

TIOGA STATE FOREST DISTRICT

2024 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 the Tioga 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:

Benn Carlson, District Forester
Tioga State Forest
One Nessmuk Lane, Wellsboro, PA 16901
570-724-2868
Fd16@pa.gov

RECREATION

- **2024 Recreation Events:**
- The **Mt. Tom Challenge** will take place on February 11. This timed trail run utilizes the Mt. Tom trail system near Ansonia.
- The **Mammoth Gravel Endurance** bike ride will be held in downtown Wellsboro, PA on May 4. This bike ride has options of 32, 70, or 140 miles of dirt and gravel township and state forest roads in Tioga County.
- **Canyon Man 100** takes place on the first weekend in May. This 100-mile triathlon is for fun, and uses pine creek, the west rim trail, and the pine creek rail trail, as well as state forest roads.
- The **Susquehannock Trail Pro Rally** (automobile speed competition) will take place on June 28 & 29. The pro rally uses selected public use roads in the western and northern portions of the Tioga State Forest.
- **Conquer the Canyon** will take place on July 27. This event will include both a full and half marathon on the Western side of the PA Grand Canyon and a 5K run in Wellsboro.
- **Brayden's Trail of Strength** will take place on August 3. This trail run is a 10 or 20-kilometer race that serves as a fundraiser for the Chromosome 18 Registry and Research Society. This race uses selected trails in the section of the Tioga State Forest that lies north of Rt. 6.
- **Kanyon Kids** will take place for its second year on August 3. This 5k run for the youth of the area starts on private land and uses a couple miles of our trails in the Clay Mine area.
- **Rise & Run on West Rim Trail** is a new trail running event taking place on August 10. Participants will run the northern half of the trail and back.
- The **Eastern States 100** will be taking place on August 10 & 11. This 100-mile trail run uses selected trails and roads in the southwestern portions of the Tioga State Forest. This event takes place in several other forest districts as well.
- The **Pine Creek Challenge** will take place on September 7 & 8. This 100-mile run takes place on the Pine Creek Rail Trail.
- The **Green Monster** trail challenge happens on October 13. This race has 15, 25, and 50 km course options that use selected trails and roads in the "Asaph Block" of the Tioga State Forest that lies north of Rt. 6.

- The **Explore PA Wilds Four Tour** is tentatively planned for mid-October. This adventure bike tour has been expanding since it was first held in 2017 and will be held in several state forests in the PA Wilds region. Only licensed motorcycles are allowed.
- **2024 Recreation Trail and Infrastructure Improvement Goals:**
- **West Rim Trail** will continue to have Mt. Laurel and brush trimmed back by Keystone Trail Association.
- The last of 3-foot bridges will be constructed with the help of the Williamsport POC crew on the **Mid-State Trail** over Sand Run near **Sand Run Falls**.
- We hope to complete the equestrian campsites located at the Sand Rd./ left straight run intersection this spring. Stone will be spread on the access road and campsite parking spots and install hitching posts/ highline anchor points.
- Begin process to design and develop an interpretive trail in the district. Work with the Bureau and local partners to develop strategic outreach for the trail.

TIMBER MANAGEMENT

Marked and Sold, Potentially Active

- There are currently 24 timber sales under contract in the district. Many of these sales will have activity on them in 2024. Sale activity will be in the scattered throughout the district. The contracts for eight of these sales will expire in 2024.

Marked But Not Yet Sold

- Currently, 20 timber sales totaling approximately 1,850 acres are proposed for bid in 2024 on the Tioga State Forest. These sales are scattered throughout the district. These sales are mostly overstory removal and shelterwood treatments.

Regeneration Projects

- There are 8 blocks totaling 461 acres scheduled to be treated with broadcast herbicide in 2024. Application of herbicide will be applied by both machine and by hand. These blocks are located throughout the Tioga State Forest. These blocks are being treated to control interfering vegetation such as fern, beech brush, and striped maple.

- There are 2 blocks totaling 151 acres that are planned to have the brush cut in 2024.
- There are 3 woven-wire fences proposed to be constructed in 2024. These fences are located throughout the district. These fences are being constructed to protect developing regeneration from browsing deer.
- There are 6 woven-wire fences that will be dismantled in 2024.

RESTORATION AND HABITAT PROJECTS

- **Stream Improvement Projects:** There are stream bank improvement projects planned on the Tioga River near County Bridge Park, Campbell Run in Tiadaghton along the Pine Creek Rail Trail and a third project along Four Mile Run off Thompson Hollow Road.
- **Wildlife Habitat Projects:** Several wildlife projects will be taking place throughout the Tioga State Forest in 2024. The Landrus Heights projects will build on the 70+ acres of aspen cutting that was completed during early 2020, 2021, 2022 and 2023. The final 20 acres of aspen cutting is on track to be completed in the Nickle Run area of the Arnot LMU in early 2024. Other projects involve placing seed, fertilizer, and lime on established food plots throughout the district. These sites include Big Dam Hollow, and Hoffman Campground. A pollinator field is planned to be established at the Cavanaugh Rail Trail Access area. Additionally, expansion and continued maintenance of several fruit tree orchards across the district is also planned in the upcoming year.
- **Landscape Restoration Project:** Work will continue a landscape restoration project in the Gamble Run area of the district. In 2024, money from an NWTF grant will be used to improve road access into the project area. A 378-acre timber sale is currently being proposed and will focus on creating pitch pine / oak barrens type habitat. Fire will then be used on different return intervals to maintain this underrepresented ecotype on the district. Additionally, the Leetonia South LMU and Asaph LMU have been designated as Dynamic Forest Restoration Blocks (DFRB's). This will allow for funding from the Ruffed Grouse Society to be used towards creating early successional habitat on degraded sites in those areas.

ROAD AND BRIDGE PROJECTS

- Two Act 26 funded projects will be done this year. One located on Cedar Mtn. Road and the other on Fallbrook Cemetery Road Hemlock Hollow Run. Projects are to be completed in 2024.
- Several bridges along Pine Creek Rail Trail will have work completed on them to repair failings noted in routine bridge inspections due to rotted timber supports.

- Right Asaph Road is scheduled to have DSA paver placed on approximately 1.4 miles of road.
- The crews will be working throughout the district replacing pipes and adding new ones where needed. Roads will be closed during these times for safe working conditions.
- Pipes will continue to be installed and 2A will continue to be spread on Painter Leetonia Road in anticipation of a future DSA project.
- Francis Leetonia Road will have shale and fabric placed on it to provide an improved base layer and drainage in anticipation of a future 2A project.
- A short section of Pine Creek Rail Trail will be constructed to join the existing northern terminus with the newest addition slated to be finished in 2025.

PRESCRIBED FIRE

- Another constructive year for prescribed fire in the Tioga State Forest District as we plan for 178 total acres of silvicultural burns. All the units planned for 2024 are post-removal burns mainly focused on the release of oak species and control of “nuisance” species competing with the oak. The application of fire in post-removal stands has proven a successful tool to establish oak as dominants/ codominant among the other species while maintaining biodiversity. Our number one priority unit, Half Mile (33 acres), is a leftover 2023 block from the 93-acre Leetonia unit. Following the Half Mile unit on the docket would be the two blocks of the Trophy Squirrel unit. Block 2 of the Trophy Squirrel unit can be completed early in the season due to the block mainly focusing on wildlife habitat and an associated aspen release cut inside the unit. Lastly, we plan to “clean up” the Dead Man unit (28 acres) that was attempted as a Fall burn unit in 2022. Because of the narrow daytime burn window, the Dead Man unit experienced mosaic fire activity across the unit. The goal is to burn the fenced unit to completion and release the remaining oak that is currently being outcompeted mainly by birch species and red maple prior to the removal of the fence. These units are not only important to forest ecosystem management and silvicultural procedure but are essential to building firefighter’s depth, observation of fire effects on the landscape, and establish preparedness both for firefighters and equipment for a wildfire event.
- Looking outside the box in early February, having a snowless and warm beginning of February, we were able to complete the Cavanaugh Rail-to-Trail Access grass unit (9 acres). With collaboration from the Tiadaghton Audubon Society and DCNR some of the completed grass units, including the Cavanaugh Access unit, are planned for a frost seeding with herbaceous native pollinator species. Progressing forward with the grass units for Spring of 2024 we plan to burn approximately 33 acres of wildlife openings on Old Supply Trail (7.3 acres), Wynne wildlife openings (4 acres), and Hoffman Canoe Access (portion of the planned 35 acres). The goal of these prescribed fires is to maintain the sites as wildlife openings / pollinator fields, and to encourage the growth of native non-woody

vegetation. Another specific goal for the Hoffman unit is to control mile-a-minute within the burn area. After multiple entries with fire in the Hoffman unit, control of mile-a-minute has been positively observed. Also, control of but not complete elimination of other invasive species has been observed after multiple fire entries. The grass units also serve as an important training opportunity prior to the more technical burns in the forested units, blow the dust-off overwintered firefighters, and determine if firefighting equipment is fire ready for the upcoming season.

INSECT, DISEASE, AND INVASIVE PLANT TREATMENTS

- **Ash Management:** In 2024, the Tioga State Forest plans to continue implementing its management plan for dealing with the mortality of ash species due to the Emerald Ash Borer. As most hazard trees have been removed and the sites with higher components of white ash have been harvested, management on the district will be limited to small scale chemical and biological treatments. 2024 is a scheduled ash treatment year. 88 trees spread over six treatment sites will be injected with *emamectin benzoate* to control Emerald Ash Borer. Additionally, Division of Forest Health will continue to monitor biological controls that were released on the district several years ago.
- **Spongy Moth Spray Program:** Spongy moth numbers have substantially decreased across the district; however, a fourth aerial suppression program is planned for May 2024. This program will focus on areas of the district where egg masses were found and where trees are highly stressed and subject to mortality. Substantial defoliation across the district in recent years has started to manifest in pockets of mortality which is expected to expand in the coming year. Total acreage in the program this year is 9,475 acres.
- **Hemlock Treatment** – No hemlock treatments are planned for the district in 2024. District staff will continue to be monitor these areas.
- **Invasive Plants Treatment Projects:** In 2024, we will continue to treat and monitor populations of invasive plant species in the district. Most of these projects have been on-going over the past several years. *Japanese knotweed*, *mile-A-minute*, *glossy buckthorn*, and *ailanthus* (tree of heaven) are the main species that are being targeted.
- **Invasive Plant Treatment Painter/Leetonia Road:** There will be an invasive plant treatment project totaling 31 acres that will go out for bid this spring. The project will focus on eradication of *Tartarian honeysuckle* and *Japanese barberry* in a 20-year-old Aspen clearcut that failed in places.

NATURAL GAS, OIL, AND OTHER GEOLOGIC RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

- In 2024, there will be moderate activity in association with gas development in the district. The activity that is anticipated is as follows:
 - **Tract 007 Seneca Resources (Asaph area):** Seneca will likely be constructing a new pipeline. from their operations along Baldwin Run Road and headed North. The majority of the pipeline will be on private lands, but heavy truck traffic will impact users accessing. SFL through Niles Valley and Baldwin Run Road.
 - **Tract 595 Seneca Resources (North of Arnot):** no construction of new facilities/wells anticipated.
 - **Tract 594 REPSOL (Lower Arnot Rd area):** no construction of new facilities/wells anticipated.
 - **Tract 587 REPSOL (Fallbrook area):** no construction of new facilities/wells anticipated.
 - **Tract 596 Pennsylvania General Energy (Taylor Run Road / Blossburg area):** no new construction of new facilities/wells anticipated.
 - **Tract 1040 STL (South of Marshlands):** no construction of new facilities/wells anticipated.

TOWER AND RIGHTS-OF-WAY PROJECTS

- There will be small maintenance and monitoring projects on the various pipelines and electric ROWs throughout the district. These mainly involve mowing of herbaceous species on the pipelines on main transmission lines through the district. As well as surveys of the electric lines to check the integrity of the power poles throughout the district.
- **Cathodic Protection Facility and Electric Line:** Kinder Morgan has applied for a Right-of-Way for a cathodic protection facility to be installed along their pipeline off Right Asaph Road. Tri-County Rural Electric has also applied for a Right-Of-Way to construct an underground electric line to power this cathodic protection facility.
- **Morris Tower Agreement:** Tioga County 911 has approached us about the possibility of adding Verizon panel antennae to the tower. This should expand cell phone coverage in the Morris/Route 287 area.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

- **Annual Local Events:** A public contact trailer is staffed by district personnel for the following events: Wellsboro Laurel Festival and the Tioga County Fair.
- **Environmental Education Specialist:** With the new addition of this position in the district, we will have the opportunity for public engagement through the following methods: public programming both virtual and in-person, classroom visits, school field trips, public/private habitat tours and teacher/public workshops.
 - **Public programming:** Will be offered to the general public as well as captive audience groups and organizations whose missions correlate with BOF. Programs will be geared towards recreational activities that occur on state forest lands and timber management/sustainable forestry.
- **Pine Creek Watershed Association:** District personnel attend meetings with the Pine Creek Watershed Association.
- **Babb Creek Watershed Association:** District personnel attend meetings with the Babb Creek Watershed Association. This group is responsible for maintaining acid mine drainage treatment facilities on the Tioga State Forest.
- **Pine Creek Rail Trail Advisory Committee:** District personnel attend the bi-annual meetings with the Pine Creek Rail Trail Advisory Committee. The district updates the committee on rail-trail projects, usage, and incidents associated with the Pine Creek Rail Trail.
- **Step Outdoors Recreation Committee:** The district recreation forester attends meetings with a county recreation committee that holds events on private and public lands. Several winter events such as snowshoeing and cross-country skiing take place on the Tioga State Forest each winter.
- **Tioga County Concerned Citizens Committee:** District personnel attend meetings with TCCCC. This group focuses on acid-mine treatment projects associated with the Tioga River and its tributaries.
- **Local School Districts:** District personnel give presentations to classes at local schools dealing with forestry related topics such as forest-fire prevention, tree planting, and insect and disease issues.
- **Local Fire Departments:** The district forest fire specialist commonly interacts with local volunteer fire departments to coordinate fire suppression activities and to provide needed equipment and training.

- **District Field Tour:** The district holds a public tour of management projects on state forest land every other year to keep the public informed of activities on the state forest. A tour is planned for 2024.

RESEARCH

- **Oak Regeneration Study:** The Forest Service is monitoring the growth of oak seedlings in two areas on the Tioga State Forest. Both sites are in the northern portion of the district. The sites are visited each year to assess seedling mortality rates and take growth measurements on oak seedlings.
- **Gas Development Impact:** There are several research projects in place that monitor the impacts of Gas Development on state forest land.

MAJOR ACCOMPLISHMENTS FROM PREVIOUS YEAR

- **Timber Sales** – In 2023, the forester and technician staff completed and sold 13 timber sales totaling 1,073 acres, 5,521 MBF of sawtimber, and 1,553 HCF of pulpwood.
- **Prescribed Fire:** Prescribed fire was utilized on 4 grass units totaling 20 acres in 2023. Additionally, 128 acres of silviculture burns were completed in post removal settings on 3 separate sites.
- **Spongy Moth Spray Program:** The district sprayed 25,179 acres in 2023's aerial spray program. This is the largest program the district has had in recent years.
- **Bank Stabilization** – In 2023, a portion of Babb Creek, where it enters Pine Creek in the Village of Blackwell, had a much-anticipated stream bank stabilization project completed.
- **CXT** – Seven new CXT's were installed throughout the district. Presently five have been completed, inspected and opened to the public.

- **ATV Pilot** – Pipes were installed and 2A spread to resurface and improve drainage on the lower portion of the ATV Pilot Trail on Deadman Road.
- **Parking Lots**- A new parking area was constructed at Pirates Rock in Blossburg, and the Sand Run Falls parking area was improved.
- **Mid-State Trail**: A new trail bridge spanning 30 feet was constructed over Rattlesnake Run with the assistance of the Pennsylvania Outdoor Corp.
- **Seed Collection** – We collected the following in 2023:
 - Quaking Aspen – 3 bushels
 - White Spruce – 3.25 bushels
 - White Pine – 35 bushels
 - Pitch Pine – 8 bushels
 - Red Oak – 14 bushels
 - Chestnut Oak – 1 bushel
 - White Oak – 0.5 bushel
 - Black Cherry – 2 bushels
 - Sugar Maple – 0.75 bushel