



Pennsylvania Department of
Conservation & Natural Resources

Forest Focus

*The Bureau of Forestry
Newsletter
Spring 2023*

The Bureau of Forestry's New Leadership Structure

The Bureau of Forestry has recently undertaken leadership realignment to better serve the Commonwealth and meet management needs. "The Bureau of Forestry's new leadership structure will increase our efficiency, optimize professional resources, and ultimately make our bureau more effective in carrying out its conservation mission," said State Forester Ellen Shultzabarger.

Jason Albright was recently appointed Assistant Director of State Forest Operations. Jason has served as Field Operations Manager for nearly 10 years working with 12 forest districts and the Mira Lloyd Dock Nursery and Wood Shop. Prior to this position, Jason served as the District Forester in Rothrock State Forest. He also served in other roles in Moshannon and Elk forest districts since 2000. Prior to his Commonwealth career, Jason spent five years as a field forester for the Kane Hardwood Division of the Collins Pine Company. Jason holds a bachelor's in forestry and associate's in wildlife technology from Penn State.



Matt Keefer was appointed Assistant Director of Stewardship, Protection, and Conservation. Matt has served as a Field Operations Manager for 10 years working with Rural and Community Forestry and eight forest districts. Matt previously served as chief of the Resource Planning and Information Division, and prior to that, chief of the Planning Section since 2001. Prior to working in the bureau, he worked as a field forester for International Paper Company in the Adirondacks. Matt holds bachelor's and master's degrees in forestry from Penn State.



Seth Cassell was appointed Chief of Staff and Director of Planning and Administration. Seth has served as Division Chief of the Resource Planning and Information Division for 10 years and previously served different roles in Planning, Communications, Rural and Community Forestry, and the Gallitzin State Forest District since 2000. He holds a bachelor's degree in journalism and master's in forest resources from Penn State. Seth has also served the Pennsylvania Air National Guard for 29 years, where he is a Lt. Colonel and squadron commander.

In addition to the new assistant director positions, two regional managers were named to oversee forest district operations. Each regional manager will oversee the work of ten forest districts and serve as liaison to senior managers. Chris Nicholas was appointed to serve as the Northern/Western Regional Forester, and Jason Hall was appointed the Southern/Eastern Regional Forester.

Chris Nicholas is a Penn State graduate with 26 years of experience beginning as a management forester in Forbes and Tioga State forests. In 2003, he was promoted to Resource Management/Assistant District Forester in Tioga. In 2007, Chris was promoted to District Forester in Susquehannock State Forest where he has served for nearly 16 years. Chris was significantly involved with the team which developed our DMAP and VIP monitoring protocols, and more recently, the successful implementation of the PA Northcentral ATV Connector Pilot program by fostering relationships with the many township and county cooperators necessary to doing so.



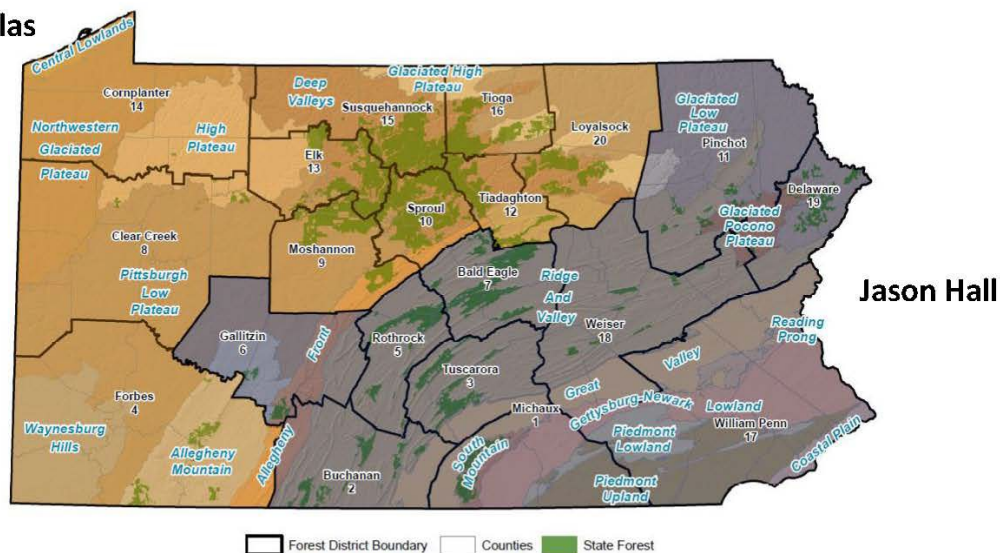
Jason Hall has been District Forester in the Buchanan Forest District since 2018. Highlights from his tenure in the Buchanan include two significant energy projects including the installation of a 65.1 kW solar array on the Resource Management Center's roof and four EV charging stations. Jason's Bureau of Forestry career started in 2000 as a service forester in the Gallitzin Forest District. In 2003, he transferred to the Division of Operations and Recreation, working as a Forest Program Specialist and then Forest Program Manager for the Recreation Section. Jason managed or assisted with many programs including leased camps, the Pennsylvania Conservation Corp, the Ranger program, and Dirt and Gravel Roads projects.

The two new forest district groupings will help to optimize managerial and district efficiencies by capitalizing on district similarities relative to their surroundings, including broad patterns in forest ownership (state forest, other public lands, family and industrial), land use, and human communities.

The new groupings will also facilitate that the newly appointed regional managers will be active in aspects of all BOF program areas while emphasizing functional areas (State Forest Operations and Statewide Stewardship, Protection and Conservation programs) that broadly align with programs and operations at a regional level. The district groupings will additionally account for logistic considerations like travel and resource usage.

Bureau of Forestry Regions

Chris Nicholas



Special thanks to Jeffrey Woleslagle for his contributions to this article.