

# Moshannon State Forest District

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## 2023 MANAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

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.

The SFRMP is implemented at the local level by district-specific resource management plans that aim to balance many uses and values of the forest, while maintaining ecosystem health and the wild character of the forest.

The purpose of this Management Activities document is to communicate to the public about upcoming management activities, projects and events that will be conducted to implement the SFRMP on Moshannon State Forest. For questions, comments or more information about this plan, please contact:

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## RECREATION

- **Allegheny Front Trail (AFT) Map Revision.** The AFT map has not been revised since 2013. The new map will serve as a reference for all recreation users. The plan is to include all types of trails onto one map – hiking, shared-use and snowmobile.
- **CPL Snowmobile Trail re-route from Stone Run Road to Laurel Run Road.** The CPL Trail is currently closed because of a washed-out bridge and the wetlands surrounding Laurel Run. The re-route will bypass Laurel Run while adding an important link to the snowmobile trail system. This re-route will likely be a multiple year project.
- **Quehanna Hiking Trail Corporation Dam Bridge Replacement.** The Quehanna State Forest Hiking Trail is a 71-mile looped trail system through many remote areas in the northern part of the Moshannon State Forest and the southern part of the Elk State Forest. Several years ago, heavy spring snow melts severely undercut abutments on a 72-foot footbridge across the Mosquito Creek just west of Gifford Run in the Frenchville area. The crossing is currently accomplished by fording which can be difficult during periods of high flow. There are no suitable alternate routes nearby for crossing the stream. Designs are completed for the replacement of the bridge.
- **Snowmobile Trail Wet Areas in the Dague Division.** Several snowmobile trails in the Dague Division have wet spots and uneven terrain that will improved with machinery and topped with stone.
- **Smays Run and North Run Trail Stone Surfacing.** Work continues to surface the snowmobile and shared-use trails with 2A limestone. Wet spots and rocky spots are being addressed with stone to improve the riding experience.
- **Rockton Mountain Trail System Signage.** The trailhead sign needs to be repaired, and additional sign posts will be installed where necessary to replace the aging fiberglass signs.
- **North Run Camping Area Improvements.** With an increase of motorized camping throughout the forest, efforts will be made to better accommodate users by adding fire rings, picnic tables, stone parking pads, signage etc.



## **2023 Large Group/Organized Events**

### **January**

- Black Moshannon Snowmobile Club – Poker Run (Black Moshannon Tract)
- Winter Klondike – Mountain Run, Boy Scouts of America
- Winter Klondike – Chief Logan Council, Boy Scouts of America (Wopsy)(FEB)

### **May**

- Moshannon Valley Y.M.C.A. –5k/10k Run-Walk (Black Moshannon Tract)
- Quehanna 50 – Ultramarathon (Parker Dam and Quehanna)
- PA Wilds 1500 Dual Sport Ride (Moshannon District)

### **June**

- NACMO – Orienteering Event (Black Moshannon Tract)

### **July**

- Soggy Bottom Motofest – Dual Sport Ride (Moshannon District)
- Mid-State Gravel Grinder Bike Race/Foot Race (Black Moshannon Tract)

### **August**

- Moshannon Valley Y.M.C.A. – Mountain Bike Race (Black Moshannon Tract)
- Penn State ORION – Student Orientation (Black Moshannon Tract)
- Allegheny Front Trail Run (Black Moshannon Tract)
- Trans-Sylvania Gravel Epic Bike Race (Moshannon District)

### **September**

- Canter for a Cure Horse Ride (Black Moshannon Tract)
- Pennsylvania Environmental Council Bike Ride (Black Moshannon Tract)
- Ruffed Grouse- (no-kill) Trials (Black Moshannon)

**TIMBER MANAGEMENT**

Harvesting is occurring in the areas of the forest listed below. These harvests include mostly shelterwood and overstory removal treatments. Shelterwood harvests are designed to encourage the growth of new tree seedlings in the forest to replace ones that either died or have become mature and are 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. Below is a list of timber sales that are already contracted and will potentially be active in the Moshannon State Forest in 2023:

<u>Harvest Location – nearest road and forest division</u>	<u>Acreage (A) / Type of Harvest</u>	<u>Harvest Name/Contract #</u>	<u>Forester</u>
Fisher Rd. – Quehanna Division	693A Salvage Shelterwood	Drunken Snail 09-2021BC05	Miller
Sullivan Road- Quehanna Division	127A Shelterwood	Old Round Top 09-2018BC11	Miller
Barr Hollow- Quehanna Division	185A OR/Shelterwood	Barr Hollow 092020BC02	Wilson
Tram Rd. Black Moshannon Division	65A Overstory Removal	Tram Rd. Removal 09-2021BC02	Kucharcik
Shaggers Inn Rd.- Quehanna Division	687A Salvage Shelterwood	Beechy Bear 09-2021BC01	Kucharcik
Strawband/Claymine- Black Moshannon	90A Overstory Removal	Black Rat Removal 09-2021BC03	Kucharcik
Off Mill Run Rd. Dague Division	102A Shelterwood	Mill Run 09-2018BC05	Conrad
Gordon Road.- Dague Division	195A Shelterwood	Little Sicily 09-2021BC07	Jovenitti
Kennedy Road – Dague Division	101A Shelterwood	Forgotten Fire 09-2019BC06	Gulvas

As of the beginning of 2023, the following harvests are presently being proposed and/or marked and prepared for bidding:

<u>Harvest Location – nearest road and forest division</u>	<u>Acreage (A) / Type of Harvest</u>	<u>Harvest Name</u>	<u>Forester</u>
Grant Trail Quehanna Division	60A Salvage	Slowdown/Blowdown 09-2022BC05	Mohney
Gordon- Dague Division	410A Shelterwood	Silver Spring 09-2022BC05	Jovenitti
Ames Rd.- Quehanna Division	270A Shelterwood	Ames Rd. 092022BC06	Jovenitti
Shaggers- Quehanna Division	85A Two- age Removal	Beechy Clean-up 09-2022BC07	Kucharcik
West Cal Pike- Quehanna Division	275A Shelterwood	Cal Pike- 09-2022BC01	Kucharcik
Quehanna Highway East- Quehanna Division	250A Salvage Shelterwood	Marks Run 09-2022BC03	Wilson

Additional harvests will be proposed in 2023. Inventory and landscape exam work has not yet been fully completed for identifying and prioritizing each of the areas to be proposed for harvesting over the next year. Areas will be selected for harvesting based upon assessments of stand health, habitat needs, forest maturity, whether natural seedlings are available to quickly replace harvested trees, and other goals detailed in the State Forest Resource Management plan.

## **FOREST RESTORATION AND WILDLIFE HABITAT PROJECTS**

- **Moshannon Tree Plantings** – Approximately 400-acres of forest which have been impacted by gypsy moth mortality and recently salvaged, as well as some recent timber sales, will be planted with a variety of seedlings, mainly conifers to supplement natural regeneration. These plantings will not only aid efforts increase diversity of tree species in the forest, but it will also provide additional wildlife habitat opportunities.
- **Quehanna Wildlife Projects** - An effort has been made both past and present by the Game Commission to maintain about 225 acres of grass and clover food plots on the Moshannon State Forest for wildlife habitat in the Quehanna Area. The Moshannon District maintains about 30 acres.
- **Wilson Switch Aspen Cuttings**- 10 acres of Ruffed Grouse Habitat and deer browse cutting was completed by foresters and maintenance staff.
- **Apple Orchard Replacement Trees** – Apple orchards have been planted across the Moshannon to enhance wildlife habitat diversity. New apple trees (approx. 80 will be planted in the spring to replace dying or dead existing trees in the one acre fences. Once the apple trees are well established (10-15 years), the fences will be removed.
- **Deer Fence Removals** - Moshannon State Forest is currently on a trend of removing many deer fence exclosures. More than half of the 120 fences that were present 10 years ago have been removed, based on changing habitat and harvesting conditions. Seven fences were removed in 2022 and an additional four fences will be removed in 2023.

## **ROAD AND BRIDGE PROJECTS**

- Spring 2023 – **Medix Grade Road – Quehanna Division** – Driving surface aggregate placement on Medix Grade Road. This application will continue the DSA surfacing from the intersection of Jack Dent Road continuing to the Caledonia Pike. Closure and detours are anticipated for a week in May or June while work is completed.
- Spring 2023 – **Caledonia Pike – Quehanna Division** – Four inch minus aggregate placement on Caledonia Pike from near the intersection of Cardinal Road and continuing toward Saunders Road. Closure and detours are anticipated for a week in May or June while work is completed.
- Spring 2023 – **Benner Run Road – Black Moshannon Division** – Driving surface aggregate placement on Benner Road from the intersection of Huckleberry Road and continuing toward SR 504. Closure and detours are anticipated for a week in May or June while work is completed.
- Spring 2023 – **Harley Dean Road – Dague Division** – Driving surface aggregate placement on Harley Dean Road from the intersection of Laurel Run Road and continuing toward Fourmile Road. Closure and detours are anticipated for a week in May or June while work is completed.
- Summer 2023 – **Deserter Run Road Access Improvements – Quehanna Division** – This project will involve improving road surface and drainage and installation of additional gates to allow better seasonal fishing access to a portion of Gifford Run from the Caledonia Pike.
- 2023 – **Blackwell Road and Tyler Road – Dague Division** – Bridge/culvert replacements have been planned and are in design for the intersections of Tyler Road and Blackwell Road over tributaries of Laurel Run. Road closure and detours for a few months are anticipated.
- 2023 – **Caledonia Pike – Quehanna Division** – Replace four large diameter culvert crossings with new structures over tributaries of Little Medix Run and Trout Run.
- 2023/2024 – **Hoover Nelson Road – Dague Division** – Replace a failed large diameter culvert with a more suitable structure while preserving wetland qualities of the location. Project should be in final design in 2022 with construction anticipated in 2023/2024.
- 2023/2024 – **Hoover Nelson Road Retirement – Dague Division** – The middle third of this road is proposed for closure and retirement due to entrenchment, lack of use, and the inability to maintain this road adequately. Repairs to drainage and road grading will be done on the portions that remain open.
- 2023/2024 – **Lower Dubec Rd. – Dague Division** – Replace a large diameter culvert with a box culvert over Moose Creek. Box culvert expected to be in final design in 2023. Construction in 2023/2024.
- 2023/2024 – **Mill Run Rd. – Dague Division** – Replace four large diameter culvert crossings with new structures over Mill Run. Box culverts should be in design in 2023. Construction in 2023/2024.

- **2023/2024 – McGeorge Road – Dague Division** – Replace large diameter culvert with new structure over Alex Branch. Box culvert should be in final design in 2023. Construction in 2023/2024.
- **2023/2024 – Clay Mine Rd. – Black Moshannon Division** – Replace a large diameter culvert with a box culvert over Corbin Run. Box culvert should be in final design in 2023. Construction in 2023/2024.
- **2023/2024 – Six Mile Run Rd. – Black Moshannon Division** – Replace a large diameter culvert over a tributary to Six Mile Run. Culvert should be in design in 2023. Construction in 2023/2022.
- **2023/2024 – Ardell Road – Quehanna Division** – Replace a large diameter culvert with a box culvert over Mosquito Creek. Box culvert should be in final design in 2023. Construction in 2023/2024.
- **2023/2024 – Saunders Road – Quehanna Division** – Replace a large diameter culvert with a box culvert over tributary to Laurel Run. Box culvert should be in final design in 2023. Construction in 2023/2024.
- **2023/2024 – Wallace Mines Road – Quehanna Division** – Replace two large diameter culverts with more suitable crossings over tributaries to Alex Branch and Trout Run. Crossings should be in final design in 2023. Construction in 2023/2024.

## PREScribed FIRE

- **Schofield Prescribed Fire—Dague Division** This is a 60-acre burn planned for April/May of 2023 weather permitting. The area had been treated with salvage and shelterwood treatments previously, and red maple and birch are overtopping and crowding the oak regeneration in many areas. The fire will benefit the fire tolerant oak seedlings that will resprout and grow vigorously post-fire. Oaks have many outstanding values for wildlife habitat and grow into a valuable timber tree in time.
- **Hobo Hill RX Fire- Dague Division** This is a 95-acre burn planned for April/May of 2023 weather permitting. The entire site was fenced around 2007, which excluded deer. The herbicide and exclusion made way for a shelterwood cut in 2009. An overstory removal harvest was completed in 2018. The overstory is dominated by oak species (primarily red oak) and contains a mix of white oak, chestnut oak, black oak, and red maple. The regeneration is variable with red maple dominating some areas while oak dominates other areas. Even in areas dominated by red maple, oak is found below the red maple. The goal of the prescribed fire is to reduce height and quantity of the less desirable red maple to give the competitive advantage to the oak seedlings.
- **Mud Run RX Fire- Dague Division** This is a 20-acre burn planned for April/May of 2023 weather permitting. This prescribed fire will serve as the maintenance and the third phase of the original Mud Run RX fire (PA-RX-09201402) that was conducted in 2014. The second phase of this prescribed fire was completed in 2019 with great success. As an initiative to establish a warm season grass management area in the Moshannon Forest District, this site was planted in 2014

post fire. At this time, the warm season grasses have become well established, and it is time to burn them again for maintenance of an optimal wildlife grass habitat. This area will continue to be burned on a cycle to maintain warm season grasses.

- **Huckleberry Road RX Fire- Black Moshannon Division** This is a 269- acre burn planned for April/May of 2023 weather permitting. The understory is dominated by scrub oak which, due to fire exclusion from the area, has grown to a consistent shrub layer of approximately 8-12' under the areas of minimal canopy, and approximately 4' in areas with an overstory component. Some locations even have a shrub layer height in excess of 12'. Under the shrub layer is some minimal oak regeneration and mixed red maple, as well as vaccinium and sassafras seedlings. Our primary goal should be a site preparation burn that permits the coppicing of scrub oak and adequately exposes the seed bed to be receptive to additional scrub oak natural regeneration. This area once had a great deal of scrub oak/pitch pine landscapes, and it is the goal of this burn to set the groundwork to re-establish this burn site as a predominately scrub oak stand, while permitting the natural pitch pine near the area to have a receptive seedbed, should natural regeneration occur. This scrub oak stand is necessary not only to ensure scrub oak perseverance in this area, but also to supply a scrub oak seed source for the DCNR Bureau of Forestry's Penn Nursery.
- **Rock Run RX Fire- Black Moshannon Division** This is a 345-acre burn planned for April/May of 2023 weather permitting. This area was previously burned in 2017 and showed great success in the amount of vigorous scrub oak regeneration and acorn reproduction. Due to fire not being present for 5 years, the shrub layer of scrub oak has grown to approximately 12'. Maximum production of acorns for scrub oak is between 4-6 years after a burn, and we are coming to the end of that window. This prescribed burn will maximize the production of this area and help promote the desired scrub oak stand. This scrub oak stand is necessary not only to ensure scrub oak perseverance in this area, but also to supply a scrub oak seed source for the DCNR Bureau of Forestry's Penn Nursery.

## INSECT, DISEASE, AND INVASIVE PLANT TREATMENT

- Insecticide treatments to combat emerald ash borer will be conducted at a nursery for white ash seed collection. This treatment involves an "IV" injection of pesticide into ash trees to protect individual trees. Emerald Ash Borers are a devastating non-native pest that is invading Pennsylvania and will kill nearly all untreated ash trees. The trees we treat will act as a seed source if a viable broad scale control is someday found for Emerald Ash Borers. The trees must be retreated once every three years.
- Ground egg mass surveys were conducted for the 2023 spongy moth spray program. Spongy moth egg mass counts are on the rise in many areas of the state forest, and those areas have been entered into the Spongy Moth Suppression Program for spraying in 2023. Moshannon is proposed to spray approximately 55,733 acres due to increasing spongy moth populations. Spray operations will be conducted in the Dague, Quehanna, and Black Moshannon divisions. Information on the 2023 Spongy Moth Suppression Program and, upon finalization, spray blocks will be shown on an interactive map available to the public at <https://www.dcnr.pa.gov/Conservation/ForestsAndTrees/InsectsAndDiseases/SpongyMoth/Pages/default.aspx>.



- Two populations of Mile-a-Minute will continue to be controlled and eradicated by hand-pulling and with chemical treatments. The site in Quehanna is nearing eradication and will continue to be monitored. A new infestation at a third site was discovered and will be treated promptly.
- Three Phragmites treatment sites will continue to be treated and monitored. Chemical treatments will continue in summer 2023.

## NATURAL GAS AND OIL DEVELOPMENT

No new leases have been proposed at this time on the Moshannon State Forest, but there is development interest growing again in some previously leased areas. Some general activities are noted below, but plans are far from definite for any company in 2022 at this time.

- EQT will be plugging four conventional gas wells this year. These wells are part of a multi-year plugging plan on Moshannon and Elk state forests. The wells to be plugged are in the Medix Run area. No further plans have been presented to the district for other 2023 activities.
- Seneca Resources is continuing to haul flowback water from wells on the state forest. District staff and Seneca Resources will be meeting soon to discuss road work and plans for 2023.
- National Fuel is continuing to work with DCNR staff on the abandonment and reclamation of a section right-of-way in 2023.
- PPG has built a pad on Tract 324 in the Knobs area. The pad partially used an opening from a previous conventional gas well. They have drilled two Marcellus shale gas wells and plan to drill for Utica. The wells are in the process of being finished.

## RESEARCH

- The United States Forest Service (USFS) will continue data collection on a site off Hoover Nelson Road to study the effects of herbicide on mountain laurel.
- The USFS will continue data collection on sites at Tyler Road and Kaylor Camp to study oak regeneration.

## OPPORTUNITIES FOR PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

The public is welcome to call or email the Moshannon State Forest for further information on any activities within the forest. Also, below is a list of some of the organizations that are most engaged presently with activities and projects on the Moshannon State Forest. Belonging to one of these organizations is an excellent way for the public to become more engaged with the forest.

- The **Wild Turkey Federation** is engaged with wildlife habitat projects in the district.
- The **Mosquito Creek Sportsmen's Association** completes stream and wildlife habitat projects with the district.
- The **Sinnemahonning Sportsmen's Club** is engaged in wildlife habitat projects in the district.

- The **Ruffed Grouse Society** is also engaged in wildlife habitat projects in the district.
- The **Clearwater Conservancy** has completed water conservation projects in the district.
- The **Pennsylvania Wildlife Habitat Unlimited**, P.O. Box 851, Dubois, PA builds and maintains stream improvements in the district.
- The **Hilltop Howlers Snowmobile Club** grooms trails and participates with the forest district in several snowmobile related projects each year in the northern part of the district.
- The **Black Moshannon Snowmobile Club** grooms trails and participates with the forest district in several snowmobile related projects each year in the southern part of the district.
- The **Keystone Trails Association** organizes volunteer projects with the district on the Quehanna Trail and cross-connector trails.
- The **Pennsylvania Equine Council** is an umbrella organization for projects and equine activities on the district.
- The **Boy Scouts of America** are engaged in trail and other projects in the district.
- The **DCNR Conservation Volunteer** program allows individual volunteers to propose and/or complete various projects from planting trees to scouting trails on the forest district.
- The **Four-Mile Camp Association** holds an annual meeting that district staff attends to discuss issues and receive comments.
- The **Pennsylvania Camp Lessees Association** is a statewide organization of State Forest Camp Lessees that occasionally communicates issues to the district of interest to camp owners.
- The **Sustainable Forestry Initiative of Pennsylvania** is an organization that conducts environmental and safety training for loggers on State Forest lands with the forest district.
- The **Pennsylvania Forest Fire Warden Program** is involved with fire suppression, prescribed burns, prevention programs and fire preparedness on the forest district.
- The **Moshannon Forest Firefighters Association** is involved with fire suppression, prescribed burns, prevention programs and fire preparedness on the forest district.
- The **Trout Unlimited** is also engaged in stream habitat and stabilization projects in the district.

## EDUCATION AND PUBLIC OUTREACH

- The Moshannon State Forest offers a Service Forestry program whose mission it is to provide public education, outreach and technical assistance to school groups, conservation groups, government agencies, homeowners and forest landowners in Clearfield County. Its purpose is to promote sound, science-based forest management. There is no cost for a consultation or landowner visit.

- In addition to responding to requests for forest management assistance, the District is scheduled to participate in the following ongoing programs and special events following COVID-19 guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Pennsylvania Department of Health. Event formats are subject to change and events may be cancelled due to the COVID-19 situation:
  - Provide ongoing technical assistance to the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service to implement programs designed to promote good forest management on private land.
  - Provide forestry education to Boy Scouts at the annual Klondike Derby in January at the Camp Wopsononock Tract of the Moshannon State Forest.
  - Partner with the Wildlife Technology Program at Penn State-DuBois to present learning opportunities in Dendrology, Silviculture and Deer Pellet Count Transects.
  - Provide forestry education to area high school students in April as part of the annual Earth Day Celebration and Envirothon Review at Parker Dam State Park.
  - Participate in the statewide high school Envirothon environmental education competition in May by providing review sessions and conducting the forestry test component of the county competition.
  - Present to elementary, middle school, high school and college students throughout the year. This includes the DuBois Area Jr. High School Environment Day in May, The Curwensville Area School Logs to Lumber event in May and the Curwensville Area School 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Environment Day in May.
  - Promote the Moshannon State Forest and good forest management at the Clearfield County Fair in late July-early August.
  - Provide technical assistance to the Clearfield County Conservation District in the maintenance of two Riparian Forest Buffer plantings.
  - Partner with Penn State Extension giving woodlot management tours at the annual Ag Progress Days near State College in August.
  - Present a forestry program at the annual Conservation Celebration in September sponsored by the Conservation District.
  - Conduct a local “Walk in Penn’s Woods” in October. Walk in Penn’s Woods offers opportunities Statewide for the public to get outdoors and learn from peers and natural resource professionals.
  - Hold a Spongy Moth meeting for local landowners in the fall to discuss management options for 2024, dependent upon the population levels of the Spongy Moth.
  - In Clearfield County, for technical advice on tree care and forest management issues or to schedule a program. Call the Moshannon State Forest (814-765-0821) and ask for the Service Forester.