

Allegheny Forest Health Collaborative

Integrated Landscape Strategy for the Priority Suppression of Buckthorn Allegheny Plateau Project

Introduction

Invasive species pose some of the greatest environmental, economic, and social threats to Pennsylvania's (PA) forests, wildlife, agriculture, and waterways. They endanger native species and threaten valuable ecosystem services and resources, including clean water sources, recreational opportunities, sustained production of wood products, wildlife and grazing habitat, and human health and safety.

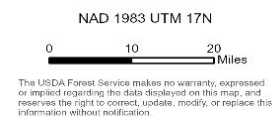
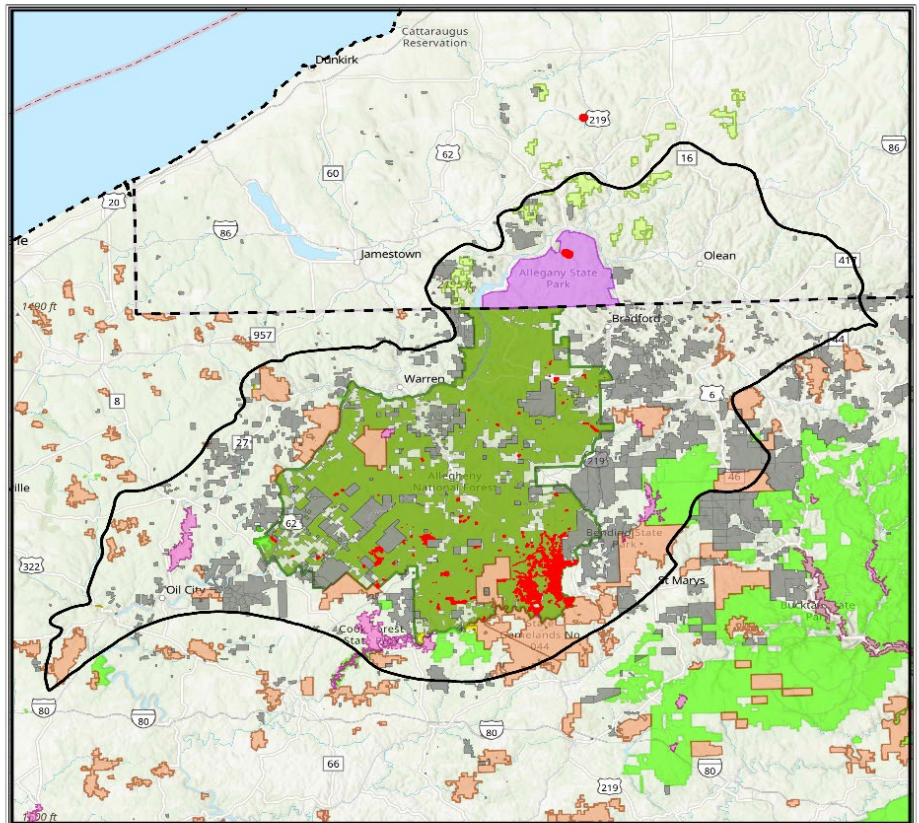
The High Allegheny Unglaciaded Plateau (HAUP) is home to the 514,000-acre Allegheny National Forest (ANF), PA State Forests, PA and New York State Parks, PA Game Commission lands, and thousands of acres of industrial and privately owned forestlands. This ecoregion encompasses the largest area of core forestland in PA, which provides high quality streams, PA Natural Heritage Program delineated rare and unique ecosystems, outdoor recreation, and tourism value. HUAP serves as the beginning of the hardwood supply chain, as PA ranks as the top hardwood producing state in the country. The hardwood industry provides more than 63,000 jobs and contributes over \$36 billion annually to PA's economy.

Invasive species are organisms whose introduction to an area cause, or is likely to cause, harm to the environment, economy, and/or public health.

Two invasive plant species, glossy buckthorn (*Frangula alnus*) and common buckthorn (*Rhamnus cathartica*), have emerged as an immediate, significant, and rapidly increasing threat to this ecoregion. Without the natural controls of insects, animals, diseases, and pathogens native to their origin areas, the plants exceed healthy levels, and compete with native species for nutrients.



Inventoried Glossy Buckthorn Distribution
Allegheny Forest Health Collaborative



Goals and Deliverables

This project was made to develop and implement a cooperative effort to map, inventory, treat, and monitor buckthorn and other invasive plant species. The Allegheny Forest Health Collaborative (AFHC) and its partners seek to provide educational resources to our stakeholders in efforts to prevent catastrophic loss of native species within the HAUP.

The AFHC, co-led by the Allegheny Hardwood Utilization Group (AHUG) and the ANF, was established in 2017, encompassing more than 60 participating entities. AFHC partners include participation from public land agencies, elected officials, forest and wood products companies, non-government organizations, private landowners, and academic and community groups.

Ongoing Efforts

Partners within the AFHC have applied for grant funding in the amount of \$755,353 dollars to date (2/2024) for education and outreach activities, hiring a summer intern, conducting buckthorn treatments and treatment monitoring. To date, \$25,000 has been received, other grant awards are pending. Treatment funding will be used on both public and private lands. Depending on which funding sources are received, eligible landowners including State, industrial forest, and private lands may receive funding. A willing owner will need to sign an agreement for treatments on their lands.

On January 24, 2024, the first Buckthorn Strategy meeting was held at the ANF Supervisor's Office in Warren with 32 attendees from a variety of organizations. The meeting featured presentations on the impacts of glossy and common buckthorn, plant identification, on-going treatment efforts, grant opportunities, and an overview of a draft Buckthorn Strategy document. This strategy document is being compiled to assist landowners and managers in the identification, mapping, treatment, and monitoring of glossy and common buckthorn. Next steps include a discussion and mapping of buckthorn infestations focused on dense and large infestations; identifying the leading edge of where infestations are expanding; and satellite areas where infestations are smaller, less dense, and separated from the leading edge to assist in the prioritization of treatment areas.

Collaboration

is the joint effort of many individuals or groups of people working together to complete a job or achieve a common goal.



Figure 1 – A detailed profile of a Glossy Buckthorn (*Frangula alnus*) plant found in the Allegheny National Forest. USDA Forest Service photo by April Moore.

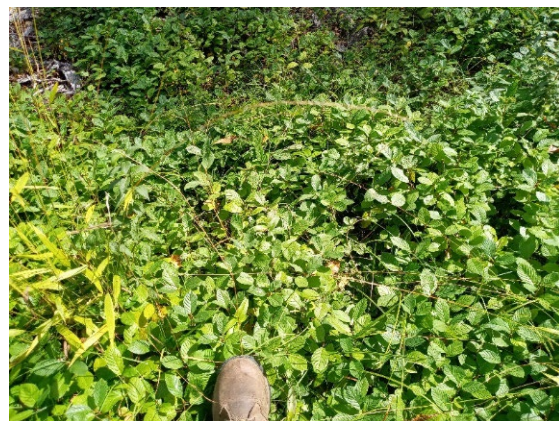


Figure 2 – A dense Glossy Buckthorn (*Frangula alnus*) infestation on the Allegheny National Forest. USDA Forest Service photo by April Moore.

If you're interested in learning more, contact April Moore, Non-Native Invasive Program Manager of the Allegheny National Forest, at April.Moore@usda.gov or 814-728-6186.