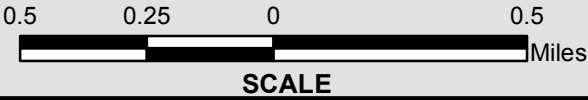


# SWEET ROOT NATURAL AREA

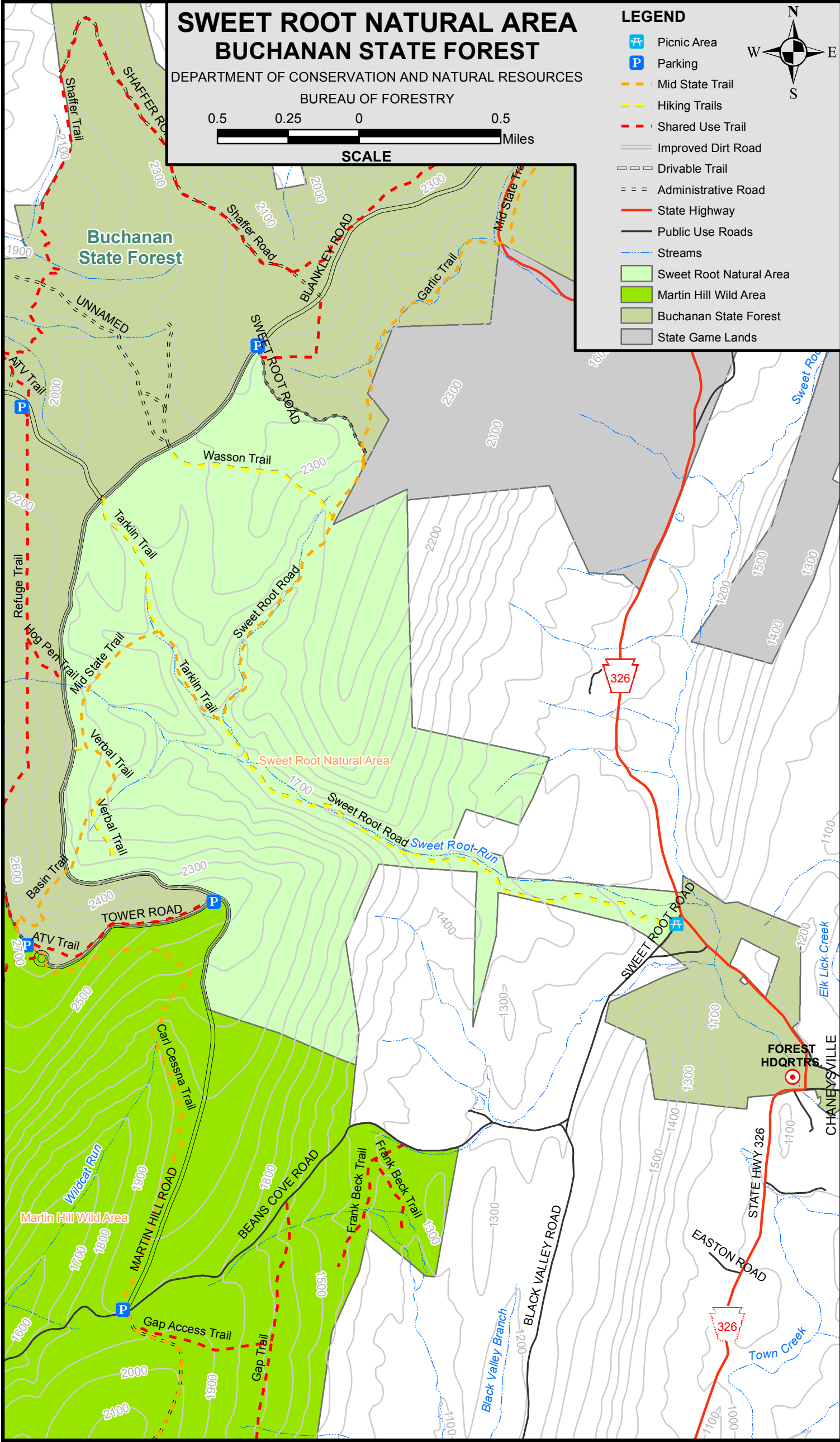
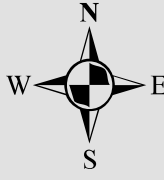
## BUCHANAN STATE FOREST

DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION AND NATURAL RESOURCES  
BUREAU OF FORESTRY



### LEGEND

- Picnic Area
- Parking
- Mid State Trail
- Hiking Trails
- Shared Use Trail
- Improved Dirt Road
- Drivable Trail
- Administrative Road
- State Highway
- Public Use Roads
- Streams
- Sweet Root Natural Area
- Martin Hill Wild Area
- Buchanan State Forest
- State Game Lands



## History and Land Use

Pennsylvania’s state forest system includes dozens of special wild and natural areas set aside to protect unique or unusual biologic, geologic, scenic and historical features or to showcase outstanding examples of the state’s major forest communities. A natural area is an area of unique scenic, historic, geologic, or ecological value that will be maintained in a natural condition by allowing physical and biological processes to operate, usually without direct human intervention. They are set aside to provide locations for scientific observation of natural systems, to protect examples of typical and unique plant and animal communities, and to protect outstanding examples of natural interest and beauty.

The 1,526 acre Sweet Root Natural Area is a unique area along the Sweet Root Run. The first historical reference to this area dates back to 1625 when Thomas Powell set out on an expedition of discovery from Jamestown, VA traveling a route up the Chesapeake Bay and Potomac River to Town Creek and Sweet Root Run. In 1728, his descendant, Joseph Powell on a Native American Indian trade mission also brought the first settlers to the area. He returned in 1734 and established a trade post along the Little Sweet Root Creek. Nearby, a saltpeter cave was discovered in the narrow hemlock covered gorge of Sweet Root Run. This saltpeter was mined during the Revolutionary War and used to make gun powder. Throughout the settlement history much of the surrounding landscape was lumbered, but the narrow gorge never was mostly due to the inhospitable terrain.

This cove and the surrounding ridges were acquired by the state from Howard Cessna in 1902. In 1921, the 9-acre grove of virgin hemlocks was designated as the Martin Hill Monument to be one of the Forest Monuments that Gifford Pinchot recommended be preserved across the state. The name Forest Monument was determined not to represent the goals of these natural areas and in 1970 the site was renamed Sweet Root Natural Area. Over the years additional acreage has been added allowing for the protection of 1,526 acres including a 69 acre

area of what was virgin timber. In 1979, this area was also afforded additional protection status as an Amphibian and Reptile Protection Zone.



Though remaining virtually untouched for hundreds of years and despite the best efforts towards preservation change has reached this cove. By the late 1990’s the invasion of a non-native insect known as the hemlock wooly adelgid has caused severe mortality in the ancient large hemlocks for which this site has so long been known. The increased sunlight to the ground is resulting currently in a thick sapling stage stand of sweet birch while the slopes above are covered with second growth oak or oak-hard pine forest types. However, even with the loss of the majestic hemlocks, Sweet Root will remain a unique area. Trunks will remain for decades in varying stages of decay providing homes for many species of plant and animal life. The increased sunlight may also encourage the American yew to return to its former glory rather than its current isolated patches.

## Recreational Opportunities

The Sweet old growth stand along Sweet Root Run can be reached from Sweet Root Picnic Area by taking Sweet Root Road. Parts of the Mid State trail and other hiking trails allow visitors access to examine this unique landscape, and historical remnants. Sweet Root Natural Area is also a wonderful location for sportsmen wishing to harvest bear, deer, turkey and even small game. Sweet Root Picnic Area is nestled at the base of the Natural Area offering all recreational users a place to pause and enjoy their travels.

## Care for the Land

State forests belong to all Pennsylvanians. Take time to enjoy them, but know the rules and regulations designed to protect the forests and you. Please be careful with fire, keep our forests litter free and don’t damage trees and other plants.

## Directions to Sweet Root NA

The Sweet Root Road Picnic and Parking Area is located on PA Route 326 about 0.8 miles north of the intersection of Chaneyville Road.

GPS Coordinates:  
39° 49’ 54.8” N, 78° 30’ 3.6” W

Nester’s Parking Area is located on Blankley Road about 1.4 miles west of the intersection of PA Route 326 or 7.2 miles east of the intersection of Evitts Creek Road. The Evitts Creek intersection is 3.5 miles from PA Route 220.

GPS Coordinates:  
39° 51’ 41.4” N, 78° 31’ 44.9” W

## Dual Certified Forest

Pennsylvania’s 2.2-million-acre state forest system is one of the largest dual certified forests in North America. The forest is certified under Forest Stewardship Council™ and Sustainable Forestry Initiative® standards. The FSC® is an independent organization supporting environmentally appropriate, socially beneficial, and economically viable management of the world’s forests. SFI® certification focuses on protection of water quality, biodiversity, wildlife habitat, species at risk, and forests with exceptional conservation value. Dual certification ensures that Pennsylvania’s state forests are managed to the highest third-party standards.



## For more information

**Buchanan State Forest  
Forest District #2**  
25185 Great Cove Road  
McConnellsburg, PA 17233  
(717) 485-3148  
FD02@pa.gov  
[www.dcnr.pa.gov](http://www.dcnr.pa.gov)



## Sweet Root Natural Area Buchanan State Forest



Pennsylvania’s vast state forest system comprises 2.2 million acres for you to use, enjoy and explore. The Department of Conservation and Natural Resources’ Bureau of Forestry manages these forests to ensure their long-term health and to conserve native wild plants.

Buchanan State Forest comprises 71,638 acres in Bedford, Fulton and Franklin counties. The Sweet Root Natural Area is a 1,526 acre special use area in Buchanan State Forest that is located in Southern Bedford County on the east side of Tussey Mountain near the Sweet Root Picnic Area, about one half mile west of Chaneyville on PA Route 326.

