

Elk State Forest

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.

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 Elk 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

MAY BE RESTRICTED/CANCELED

- Proposed Lyme Timber Easement bike trail construction, signage and delineation, Bobolink Lane parking area development and DPVR installation, etc.
- Proposed recreational trail connector (Bauer Hollow to Steam Mill Road)
- Proposed bicycle and hiking/XC Ski trail work on State Forest Lands
- Improve parking areas along Marshall Farm Road
- Continue improvement of access to Old Cameron County Dump for dark sky and wildlife viewing on Cameron County Property
- Proposed Cameron County Snowmobile Trail reroutes onto portions of retired NFG pipeline (Grove Hill to Hunts Run Intersection)
- Proposed Cameron County Snowmobile Trail Connections (West Creek Recreational Trail to Rich Valley or South Fork Road)
- Proposed McKean County Snowmobile Trail Connections (Sackett Hollow to Clermont and Clermont to Martin Road)
- Bucktail Path rehab as identified (brushing, rerouting, etc.)
- Hackett Trail rehab (brushing, benching, and blazing) to Bucktail Path bridge (McNuff Draft)
- Installation of interpretive signage and trail development at 3 Sisters site
- Install signage at the 3 Sisters site
- Continue yearly maintenance of all trails
- Work with KTA to set-up trail improvement work on Elk Trail
- Organized Events:
 - Throughout the Year: Collaborate when necessary Elk County Riders events
 - September: bicycle race (Second Stage of County Triathlon)
 - October: Ultra-Marathon (Third Stage of County Triathlon)
 - Fall Weekends: Public outreach at Hicks Run Wildlife Viewing Area

TIMBER MANAGEMENT

MARKED AND SOLD, POTENTIALLY ACTIVE TIMBER SALES

- 13-2018BC01 210-acre shelterwood and overstory removal Rock Run, Cameron County.
- 13-2019BC02 332-acre shelterwood Montour Road, Cameron County
- 13-2019BC04 378-acre overstory removal and shelterwood Whiting and Sleepy Hollow Roads, Elk County.
- 13-2021BC01 95-acre shelterwood Ames Hollow Road, Cameron County
- 13-2021BC04 145-acre shelterwood Thunder Mountain Road off West Hicks Road, Elk County

- 13-2021BC05 230-acre shelterwood Truman Area, Cameron County
- 13-2021BC06 202-acre removal North Fork Road
- 13-2021BC07 264-acre removal Deer Pen Road
- 13-2022BC01 114-acre shelterwood Marshall Farm Rd., Cameron County
- 13-2022BC02 70-acre removal Kersey, Elk County
- 13-2022BC03 250-acre shelterwood Patterson Hollow, Elk County

PROPOSED, NOT SOLD YET

- 85-acre shelterwood in Lumber Township, Cameron County
- 115-acre shelterwood Canoe Run Road, Cameron County
- 221-acre shelterwood Russell Camp area, Cameron County

Other sales could potentially begin, but that activity can be hard to predict due to the length of timber sale contracts. Please contact the District Office at fd13@pa.gov or (814)486-3353 for information on active sales.

REGENERATION PROJECTS

WOVEN WIRE FENCES TO BE CONTRACT INSTALLED

- NONE

WOVEN WIRE FENCES TO BE CONTRACT DISMANTLED

- 41-acre South Whitehead I Fence, Cameron County
- 33-acre Norcross I Fence, Cameron County
- 61-acre Mason Hill 2 Fence, Cameron County
- 37-acre Little Bear North Fence, McDonald Draft Rd., Elk County
- 57-acre Little Bear South Fence, McDonald Draft Rd., Elk County
- 63-acre McDonald Draft fence, Elk County

ELECTRIC FENCES TO BE INSTALLED

- McNuff salvage sale 250 acres
- South Dividing Ridge sale 130 acres
- Log Cabin sale 206 acres
- Kersey Sale 43 acres

ELECTRIC FENCES TO BE REMOVED

- NONE

HERBICIDE BLOCKS

- 28 acres South Whitehead Road, Cameron County.
- 23 acres South Whitehead Road, Cameron County.
- 50 acres Jack Pine Ridge Road, Elk County
- 73 acres Five Mile Road, Cameron County

- 51 acres Nady Hollow Road, Cameron County

RESTORATION AND HABITAT PROJECTS

MAY BE RESTRICTED/CANCELED

- Blue Bird box maintenance – Maintain/Repair/Install bluebird boxes throughout the district
- Wild Plant Sanctuary plan review for the East Branch Dam Area completed and approved.
- Continued Native Plant Overseeding along NFG Midstream Pipelines in East Branch Dam Area – 15.25 acres completed over the past three years with an estimated 5.17 acres slated for 2023
- Implement 3 Sisters Tract Plan for woodcock and grouse habitat
 - Develop timber sale to create necessary edge habitat
 - Layout trail location
- The District, in cooperation with the Pennsylvania Game Commission, maintains and enhances more than 40 food plots that encompass more than 450 acres that were developed, mainly for the elk herd, but used by many different species. Some of these food plots were initially funded through local and national wildlife organizations
 - Food plots to be sprayed, no-till seeded, and fertilized = 81 acres
 - Food plots to be mowed, maybe once or twice = 450 acres
 - Food plots to be limed = 46 acres
 - Vegetated roads to be mowed = 18 miles
 - Apple trees to be pruned = 10
 - Wood duck nesting boxes maintained = 6
- The District will continue to locate, document, and prune old apple trees.
- The District will continue to locate, document American chestnut trees.

ROAD AND BRIDGE PROJECTS

MAY BE RESTRICTED/CANCELED

- Barr Hollow Road DSA project with Dirt and Gravel funds
- West Hicks Run Road DSA project with Dirt and Gravel funds (through PGC SGL 14)
- Ridge Road top dressing with District Operating Funds (Gate 141 to Gate 142)
- Various drainage improvements (pipe and under drain installation, stream bank stabilization, sloping, etc.) throughout district area
- Contracted box culvert and bridge work: Red Run Road, East Cowley Run Road, Simons Lane (Bender and Portable Runs).

PRESCRIBED FIRE

MAY BE RESTRICTED/CANCELED

- None planned

INSECT, DISEASE, AND INVASIVE PLANT TREATMENT

- Have approximately 75,000 acres of high value oak stands contract sprayed for spongy moths
- Contractor treated 5 acres of Ailanthus Altissima, host tree for Spotted Lanternfly
- Review, update, and treat hemlock per the District Hemlock Plan
- Review, update, and treat ash per the District Ash Plan
- Review, update, and treat invasive plants per to District Invasive Plan
- Planned Invasive Plant Treatment Areas Continue
- Work with PennDOT and McKean County Conservation District to treat Goats Rue along Rt./ 146 and 46 adjacent to state forest lands.
- Continue insect and disease monitoring from aircraft and ground truthing.

NATURAL GAS, OIL, AND OTHER GEOLOGIC RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

Seneca Resources (Severed Rights)

- No new pads or infrastructure is planned for 2023.
- 5 unconventional wells plugged in 2022
- 3 to 6 wells proposed to be drilled on several existing pads – timeframe to be determined.
- Fracking and completions work to take place on several previously drilled wells in the E. Branch Dam Area.
- One new communications tower in the E. Branch area installed.

NFG Midstream

- 800 additional feet of 8” gathering line proposed withing existing ROW (E08-T)

TOWER AND RIGHT-OF-WAY PROJECTS

NFG Supply

- Modernization of FM-120 line from the Wellendorf area South onto private property completed.
- NFG FM-100 line abandonment completed. ROW restoration to be completed in 2023.



- Preliminary notice and review of proposed abandonment of the FM-120 line in the Dents Run area completed. Working on formal response and proposal processing with Operations.
- EGT&S preliminary proposal of Line 1800 Abandonment (M-1813) received. Working on details, documentation and formal response with Operations and several other forest districts.

EQT

- Termination of leases on two tracts in the Hicks Run area. Future well plugging and pipeline abandonment to follow over the next several years.

SPECIAL PROJECTS

MAY BE RESTRICTED/CANCELED

- Reestablished snake basking areas that are overgrown.
- Create habitat for woodcock and grouse, develop a trail, and install interpretive panels on the 3 Sisters property.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

MAY BE RESTRICTED/CANCELED

- The District periodically writes and disseminates news releases to both papers and radio on proposed projects, completed projects and articles of interest.
- A yearly newsletter is created and sent to all camp lease owners.
- The District maintains a Facebook page.
- Recreational Stakeholders Meetings are held as needed.
- Volunteer projects are available for additional participation.
- Staff the Hicks Run Wildlife Viewing Area during peak visitation weekends.
- We attend the Bendigo State Park Winter Fest and have a booth.
- We attend the Sinnemahoning and May Hollow Sportsmen Clubs Youth Field Day.
- We assist with the Envirothon.
- We host the Gravel Race and the Ultra Marathon which occurs almost entirely on state forest lands and we have a booth in town.
- We attend County fairs.
- We attend the Emporium Fire Company's fire prevention programs.
- We attend the Bavarian Festival.
- The District Office is open weekends on opening days of deer and bear season.
- We attend the "All About Nature" sponsored by the Cameron County Conservation District.
- We attend the Sportsman's' Clubs Meetings.
- We are on the St. Mary's Shade Tree Commission Board.
- We sponsor and attend meetings and visit tree issues for *Tree City USA*.

RESEARCH

- Site Class and 2019 Canopy Heights based on LIDAR and how they can be utilized to guide timber rattlesnake habitat management activities
- Autonomous Recording Unit (ARU) survey for Great Horned Owl and Barred Owl Vocalizations
- Parturition Timing and Calf Survival in PA Elk
- Stream Salamander Occupancy
- Mapping population dynamics of the invasive *Alliaria petiolata* (garlic mustard) in response to climate
- Facial Recognition for Noninvasive Identification of Cervids
- Timber rattlesnakes – Classify historic rattlesnake sites and provide accurate locational information and habitat boundaries and assess den viability and treats. In addition, blood samples will be collected. This is a collaborative project with the PA Fish and Boat Commission.
- Ginseng – Assessing American ginseng populations and sampling plant material for a regional study of genetic structure and habitat occupancy.
- Elk habitat study and what are elk eating study with the PGC

MAJOR ACCOMPLISHMENTS FROM PREVIOUS YEAR

- Timber management on 1,247 acres. Producing 7,575,741 board feet and \$3,763,033.60
- Cleared and painted district trails
- We treated Mile-a-minute populations at several sites: Hicks Run, Brooks Run, Norcross, Ridge Trail, Lebo Road, Ive's Farm, and Short Bend Treated knotweed at Four Mile, Boyer Run, Nanny Run, and along Rt. 120
- Continued mechanical treatment of Goatsrue at Pepper Hill and herbicide treatment of Goatsrue in the East Branch Dam area by contractor and staff. Other non-native invasive plants treated throughout district: Japanese barberry, multiflora rose, autumn olive, bush honeysuckle, garlic mustard, and Japanese stiltgrass
- Treated approximately 55 ash trees to protect them from the Emerald Ash Borer
- Staff assisted with western wildfire suppression needs
- Replaced pipes on southern end of Rich Valley Road (county line north)
- Assisted the public with general information and educational information
- The following bridges/box culverts were installed: Dents Run Road, Rich Valley Road (Cherry Run and Billy Buck Run), and Straight Creek Road
- East Cowley Run Road DSA stone project with Dirt and Gravel funds (top end)
- Ridge Road DSA stone project with Dirt and Gravel funds (Chicago Springs Area)
- Ridge Road DSA stone project with Dirt and Gravel funds (Crooked Run Road north)
- Porcupine Road top dressing with District Operational Funds
- Lower Lick Island Road drainage and surface improvements

