State Forest System

- DCNR Bureau of Forestry manages 2.2 million acres of state forest.
Purpose of State Forests

The Bureau of Forestry manages state forests, per its mission, by:

• Managing state forests under sound ecosystem management
• Retaining their wild character
• Maintaining biological diversity
• While providing …
  – pure water
  – opportunities for low-density recreation
  – habitats for forest plants and animals
  – sustained yields of quality timber
  – environmentally sound utilization of mineral resources.
Shale Gas and State Forests

• An estimated 1.5 million acres of state forest are underlain by Marcellus Shale and other gas formations.

• These lands also have high recreational and ecological value and contain some of the largest tracts of contiguous forests in the eastern U.S.

• 390,000 acres are available for shale gas development from DCNR-issued leases from which the Commonwealth receives royalties.

• 285,000 acres are available from areas where DCNR doesn’t own the mineral rights (“severed rights”).
Shale Gas and State Forests

- In Sept. 2008, DCNR issued a lease on state forest for 74,000 acres, targeting the Marcellus Shale formation.
- In Jan. 2010, DCNR issued a 32,000-acre lease.
- In May 2010, DCNR issued a 33,000-acre lease.

Susquehannock State Forest
Shale Gas and State Forests

• These DCNR lease agreements contain strong provisions that protect Commonwealth interests and assets and address issues such as:
  – Limiting surface disturbance and well pad spacing
  – Drilling restrictions, operations and approval processes
  – Pipelines
  – Seismic surveys
  – Ecological features
Shale Gas and State Forests

Evaluating Impacts

• In 2010, after extensive leasing in a 2-year period, DCNR began a process of evaluating potential impacts of additional state forest leases.

• This analysis focused on the impacts of additional leases that would generate significant surface disturbance on state forest land.

• The following slides show the areas identified by DCNR as important ecological and recreational resources in this initial analysis. (These maps and data continue to inform DCNR’s ongoing review of the potential impacts of state forest shale gas leases.)
Protecting the Forest’s Ecological Integrity

- DCNR Gas Lease
- Severed Rights
- Ecologically Sensitive Areas
  - Species of Concern
  - Unique Area
  - Road, Trail, & Stream Buffers
- Inaccessible w/o Potentially Damaging Sensitive Areas
Protecting Wild Character
Shale Gas and State Forests

Marcellus Shale Advisory Commission Report

• In March of 2011, Gov. Corbett issued an Executive Order that established the Marcellus Shale Advisory Commission (MSAC). The order stated that “the Commonwealth would benefit from the advise and counsel of an official advisory commission comprised of key stakeholders …”

• The order also stated that “the Commonwealth takes seriously its responsibility to ensure the development of natural gas in a manner that protects the environment and safeguards the health and welfare of citizens.”

• MSAC, in its final report of July 2011, recognized the importance of natural gas development to the Commonwealth’s economy and the nation’s energy future.

• The commission also recognized the many ecological and social values of Pennsylvania’s forest.
Shale Gas and State Forests

Marcellus Shale Advisory Commission Report

• MSAC issued a recommendation that: “Any future leasing of state forest land should be limited to agreements which result in no or minimal surface impact to Commonwealth-owned land, and prohibits surface disturbance in high conservation value forests and other ecologically important areas.”

• The MSAC recommendation will guide any future consideration of leasing state forest land.