

DELAWARE STATE FOREST DISTRICT

2023 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 Delaware 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

- District staff will assist the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission stock trout at Bushkill Creek, Lily Pond, Lake Minisink, Little Mud Pond, and Saw Creek.
- New picnic tables and BBQ grills are planned to be installed at the Ambush pavilion near the Owego Maintenance Headquarters, off U.S. Route 6 in Blooming Grove Township.
- An educational wayside will be installed at the Pecks Pond Dam site as part of the requirements from the dam rehabilitation project.
- Parking areas and access points— Castle Country Club, Barrett Township, Monroe County will have the parking area improved this year.
- Forest leased campsites (cabins) will receive their standard inspections, or on request, by staff.
- Snowmobile trail improvement is planned for a portion of Saw Creek Trail and will include top-dressing AASHTO#1 with 2RC stone to provide a smoother driving surface.
- ATV trail improvement is planned for the Dixon Miller trails. Project will include filling entrenched trails, top-dressing trails, and grading to improve the driving surface and reduce erosion and impacts on that site.
- Pecks Pond vegetation management will continue with monitoring and potential spot-treatment of small areas. The PA Fish and Boat Commission's repopulation/stocking plan will continue in 2023.
- Stream crossing signs will be installed to help visitors identify the stream name along our State Forest Roads.
- Dixon Miller ATV trails will receive new signage and posts for trails and intersections.
- A Hiking-only trail connecting Laurel Run Road to Double Flat Trail on the SJC Tract is planned using an existing conservation easement right-of-way through a neighboring property.
- District staff will continue to improve bridge stream crossings on hiking trails throughout district, create a GIS layer map to monitor conditions and record maintenance, and inventory trail sign needs. Installation of signage, maintenance tasks, and improvements will be ongoing.
- Site-specific maps will continue to be produced by district staff. These are helpful when forest users are hiking or looking for greater detail in a specific area.
- District staff are planning to improve existing trails and establish connector hiking trails where needed on the Checo Tract.

Organized Events

- The District expects to renew and administer multiple commercial activity agreements for 2023. The activities include environmental education, guided nature hikes, guided horseback riding, ATV trail access, and guided biking trips.

TIMBER MANAGEMENT

Marked and sold, potentially active

- Pike County, Porter Township—In 2021, an oak regeneration timber sale was marked and sold along Spring Roberts Trail off Highline Road. The timber harvest encompasses 247 acres. Part of this timber sale’s purpose is to create early successional habitat for golden-winged warblers and associated species such as woodcock and grouse. The overstory removal timber harvest began in 2022 and will continue in 2023.
- Firewood Cutting Permits—During 2023, the public will be able to buy fuelwood permits to cut wood at the following locations: a network of roads west of State Route 402, Highline Road, Millbrook Trail (closed during the winter snowmobile season), Whittaker Farm Road, Ivan Swamp Road, Hiawatha Road, and Coon Swamp Road. Any of these sites may be closed if the wood is all removed and additional sites may become available. Permits and site-specific information can be attained by contacting the District Office in Swiftwater. A permit of \$20 per cord is required to cut fuelwood.
- Monroe County, Price Township – An overstory removal was completed in 2022 along Millertown Road, east of Schoolhouse Road. The removal was completed inside of 3 fences that were installed to keep deer out and improve the regeneration. The sale was 95.6 acres. When the regeneration is adequate, the fences will be removed.
- Pike County, Blooming Grove Township – The 295-acre Ambush timber sale along Ambush Road across from Costa’s Fun Park just south of Route 6 will continue to be active. The sale was sold in November 2021 to the highest bidder and the operator has until September 2023 to complete the harvest. The harvest will occur inside and outside of three fences along the east side of the road totaling 50 acres. Another 245 acres were marked outside of the fences along the western side of Ambush Road to remove the overstory and allow for natural regeneration of the site. This treatment area will extend over to the well house along White Deer Lake Road. Conifers and oak seedlings will be planted inside the fences once harvest has been completed. The large area this sale encompasses will hopefully benefit threatened species by creating the proper habitat they seek such as a healthy, young forest.
- Pike County, Porter Township – The 108-acre Bald Hill timber sale was sold in the winter of 2022 and the high bidder will have until September 30, 2024 to complete the sale. The southern portion of the sale area, right past the bridge, had tornado damage from the mid 1990’s. Other

parts of the sale along the road have been cut over for firewood and damaged by spongy moth. The entire area shows signs of good regeneration which should allow for the establishment of a healthy young forest once harvested. No sales have been conducted in the vicinity in the recent past. This sale should create a large opening in an area of otherwise dense forest.

- Pike County, Porter township — A 49.4 acre overstory removal timber sale was put out for bid and sold to highest bidder. It is located east of Route 402 and northeast of the Whittaker Road powerline. The area is fenced and received a prescribed fire this past spring to control the interfering vegetation. The buyer has until May 30, 2024 to complete the sale.

Proposed (not marked yet)

- Pike County, Dingman Township – A 125-acre timber sale will be proposed for an area located along Fivemile Meadow and Saw Creek Roads. The treatment area will be along both sides of Saw Creek Road as you enter the gate off Fivemile Meadow Road. Regeneration in the area ranges from fair to good. Forest density will be reduced to promote growth of oak species, remove old and genetically inferior trees, reduce the competing black birch component, and create a more open forest. No sales have been conducted in the vicinity. This sale should create a large opening in an area of otherwise dense forest.

Regeneration projects

- One deer exclosure fence northwest of Pine Lake in Greene Township, Pike County will be removed this year.
- One deer exclosure fence along Route 6 across from Alice’s Wonderland store encompassing 38 acres is slated for removal. The site was harvested years ago and the present regeneration is tall enough to withstand any browsing from deer once the fence is removed.
- One deer exclosure off Route 402 near the Blooming Grove hiking trail encompassing 63 acres is slated for removal. The area inside the fence was harvested in 2016 and current regeneration inside the fence is tall enough to warrant removal. Undesirable black birch has overtopped much of the oak.
- A 21-acre deer fence was installed just east of Route 402 and south of the White Deer Lake Road. The new fence will protect young oak seedlings within the recently harvested shelterwood. Interfering black birch will be spot treated with an herbicide during the summer months. Birch in the region tends to outgrow oak seedlings.
- Vegetation Impact Protocol Plots (VIP plots) will be completed on State Forest Land to assess deer browsing impact on regeneration and native plants.
- The District will participate in the Deer Management Assistance Program (DMAP) in effort to achieve or maintain a deer population that is balanced with its habitat.

- Tree seedlings will be planted at sites along Song Dog Road and Bear Wallow Road in Greene and Palmyra Townships, Pike County. A total of 30,000 white pine seedlings will be planted on 38 acres at these locations. The conifer tree seedlings will augment the natural regeneration of mainly hardwoods with a conifer component for wildlife habitat and species diversity. The conifers will provide winter thermal and escape cover for wildlife.
- Delaware State Forest staff have been and will continue to perform a silvicultural treatment called weeding at previously regenerated timber sales in Pike County. The projects consist of cutting, by hand, competing vegetation generally less than 8" diameter. Specifically, sweet and yellow birch, striped maple, beech, and hophornbeam are cut to release red, white, and chestnut oak saplings and other highly desirable species such as tulip poplar, sugar maple, black cherry, conifers, and aspen. The project areas planned for 2022 are along Song Dog Road and Bear Wallow Road in Greene and Palmyra Townships, Pike County.
- In order to improve the regeneration of trees, shrubs, and wildflowers and to improve the health and sustainability of wildlife populations, the Bureau of Forestry has been improving access to deer hunters during the past two decades. The result of this initiative is that now, more than 90 percent of the state forest system is within one-half mile of an open road during the fall hunting season. The increased access has allowed hunters to harvest more deer throughout the more remote parts of the forest which in turn has improved forest health. With improved forest health comes better wildlife habitat and healthier wildlife populations. Besides big game hunters, other forest users such as wildlife viewers, hikers, small game and waterfowl hunters, and fall foliage enthusiasts have benefited from the access program. For the 2022-2023 fall/winter hunting season, the Delaware State Forest District opened 25 gated roads totaling 35.2 miles of road access. We have also enrolled 8 gated roads into the popular and effective Big Game Retrieval Program. The Big Game Retrieval Program allows hunters to drive behind a closed but unlocked gate in order to retrieve big game that they had harvested. This program encourages hunters to harvest deer in remote areas where a long drag may normally discourage them from doing so. At the same time, the program keeps these areas in a state of having minimal disturbance by vehicular travel.

RESTORATION AND HABITAT PROJECTS

- Delaware State Forest will continue to partner with Indiana University of Pennsylvania in an ongoing effort to create Golden Winged Warbler habitat in a 2500-acre Special Management Area. Sites are located along Pine Flats Road and Highline Road. These habitat projects are beneficial to warblers and a host of other game and non-game species.
- Work will continue at the 2-acre wildlife habitat opening located along Steam Mill Trail. The area received an herbicide treatment to kill non-native grasses and shrubs. A 200' buffer around the opening was burned to stimulate new shrub growth. The buffer had some of the trees cut to open it up and create a "soft edge." The opening was planted in May 2019 with a

mixture of native grasses and wildflowers. The site has seen three growing seasons and has responded nicely. One more growing season is needed for the opening to reach its maximum growth ability. A prescribed fire will be used to remove dead grasses and stimulate new growth in the Spring 2024 growing season.

- Pike County, Porter Township – Red spruce is a native conifer to our region and past forest disturbances have mostly relegated it to swamps. Staff will work to reduce hardwood competition to red spruce that are re-colonizing upland areas around Painter Swamp. Hardwood trees will be cut which will allow the spruce ample room to grow. This project will benefit grouse, snowshoe hare, and northern flying squirrel that benefit from a conifer component.
- Pike County, Porter Township – In 1977, Tony Cardwell proposed an 85-acre regeneration harvest off Ludleyville Road (19-77BC2). The regenerated stand is now approximately 45 years old and the aspen, which is abundant in this stand, is beginning to age out. Aspen is an early successional/pioneer species that is underrepresented in the Delaware State Forest. Aspen responds well to coppice harvest methodology. Therefore, staff will create forest openings large enough to promote aspen cloning/root suckering. Aspen buds are a high protein preferred browse forage. Aspen forests often have well developed herbaceous layers and can benefit ruffed grouse, woodcock, white-tailed deer, snowshoe hare, golden winged warbler, and numerous other songbirds.
- Nesting boxes for various wildlife species will be installed throughout the district to help promote species such as wood ducks, bats, and bluebirds.
- The numerous herbaceous openings in Monroe and Pike county will be maintained for various species of wildlife.

ROAD AND BRIDGE PROJECTS

- Burnt Mills ATV trail will receive aggregate to improve the trail as needed. Volumes of aggregate are unknown at this time.
- Laurel Run Road, Price Township, Monroe County, will receive 1721 tons of paver placed and rolled DSA through a Dirt and Gravel Road funded project. This project is funded and should take place in the spring/early summer 2022. A temporary road closure will be posted and in-place.
- Dixon Miller Recreation Area will receive aggregate to improve trail conditions and driving surfaces. Plans are to improve drainage from the trails and repair entrenched trails.
- Ongoing bridge inspections continue to occur across the state forest. Inspections are done to ensure the integrity of our bridges for employee and public safety.
- Whittaker Farm Road had 2 pipes installed and regraded to stop road washouts in 2022.

- Whittaker Trail 2rc was completed in September 2022.
- A portion of Whittaker Farm Road that is owned and maintained by Porter Township will undergo a Dirt and Gravel Road improvement project in the spring of 2023.

PRESCRIBED FIRE

- Pike County, Porter Township – A prescribed fire was completed in 2022 north of the Whittaker Farm road and east of the powerline. The purpose was to remove unwanted interfering vegetation and promote desirable regeneration. The area has been marked for a timber sale and is currently out for bid.
- Pike County, Dingman Township – A prescribed fire is planned for a 9.87-acre unit along Standing Stone Road just to the north of the deer fence. The purpose of the fire is to remove dead grasses, small shrubs, and other interfering vegetation in an effort to maintain the site as a wildlife opening.
- Pike County – Various sites will be evaluated for future prescribed fire treatment. These sites entail previously harvested timber sales, poorly growing/overcrowded stands, and established stands to remove interfering birch and understory plants. The goal will be to open the mid-canopy and stimulate growth.

INSECT, DISEASE, AND INVASIVE PLANT TREATMENTS

- One hundred ash trees will be chemically re-treated with TREE-AGE, a trunk-injected insecticide. This treatment is an attempt to save some genetically superior ash trees that would otherwise succumb to the emerald ash borer – a non-native forest pest.
- Staff will continue to monitor for invasive plants and insects across state forest land and they will be treated appropriately. Areas of specific concern are the fourteen miles of PPL Susquehanna-Roseland powerline, as well as, several other electric and gas line projects. Mile-a-minute, tree-of-heaven, phragmites, Japanese knotweed, emerald ash borer, and spotted lantern fly are key invasive species for which the staff will be on the lookout.
- Approximately one acre of wisteria will continue to be chemically treated until it is controlled. Wisteria is an exotic, invasive vine that causes significant damage to the native trees and forest ecology. The wisteria treatment site is located along Old Route 402 near Peck’s Pond.
- Approximately one-quarter acre of Japanese knotweed will continue to be chemically treated along the shore of Peck’s Pond. Japanese knotweed is an exotic, invasive plant that can detrimentally alter a wetland ecosystem.

- The presence of emerald ash borer was confirmed in Monroe and Pike County in 2017. Ash mortality began in 2018 on the western edge of the district as a result. Severe ash mortality is occurring in Monroe and Pike Counties.
- Hemlock trees will be re-treated for hemlock woolly adelgid along Bartleson Road.
- The Delaware Forest will treat approximately 19,000 acres as part of our spongy moth (formerly known as Gypsy moth) suppression program. Treatment dates will occur in mid-May to early June depending on insect and tree formation. Notices have been posted.
- Spotted lanternfly has been confirmed in Monroe and Pike Counties. Spotted lanternfly is an invasive insect that was confirmed in the United States in 2014. This invasive insect could potentially have an impact on State Forest lands in 2022. This pest has the potential to negatively affect many of our native tree species.

NATURAL GAS, OIL, AND OTHER GEOLOGIC RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

- Tennessee Gas Pipeline company will continue to support invasive plant treatments on Delaware State Forest land right-of-way's and adjacent areas.

TOWER AND RIGHTS-OF-WAY PROJECTS

- PennDOT continues to improve Interstate 84 in Dingman Township, Pike County adjacent to Delaware Forest and has recently given Forestry notice of acquisition of approximately 0.5 acres for ROW access. Construction on the Tunnel Road underpass may occur in 2023, which will increase access to the south side of Interstate 84.
- The Pennsylvania Outdoor Corps worked to replace wooden steps and landings at the Pohopoco Fire Tower at Dixon Miller Recreation Area in 2021. The project is anticipated to be completed in the year 2023.
- Pike County, Blooming Grove Township — PPL will continue a transmission line upgrade from Beaver Dam Road to Shiney Mountain Road. Project includes the removal of wooden poles to replace them with taller steel poles. Temporary impacts will occur at Beaver Dam Road, Tanglewood Trail, and Shiney Mountain Road.
- Pike County, Porter Township — PPL and Verizon will be extending service south along State Route 402 from Snow Hill Road to the Monroe County line. Project will include placement of new poles, right-of-way clearing and installation of local distribution lines.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

- Staff will continue to promote and enhance the image of the forest and district. One task is addressing illegal forest dumping. Staff will investigate and prosecute illegal forest dumpers when applicable. We will continue to remove and clear dump sites when found.
- Volunteering opportunities are expected for 2023. The recreation forester will reach out to current conservation volunteers and the estranged friends group to inform them on priority projects. Information will be distributed to local stakeholder groups to advertise the need for volunteer assistance and seek to establish a new friends group.
- Comments, questions, and concerns pertaining to any and all district activities may be directed to our District Office at 570-895-4000 or via email at FD19@pa.gov. Due to COVID-19 restrictions and safety protocol, our offices may not be open to the public. Please email us or call and leave a message; our staff are monitoring those lines of communication and will reply as soon as possible.

SPECIAL PROJECTS

- The new Resource Management Center with Storage Building (aka District Office) started construction in January 2023 — The site selected is along Route 402 near the Thunder Swamp Trailhead parking area. The estimated time for completion is early 2024.
- Little Summit Fire Station — This project is to renovate the heating system, remove underground fuel tanks, and improve site drainage. Project bidding, award, and construction started in March 2023.
- Edgemere and Snow Hill Station paving — This project is to pave portions of the Edgemere and Snow Hill stations to improve site drainage and operational efficiencies. Project has started and Edgemere is complete. Snow Hill area will likely be started this spring after freezing temperatures subside.

RESEARCH

- Other research projects continue at multiple sites across the forest district investigating and monitoring groundwater, water quality, and other flora and fauna.

MAJOR ACCOMPLISHMENTS FROM PREVIOUS YEAR

- Trail maps for the Buckhorn Recreation Area, Camp William Penn, White Deer Lake, and SJC tracts were developed and are now available for the public.
- DSF staff chemically treated one hundred ash trees by trunk injection to kill emerald ash borer. This treatment is an attempt to save some genetically superior ash trees that would otherwise succumb to the emerald ash borer – a non-native forest pest.
- Seventy-three hemlock trees were re-treated for hemlock woolly adelgid and elongated hemlock scale at Tarkill Interpretative Trail. The combined diameter of these trees is 940”.
- Twenty-one hemlock trees were treated along Bartleson Road for hemlock woolly adelgid. The combined diameter of these trees is 249”.
- Approximately 1250 acres of state forest was treated for spongy moth (formerly Gypsy moth) as part of our statewide suppression program. Treatment locations were in the Porter’s Lake area.
- DSF staff certified several shipments of ginseng for ginseng dealers to ship across state lines.
- DSF staff applied for and received 1,164 DMAP permits covering nine DMAP areas encompassing 86,266 acres in Pike, Monroe, and Carbon counties.
- DSF staff completed 19 Vegetation Impact Protocol Plots (VIP plots) on State Forest Land to assess deer browsing impact on regeneration and native plants.
- DSF transitioned to the P25 radio system.
- DSF staff assisted other state and federal agencies with large-scale wildland fires in Colorado, Montana, Idaho, Texas, Kentucky, and California.
- DSF staff assisted PA Fish and Boat Commission stock trout at the Bushkill Creek, Lily Pond, Little Mud Pond, Lake Minisink, and Saw Creek.
- Lily Pond and Little Mud Pond were both added to the PA Fish and Boat Commission’s Stocked Trout Open to year-round fishing program.
- Ranch Road in Pike County was greatly improved via a grant through Pike County Conservation District utilizing funds from the Center for Dirt and Gravel Roads.
- A section of Whittaker Trail was top dressed with 2RC to improve smoothness for snowmobilers and improve overall trail conditions.