

Ohio Department of Natural Resources

Division of Forestry

Annual Work Plan

For

Sunfish Creek State Forest

For the Period of

Fiscal Year **FY13**
(July 1, 2012 to June 30, 2013)



Prepared By:

Nate Jester, District Manager

6-20-2012
(Date)

Approved By:

Greg Guess, Asst. District Manager
(Name & Title)

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

III. Forest Overview

Sunfish Creek State Forest is located in the Ohio Valley along the Ohio River about four miles north of Clarrington and three miles south of Powhatan Point. This 638 acre forest lies entirely within sections 10; 15, and 16 of Switzerland Township, Monroe County. The forest is easily reached from State Route 7 on the east.

This State Forest is within the unglaciated portions of the Appalachian Plateau. The topography is extremely rough, ridges are narrow, slopes are steep, and elevations vary by 600'. Surface strata are of residual soils formed by the weathering of bedrock and are composed predominately of calcareous sandstones and shales, except for a small portion formed on limestone and limey shale. Most soil is generally light colored and well drained. The deepest soils are in the hollows but are low in natural fertility and organic matter.

Sunfish Creek is drained by Blair Run, Johnson Run and Yost Run directly into the Ohio River. Johnson Run forms the major forest hollow, running east-west through the forest. Blair Run and Yost Run drain the north and south sections of the forest respectively. High gradient streams without acidity problems are characteristic and have developed on the underlying Permian shale, sandstone, and coal. On shale, the streams are ephemeral and without large riffle-inhabiting fish populations.

In the 1940's the Hastings Report was initiated to determine areas in Ohio suitable for State Forests. Athens, Yellow Creek, Maumee, Shade River, Sunfish and Beaver Creek State Forest were designated (since then Athens and Beaver Creek became State Parks). Sunfish Creek State Forest has been in existence since 1963, when final acquisition for the forest was completed. This small forest area was part of an original purchase unit which included thousands of acres in Center, Adams, Switzerland, Salem, and Sunbury Townships in Monroe County. However due to difficulties and delays, the final purchase unit included less than a thousand acres in Switzerland Township, the present site of the forest.

Past land use practices (farming, improper logging and grazing) have greatly damaged present stands and have reduced the timber potentials for years to come. Ridge areas once used for crops and pasture are in the youngest timber. Slopes and narrow bottoms contain the largest timber.

IV. Resource Management

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

Approximately 9% (60 acres) of Sunfish Creek State Forest is in three pine plantations, planted in 1964. The most southern plantation (#3) however, had only 25-50% survival due to heavy sod cover and poor clay soil. Management in these plantations will focus on reverting them to a native hardwood stand type. Plantation #1 and Plantation #2 will be regenerated by a timber harvest this fiscal year. Plantation #3 will be allowed to revert to hardwood through natural succession. In addition 3 hardwood stands in declining health will also be harvested.

The following areas will be marked in FY 2013:

State Forest	Compartment	Vol. Bd. Ft.	Tons Pulp	Acres Clearcut / Openings	Acres Shelterwood / Deferment	Acres Selection / Improvement
Sunfish		175,800	4,345	60		

Merchandising: Currently Sunfish Creek State Forest does not have any scheduled merchandising activity. 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.

Minerals: 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: The only known invasive is multiflora rose. There is insufficient inventory to determine other invasive issues and the severity. However, Tree of heaven, multiflora rose, autumn olive and paulownia are some of the woody invasive species that have been targeted for control if found. Treatment projects will be proposed according to policy for review and approval.

Boundary: All of the Division of Forestry boundaries are maintained to ensure location of property lines in the field. Once every four (4) years, boundaries are to be repainted to ensure location and to review if any obstructions have been placed on Division of Forestry lands. All boundaries are painted in yellow for easy recognition in the field. Forest Officers work closely with Forest Managers to ensure security of land boundaries. This year Hocking State Forest Staff will review the boundary and develop a marking schedule accordingly. Priority will be to focus on the south and east sides with the possibility of painting the entire boundary at this forest, this fiscal year.

Licenses/Leases: Each request is reviewed by the District Forester for individual review and will be processed according to policy. Currently, power lines traverse through Sunfish Creek State forest in a north-south direction. Vegetative management within these power line “right of ways” is expected to continue.

Insects & Disease: Foresters and staff will continue to monitor for invasive / exotic / epidemic insects and diseases. Various methods are employed in this identification process and staff are trained to identify the causal agents during fieldwork. Insect and disease surveys conducted by employees and organizations, not directly related to the Division of Forestry, are often utilized. These include but are not limited to the Ohio Department of Agriculture Gypsy Moth Aerial Survey, Emerald Ash Borer Survey, and others. The Division of Forestry also participates in an annual aerial forest health survey as well as a hemlock woolly adelgid survey.

Utilization & Marketing: Forest products will continue to be offered for sale through traditional state forest timber sales (stumpage) and merchandising sales. See above for scheduled silvicultural activities.

Research: Currently no ongoing research projects are taking place within Sunfish Creek State Forest. Opportunities to conduct research projects exist for any person or group. A special use permit needs to be applied for and approved for the activity.

Summary (2-3 year projects): Prioritize boundary marking and complete work necessary to obtain proper boundary identification. Conduct scheduled harvest activities and inventory additional stands.

V. Maintenance

Buildings: No structures.

Infrastructure (water, wastewater, utilities): No Infrastructure.

Vehicles/Equipment: No Vehicles/equipment assigned to this location.

Roads: No forest roads exist on Sunfish Creek SF. Access to the eastern side of the forest is provided by an old road along Johnson Run. TR 2190 touches the southwest corner of the forest. Access to the northern portion of the state forest is through the rerouted County Road 81, connecting Krebs Ridge Road with State Route 7 by using existing Township Road 910 and following drainages in Blair Run.

Signage: All wood signs are reviewed annually for possible repair or replacement as needed. They will either be purchased or constructed by forestry staff. Signs should also be posted in areas where harvesting, prescribed burning, and trail work is being conducted.

Residences: No residences.

Dams: No dams present at this state forest.

Capitals Projects: No planned capitals projects.

Summary (2-3 year future projects): Continue to identify projects with priorities focused on signage improvement and access road improvement.

VI. Recreation

Trails (bridle, backpack, etc.): Sunfish Creek State Forest has many recreational opportunities related to hunting and primitive recreation. No formal trails exist at this forest; however, game and user defined trails can be used to access the forested area.

Campgrounds: No campgrounds at this location.

ATV Areas: Not applicable at Sunfish Creek State Forest. APVs are not permitted.

Shooting Ranges: Not applicable.

Grants: No grants are expected this fiscal year.

VII. Wildland Fire

Suppression: The Division of Forestry has the statutory authority for fire suppression and protection within the hill country of the state. Hocking State Forest staff is responsible for these duties in Monroe County. Division employees serve as initial attack resources within the forest boundaries and assist VFD's outside the forest boundaries, when requested. Most requests involve the use of heavy equipment.

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 (9) commissioned law enforcement officers and one (1) 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: Well-trained Forest Officers are necessary in order to effectively and safely perform their law enforcement duties. Commissioned officers will receive the following training: Weapons qualifications, law enforcement in-service training, remain current with CPR and First Aid, TASER certification. Officers are to complete all Continuing Professional Training (CPT) and LEADS Certification training as mandated by the Ohio Attorney General's Office. Non-mandatory training will be offered to officers as workloads and budgets allow.

Reporting: All Forest Officers are to complete and submit annual Criminal Justice Information System (CJIS) reports as required. Officers are required by policy to submit copies of their citation logs to the Division Law Enforcement Administrator twice during the fiscal year. Other reports are to be submitted as required by Department/Division policy and the LE Manual.

Equipment: Law Enforcement Officers are also responsible for communicating and collaborating with the Forest Manager pertaining to equipment and uniform necessities. Officer will be issued all equipment listed in the division's law enforcement manual and it is the responsibility of each Law Enforcement Officer to maintain their own equipment, including patrol vehicles.

Patrol Priorities: Priorities for patrol will be established utilizing the following criteria:

1. Responding to emergencies and help requests with jurisdiction
2. Protect and assist visitors through routine patrol of all facilities and incident investigation
3. Issue warnings and citations for violations
4. Investigate and assign wildfire reports for violations
5. Assist in special projects with other forests and agencies

Special Projects: Special projects are worked depending upon need.

Other Duties (VFD's, FEPP, court, boundary, etc.): The Forest Officer will visit county courts and prosecutors at least once per year for updates on bond schedules, court dates, and judge and prosecutor information.

Summary (2-3 year future projects): Continue to focus on projects to protect user safety and positive visitor experiences.

IV. Employee Development

Employee List/Vacancies/Table of Organization: This forest is administered at the District level with law enforcement and fire area supervision specifically assigned to Hocking State Forest staff. Land management and operations duties will be assigned as needed.

Training (tuition reimbursement, etc): Training will be considered as opportunities arise. Law enforcement and fire training have been addressed in the above sections. CPR and First Aid will be offered to all employees. Other training opportunities may include silvicultural and forestry training, equipment operations, all risk response training, and many on the job training experiences.

X. Public Information/Outreach

Planned Events: Sunfish Creek State Forest will be represented at the Open House held at the Chillicothe District Office in July of 2012.

Partnerships: The Division of Forestry has worked and will continue to work with various groups including:

- Monroe County Sheriff and EMA
- All volunteer fire departments in the protection area
- State Fire Marshal
- Township Trustees
- County Commissioners

- Division of Wildlife
- Division of Parks and Recreation
- Division of Natural Area and Preserves

Volunteers: No volunteer projects are currently scheduled.

Summary (2-3 year future projects): Continue to maximize volunteer projects and impacts.

XI. Budget

Operational Budget (personnel, maintenance): Following is last year’s budgetary allotments for Hocking State Forest. The majority of work completed at Sunfish Creek State Forest is conducted by Hocking State Forest Staff:

500	Payroll- GRF			\$361,293
		GLASS,DAVID L	FOREST MANAGER 3	\$***
		PFARR,JAMES M	FOREST OFF 2	\$***
		LEE JR,CHARLES H	FORESTER	\$***
		DUNCAN,TONY A	EQUIPMENT OPR2	\$***
		LOWE,MARK R	EQUIPMENT OPR2	\$***
				\$***
		OT		\$2,308
510	Personal Services			\$250
		Misc Prof Development	Fund 5090	\$250
520	Supplies & Maint			\$50,000
		General Operating- Supplies	Fund 5090	\$13,500
		General Operating-Vehicles	Fund 5090	\$5,000
		General Operating- Fuel	Fund 5090	\$13,500
		General Operating-Utilities	Fund 5090	\$4,500
		General Operating- Maint	Fund 5090	\$13,500
530	Equipment			\$0
550	Subsidies			\$0
570	Capital			\$0
590	Settlements & Bonds - Refunds			\$0
591	Debt Service			\$0
			Total	\$411,543

Revenue: Revenue sources for include: Timber sale proceeds, fuel wood permits, special use permits.

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.