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.

The SFRMP is implemented at the local level by district-specific resource management plans that aim to balance many uses and values of the forest, while maintaining ecosystem health and the wild character of the forest.

The purpose of this Management Activities document is to communicate to the public about upcoming management activities, projects and events that will be conducted to implement the SFRMP on Sproul State Forest. For questions, comments or more information about this plan, please contact:

Douglas J. D’Amore, Sproul District Forester
Sproul State Forest
15187 Renovo Road
Renovo, PA  17764
570-923-6011
ra-fd10@pa.gov

RECREATION

- **Whiskey Springs ATV Trail** - The Whiskey Springs ATV Trail will open for the winter atv riding season on January 14, 2018, close March 31, 2018, the summer riding season on May 25, 2018 and close on September 23, 2018. Planning and design work is being on the next reclamation project for the abandoned strip mines south of Area 36. Regular maintenance work is scheduled for this trail system during the field season.

- **Bloody Skillet ATV Trail** – The Bloody Skillet ATV Trail will open for the winter atv riding season on January 14, 2018, close March 31, 2018, the summer riding season on May 25, 2018 and close on September 23, 2018. Work will continue on developing the railroad
grade and old skid trail coming west from Orviston for emergency access into the lower portion of the connector trail.

- **Donut Hole Trail (DHT)** – This trail is scheduled to receive maintenance work through both volunteer work weekends with Keystone Trails Association and through the Pennsylvania Outdoors Work crew.

- **Chuck Keiper Trail (CKT)** – The majority of this trail is being planned for use in an adventure hike tentatively planned for September 15, 2018. This event will consist of a 50k and 100k trail race headquartered in the Renovo area.

- **Eagleton Mine Camp Trail** – The majority of this trail was used in an adventure hike on October 8, 2017. This is the second year of this event which was headquartered on the Sons of Italy property in Bald Eagle Township. The majority of the event was held on State Forest Land and consists of a 25k and 50k race. This event is planned to replace some of the opportunities lost through changes to the Megatransect event in another portion of Clinton County.

### 2018 Organized Events:

District policy is to allow only one organized event per weekend. This policy is in place to ensure the District’s Ranger staff is not spread to thin. Given the ongoing illegal use issues with atvs, we want to ensure there is an ability to have a law enforcement presence in problem areas while still having rangers available to help with the organized event.

- **April**  Saturday, 21st; Hyner View Trail Challenge
  
- **June**  Sunday, 3rd, Durty Daubers Trail Ride
  
- **July**  Saturday July 21st, Prowl the Sproul 10k Trail Race
  
- **August**  Saturday 11 and 12 Eastern States 100 Trail Race
  
- **September**  Saturday, 15th Chuck Keiper Trail 50k and 100k Trail Race

- **OCTOBER**  Sunday, 7th Eagleton Mine Camp Trail Challenge
November Sunday, 4th Kettle Creek Trail Race

TIMBER MANAGEMENT

- The district timber allocation model recommends that 1500 acres be treated silviculturally each year. In 2017 the forester staff marked 1477 acres on ten sales. Five sales have been sold and five are in the pipeline to be out for bid.

- Directly below are the sales completed in 2017 and a rough idea where the foresters propose to implement timber sales in 2018.

**Marked and sold, potentially active**


**Marked but not yet sold**

- Panther Road – 23 acres Improvement, Benjamin Run – 223 acres Shelterwood/Overstory Removal, Dry Run – 119 acres Shelterwood, Penrose Road – 141 acres Shelterwood. Eddy Ridge Road – 149 acres Shelterwood – Overstory Removal

**Proposed (not marked yet)**

- Hicks Road – 50 acres Overstory Removal, Marsh creek Trail – 200 acres Salvage Shelterwood
Regeneration projects

- Projects for 2018 include: Tree Planting – 25,000 trees (18K White Pine & 7K Pitch Pine) on 65 acres, Woven Wire Deer Fencing – One fence on 173 acres totaling 13,691 feet of fence, Fence Dismantling – Sixteen fences removed on 540 acres totaling 97,596 feet of fence, Herbicide to control fern – One projects covering 101 acres.

RESTORATION AND HABITAT PROJECTS

- Fourteen food plots are currently maintained by the District. Two food plots in the rotation will be reestablished this year. Those plots are 4 acres off Hicks Road and 4 acres off Flat Ridge Trail using 25 percent funding from the National Wild Turkey Federation. The food plots get re-worked on a rotating schedule of every five years. Seven new food plots of 2 acres each will be established on the Texas-Eastern/Dominion Pipeline corridor using 100 percent funding from the National Wild Turkey Federation.

ROAD AND BRIDGE PROJECTS

- Carrier Road Phase 1 – Paver Place DSA $249,000.
- Allen Dam – Pipe replacement and Paver Place DSA $210,000.
- Dutchman Road DSA placement

Possible Bridge Replacement Projects:
- Graham Road over Ferney Run
- Coon Run Road over Swamp Branch
- Crowley Road at Nefure Hollow
- Little Greenlick Rd/Rands Hole
- Little Greenlick Rd. over Big Greenlick
- Sugar Camp Road over Rattlesnake Run
- Cooks Run Road over Cole Run
- Right Branch Hyner

PRESCRIBED FIRE

Approved:
- Cole Run Point Unit 1 – 55 Acres, Site Preparation to reduce competing vegetation. This stand was last managed in the 80’s.
- Bougher Trail – 85 Acres, Site Preparation to reduce competing vegetation and leaf litter. Targeted for a growing season or fall burn.
Proposed:

- **LSR Rx (Fields Ridge),** The proposed Burn Plan is a joint burn plan between DCNR and the PA Game Commission due to being tied to the Landscape Restoration Grant that was awarded to both agencies. There is only one unit that notably extends over the boundary of the two agencies however cooperation during the additional burn units will likely occur as well. In total the Burn Plan will impact approximately 400 acres of DCNR land that is made up of 3 units. PGC will likely have an additional 2 – 3 units once plans are finalized to add into the 3 units that already exist. The Burn Plan will be the top priority for the 2018 Spring / Fall, although depending on weather it could be until 2020 until all the units are completed.

- **Wolf Run I, 310 Acres** is broken into 3 units. These units are mixed habitat type of Dry Oak, Oak/Heath, and Scrub Oak types that is in poor health. The area is on the decline due to insect mortality that has degraded the overstory and allowed for Red Maple encroachment. Furthermore, the Scrub Oak is well beyond a mature age which leads to a severe drop in acorn production. The density of Scrub Oak is not as significant as the Allen Dam Unit that was completed in 2017, however there are several notable pockets that are worth the rejuvenating. In addition to the Scrub Oak there are several Pitch Pines spread throughout the stand that will likely regenerate well after the Prescribed fires are complete. Due to the recent success of the Allen Dam Unit and the cooperation with NWTF these units will provide additional wildlife habitat for the area and restore the Scrub Oak Ecosystem.

- Several other burns are in the process of being developed to enhance oak regeneration in some of the timber sale first stage shelterwoods.

**INSECT, DISEASE, AND INVASIVE PLANT TREATMENT**

- In 2015 the staff treated 87 White Ash trees on six (6) sites in the hopes of saving a White Ash seed source from the devastating effects of the Emerald Ash Borer, **EAB.** The site locations are at Halls Run, Bakers Run, Cooks Run, Hyner Run, Rattlesnake Run, and Holland Run. These trees have been monitored yearly for EAB presence and will be retreated in the future. We have decided to treat these trees for the second time this field season.

- Aerial surveillance flights are conducted each year in June. Most forest insect pests are cyclical in nature, i.e. gypsy moth, and the flights enable us to get a sense of any population build up. Last year’s flights showed very few problem areas within the District.

- Monitoring/control of Japanese Knotweed and Mile-A-Minute will occur if the need arises. Mile-A-Minute has been found on private land adjacent to State Forest Land. The banks of the West Branch of the Susquehanna River seem to be a conduit for the establishment of invasive species on the district. Japanese knotweed and Mile-A-Minute Weed control will continue on the recently acquired Goodling/ Knarr property in Chapman Township, Clinton County. The dredge disposal sites for the
Sinnemahoning Dam Project have a large amount of mile-a-minute germinating from the dredge material. These sites will be actively monitored and treated throughout the growing season.

- Efforts started in the 2016 field season to treat a poison hemlock infestation at three sites off Jews Run Road. The results on the sites were mixed and all three were retreated in the 2017 field season. These sites will be monitored this year and spot treated as the need arises.

**NATURAL GAS, OIL, AND OTHER GEOLOGIC RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT**

- 2017 brought significant change to the District’s natural gas program. Anadarko sold their lease holdings to Alta from Houston Texas. Endless Mountain Energy sold their holdings to S.T.L. Resources, LLC from Houston Texas. NCL sold their lease holdings to Eric Petroleum from Ohio. XTO and Exco sold their shallow gas rights to Alliance. The transfers included all wells, pipelines and other infrastructure.

- Alta, Exco and XTO have no plans for constructing well pads along with the associated access roads and pipelines for 2018. The District had its last Marcellus Shale well drilled in 2011. NCL has not constructed a new shallow gas site since 2007 and Eric Petroleum plans on no new wells. They are planning on plugging approximately four wells this year. We expect those operations to continue into 2019. Dominion continues to upgrade their infrastructure within the Leidy and Tamarack Storage Fields. We expect several sites to be worked on in 2018.

  Alta will begin pipeline restoration activities throughout their lease holdings.

  Alta plans to rehabilitate a significant portion of the Tract 231 Compressor Pad in 2018. The stone will be applied to roads in the Marsh Creek Trail area for subbase material. This site will also be restored using the ARRI method.

- The abandoned well at the dead end of Cooks Run Road is scheduled for plugging operations during the 2018 field season. This well is contributing salt water, petroleum by products and other pollutants to this Exceptional Value Watershed. The plugging operation is through DEP’s Abandon Well Plugging Program with funding coming from the U.S. Coast Guard.

- Planning on a major strip mine reclamation project in the Cooks Run Watershed started in the Fall of 2016. The project was bid in the spring of 2017 and work started in August of 2017. We expect this project to be actively worked throughout 2018 with final restoration work occurring in the spring of 2019. This project will consist of excavating the Fran Mine Complex down to the pit floor, adding alkaline addition to the overburden, removing and treating any tipple waste and remaining coal on the site and
regenerating the site to a mixture of ARRI plantings and food plots. Current plans are to ring the 15-acre food plot with a conifer stand planted on the ARRI sites. The food plot will be planted to a mix favored by elk. The hope is to change quality of the base water flows from the site and improve the water quality in 5.5 miles of stream. The lower reaches of Camp Run, Rock Run and Cooks Run will all be impacted by this project.

- A 14 acre unreclaimed strip mine site in the Stony Run Watershed was regraded and partially reclaimed in December 2015. In August 2016, this site started to receive dredge material from George B. Steveson Dam in the Sinnemahoning Watershed. This project site continued to receive dredge disposal material until June 2017. Site revegetated to a very heavy stand of mile a minute weed during the late summer of 2017 and received several herbicide treatments. Final revegetation of the dredge material using ARRI principles will most likely be eliminated and the site restored to a food plot mix sometime during the spring of 2018.

- Susquehanna River Basin Commission (SRBC) constructed a passive treatment on Sandy Run to treat acid mine drainage entering the watershed from a shallow deep mine. The system consists of a limestone treatment pond and is located between the road and stream. This project will impact the lower reaches of Sandy Run and improve the water quality in Drurys Run to Woodley Draft.

- Susquehanna River Basin Commission and the District are partnering on a strip mine reclamation project in Woodley Draft. The District is currently clearing an 80 acre site with a timber sale. Once the sale is terminated SRBC will add alkaline addition and recontour spoil piles and replant the site using ARRI techniques. This work will be accomplished in 2019 or 2020.

- DEP, Bureau of Abandoned Mine Reclamation is beginning the planning process on an abandoned strip mine reclamation project off the Kato-Orviston Road in Snow Shoe Township, Centre County. The site is on both sides of the township road and has been previously cleared with timber sales. Design work will be completed in 2018 with the work anticipated to start in the 2019 field season.
TOWER AND RIGHT-OF-WAY PROJECTS

- Williams has completed planning for the 3.5-mile looping pipeline which is part of the larger Atlantic Sunrise project in the Summerson Mountain Area of Chapman Township. Construction is expected to occur sometime during the 2018 field season. They are also planning a series of integrity digs on their pipeline corridor for the 2018 field season.

- Betchel Corporation is currently evaluating the feasibility of building a large natural gas fired electrical power plant in Renovo utilizing the site of the former railroad repair facilities. If this plant is built it will require a 16 to 20-inch natural gas pipeline to provide the needed fuel. The company decided on a route that will impact approximately six (6) miles of State Forest. The route will begin in the Robbins Run and basically follow the First Energy/NYSEG corridor to an area of private property just north of Renovo. The company continues to conduct their planning operations with the possibility of construction in the Fall of 2018.

SPECIAL PROJECTS

- Several rights of way are in the process of being acquired from private landowners to facilitate public and administrative access to the Sproul State Forest.
- A conceptional ATV trail is being developed to link the Whiskey Springs and Bloody Skillet ATV Trails with each other and the Borough of Renovo. There are significant private property and other issues that need to be resolved.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

- Sproul Tree Planting Ramble – Saturday, April 28th, this event is sponsored by Pennsylvania Forestry Association and involves approximately 50 volunteers planting trees on selected sites.
- Numerous school programs throughout the year featuring fire prevention, Birth of a Tree, conservation field days and other programs for schools within the District.
- Leased Camp Owners Meeting – Sunday, November 25th. Meet with leased campsite owners in a central location to discuss changes to the lease program.
- Participation in the Centre County and Clinton County Natural Gas Task Forces and associated sub committees. Meetings held throughout the year.
- Participate with the Clinton County Economic Partnership Tourism Committee. Meetings held throughout the year.
- A public meeting on the State Forest Resource Management Plan will held in 2018 on a date and site to be determined.
RESEARCH

- There are many research projects currently active on the Sproul State Forest. These projects range from habitat studies for various species to impacts from the Marcellus Shale Gas play. The Planning Section maintains a database of all active and approved research projects.

MAJOR ACCOMPLISHMENTS FROM PREVIOUS YEAR

- April 2017 – Prescribed fire to rejuvenate 172 acres of scrub oak habitat was completed on Allen Dam Road.
- May 2017 – Maintenance Crew placed 1,600 tons of DSA on Tamarack Tower Road.
- May 2017 – Contractor completed moving dredge material from Sinnemahoning State Park to a 14-acre strip mine reclamation project in the Stony Run Watershed.
- May 2017 – Prescribed fire on 80 acres off Cole Run Road was completed for silvicultural objectives.
- June 2017 – Maintenance crew placed 1,542 tons of 4 inch minus road base on Yost Ridge Road.
- June 2017 – Maintenance Crew placed 1,915 tons of 2A to Beech Creek Road.
- June 2017 – Contractor paver placed 9,728 tons of DSA on Shintown Run Road.
- August 2017 – Contractor paver placed 9,070 tons of DSA on Birch Island Road.
- August 2017 – Contractor started work on the Fran Mine II reclamation project in the Cooks Run watershed.
- October 2017 – Contractor installed box culvert on Cooks Run Road at Bechdel Hollow.
- October 2017 – Contractor replaced box culvert on State Line Road over Panther Run.
- November 2017 – Contractor completed a passive treatment system for acid mine drainage on the Sandy Run Watershed.
- December 2017 – A total of 3,227 acres of silvicultural treatments were finalized with 13 executed timber sale contracts for the year.