

Rothrock State Forest District

2019 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 Rothrock 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:

Mark C. Potter, District Forester
Rothrock State Forest
181 Rothrock Lane, Huntingdon Pa. 16652
814-643-2340
ra-fd05@pa.gov

RECREATION

- **Standing Stone Trail (SST) “Throne Room”** – A section of the SST located on Jack’s Mountain is proposed to be relocated to mitigate trail erosion and sustainability issues. A formal review of this project was completed in 2018. With approval, project will be implemented in 2019 and 2020.
- **Bear Meadows Loop Trail** – This trail was assessed for necessary trail improvements in 2017. The improvements will enhance user safety and enjoyment as well as trail sustainability. A primary goal will be to improve the trail tread to get users feet out of the often-wet trail conditions. We plan to formalize design and begin these improvements during the field season of 2019.
- **Kepler Road Trail System** – An approximate 7-mile trail system located north of Kepler Road has been approved for establishment. Authorized trails will be designated, improved, blazed, and signed during 2019.
- **Lonberger Path Improvements** – Trail improvements to Lonberger Path took place during late summer 2017. Trail work was conducted with the use of a mini-excavator, with assistance from Nittany Mountain Biking Association (NMBA) via funding and volunteer labor. Trail work will continue into 2019 to further improve the trail.
- **Croyle Run Trail Improvements** - Continued improvements to Croyle Run Trail will take place in 2019 with a short relocation to mitigate erosion and enhance trail sustainability. Trail work will be accomplished with the use of a mini-excavator. Additional work to this trail will take place through 2019 and 2020.
- **Brush Ridge Trail (Coopers Gap Area)** – The Brush Ridge Trail will be relocated to avoid a recently constructed administrative road and timber sale area. This relocation is in the planning phase, where the trail be move to the side slope to incorporate sustainable trail building features with the use of a mini-excavator. Projected completion will be in 2019.
- **West Chestnut Street Parking Area** – Development of a small recreational trailhead at the terminus of West Chestnut Street, Pine Grove Mills. This will provide access to Kepler Road Trail System.

Organized Events

- **January 19, 2019**, Saturday, GWF State Park Snowfest & 5-Miler
- **May 5, 2019**, (SAA) Greenwood Furnace Trail Challenge
- **May 23rd – 27th, 2019**, (CAA) Transylvania EPIC Mountain Bike Race
- **July 20, 2019**, (CAA) Wilderness 101 Mtn. Bike Event
- **October 27, 2019**, (CAA) Tussey MountainBack 50 (MTB50) Trail and Road Run

- **NOTE - other events that have not been listed currently do not have finalized dates or have not been confirmed by the organizers that they will be having them at the time this publication was created.**

TIMBER MANAGEMENT

Marked and sold, potentially active

- Little Shingletown Road, located off Pine Swamp Rd, Jackson Township, Huntingdon County (1st-stage shelterwood): This sale was marked and sold in early 2014 and is comprised of 121-acre forested stand in the Big Flat Landscape. The area will be treated with a 1st-stage sheltered harvest to increase desirable regeneration by removing low quality trees commercially. This sale was re-bid, due to contractor default, and sold via competitive bid to Pierron Reasoner Logging and Lumber of Neelyton, Pa in late 2017 and harvesting operations may begin at any time.

- Tram Road, located to the southwest of Teaberry Road and Tram Road intersection, Porter Twp. Huntingdon County (overstory removal and two-age selection): An overstory removal treatment and two age treatment have been marked and sold via competitive bid to Z.B. Forest Products, LLC of Reedsville, Pa. The sale area lies within the Camp Barree Landscape and is 79 acres in size including a fenced area of 38 acres. An additional 41-acres surrounding the fenced area will be treated via overstory removal and two-aged selection harvest along the road buffer stands. The entire area has extensive established and competitive desirable regeneration present. Harvesting operations were completed in late summer of 2018 and the site will be retired and seeded when conditions allow in spring 2019.

- Crowfield Road located just east of the Underwood Trail intersection and along the south side of Crowfield Road about 1.75 miles west of the intersection with Rte. 322. (overstory removal, two-age selection): A 101-acre harvest was marked in the Boal Gap Landscape as part of a long-term wildlife habitat improvement project to promote early successional habitat in lower quality forested sites. The long-term project will focus on sites that have existing desirable

regeneration and work to improve regeneration in areas that are currently lacking. A part of the project goal will be to increase shrub species presence such as scrub oak along with increasing the conifer component of the forested stands. The current treatment area includes a few existing deer exclosure fences that will be treated. This sale was sold via competitive bid to Walker Lumber Company of Woodland, PA in late 2017. Harvesting began in late January 2018, however due to a harvesting restriction in the contract that allows for “winter only harvesting”. The harvesting will resume at any time in 2019.

- Beidleheimer (Road) Removal timber sale located about a mile east of Bear Meadow’s Road in Jackson Twp., Huntingdon County. (overstory removal, selection, shelterwood): 104-acres has been sold on Gettis Ridge along Beidleheimer Road. This sale was sold via competitive bid to ZB Forest Products of Belleville, PA in late 2017. There are two deer exclosure fences that will be treated with an overstory removal, a single-tree selection block within the road buffer stand, and a shelterwood treatment in two stands adjacent to the fences. Several projects have been implemented over the years to improve desirable regeneration and prepare the fences for an overstory removal including a hack-n-squirt herbicide application and a prescribed fire (within the larger fence only). Harvesting began October 2018 and all cutting and sale retirement for this sale will likely be finished in spring 2019.
- Greenwood Tower I Sale located in Jackson Township, Huntingdon County. (overstory removal/two age buffer): A 141-acre sale was proposed, marked and sold to Jacob Swarey in 2017 on the top of Broad Mountain at the Greenwood Fire Tower. This sale is part of a long-term series of sales on the mountain top flat, with the primary objective of creating young successional forest habitat for a variety of wildlife, namely the ruffed grouse. Conifers, serviceberry, dogwood, and hickory are reserved, as well as the healthiest oak for mast trees. Scrub oak will also be favored. Harvesting was completed on this sale and we are currently awaiting final retirement slated for early spring 2019.
- Pawpaw Sale at Leading Ridge Drivable Trail located in the vicinity of Ruby Trail, West Township, Huntingdon County. (overstory removal and 1st – stage shelterwood): 165-acres of forested stands within the Leading Ridge Landscape will be treated with two regeneration treatments; a 1st –stage shelterwood harvest to begin the regeneration process in areas that have little to no desirable regeneration established and an overstory removal harvest treatment in areas that have extensive regeneration. The stands themselves have suffered several blowdown events and are succumbing to other forest pests and mortality. This area has been sold via competitive bid to Dachenbach Sawmill of Mill Creek, PA early 2018. Harvesting may begin at any time during 2019.

- Pine Swamp Road buffering the Mid-State Trail, in Jackson Township, Huntingdon County.: (1st stage shelterwood,): 212 acres have been sold to Jacob Swarey along Pine Swamp Road in the Rudy Ridge Landscape. This sale was sold via competitive bid to in late 2018 and harvesting may begin anytime. Treatment is focused on improving regeneration across an area that currently has minimal desirable regenerating tree seedlings. This shelterwood treatment will focus on removing the low quality and smaller trees to get regeneration started in some areas of the sale and to improve existing regeneration in others.
- Brush Ridge Royer Sale: (overstory removal) A 149-acre overstory removal is approved for a bench in the Spruce Mountain area of the Rothrock SF located along the Brush Ridge Trail in Brown Township, Mifflin County. The sale was awarded to Joseph Peachey of Big Valley Hardwoods. This sale has been active winter of 2018 and 2019 is expected to become active once again in the fall of 2019 following a summer shutdown period. The mountain laurel was mowed in 2016 with favorable results of oak seedling stocking. Objectives include releasing desirable regeneration, balancing the age classes, and promoting young successional forest.

Marked but not yet sold

- Laurel Run Road (1st-stage shelterwood, overstory removal, group selection): A 125-acre timber sale is planned along Laurel Run Road, within the Rudy Ridge Landscape on the north-side of Laurel Run between Beidler Road and Sand Knob Shale Pit in Jackson Township, Huntingdon Co. The sale will incorporate primarily 1st-stage shelterwood and group selection treatments along with a component of overstory removal harvest in an area with extensive advanced regeneration. The goal will be to begin the process of successfully regenerating multiple forested stands, particularly stands with a large component of dying eastern hemlock. Survey work is continuing in this area and marking will be completed by mid-summer with the sale then going out for competitive bid. Additional work will be completed to control invasive species and competing vegetation later in the growing season.

Proposed (not marked yet)

- Trough Creek (overstory removal): This 288-acre sale will include both overstory removal treatment blocks and shelterwood treatment blocks. The overstory removal blocks (176 total acres) were treated with a shelterwood harvest in 2011. The shelterwood removed just enough of the mature trees to allow some sunlight to reach the ground and help regeneration become established. The regeneration has responded quite well and has reached the point where the remaining of the overstory trees can be removed to allow space for the competitive seedlings.

The shelterwood blocks (112 total acres) were mowed several years ago and the smaller, undesirable trees and competing vegetation were removed. Now, more of the smaller, low quality trees will be removed commercially to begin the regeneration process. This timber sale will be laid out in the winter/spring of 2019 and is expected to be put up for competitive bid later in 2019.

- **Laurel Run Road: (overstory removal, shelterwood):** An estimated 125-acre harvest is planned in three deer fence enclosures and adjacent stands off the switchback gated haul road on Laurel Run Road in the Shingletown Landscape. This area is between the Mid-State Trail and the Lower Trail in Harris Township, Centre County. The fenced areas have sufficient desirable regeneration to establish a new forested stand with an overstory removal harvest. These fenced areas were previously treated with a mechanical broadcast herbicide spray project to control competitive vegetation. The stands adjacent to the deer fences will be surveyed to determine if a shelterwood harvest to establish regeneration is appropriate. Continued surveying and layout work will progress into marking of the site and lead to the competitive bidding process. This sale will likely take place in 2020.
- **Brickyard Short Mountain Timber Sale (overstory removal, shelterwood, selection):** Approximately 170 acres is planned for a timbersale harvest located on Short Mountain within the Stony Point Division. The area is north of the Mid-State Trail in Porter Township, Huntingdon County. A portion of this area was treated with a shelterwood harvest in 2011. Areas with established desirable tree seedlings will be treated with an overstory removal to release those seedlings. A shelterwood treatment will be applied to areas where seedlings require disturbance to become established. A two-age and single-tree selection treatment will be implemented within the stream and road buffers as appropriate.
- **Coopers Gap Shale Pit (overstory removal/shelterwood):** Approximately 28 acres of overstory removal and 62 acres of shelterwood planned for stands immediately northeast of Coopers Gap shale pit in Jackson Township, Huntingdon County. This area was salvaged in 2005 following hurricane storm damage and fenced to protect regeneration from deer browse. Areas previously salvaged will be treated with overstory removal while adjacent areas will receive a first entry shelterwood treatment. This project is currently in the proposal writing stage with marking to begin spring 2019.

Regeneration projects

- A contract basal bark / cut stump herbicide treatment will be completed on a 40-acre site to control competing vegetation consisting of black birch, red maple, and striped maple prior to the implementation of a timber harvest a forested stand near on Short Mountain.
- Three areas of the forest are scheduled to receive contracted planting of nearly 66,000 conifer seedlings to supplement natural regeneration on these sites and provide evergreen cover in the future.
- A contract broadcast herbicide project is planned for 41-acres to control competing vegetation including hay-scented fern, Japanese stiltgrass, and black birch. This project will release existing desirable natural regeneration. The project area is in one of the deer fence areas along the Roaring Run Haul Road on Tussey Mtn.
- Deer Exclosure Fence Removals project: Two small deer fence exclosures were removed this past summer by the PA Outdoor Crew. In addition to those, a contractor has removed 5 of the 10 additional fences slated for removal. Following the contract there will be a total of 41 fences remaining in the district. The foresters evaluate the fenced areas annually and once they reach a point that the regeneration will not be impacted by browsing the fences are scheduled for removal. The district has been fortunate not to have been required to install new deer fences in the areas that we are currently doing timber harvesting and habitat work. This is due to deer numbers being at acceptable levels for the forest conditions present. The efforts of hunters to control the deer populations in the areas we are working in have proved to be successful. We continually monitor deer impacts to forest vegetation in both areas that we have work planned in addition to other areas of the forest.

RESTORATION AND HABITAT PROJECTS

- An effort is being made this year to continue re-evaluating the conditions of the various permanent herbaceous openings (PHO's) to see if they are still viable and what work is needed to improve them for the future. Work will then begin to mow, reseed, and improve them over the next few years as time, funds, and workloads permit. They will also be known from now on as Special Wildlife Management Areas (SWMAs).
- The Greenwood Division of the Rothrock SF has approximately 50 wildlife openings established in the mid-1970's aimed at habitat improvement for wild turkey and ruffed grouse. Unfortunately, these openings were planted with invasive shrubs. Ten openings have been identified for continued maintenance while the remaining ones will be treated for invasives and allowed to regenerate naturally with trees. Those openings will eventually become part of the surrounding stand.

- A stream habitat improvement project is planned for Laurel Run, upstream from the bridge that carries Beidler Road across the stream. Habitat improvement structures will be installed at various locations for over 1,000 feet of stream. These structures will provide shelter and hiding cover for brook trout and also create vital young of the year habitat areas in addition to stabilizing stream bed and banks and reducing erosion. This work will take place over two weeks in the summer to fall.

ROAD AND BRIDGE PROJECTS

- Late Spring/Summer 2019 – Spread 2A stone and place Driving Surface Aggregate (DSA) on 3.5 miles of Kepler Road in the Stony Point Division from PA Furnace/Kepler Intersection and going east towards Route 26
- Late Spring/Summer 2019 – Place DSA on .70 miles of Tar Kiln Road from the Youth Forestry Camp to John Bum Road/Tar Kiln intersection in the Trough Creek Division
- Spring - Fall 2019 Regrading and shaping the DSA that has been placed in the past on sections of Laurel Run Road and Krise Valley
- Summer - Fall 2019 – In-house culvert replacement Beidlehiemer and Underwood Trail
- Spring – Summer 2019 Spread 2A stone on Krise Valley Road from the intersection of Krise Valley and Boal Gap to the northeast
- Locke Valley Haul Road: Road surface and drainage improvements from the gate to the boundary with state game lands 81.
- Lucy Furnace Haul Road: Road surface and drainage improvements from the gate to the first switch back.
- Design for bridge replacements are in final stages for the two bridges carrying Bear Meadows Road over Galbraith Gap Run. Project should be bid out summer of 2019 and completed between January 1, 2020 and September 30, 2020.
- Beidler Road: Road surface and drainage improvements for 1.3 miles of state forest road.
- Design for bridge rehab carrying Bear Meadows Road over Sinking Creek has begun. Currently no date has been set yet for this project to begin.
- Install parking lot Pine Grove/ West Chestnut road area in 2019

PRESCRIBED FIRE

Currently, there are no areas in consideration for prescribed fire treatments within the Rothrock State Forest.

INSECT, DISEASE, AND INVASIVE PLANT TREATMENTS

- Insect and disease monitoring and reporting will continue in 2019 and will focus on the priority list provided by the Division of Forest Health. Report forms will be forwarded to Forest Health



Area Specialist from the District I&D coordinator for ground truthing and possible control efforts for reported insect and disease problems. Aerial survey flight(s) will be conducted in late June/early July to detect possible problem areas as well.

- The district is currently not planning a Gypsy Moth Spray program for 2019 due to lack of need. Aerial surveys have been completed and no areas were identified as having heavy populations of this forest pest for the 2019 season.
- Treatment efforts for invasive plants will continue in 2019. Larger ongoing projects such as mile-a-minute and Japanese knotweed infestations along Kepler Road typically receive treatment in June/July. These control efforts have been effective in controlling the spread of these plants outside of the treatment area. Weevils have been released in Locke Valley in 2010 and 2014 to combat the large mile-a-minute infestation there. New infestations of invasive plants will be treated by District personnel to prevent large scale problems later. On the forefront of the district's monitoring and surveying is for Japanese Angelica Tree, which has been found and treated on one site near Musser Gap Trail. Surveying for this species takes place when the flowering bodies are present on the tree usually late August to October. Oriental Bittersweet has been found more and more in 2017, with additional treatments likely in 2018. Foresters continue pre-emergent treatments for Japanese stiltgrass leading into timber sale areas.
- HWA treatment in 2019 will be planned as another fall volunteer day, as a follow up in Alan Seeger. Treatment will depend on survey results and how winter weather has impacted populations.
- In spring and summer of 2018, oak anthracnose had been prevalent in central Pennsylvania. This is fungal pathogen affects the foliage. Signs of anthracnose include brown and dead spots on leaves, curling and misshapen leaves, and loss of leaves or defoliation. Chestnut oak and other oak species in the white oak group tend to be more susceptible to anthracnose. This foliage disease is more prevalent in times of a wet and damp spring season. On the Rothrock State Forest, oak anthracnose was prevalent in the Coopers Gap area and Colerain/Brady/Kepler area. Ground surveys in the spring will be conducted to assess the health of those stands.
- The invasive spray project conducted on the Locke Valley tract in the fall of 2017 will be surveyed in the early spring 2019 to determine the current success, retreatment of needed locations, and direction of future treatments. The invasive spraying is the first step in restoring the riparian buffer of Craig's Run for wildlife habitat improvement, namely for species such as woodcock and ruffed grouse.

NATURAL GAS, OIL, AND OTHER GEOLOGIC RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

- Presently, there are no natural gas and or oil development activities taking place or immediately planned within the Rothrock State Forest.

TOWER AND RIGHTS-OF-WAY PROJECTS

- Valley Rural Electric COOP: Communications tower replacement on Jacks Mountain/Butler Knob. Should be completed in early 2019
- First Energy: Mowing and herbiciding vegetation control work on high voltage transmission lines
- V REC – Vegetation control work.
- Dominion Pipeline – vegetation control work
- Texas Eastern pipeline – vegetation control work

OPPORTUNITIES FOR PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

- A public tour is being considered for Rothrock State Forest for this **Fall 2019**. The District will host another “Walk in the Woods Day”. More to come as details are worked out during the coming months. Check back to the Walk in the Woods website at: <https://sites.psu.edu/walkinpennswoods/>
- **Be sure to check our Facebook Page for the most up to date information related to the Rothrock State Forest, activities, and events.**

SPECIAL PROJECTS

- The district submitted a possible signature project for the PA Outdoor Corps Crews. The project is to replace the roof on the storage building near Alan Seeger Picnic Area and assemble new picnic tables for the day use areas.

RESEARCH

- Researchers from Penn State University continue conducting a multi-year project called the Deer-Forest Study on the Rothrock, Bald Eagle, and Susquehannock State Forests. This study looks at better understanding the role of deer in context of the many challenges that PA forests face including invasive species, insect outbreaks, soil acidity, tree diseases, and even deer themselves. The goal of this study is to help forest and wildlife managers better manage deer and the forests. This is a cooperative project with researchers from PSU, US Geologic Survey, PA Game Commission, and DCNR Bureau of Forestry. This study area is 25-40 square miles in size

and is in the north-eastern most part of the Rothrock State Forest. 2019 is the sixth year of this research project.

- Researchers from Penn State University are conducting a “Shale Hills Study” in which they are looking at water flow. The two sites that have activity are along Harry’s Valley Rd on Tussey Mtn. 2019 is the sixth year of this research project.
- Researchers from Penn State University are conducting research on the success of oak regeneration 10-years after the harvest. This research is part of state-wide research project that looks at all forest districts that complete oak forest type regeneration harvests.
- Researchers from Penn State University are working on the Visitor Use Monitoring study within the Rothrock State Forest in 2019. This research project is to measure the recreational use and develop a profile of recreational visitors to the Rothrock S.F.

EMERGENCY RESPONSE/SAFETY

- 10 Wildfires that impacted 13 acres were responded to in Spring of 2018
- To date, 231 Wildland Firefighters were trained in the district at various levels.
- 72 Forest Fire Wardens received training in the district in 2018.

MAJOR ACCOMPLISHMENTS FROM PREVIOUS YEAR

- Various regeneration projects that were listed from last year were completed as described.
- Two stream habitat projects were completed. The first on Garner Run along a section of Tram Road. In addition to the trout habitat work we took the opportunity to fix the road bank that was sloughing off into the stream. The second project completed was on part of the upper reaches of Laurel Run along Laurel Run Road. These projects are in partnership with Trout Unlimited and the USA Youth Fly-Fishing Team.
- Hemlock Woolly Adelgid volunteer work day was a success this past fall. A great turn out of volunteers assisted staff of the Rothrock in the treatment of the Alan Seeger Natural Area to retain the state tree in this special area. We treated 28 acres of trees in the 20” to 40+” diameter class! Thanks again to all that came out for a productive day and fun fellowship!
- General Trail Maintenance and Enhancements: Every year, numerous miles of trails are maintained and improved throughout the Rothrock State Forest. This work ranges from brush cutting, blazing, signage, trail tread improvements, dead tree removal, relocations, etc. This work is completed by staff, volunteers, and recreation clubs such as Nittany Mountain Biking Association, Friends of Coopers Gap, Standing Stone Trail Club, Mid-State Trail Association, and

several others. In 2018 the many conservation volunteers put in over 800 hours of dedicated work to improve the Rothrock State Forest.

- Many outreach and educational programs were completed within Centre and Huntingdon Counties by District Staff. These include the Huntingdon Fair, Ag Progress Days, the Grange Fair, several ATV Safety Programs, Tree City USA and Arbor Day programs.
- 32 Forest Fire Prevention and other educational programs were completed by our Forest Fire Specialist Supervisor, Forest Fire Wardens, and employees across our service area. Support of Staff and the District's Forest Fire Wardens (volunteers) are critical to this programming and their hard work and dedication is truly appreciated.
- Under the Department's Mutual Aid Agreement with the US Forest Service, nine staff members provided wildfire suppression assistance to the state of Idaho, Nevada, Oregon, and Washington.
- Enlarged and improved the Hawk Watch parking area at the top of Allenville Mt. Road for Rothrock State Forest users.
- Completed the in-house culvert replacement on Crowfield Road, Laurel Run Road, and PA Furnace Road.
- Completed spreading 2A stone and place DSA on entire length (1.52 miles) of Fink Road in the Trough Creek Division
- Completed digging up 105-foot section of PA Furnace Road up and replaced this soft material with 3 Minus to build a firm base and build up the road surface by spreading 2A stone on approximately .4 mile starting at PA Furnace and Tram road intersection and heading north.
- Completed spreading 2A stone on 1.6 miles of PA Furnace to build up the road base and then placed DSA on approximately 2 miles on PA Furnace Road from intersection of PA Furnace to the north.
- Completed a Trail Assessment Plan for a portion of the district and held a public meeting to share with our stakeholders. This plan forms the basis of the long-term recreational planning for the Rothrock. Within the next decade, we hope to unveil 60 miles of new, professionally constructed, sustainable trails and decommission 28 miles of unsustainable trail. Additional information on the trail assessment can be found at the following link:
http://www.docs.dcnr.pa.gov/cs/groups/public/documents/document/dcnr_20033620.pdf

- In coordination with PA Parks and Forests Foundation and our local stakeholders, we helped to organize the “Friends of Rothrock State Forest” (<https://www.friendsofrothrock.org/>). This group of volunteers will aid the District, well into the future, develop and maintain our recreational infrastructure, and assist us with the stewardship and conservation of the Rothrock’s Natural Resources.
- The Rothrock was honored to receive the 2018 Forest of the Year award from the PA Parks and Forest Foundation. The award is testament of the great work of our dedicated staff and our wonderful group of volunteers and their extraordinary efforts.