

2020 Accomplishments | PA Bureau of Forestry

Managing, Serving, and Protecting Forests and Communities

By the Numbers



- ✓ **Forest Stewardship Program:** Following Covid-19 Department of Health guidelines, program staff assisted and educated over 33,000 landowners to better manage their private forests.
- ✓ **Timber Management:** the bureau contracted for harvesting of approximately 10,500 acres of timber on state forest land. These operations provided over \$13 million in revenue for the commonwealth, supplied raw materials for private-sector economic activity, and improved habitat for wildlife.
- ✓ **Wildfire suppression:** The state suffered about 1,500 wildfires burning approximately 3,000 acres in 2020. The largest fire of the year burned about 800 acres in Monroe County in early November.
- ✓ **Forest Health:** Gypsy moth treatment was unnecessary in 2020. Egg mass surveys indicated an increasing population of gypsy moths, which will require treatment on over 214,000 acres in 2021. To combat hemlock woolly adelgid (HWA), 6,537 hemlocks were treated on 805 acres of DCNR lands.

Forest Resource Management

PA Forest Action Plan: The Bureau of Forestry completed its second PA Forest Action Plan, submitting it to the US Forest Service in December, 2020. A requirement of the Federal Farm Bill, the plan sets strategies that guide federal investment, which in turn affects Forest Health, Forest Fire Protection, and Community Forestry and Stewardship programs.

Dual Forest Certification: For the second consecutive year, the Bureau of Forestry successfully passed its dual certification audit. Under a modified audit format due to COVID-19, the bureau safely and effectively demonstrated its commitment to sustainable forest management under Forest Stewardship Council and Sustainable Forestry Initiative standards.

Shale Gas Monitoring Reporting: The Bureau of Forestry developed and released the web-based Shale Gas Monitoring Story Map, a new and more accessible format for sharing monitoring data. The team was lauded by the Governor for continuing its crucial monitoring work during the pandemic.



Pennsylvania has one of the largest third-party certified forests of North America. Dual certification ensures that Pennsylvania's state forests are managed to the highest third-party standards.

Natural Gas Activity

Management: As of December of 2020, the Bureau of Forestry managed 135 state forest, state park, gas storage, and publicly-owned streambed leases for performance and compliance. Associated with those leases are approximately 1384 wells (conventional and unconventional), capable of natural gas production.

Forest Protection

Wildland Fire: More than 200 bureau and volunteer firefighters were deployed to battle blazes in nine western states during the summer 2020 fire season.

Good Neighbor Authority

Agreement: The bureau met the goal for 2020 by creating 31 fire effects plots in five burn units with completed pre-burn data on Allegheny National Forest. It also assisted with conducting two timber sales.



Prescribed Fire: Despite the pandemic, personnel were able to safely conduct 11 controlled burns on 500 acres of DCNR-managed land.

Forest Pests: The bureau continued projects to combat other invasive insects in 2020, including emerald ash borer and spotted lanternfly.

Recreation

Adaptation to Increased Visitor Use During Covid-19: Popular state forest recreation areas were used by thousands of additional visitors, creating safety concerns and straining resources. Partnering with other district and state park rangers, PennDOT, and other officials, the bureau ensured public safety while protecting sensitive resources.

Deer Hunting: Abundant hunting opportunities were offered in 104 units in state forests and parks participating in the Game Commission's Deer Management Assistance Program (DMAP). Staff also opened more than 400 miles of roads prior to deer season. Roughly 90 percent of all state forestlands could be accessed within 1/2-mile of a drivable road.

Infrastructure: The bureau coordinated the complete restoration of Beech Creek and Mill Creek roads in Sproul and Loyalsock State forests, restoring important passages for visitors.

Conservation

Invasive Plant Management: The Bureau of Forestry treated 600 acres of invasive plants in 2020. Eight new populations of high-priority invasive species were eradicated using Early Detection Rapid Response (EDRR) protocols.

Wild Resource Conservation Program: The Wild Resource Conservation Program shifted its procedures online due to COVID-19. The board funded 14 projects, totaling about \$365,000 to aid in the conservation of the commonwealth's flora and non-game fauna.

Climate Change Committee: The bureau formed the Climate Change Committee with eight work groups to address specific challenges and needs arising from Climate Change.

PA Conservation Explorer: The environmental review tool, PA Conservation Explorer, had another successful year. The site was visited 88,000 times, with users running 2,581 conservation planning reports. A total of 25,861 projects were entered and screened, with 20,455 submitted for agency review. The program generated almost \$440,000 in revenue in 2020.

Wild Plant Sanctuaries: Twenty-two sanctuaries were monitored for state-listed plant populations.

Rural/Community Forestry

Buffer Summit: The annual DCNR Riparian Forest Buffer Summit was held virtually in conjunction with The Western Pennsylvania Conservancy. In lieu of the in-person event (COVID-19) alternative webinars were viewed 6000x.

Riparian Buffer Programs:

DCNR awarded \$673,700 in buffer grants via C2P2 and an additional \$1.2 million in buffer grants via federal funds (EPA), equating to approximately 210 acres of buffers. The bureau also launched the Buffer My Stream outreach campaign, which resulted in calls from over 180 landowners. The new Lawn Conversion Program resulted in approximately 20 acres of installations.

TreeVitalize Program:

The TreeVitalize program facilitated the planting of 2,091 larger-caliper trees in urban/suburban settings and reached 112 total TreeCity USA Communities. In-person TreeTenders trainings were cancelled due to Covid-19, but Philadelphia held two virtual trainings reaching over 150 attendees.

Communications

Bureau 125th Anniversary Celebration:

Despite the pandemic, the bureau celebrated this milestone with banner displays, social media infographics, and a short video. Bureau staff provided articles for the summer edition of the Pennsylvania Forestry Association magazine which was dedicated to this important observance.

