

Ohio Department of Natural Resources

Division of Forestry

Annual Work Plan

For

Brush Creek State Forest

For the Period of

Fiscal Year **2013**
(July 1, 2012 to June 30, 2013)



Prepared By:

Dale Egbert
Forest Manager

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(Date)

Approved By:

Nate Jester
District Manager

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(Date)

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OHIO DIVISION OF FORESTRY

I. STRATEGIC PLAN *(Effective 2008)*

Our Vision: Ohio's state forests will be the best managed forest lands in the country, and will be widely recognized as such.

To fulfill this vision, the Ohio Division of Forestry commits to meeting five objectives. We will:

- Manage forests to ensure the health and sustainability of forest systems
- Produce high-quality forest products that contribute to local communities
- Provide recreational opportunities that require a large forest land base
- Provide unique forestry education sites and promote outreach and long-term research
- Maintain a highly trained and well equipped work force

To fulfill these objectives, the Division of Forestry will develop and implement strategies and plans that allow us to accomplish the following goals by 2011:

- Manage forests to ensure the health and sustainability of forest systems
 - *Implement a proven, verifiable approach to sustainable management*
 - *Manage for site-appropriate, native forest systems and species*
 - *Maintain long-term forest productivity through conservation of soil, water, and forest resources*
 - *Retain or promote stand- and landscape-level wildlife habitat*
 - *Assess the distribution and impact of non-native invasive species*
- Produce high-quality forest products that contribute to local communities
 - *Base State Forest harvest volumes on the goals and guidelines for each forest system, current stand and forest-wide inventories, and science-based silviculture*
 - *Develop marketing strategies to capture the maximum value of forest products*
- Provide recreational opportunities that are compatible with sustainable forest management
 - *Develop a comprehensive recreation plan for the state forest system*
 - *Build recognition for unique and varied recreation opportunities on state forests*
- Provide unique forestry education sites and promote outreach and long-term research
 - *Support forest research with an emphasis on sustainable forest management (silvicultural, prescribed fire, native systems, etc.)*
 - *Develop opportunities to showcase forest management practices to the general public, private landowners, and forest industry*
- Maintain a highly trained and well equipped work force
 - *Develop a training, continuing education, and/or certification standard for all division staff*
 - *Inventory and evaluate equipment and facilities and develop maintenance and replacement schedules*
 - *Develop equipment and facilities budgets based on current and projected needs*
 - *Ensure all staff have appropriate health and safety training*

II. Summary of Strategic Plan Actions

- Manage Brush Creek State Forest under the multiple use concept promoting land management, forest sustainability, and back country recreation.
- Continue to implement new policies as presented in the revised Land Management Manual that will maintain third party certification.
- Continue to develop employee skills and abilities through training thereby improving productivity and efficiency.

III. Forest Overview

History & Description: Located in the unglaciated hill country of south central Ohio, Brush Creek State Forest was established in 1928 with the acquisition of 285 acres of land. This and other early land acquisitions were originally part of Shawnee State Forest. As acreage and distance grew, the need to form a separate state forest unit became apparent in order to properly manage these scattered land holdings. In the early 1950's, a new state forest was formed and drew its name from a major stream in the area known as Scioto Brush Creek. Today, Brush Creek State Forest comprises well over 13,000 acres of productive hardwood forested land. Because of its separation into many parts, management for continuous recreational facilities is difficult. Opportunities offered within the forest include timber harvesting, research and recreation including hunting, hiking, car touring and horseback riding.

No field staff reports to Brush Creek State Forest. Day to day operations were previously directed from Pike State Forest but have now shifted to Shawnee State Forest.

IV. Resource Management

Silvicultural Practices (Scheduled Harvests, Cruising, Marking, TSI, etc.):

The following areas were marked previously but have not yet been sold:

State Forest	Compartment	Vol. Bd. Ft.	Tons Pulp	Acres	Acres	Acres
				Clearcut / Openings	Shelterwood / Deferment	Selection / Improvement
Brush Creek	B-7	656,258	2,000		67	
Brush Creek	B-28	1,301,414	3,650		139	
Brush Creek	D-17	110,142	250			37
Brush Creek	D-101	164,362	400	15		

The following areas will be marked in FY 2013:

				Acres	Acres	Acres
State Forest	Compartment	Vol. Bd. Ft.	Tons Pulp	Clearcut / Openings	Shelterwood / Deferment	Selection / Improvement
Brush Creek	B-9, B-10	508,413	2,005			
Brush Creek	D-4	859,991	1,762		99	
Brush Creek	D-14, D-38, D-39	200,000	3,200			113

These planned harvests resulted from previous cruising and are expected to be marked in FY 14 or beyond.

				Acres	Acres	Acres
State Forest	Compartment	Vol. Bd. Ft.	Tons Pulp	Clearcut / Openings	Shelterwood / Deferment	Selection / Improvement
Brush Creek	C-30	100,526	679			29

Approximately 5% of the acreage in the forest will be assessed for potential silvicultural prescriptions during FY 13. The exact locations of the cruises have not yet been determined. The cruises will follow the stand-based cruising model used in FY 12.

Merchandising: The Division of Forestry will continue merchandising a limited portion of its scheduled management activities. This effort will consist of hiring a Master Logging company, through complete bidding, to cut and deliver tree length logs to a centralized location where Division of Forestry personnel will manufacture them into sellable and sorted products. This process maximizes the Division's rate of return for its products. The Division's staff will continue to identify sales for merchandizing throughout the year.

A developed merchandising yard located on SR 73 will continue to be utilized for this program.

Minerals: Currently, there are no mineral leases at Brush Creek State Forest. The Division of Forestry is currently reviewing and pursuing the potential for oil and gas activity on each state forest. In coordination with other Divisions within the Department of Natural Resources, Best Management Practices have been developed and suitability analyses have also been conducted. During this analysis, specific areas within the land holding Divisions of the Department have

been identified as potential locations for the various types of oil and gas activity. Also, the mineral rights for each property are also being researched and identified in preparation for potential leasing activity. These leases may be with the state or with other private mineral rights owners on state lands. In either case, the Division is fully prepared to manage and implement these activities with the least amount of disturbance necessary to accomplish the task.

Invasives: Treatment projects will be proposed according to policy for review and approval. Common invasives at Brush Creek State Forest include: *Allanthus altissima* (Tree of Heaven), *Paulownia tomentosa* (Princesstree), *Lonicera japonica* (Japanese Honeysuckle), *Rosa multiflora* (Multiflora Rose).

Boundary: Brush Creek boundary totals 165 miles and it has been placed on a five (5) year rotation, 33 miles will be painted yearly.

Licenses/Leases: None

Insects & Disease: Ohio Department of Agriculture actively monitors gypsy moth by placing traps within the forest. Division staff perform informal monitoring for forest pests including emerald ash borer, gypsy moth, as well as many native pests.

Utilization & Marketing: Forest products will continue to be offered for sale through both traditional state forest timber sales (stumpage) and merchandising sales. Additionally, firewood permits will be available for sale to the public.

Research: Historically very little research has taken place on the forest. Opportunities to conduct research projects exist for any person or group. A special use permit must be applied for and approved in advance of any research activity.

Summary (2-3 year projects): Implement post harvest cruising to better develop the growth & yield model. Try to develop a backlog of scheduled sales to project at least 2 years of proposed treatments.

V. **Maintenance**

Buildings: There are two buildings, an office and garage; both are currently being rented to the Rarden Township Trustees.

Infrastructure (water, wastewater, utilities): None

Vehicles/Equipment: Reference Shawnee Forest Plan.

Roads: Coffee Hollow, also designated as Township Road 250 and Forest Rd. 1, has been maintained by Forestry for many years and will continue. This

includes clearing of fallen trees, grading, clearing ditches, cleaning out headers and mowing the sides. Ditches will be thoroughly cleaned this fiscal year. Installation of a gate off Dry Run Road, on forest property, to control illegal access onto state forest property will be completed.

The access road and parking area off Big Bear Creek Road will be maintained this year. Upon completion of the current timber sale, brush along the road will be mowed back, the road will be graded, and culverts/headers will be maintained to regain the integrity of this access road.

This year all access roads will be formally inventoried, mapped, and an inspection report will be completed. The results of the inspection report will guide the maintenance efforts of the forest staff.

Signage: Signs are used to mark and identify trails and to identify areas for information purposes. They are used on the horse trails and hiking trails. Currently carsonite and wood signs are used. Appropriate decals are used with the carsonite signs. They are replaced when damaged or vandalized. Wooden signs are routed with the description and painted. Usually they are repainted but at times are in need of replacement, so new ones will be made

Residences: None

Dams: None

Capitals Projects: None

Summary (2-3 year future projects): Replace 2 culverts in Coffee Hollow. Replace headers in Coffee Hollow. Gravel all of Coffee Hollow roadway.

VI. Recreation

Trails (bridle, backpack, etc.): There are ten (10) miles of bridle trails and three (3) miles of hiking trails. Utilizing APVs, the hiking trails will be checked and cleared of trees a minimum of once this year. The horse trails will be cleared, graded and water bars re-installed using the bulldozer. The Coffee Hollow Bridle Trail will be re-routed such that it will not cross over onto private property. The Forest staff will work closely with both the Scioto County OHC and Adams County OHC in maintaining the horse trails. Trees will be removed from the vista on the Stone Quarry Hiking Trail to enhance the view.

Campgrounds: None

ATV Areas: None

Shooting Ranges: None

Grants: None

Summary (2-3 year future projects): Re-establishing the vista near the tower site on Crabtree Cemetery road.

VII. Wildland Fire

Suppression: Initial attack will be done by forestry personnel when available. Shawnee State Forest staff is responsible for suppression in Scioto and Adams counties.

Prevention: Each fire season, the majority of wildland fires are human caused and usually result from debris burning. In order to promote wildfire prevention and awareness:

The Forest Manager will work with the District Manager to coordinate media activities such as interviews with the local press for television and newspaper articles. Timing critical releases with high danger fire weather will be critical in increasing public awareness.

The Smokey Bear Presentation is also available to local fire departments and other safety oriented organizations to further promote prevention. Increasing awareness and Fire Prevention promotion will be promoted further this FY with many events planned. This will be handled as requests come in. All staff will be required to participate in presentations.

Prescribed Fire: No activity planned. The Division of Forestry fully acknowledges the use of prescribed fire as a management tool and is currently collecting data across the southern district in order to better implement a prescribed fire program. The data collected and resulting analysis, will present both the effects of past prescribed burns and opportunities for additional prescribed fire. Two types of burns are being assessed. This includes site preparation burns to determine the effectiveness of establishing oak/hickory on that particular stand and release burns to encourage the success of already established oak/hickory due to previous management practices. The results of the data analysis may yield additional prescribed fire opportunity for future fiscal years.

Inter-Agency Fire Crew: The Interagency Fire Crew supports the national effort to suppress wildland fire to protect lives, personal property and natural resources. Participation is strictly voluntary, but all employees are encouraged to participate in the program.

Training: Members of the Interagency Fire Crew will attend one (1) Interagency Refresher Class. The Fundamentals of Wildland Fire course will be taught in each county, if requested.

Fire Department Contacts: The Forest Officer will attend at least one VFD association meeting in the protection area each month. Annually the officer will contact each department and complete the division's VFD contact information forms. The Forest manager will be required to attend one Association meeting for each county each year and to attend as many department meetings as time allows.

FireWise: Staff will continue to support the FireWise program.

FEPP/FFP: The Federal Excess Personal Property (FEPP) program is a program administered by the Division of Forestry that loans equipment to fire departments for their use in fire control. Division of Forestry staff must inspect loaned equipment a minimum of once each year. The inspections occur from January 1st to March 1st.

- Officers will inspect the equipment and perform the appropriate reporting by or before the due date.
- Officers will update the Forest Manager of their current progress weekly, and should also provide the Forest Manger with a list of the FEPP equipment stationed throughout the protection area. Information will be conveyed to both the program coordinator and the District Manager.

Grants: The Division of Forestry administers several grant opportunities for volunteer fire companies. Forest staff will promote the opportunities to local VFD's.

Summary (2-3 year future projects): Further develop contacts, training, and communications to the local VFD's. Become more active in fire prevention programs such as FireWise and Smokey Bear Educational programs. Implement the online reporting system for wildfires with local fire departments.

VIII. Law Enforcement

Philosophy/Purpose: State Forests currently have nine commissioned law enforcement officers and one commissioned manager. The purpose of these positions is to enforce Ohio Administrative Code and the Ohio Revised Code. One very important aspect of the program is resource protection. Forest Officers protect property boundaries from encroachment, recreation resources from undesignated uses, guard against timber theft and watch for watershed degradation. Specific law enforcement polices and procedures are delineated in the Division's Law Enforcement Manual.

Training: Reference Shawnee Forest Plan

Equipment: Reference Shawnee Forest Plan

Patrol Priorities: Patrols will be targeted towards three main areas: illegal APV use, where dumping/litter occurs, and parking locations.

Special Projects: Areas that are targeted are those that show resource degradation by APV use. Spring and fall seasons present the best opportunity for illegal APV projects.

Other Duties (VFD's, FEPP, court, boundary, etc.): Court contacts will be updated once a year at the beginning of the year. Respond to boundary encroachments by inspecting boundary when/ where encroachments occur, investigate and resolve.

Summary (2-3 year future projects): Continuation of deterring illegal APV use. Continue to focus on projects to protect user safety and positive visitor experiences.

IX. Employee Development

Employee List/Vacancies/Table of Organization: See Shawnee State Forest work plan

Training (tuition reimbursement, etc): Reference Shawnee Forest Plan.

Other Employee Development: Reference Shawnee Forest plan.

X. Public Information/Outreach

Planned Events:

- Open House representation at the Chillicothe Open House in Late July.
- Media and other opportunities as they arise.
- Fire prevention representation at parades and community functions.
- Contact or personally meet with the county commissioners, township trustees and school boards in Scioto and Adams Counties at least once per year.

Partnerships: Township trustees, Ruffed Grouse Society, local VFD's, Division of Wildlife, Ohio Horseman's Council, National Wild Turkey Federation.

Volunteers: Ohio Horseman's Council – Scioto and Adams Counties Chapters and Buckeye Trail Association

Interpretive Programs: None planned

Summary (2-3 year future projects): Design an interpretive sign for the Stone Quarry hiking trail where the current information board is located.

XI. Budget

Operational Budget (personnel, maintenance): See budget in Shawnee State Forest plan.

Revenue: Revenue from Brush Creek State Forest is generated from timber sales, firewood permits, and special use permit applications. A percentage of this income is returned to the local township, county, and local school district through the Trees to Textbooks Program.

Summary (2-3 year projected budget): Future budgets cannot be anticipated and the Division is currently composing the budget for this fiscal year.

XII. Safety

Safety: Forest employees participate in monthly training sessions and many other safety oriented discussions in the field. The Division also participates in the Public Employment Risk Reduction Program and will continue to repair minor infractions that resulted from these inspections. Division Staff is also required to attend the Annual Division of Forestry Safety Training. Other safety trainings will be utilized as opportunities arise.

Division staff will be conducting internal hazard and safety assessments and will provide mitigating practices to eliminate or reduce the risk. Forest Staff will also utilize the policies and guidelines contained within the Division Safety Manual to further improve the agency's safety culture.

Any type of emergency (medical, fire, police, etc.) will be acted upon by staff member(s) consistent with their training, experience and ability to act.