Penn’s Woods had regular rain and good growing conditions in spring and summer. General conditions foretell an early and spectacular autumn festival of color. Recent frost in the northern counties and cool nights elsewhere with clear bright days favor earlier peak dates this year.

NORTHERN REGION, (Northern Wayne County and all of Susquehanna, Bradford, Tioga, Potter and McKean Counties)

Foresters in the Loyalsock State Forest district report about 20% of the maple, ash and black cherry are starting the autumn display across Bradford and Susquehanna Counties. Only 5% of the beech and oak are showing color this early. The brightest reds and oranges will be on the maples the first week in October. Oaks will display russet orange and brick reds a week or two later. State Forest roads around Worlds End State Park in Sullivan County have a lot of red and sugar maple, ash and cherry and should provide colorful drives this week.

The Tioga State Forest district reports falls colors are already abundant throughout most of Tioga County. They expect very vibrant colors this fall. The Pennsylvania Grand Canyon and Pine Creek Rail Trail along Pine Creek are great places to view autumn color. This week the north facing slopes along US Route 6 are displaying early scarlet and orange on maple and ash. It should be a beautiful fall all across the mountains of the Northern Tier.
Follow US Route 6 west across Potter and McKean Counties and you are in the Susquehannock State Forest district. Some areas along the Pennsylvania/New York state line dominated by maples have almost 50% of their peak color. Both Red and Sugar maples are leading the way displaying bright reds, oranges, and yellows. Areas with a higher percentage of oak in the southern half of the district are at about 20 percent of their peak.

A drive on US Route 6 from Galeton to Kane provides lots of great color viewing. Driving the forestry roads in the Cherry Springs and Denton Hill areas also provide wonderful fall scenery.

The northern parts of Elk and Cameron County are seeing groups of red maples changing. Other northern hardwood species are just starting to change. The oaks are still lush green.

**CENTRAL REGION**, (A funnel-shaped band with its narrow end in southern Wayne and Pike Counties. It stretches across the central third of Pennsylvania to Fayette, Greene and Washington Counties. This region widens to the northwest to include Erie and Warren Counties.)

The great variety of tree species in Penn’s Woods provides the world’s greatest autumn spectacle. Trees that display red and orange in the central region include red maple, sumac, blackgum, dogwood and serviceberry. Yellow and orange tones are seen on birch, ash, tuliptree, sugar maple, aspen, hickory, walnut, and sycamore. Sassafras and cherry sport a variety of colors.

The central Poconos region of southern Wayne, southern Pike and northern Monroe Counties has significant changes occurring in the wetlands where red maple has vibrant shades of red and some orange. Ash and birch have started to change into lighter shades of yellow. Some of their leaves have turned brown and fallen early on slopes were trees are stressed by dry soils. Sumac, dogwood, and blackgum have also started to show varying shades of red. About 10 percent of full fall color has developed. The week of October 11 to 17 should be the peak of the fall foliage season in the Poconos.

As the morning’s air becomes crisper and light fog fills the lowlands in Carbon and Schuylkill Counties fall coloration continues to brighten the landscape in the Weiser State Forest. Red maples are the most noticeable species with shades from scarlet to maroon. Among the trees along the roadsides gorgeous red Virginia creeper vines climb tree trunks and spread as a ground cover. Their palmately compounded leaves of five leaflets provide rich early color. The oaks that form over half the forest canopy are usually the last trees to reveal their autumn glory. They provide an additional week or two of color after the maples and ash have finished.

Contrasting to past years, the birches, ashes, and tulip poplars appear to be slow to reveal their bright yellow leaves along the Endless Mountain. However, changes may occur quickly if the
weather stays chilly at night with bright sunny days. Therefore, the best time to experience fall coloration is by getting outside as often as you can, so you don’t miss anything.

In Centre County the drive along Sand Mountain Road on the way to Poe Valley State Park is brilliant with blackgum, dogwood, red maple, and sassafras. There is still a lot of green in the forest canopy with about 10-15 percent of full color showing across central Pennsylvania. Sand Mountain Road runs northeast through Poe Valley from US Route 322 in the Seven Mountains area across from Seven Mountains Campground.

In Complanter State Forest district across Erie and Warren Counties trees are now just beginning to show fall color along some roads and on the hillsides of northwest Pennsylvania. Some individual red maples are starting to display their colors, as are some of the understory shrubs and wildflowers. Goldenrods, asters and ironweed usher in the fall foliage season with a mix of yellow and purple. The region has had some warmer days but the nights have cooled. If this weather pattern continues it should produce a very good fall foliage season for northwest Pennsylvania. Fall foliage color is about 10-15% of maximum depending on location and local conditions. Some south facing slopes and open roadsides have color closer to 20 percent while other hillsides are still quite green. Peak color is expected October 10-17.

Foresters in the Forbes State Forest of southwestern PA report early fall color at higher elevations on Mt. Davis and in the Laurel Highlands. Peak autumn color is expected on the high ground October 5-12 well ahead of the surrounding valleys.

Blackgum is showing shades of deep red, peaking in the Laurel Mountain area. Red maple is gradually changing to its bright fall raiment. Views in the Pondfield Tower area south of Uniontown are still mostly green with just a few maples showing color.

Pennsylvania’s highest point, Mt. Davis (3,213 ft.), in southern Somerset County is the best place to visit this week in southwest PA.
**SOUTHERN REGION** (The area south and east of a line through southern Monroe, Dauphin, Bedford and southeastern Somerset Counties is included in the southern region.)

Only sporadic color is developing in woodlands across the southeast. However ornamental dogwoods are always early with their brick red, burgundy and maroon colors already fully displayed. Some birch and poplar on steep, dry slopes are showing yellow leaves due to dry soils. The yellowing seen on many sycamore and tuliptree is a result of anthracnose fungus diseases that flourished in the unusually cool damp weather we experienced in August. Red maples, sugar maples and white ash in urban and suburban planting are starting to change. Fields of asters, goldenrod and bonesets are blooming while Virginia creeper and poison ivy vines are starting to show scarlet.

Fall color is expected to be at its best in south-central and southeastern Pennsylvania between October 20 and 31. Plan a visit to French Creek State Park in late October. If you are looking for an enjoyable early fall activities visit the Appalachian Trail or Hawk Mountain Sanctuary as the fall raptor migration is in full swing.