycoming County. To be held on June 29, 2024.

- **Mountain Biking Events:**

- Grinduro: a two-day bike ride on gravel roads and single-track off-road trails is planned for June 8-9, 2024. Event headquarters is located on private land at Elk Creek Escape outside of Hillsgrove. The 70-mile route follows a combination of township and forestry roads in Laporte, Davidson, Hillsgrove and Forks Townships, Sullivan County and aid stations will be located along the course.

- **Hiking Events:**

- Forest Bathing Hikes: Deep Green Journey will be leading “forest bathing” hikes in various parts of the state forest. Forest bathing is a Japanese spiritual practice where participants slowly walk through the forest taking in all the sights and sounds.
- Wild Roots Guides LLC will be guiding hiking trips geared towards novice hikers on various trails in the State Forest throughout the year.

- **Fishing Derby**

- The annual fishing derby sponsored by the Loyalsock Creek Men’s Club will be held at Little Bear Creek, in Plunketts Creek Township, Lycoming County the first Sunday in May. A portion the stream will then be restricted to youth & handicapped fishing for a 5-week period following the derby.

TIMBER MANAGEMENT

Timber Sale Sold (ready to cut or active):

- 147-acre sale (20-2017BC08 – “Bear Trap”) near Upper Bodines Road in Cascade Township, Lycoming County, Over Story Removal/Salvage/Shelter Wood/Selection Treatment
- 211-acre sale (20-2019BC01 – “Fire Antler”) near Hillsgrove Road in McNett Township, Lycoming County, Over Story Removal.
- 28-acre sale (20-2020BC01 – “Briar Patch”) near Nolan’s Trail in Fox and Hillsgrove Township, Sullivan County, Over Story Removal.
- 107-acre sale (20-2021BC01- “No Telework”) near Pleasant Stream Road in McNett Township, Lycoming County, Over Story Removal.
- 130-acre sale (20-2022BC01 - “Skinny Minnie”) near Krimm Road in McNett Township, Lycoming County, Over Story Removal/ Shelter Wood Treatment.
- 92-acre sale (20-2022BC02 – “Rusty Barrel”) near Camels Road in Fox Township, Sullivan County, Shelter Wood Treatment.
- 263-acre sale (20-2023BC01 - “No Harmony”) near Devil’s Elbow Natural Area in McNett Township, Lycoming County, Over Story Removal.
- 173-acre sale (20-2023BC02 - “Stick Wall”) near Upper Pleasant Stream Road in McNett Township, Lycoming County, Shelter Wood Treatment

Timber Sale Approved (not sold):

- 179-acre sale (20-2023BC03 - “Cascade Complex”) near Cascade/Big Hollow Roads in Plunketts Creek/Cascade Township, Lycoming County, Over Story Removal
- 137-acre sale (20-2022BC04 - “Pole Bridge”) near Shanerburg Road in Laporte Township, Sullivan County, Over Story Removal.

Timber Sale Proposed (not approved):

- 141-acre sale (20-2024BC01 - “No Luck”) near Krimm Road in McNett Township, Lycoming County, Over Story Removal
- 122-acre sale (20-2023BC04 - “It Always Goes South”) near South McCarty Road in Shrewsbury Township, Sullivan County, Over Story Removal/Shelter Wood Treatment
- 100-acre sale (20-2022BC03 - “Just Deal w/ It!”) near Bodines Mt. Road in McIntyre Township, Lycoming County, Over Story Removal.

Forest Regeneration-Woven Wire Fence Installations:

- 35-acre fence near Red Ridge Road in Plunketts Creek Township, Lycoming County
- 53-acre fence near McCarty Road in Shrewsbury Township, Sullivan County
- 55-acre fence near John Merrill Road in Cascade Township, Lycoming County
- 33-acre fence near John Merrill Road in Cascade Township, Lycoming County
- 30-acre fence near McCarty Road in Shrewsbury Township, Sullivan County
- 30-acre fence near Mead Road in Laporte Township, Sullivan County
- 83-acre fence near Cascade Road in Cascade Township, Lycoming County
- 91-acre fence near Mill Creek Road in Fox Township, Sullivan County
- 117-acre fence near Mill Creek Road in McNett Township, Lycoming County
- 13-acre fence near Mill Creek Road in McNett Township, Lycoming County

Forest Regeneration-Woven Wire Fence Dismantles:

- 50-acre fence near Mill Creek Road in Fox Township, Sullivan County
- 74-acre fence near Mill Creek Road in Fox Township, Sullivan County
- 16-acre fence near Mill Creek Road in Fox Township, Sullivan County
- 41-acre fence near Mill Creek Road in McNett Township, Lycoming County
- 44-acre fence near Camels Road in McNett Township, Lycoming County
- 59-acre fence near Big Hollow Road in Plunketts Creek Township, Lycoming County
- 26-acre fence near Loyalsock Road in Forks Township, Sullivan County

Forest Regeneration-Herbicide, Ground Application:

- 117-acre block near Mill Creek Road in Cascade Township, Lycoming County
- 63-acre block near High Knob Road in Shrewsbury Township, Sullivan County
- 55-acre block near John Merrell Road in Cascade Township, Sullivan County
- 53-acre block near McCarty Road South in Shrewsbury Township, Sullivan County
- 13-acre block near Mill Creek Road in Cascade Township, Lycoming County
- 40-acre block near Red Ridge Road in Plunketts Creek Township, Lycoming County
- 35-acre block near Red Ridge Road in Plunketts Creek Township, Lycoming County

Forest Regeneration-Vegetation Mowing:

- 54-acre block near Bodines Mountain Road in McIntyre Township, Lycoming County

RESTORATION AND HABITAT PROJECTS

- **Ruffed Grouse Habitat:** The forest district will continue a landscape level restoration project to improve ruffed grouse habitat along Nettle Ridge near High Knob Road, Shrewsbury Township, Sullivan County. This project is a collaboration between the Loyalsock Forest District, the Pennsylvania Game Commission, the local Ruffed Grouse Society Chapter and Pennsylvania College of Technology Forestry Program.

BRIDGE PROJECTS

- **Upper Pleasant Stream Road over Pleasant Stream:** This project involves the installation of an open span bridge on a section of road in McNett Township and Cascade Townships, Lycoming County. Construction is in combination with a box culvert carrying Masten Road over Sixth Bottom Run. The overall project is expected to begin around May 2024. The construction will be sequenced so that both bridges are not closed at the same time. There is no room to by-pass so the roadway will be closed at the bridge construction site. Work is expected to be completed by the end of September.
- **Masten Road over Sixth Bottom:** This project involves the replacement of an arch culvert in McIntyre Township, Lycoming County with a concrete box culvert. Construction is in combination with the open span bridge carrying Upper Pleasant Stream Road over Pleasant Stream.

ROAD PROJECTS

- **Little Bear Creek Road DSA Project:** The project will apply roughly 4200 tons of DSA and will cover about 2 miles of road.

- **Mill Creek Road:** The project will repair the section of road just past the Bear Wallow Road intersection. This Liquid Fuels funded project will apply 2RC aggregate on approximately ½ mile of the road.
- **Penn State Dirt and Gravel Demo Project:** We will be working with Penn State on Mill Creek Road near the intersection with West Branch Road. The project will raise the road in the flat and entrenched areas to improve drainage and repair the severely degraded running surface.

PREScribed FIRE

- The following prescribed fires are proposed on forest district lands this coming year to improve wildlife habitat and enhance wildfire experience of district employees. Project completion is highly weather dependent.
 - 1.5-acre food plot off Sand Spring Road, Plunkett's Creek Township, Lycoming County
 - 0.3-acre food plot off Red Ridge Road, Plunkett's Creek Township, Lycoming County
 - 0.6-acre food plot off Red Ridge Road, Plunkett's Creek Township, Lycoming County
 - 1.6-acre food plot at Masten Campground, McNett Township, Lycoming County
 - 1.4-acre food plot at Masten Helipad, Cascade Township, Lycoming County
 - 1.3-acre food plot on Nettle Ridge, Hillsgrove Township, Sullivan County
 - 0.6-acre food plot on Nettle Ridge, Hillsgrove Township, Sullivan County
 - 1.0-acre food plot on Nettle Ridge, Hillsgrove Township, Sullivan County
 - 0.4-acre food plot on Nettle Ridge, Hillsgrove Township, Sullivan County
 - 36-acre forested deer enclosure off Red Ridge Road, Plunkett's Creek Twp, Lycoming County
- District staff will conduct the following two prescribed fires on State Park Lands, Project completion is highly weather dependent:
 - 80-acre historical hayfield and blueberry fields at Ricketts Glen State Park, Colley Township, Sullivan County and Fairmount Township, Luzerne County
 - 186-acre of native grasses and forbs at Mount Pisgah State Park, West Burlington Township, Bradford County
- District staff will begin prepping the following proposed prescribed fire areas by constructing control lines and felling dead trees:
 - 198-acre scrub oak and pitch pine barrens on Brushy Ridge, Plunkett's Creek Township, Lycoming County
 - 35-acre forested deer enclosure off Red Ridge Road, Plunkett's Creek Twp, Lycoming County

INSECT, DISEASE, AND INVASIVE PLANT TREATMENT

- **Hemlock Woolly Adelgid:** This project includes the injection of approximately 356 Hemlock trees near Bear Wallow Pond in Fox Township, Sullivan County, Sandy Bottom Recreation Area in Plunketts Creek Township, Lycoming County and the forest district picnic area on Dry Run Road in Hillsgrove Township, Sullivan County.
- **Spongy Moth Spray Program:** This project includes the aerial spray treatment of approximately 5,000 acres of oak forest located in several different blocks of state forest in the Wallis Run area of Gamble Township, Lycoming County and Robwood mountain in Monroe and Albany Township, Bradford County.

NATURAL GAS, OIL, AND OTHER GEOLOGIC RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

- **Tract 726:** Pennsylvania General Energy (PGE) continues with plans for gas extraction activities on Allegheny Ridge, Plunketts Creek Township, Lycoming County.
 - Work will continue on the development of several 726 well pads and continued construction on a water lift station and temporary above ground waterline from the Loyalsock Creek to the area of exploration development on Allegheny Ridge.
 - PGE will continue stabilization and improvement of pipeline infrastructure throughout the 726-lease holding.
- **Tract 723/724:** Pennsylvania General Energy (PGE) will be furthering their future development plan for these two adjacent tracts on Jacoby and Cove Mountains, Gamble Township, Lycoming County. No construction work is anticipated this year, but we expect there to be surveying on the ground and the development of road and bridge construction plans.
- **Tract 100:** Seneca Resources Corporation continues to be active with various well drilling and erosion mitigation activities throughout the tract in Lewis and McIntyre Townships, Lycoming County. Installation of a self-supported antenna tower on Pad D, Browns Road is expected to occur in first half of 2024. We anticipate SRX to return to Pad M on Shriver's Ridge to drill and frack several additional wells and construct a small water tank holding area before the end of the year.
- **Tract 551:** Alta Resources, LLC continues activity along Bodine Mountain Road in McIntyre Township, Lycoming County. They will be paving several small sections of the roadway to address sedimentation concerns.

TOWER AND RIGHTS-OF-WAY PROJECTS

- **Right-of-Way Maintenance:** No projects

- **Tower Projects:** Seneca Resources has plans for the installation of a self-supported antenna tower on Pad D, Browns Road is expected to occur in first half of 2024.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

- **Facebook page:** This is an ongoing project to keep forest visitors informed of happenings on the Loyalsock State Forest. Facebook page will be monitored regularly and the district staff will update the page with worthy information about once per week.
- **Loyalsock Vista:** This is a district newsletter compiling articles from staff on recreation, forest management and forest fire protection. It is sent annually via email and postal mail to Forest Fire Wardens, forest campsite lessees, retirees, and a variety of other contacts.
- **Sullivan County Elementary Youth Field Day:** This project involves teaching elementary school children about conservation and is held in Laporte in late May or early June.
- **Sullivan County Fair:** This project involves the staffing of an educational exhibit at the county fair in Forksville. Dependent upon overtime funding.
- **Sullivan County Fall Festival:** This project involves the staffing of an educational exhibit at the county fairgrounds in Forksville. Dependent upon overtime funding.
- **Sullivan County Flaming Foliage Festival:** This project involves the staffing of an educational exhibit at the county fairgrounds in Forksville. Dependent upon overtime funding.
- **Worlds End Day:** This event involves the staffing of an educational and informational booth at Worlds End State Park in Forksville. Anticipated for mid-July.

SPECIAL PROJECTS

- **ADA Campsite:** The district is exploring the feasibility of an ADA campsite at Little Bear Creek to add to the list of ADA-friendly accommodations at that popular recreational area.
- **Astronomy Area:** The district will be meeting with an astronomy club to explore the development of an astronomy friendly viewing area. Amateur astronomers regularly use High Knob Overlook but the headlights from incoming vehicles of vista visitors makes it difficult to explore the night sky. A nearby field may serve as a better astronomy site with some minor improvements.

RESEARCH

- **Stream Research:** This research is to analyze headwater stream habitat connectivity and resiliency on Loyalsock state forest land. Continuing research is being conducted by Susquehanna University.
- **Slash Wall Research:** This on-going research project to determine the local feasibility of using a logging slash wall in lieu of a woven wire fence as a deer enclosure to protect young tree seedlings from over browsing. The research will include an active forest district timber sale along including collaboration with Cornell University, which has been studying the concept for many years and most likely the US Forest Service. The project is located north of Upper Pleasant Stream Road in McNett Township, Lycoming County and Fox Township, Sullivan County.

MAJOR ACCOMPLISHMENTS FROM PREVIOUS YEAR

- **Forest Management:**
 - **Spongy Moth Spray Program:** approximately 2,500 acres of oak forest located in several different blocks of state forest in the Little Bear area of Plunketts Creek Township and Wallis Run area of Gamble Township were treated to help control this invasive insect.
- **Forest Maintenance:**
 - **Cascade Road and Mill Creek Road Road DSA:** 4200 tons of DSA were placed on Cascade Road, starting northeast of the intersection with John Merrill Road and continuing to the Mill Creek Road intersection. Then on Mill Creek Road down to Masten.
 - **Big Hollow Road Drainage Improvement:** With the financial assistance from Penn State, we installed drainage and a French Mattress to a spring seep on Big Hollow Road.
 - **Little Bear Creek Youth and Handicapped Fishing Area:** A third in-stream cross log vane was installed upstream of the bridge to the parking area. This project was an annual cooperative effort between the Loyalsock Forest District, the Loyalsock Creek Men's Club and the PA Fish and Boat Commission.
 - **Comfort Station Installations:** Two double vault units were installed, one at the Dry Run Picnic Area along Dry Run Road in Hillsgrove Township, Sullivan County and another at the Masten Camping Area/Old Logger's Path trailhead in McNett Township, Lycoming County.
 - **Jacoby Falls Trail:** The raised plank walkway that traversed through the wetland at the trailhead of this heavily used trail was replaced with a boardwalk.