

TUSCARORA STATE FOREST

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 Tuscarora 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

- The Forest District #3 staff continues to work on our trail system as time allows.
- Working on an interpretive trail and trailhead in the Nelson Wild Area, hoping to complete this year.
- Replacing/repairing signs as needed.
- Working on a district recreation plan that we hope to conclude by the end of 2024.
- Continuing to work on upgrading our camp sites and maps.

Organized Events

- Delaware Valley Trail Riders will be holding motorcycle enduro event, the last weekend in July.
- A horse club is planning another orienteering event this year.
- Fishing derby on West Licking Creek

FOREST MANAGEMENT

Marked and sold, potentially active.

- Three-Square Hollow - 488 acres comprised of shelterwood and two age removal treatments. Lying west of the intersection of Cowpens and Three-Square Hollow Road in Toboyne Township, Perry County and Upper Mifflin Township, Cumberland County.
- Bower Mountain – 370 acres comprised of a two-age treatment focusing on early successional habitat for the Ruffed Grouse. Located along Bower Mountain Road between Wolf and Dead-End Road in Jackson Township, Perry County.
- Turkey Pens – 136 acres comprised of shelterwood, overstory removal, and two age removal treatments. Located along Turkey Pens Haul Road between Laurel Run Road and Wolf Road in Toboyne Township, Perry County.

Proposed

- Buck Ridge – 433 acres comprised of shelterwood, overstory removal, selection treatments. Located near Colonel Denning State Park in Tyrone Township, Perry County and Mifflin Township, Cumberland County.
- Deer Stampede – 136 acres comprised of overstory removal, two-age, and shelterwood treatments. Located on north and south side of Meadows Road in Jackson Township, Perry County.
- Long Haul 11 – 426 acres comprised of two-age and two-age shelterwood treatments. Located along Vincent Tram Road off State Route 333 in Milford Township, Juniata County.

Considering for Proposal

- Dead-End Road on the east end of Bower Mountain Road in Jackson Township, Perry County.
- Blacklog Bench east of Blacklog Mountain Road in Shirley Township, Huntingdon County.
- Beers Trail near Horse Valley Road in Toboyne Township, Perry County.

Regeneration projects

- Basal bark herbicide treatment of competing vegetation to release desirable regeneration:
 - 168 acres near Horse Valley Road and Beers Trail Haul Road in Toboyne Township, Perry County.
 - 101 acres east of Birch Run Haul Road in Wayne Township, Mifflin County.
 - 241 acres along Gifford Road in Shirley Township, Huntingdon County.
- Broadcast herbicide treatment of competing vegetation and invasive plants:
 - 101 acres along Laurel Run Road in Jackson Township, Perry County.
 - 74 acres near Holderman Haul Road in Bratton Township, Juniata County.
 - 54 acres along Sugar Springs Trail in Lack Township, Juniata County.
 - 58 acres around Shade Bench Haul Road in Lack Township, Juniata County.
 - 196 acres around Vincent Tram Road in Milford Township, Juniata County.
- Conifer planting:
 - 56 acres around Blue Mountain Tower Road in Bratton Township, Mifflin County.
- Forest Weeding of competing vegetation:
 - 69 acres east of Doubling Gap Haul Road in Lower Mifflin Township, Cumberland County.

RESTORATION AND HABITAT PROJECTS

- Continuing rehabilitation and maintenance of herbaceous areas including invasive species control with herbicide, pruning, fence maintenance, mowing, and rejuvenating with native plants to promote desirable habitat for various of species.
- Continuing rehabilitation efforts with State and local National Wild Turkey Federation (NWTF) chapters to enhance wildlife habitat throughout the district.
 - 66 acres incumbered into 4 separate treatment areas are enhancing and expanding scrub oak using NWTF funds near Pine Ridge and Steltzer Road in Tuscarora Township, Juniata County.

- Collaboration efforts with the Ruffed Grouse Society (RGS) and American Woodcock Society (AWS) are occurring using National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) grant funding to create young habitat through the Bower Mountain Young Forest Habitat Plan.

ROAD AND BRIDGE PROJECTS

Please see our [Facebook page](#) or [website](#) for most current updates or contact the district office.)

- Driving Service Aggregate (DSA) paver placed project scheduled for summer on Little Valley Road this summer, 2024.
- Road repair on Longfellow Road with new surface material.
- We will haul shale to Cowpens Road and Blue Mt Road as time allows in our south block.
- New bridge to be installed on Laurel Run Road.
- New bridge to be installed on Second Narrows Road.
- New bridge to be installed on Wynn Gap Haul Road
- Several bridges are in design phase.

PRESCRIBED FIRE

- The district continues to use prescribed fire on a landscape level to promote young forest habitat for wildlife and to meet Silviculture goals. This will also aid in rejuvenating fire adapted ecosystems such as Pitch Pine stands and other fire related species along with controlling competing vegetation.
 - Hockenberry Rx in Horse Valley, Toboyne Township, Perry County.
 - Blue Mountain Rx and Three-Square Hollow Rx both located near Three Square Hollow Road in Toboyne Township, Perry County.

INSECT, DISEASE, AND INVASIVE PLANT TREATMENTS

- Spongy Moth formerly known as Gypsy Moth Suppression Program will occur in the spring of 2024. Areas to be treated total 35, 551 acres in both the North and South Block. In the North Block most of West and East Licking Creek drive onto Blacklog and Shade Mountain will see suppression efforts. In the South Block the most of Little Valley and Concord Road on the Conococheague Mountain will see suppression efforts, along with scattered blocks on the Bower and Blue Mountain.
- Treatment of hemlock trees with insecticide to control hemlock wooly adelgid will occur in portions of the North Block known as the Karl Guss Picnic and the County Line Picnic area. Other areas may be treated as time and resources are available.
- Continue with treatment of privet, paulownia, ailanthus, and other invasive plants at the Harling Tract in 2024.
- Continue treatment of invasive oriental bittersweet around Hickory Ridge and Cedar Hill.

- Continue efforts to eradicate or control new infestations of Japanese knotweed, black swallowwort, poison hemlock, etc. throughout the Tuscarora State Forest.
- Roadsides will be treated for managing Japanese stiltgrass in the Tuscarora State Forest.

NATURAL GAS, OIL, AND OTHER GEOLOGIC RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

- PA pipeline or Mariner East II by Sunoco Logistics pipeline in Western Perry County and the southern portion of the Tuscarora will be monitoring and controlling invasive plants on the easement in 2024.
- Random recoating projects and emergency digs on gas lines throughout the district are historic, this activity is likely during 2024 as well.
- Seismic study of west licking creek shale pit to discover the mining

TOWER AND RIGHTS-OF-WAY PROJECTS

- Cumberland County Public Safety has erected a new P25 800 MHz Communication System which replaced their aging Three Square Hollow Tower and Shelter off Cowpens Road. The project is not complete as the old infrastructure still exists and has yet to be removed.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

- The Tuscarora State Forest Plan which was developed during 2018 was adopted in 2019 and continues to be used to guide the district.
- Work will begin on public engagement for revising the Bureau of Forestry's Strategic Plan and the Statewide Forest Action Plan.
- Facebook page – The district's Facebook page will continue to be updated to provide the public current information about management activities occurring in the district.
- DCNR Tuscarora State Forest web page – The district's webpage will be updated to include 2024 management activities to inform the public.
- Throughout the year staff are invited to schools in the area for guest lectures, special programs, fire prevention programs, and career days.
- The Tuscarora State Forest is involved in many school programs throughout the year. These are important opportunities for interactive engagement that encourages appreciation and understanding of the forests of Pennsylvania. It also provides an opportunity to receive feedback not only from students, but also from teachers, administrators, and parents. Some of the more significant school programs that staff participate in each year are:

- Envirothon's, for Perry County and Mifflin/Juniata counties will be held outside in May at a to be determined locations throughout the counties.
 - Also, in May, the Tuscarora State Forest is planning to host fourth graders from Perry County for an outdoor classroom at Hickory Ridge that includes grade appropriate information about a full range of forestry subjects.
- The Mifflin, Juniata and Perry Woodland Owners Association meetings and tours will be planned as interest and opportunities present themselves throughout 2024.
- Throughout 2024– Patrols will be conducted for conversations with visitors and to reduce illegal activities including ATV use on the state forest.
- The District, Volunteers and PA Fish and Boat Commission (PFBC) plan to stocking trout in East Licking Creek, especially in the special regulation, Delayed Harvest Artificial Lure Only (DHALO) area.
- District staff plans to provide updates on habitat projects at regional / chapter banquets for the National Wild Turkey Federation (NWTF) and Ruffed Grouse Society (RGS).

RESEARCH

- Black Bear – The Tuscarora State Forest continues to cooperate with the PA Game Commission to capture black bears as part of their ongoing research. Bear traps are deployed throughout the state forest beginning in April and continues into the late summer. Data such as overall health, gender, age, young of the year and numbers are recorded.
- Allegheny woodrat (PA threatened species) – Research efforts continue with the PA Game Commission and Indiana University of PA at several locations in the Tuscarora.

MAJOR ACCOMPLISHMENTS FROM PREVIOUS YEAR

- Hosted a Bureau Silviculture Tour for 60 plus participants from across the State.
- Participated in Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) and Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI) Dual Audit certification in 2023.
- Acquired 50.29-acre Dombach tract which added protection and preservation to additional acres of the Tuscarora S. F. and the James Nelson Wild Area.
- Contracted forest management throughout the Tuscarora S.F consisting of both Shelterwood and Overstory treatments totaling 136 acres.

- Performed prescribed fire operations on Blue Mountain Road in the South Block totaling 99 acres.
- Hemlock Woolly Adelgid treatments occurred in the Hemlock Natural Area, treating 378 trees equaling 6,574 diameter inches.
- Marked over 60 miles of State Forest Boundary in 2023, delineating State Forest land.
- Collected over 700 bushels of white pine seed supporting conifer plantings throughout the State.
- Organized the Hickory Ridge program involving topics of Conservation and Natural Resources for middle schooler across Perry County.
- Sent multiple resources out of state to support the Wildland Fire and Emergency Response program.
- Adopted the new online campsite reservation system through Reserve America.
- Boom mowed, brushed, and widened several sections of snowmobile trail. Access around gates was improved where needed.
- Many miles of recreational trails were cleared and improved throughout the district 2023.