



AGREEMENT FOR SHARED STEWARDSHIP
Between
THE COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION AND NATURAL
RESOURCES
and the
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
FOREST SERVICE



Introduction

The Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) and the United States Department of Agriculture (“USDA”), Forest Service (the “Parties”) have developed this agreement to advance Shared Stewardship in Pennsylvania.

Many forest management issues, challenges, and threats cross ownership boundaries, and they are best addressed through partnerships. Forest product markets, forest management infrastructure, financial resources, forest research, and information exchange between resource professionals are critical to effective cross-boundary management. Through a shared vision and a mutual commitment to work together, the pace, scale, quality and effectiveness of our respective forest management can be improved. Shared Stewardship provides a framework that unites state and federal land managers in addressing landscape-scale resource needs while respecting individual direction and commitments.

This document is not an authorizing tool. Rather, the Parties will rely on all available authorities to implement priority projects (including, but not limited to, Good Neighbor Authority, Farm Bill Authorities, and the Cooperative Forestry Assistance Act). The Parties will identify specific authorities for actions prior to any project development and will implement such projects based on the availability of appropriations.

Background

Forests blanket more than 17 million acres (60 percent) of Pennsylvania and occur in diverse landscapes including urban park and street trees, scattered woodlots in highly developed areas, and the heavily-forested Pennsylvania Wilds. Approximately 12 million acres of the Commonwealth’s forests (70 percent), are privately held by roughly 750,000 landowners. The remaining 5 million acres are publicly owned by either the federal, state or local governments.

The DCNR manages 2.5 million acres of land across the Commonwealth, including 2.2 million acres of State Forests and 300,000 acres of State Parks in 48 of Pennsylvania’s 67 counties. Pennsylvania’s State Forest system represents one of the largest expanses of public forest land in the eastern United States, making it a truly priceless public asset. In Pennsylvania, the USDA Forest Service administers 513,000 acres of land in the Allegheny National Forest (“ANF”). Much of Pennsylvania’s large contiguous blocks of State Forest lands are located in north-central

Pennsylvania --- in proximity to the Allegheny National Forest lands. This natural landscape of state and federal lands and mutual resource goals and objectives, sets the ideal base layer for engagement between conservation partners and Shared Stewardship activities at the landscape-level.

Pennsylvanians value their natural resources and recognize that these resources contribute to a high quality of life and a healthy standard of living. They further recognize that Pennsylvania's economic prosperity depends on healthy and sustainably managed forests. The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania has long recognized the need to balance long-term plans for conserving and protecting valuable natural resources with management of forest lands to meet other important goals. Forest land managers have developed a wide range of management plans that reflect the diversity of ownerships, management approaches, and public interests across the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. This all-lands effort is supported by individual landowner management plans, Article 1, Section 27 of the Pennsylvania Constitution, the Pennsylvania State Forest Action Plan, the Allegheny National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan, the Pennsylvania State Forest Resource Management Plan, the Allegheny Forest Health Collaborative, and cross-ownership risk assessments and agreements.

Purpose

In August 2018, the USDA Forest Service adopted a "Shared Stewardship" strategy for large-scale land management challenges called *Toward Shared Stewardship Across Landscapes: An Outcome-Based Investment Strategy*. This strategy responds to the urgent and growing challenges faced by forest managers and landowners across the Nation and Pennsylvania.

Through Shared Stewardship, the Parties have an extraordinary opportunity to work together to set landscape-scale priorities, implement projects at the appropriate scale, co-manage risks, share and leverage resources, and learn from each other while building long-term capacity. This approach helps meet the most pressing short-term needs and builds upon opportunities for long-term desired outcomes. Shared Stewardship envisions a strategy that has four core elements:

1. Determining management priorities on a state level;
2. Doing the right work in the right places at the right scale;
3. Cooperating to improve efficiency and effectiveness; and
4. Sharing tools, resources, and information to guide management actions.

Forest Management Needs in Pennsylvania

Although specific forest management needs vary across Pennsylvania, the Parties have established priorities through their long-standing relationship. As stewards of all forest values, using an all-lands approach, the identified priorities are:

- **Forest Health:** Continually improve and restore forest health and resilience through monitoring; balancing forest age classes; treatment of invasive plants, pests, insects and diseases; and understanding the causes of and addressing tree mortality, loss of species diversity, and lack of regeneration.
- **Wildfire Prevention and Suppression:** Monitor forest landscapes for wildfire risks across ownerships, suppress wildfires, and proactively apply prescribed fire for habitat improvement and reduction of wildfire fuel loads.
- **Biodiversity Management, Improvement, and Protection:** Manage forests to improve plant and wildlife habitat for species of conservation need and species of special

concern. Provide greater opportunities to protect rare, threatened and endangered species, including rare and threatened plant communities, wetlands, and other key habitats.

- Design and implement climate-resilient forest restoration projects that will help communities adapt to the impacts of climate change
- Forest Products and Jobs: Support a diverse forest products industry, including biomass, lower-valued timber, consulting foresters, and carbon markets. Promote forest worker safety, training, and recruitment and retention of a skilled and diverse workforce.
- Watershed Protection: Promote water conservation by managing all forests in a way that ensures plentiful, clean water supplies, healthy aquatic communities, and adequate flood control.
- Sustainable Energy Development & Restoration: Coordinate oil, gas, rights-of-way and other energy development or restoration activities where appropriate, seek to restore or mitigate past effects of energy development, such as abandoned mine lands and orphaned and abandoned wells.
- Recreation: Manage common outdoor recreation opportunities in a manner that complements one another and does not compete with privately available recreation assets to enhance the sustainability of our collective outdoor recreation and tourism opportunities in Pennsylvania.
- Landscape-Scale Planning and Management: Bring collaborators and new sources of funding together to accomplish landscape-scale resource management projects, such as the Allegheny Forest Health Collaborative.
- Value of Forests and Trees: Seek partnership opportunities to help engage the people of Pennsylvania in understanding the societal benefits and importance of trees and forests through enhanced outreach and education efforts.
- Private Forestland Management: Continue to partner with consulting and industrial foresters and connect with forest landowners to provide sustainable forestry management practices and guidance.
- Research: Identify joint research needs and opportunities and seek opportunities to collaborate and coalesce funding around key research priorities.
- Support community-based tree planting initiatives in urban areas.

Statement of Mutual Benefit and Interest

To demonstrate our commitment to advancing Shared Stewardship in Pennsylvania, the USDA Forest Service and DCNR, through its Bureau of Forestry, will work collaboratively to do the following:

1. Collaborate on landscape-level plans to promote protection, connection, and restoration of contiguous forest landscapes that encompass a diverse mosaic of habitat types, including young forests and forests with old-growth characteristics.
2. Collaborate on cross-ownership partnerships to address forest health threats at a landscape-level (e.g., the Allegheny Forest Health Collaborative), incorporating integrated pest management, joint monitoring, and treatment efforts.
3. Share information, lessons-learned, and best practices regarding forest regeneration challenges, including that from deer pressure, changing stand regeneration dynamics, and emerging insects and diseases.

4. Cooperate in the research, implementation, and monitoring of best management practices for climate change adaptation and mitigation, such as climate-smart forestry practices.
5. Develop and promote approaches to sustaining and revitalizing local communities and industries that depend on forests, including using forest restoration to promote healthy and resilient forests and ecosystems in the face of climate change.
6. Support the forest products industry through a continuous supply of quality timber and assistance to the industry with market monitoring, workforce education and training, and recruitment and retention of a skilled and diverse workforce.
7. Work together and with others to build shared capacity for wildfire response and implementation of prescribed burns.
8. Seek partnership opportunities to expand and improve conservation education and interpretation efforts, focusing on reaching underserved populations and new audiences through new approaches, inclusive messaging, diversified materials, collaborative programs, and consistent messages.
9. Coordinate oil, gas, rights-of-way and other energy development or restoration activities where appropriate and beneficial.
10. Identify species and habitats of special concern using Natural Heritage information and the State Wildlife Action Plan, and work collaboratively to conserve these special habitats across ownerships.
11. Provide a sustainable range of recreational opportunities across our ownerships, informed by the Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan, the ANF Recreation Site Analysis, the ANF Land and Resource Management Plan, the State Forest Resource Management Plan, and Capitol Improvement Management Plans, while ensuring sustainable goals and equitable distribution and access to recreational opportunities exist across Pennsylvania.
12. Continue to identify and implement projects through the established Good Neighbor Authority program.
13. Integrate and prioritize investments where they will have the greatest impacts and seek opportunities to cooperatively fund and accomplish projects' adaptive management approaches of mutual interest and benefit.
14. Engage a broad range of stakeholders and partners (e.g., tribal governments, other federal and state agencies, non-governmental organizations, communities, industrial and private landowners, and educators and academia) in identifying land management priorities and desired outcomes using all available authorities and active management tools.
15. Work jointly with stakeholders, partners and other landowners to carry out cross-boundary projects, at a meaningful scale, to best benefit communities and landscapes.
16. Train and educate leaders at all levels so they can better support forest management issues.
17. Expand outreach and education on forest management.

The Parties celebrate the long-standing and successful relationship we have built. Through Shared Stewardship, the Parties will further advance our collaboration to the benefit of forests and the people of Pennsylvania. We hope to exemplify, through our actions, our interdependence by respecting the diversity and similarity of our missions, and work cooperatively to deliver products and services to Pennsylvania's landowners and communities.

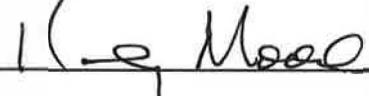
Authorizing Representatives:

Commonwealth of Pennsylvania

Date: 10/31/22 

Ellen M. Shultzabarger
State Forester
Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources,
Bureau of Forestry

United States Department of Agriculture

Date: 10/31/22 

Randy Moore
Chief, Forest Service
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