

POTOMAC-GARRETT STATE FOREST ANNUAL WORK PLAN

FISCAL YEAR 2020



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SFI-00050



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Potomac-Garrett State Forest
FY- 20
Annual Work Plan



**Potomac-Garrett State Forest
FY-20 Annual Work Plan**

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(Regeneration via patch clearcuts)
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I. State Forest Overview

The Potomac-Garrett State Forests situated in southwestern Garrett County in Western Maryland have the distinction of being the birthplace of forestry conservation in Maryland. The generous donation of 1,917 acres by the Garrett Brothers in 1906 not only serves as the foundation of the Garrett State Forest, but is the root of both Maryland's present Public Lands system and Forest Service. Mountain forests, streams and valleys make up the nearly 19,000 acres of this State Forest. The forest cover is predominantly a second growth mixed hardwood forest dominated by mixed oaks, sugar and red maples, black cherry, basswood, ash and birch. The geography of this area provides for a wide range of growing conditions from the harsh, wind and ice swept ridge tops of Backbone Mountain to the deep rich slopes above the North Branch of the Potomac River. Much of the State Forest lands contain excellent quality hardwoods.

II. Annual Work Plan Summary

In addition to the routine operations and management of the State Forest, the FY-20 Annual Work Plan for Potomac-Garrett State Forest details three Special Management Projects and 11 Land Management Projects that will be the focus of the State Forest management staff for FY-20. All projects and proposals within this Plan have been developed to meet one or more of the Land Management Guidelines and Objectives as seen in the Potomac-Garrett State Forest Sustainable Forest Management Plan including:

Forest Economy: management activities with a purpose to maintain an economically sustainable forest and contribute to the local economy through providing forest-related employment and products.

Forest Conservation: management activities with a purpose to protect significant or unique natural communities and elements of biological diversity, including Ecologically Significant Areas, High Conservation Value Forests and Old Growth Forests. Old Growth forest management serves to restore and/or enhance old growth forest structure and function.

Water Quality: management activities designed to protect or improve ecological functions in protecting or enhancing water quality.

Wildlife Habitat: management activities with a purpose to maintain and enhance the ecological needs of the diversity of wildlife species and habitat types.

Recreation and Cultural Heritage: management activities with a purpose to maintain and enhance areas that serve as visual, public camping, designated trails, and other high public use areas.

A. Special Management Projects Include:

1. **Continued Development of the Certified Potomac-Garrett State Forest Sustainable Forest Management Plan** - with special focus on addressing items identified as in need of improvement as a result of the FSC/SFI Certification Audits as well as updating of acreage figures, affected by new acquisitions, field data, ground truthing, etc.
2. **ESA Management Plan Development** – As of October of 2019, Natural Heritage staff provided descriptions and management plans for the 34+ ESA areas identified on the this forest to be included in the Potomac-Garrett State Forest Sustainable Forest Management Plan guidance document. These plans offer a look at the critical habitat elements that make up each of the designated Ecologically Sensitive Areas, and offer insights on management approaches that will assure continued protection of critical habitats, including some of the active management that has taken place to further assure protection of the RT&E species these areas are set up to protect.
3. **Forest Stand Delineation, Inventory and Monitoring** – Extension of the 5-year project to re-inventory and redefine stands on the entire forest. With the initial effort to collect forest wide data completed and being utilized in all land planning efforts, inventory work will continue in the form of follow-up monitoring protocols associated with the initial inventory and certification requirements.

B. Land Management Projects Include:

- Continuation of the Ecosystem Restoration Project involving control of invasive, exotic plants forest wide.

-1 Wildlife Habitat Project affecting approximately 2.0 acres of scrub-shrub / forested wetland to improve habitat elements associated with the wetland and surrounding early successional habitat.

- 9 Silvicultural Projects including:

5 - Stands to undergo rehabilitation and restoration of very poorly conditioned stands on the Backbone Mountain Complex in Compartments 6, 11 & 12. This work will involve combining 5 adjoining stands of poor condition, totaling 224 acres being regenerated using patch clearcuts. Approximately half the acreage (112 ac.) will be harvested under this work plan, and the balance to be cut in 10 years.

2- Non-commercial Silvicultural practices to be done as “weeding” practices to promote regeneration and seedling establishment by controlling interfering, undesirable tall woody vegetation on 95 acres.

2- Regeneration harvests, involving overstory removal using clearcut with variable retention accounting for 44 acres.

Forest harvest operations are undertaken to utilize mature and dead/dying/diseased trees; to thin overstocked stands; to improve and diversify wildlife habitat; to effectively correct public

safety concerns and issues; to reduce the forests vulnerability to insect attack, disease or wildfire hazard; to facilitate certain approved research needs; to improve certain aesthetic aspects of an area; and to improve the proportions of age class and species diversity within stands and management blocks. This forest has been intensively managed for over 100 years, utilizing both even and uneven-aged techniques via selective removals and regeneration harvests. Early records indicate that as cut over land was acquired, foresters ‘culled’ the forest, removing the poorly formed and damaged timber left behind in the wake of the cut and run practices employed by early timber speculators. By removing these undesirable trees, newly forming seedlings were released from competition and were thus cultured into the future growing stock of trees that we enjoy today. The benefits of this work have been significant including: improved wildlife habitat diversity, improved forest health and more abundant mast production, improved utilization of gypsy moth damaged trees, reduced forest fire hazard, and the considerable financial contribution to the State and local economies, as well as to those employed in the forest products industry.

Approximately 400,000 board feet of timber will be contracted for harvest in FY-20. The timber will put an estimated \$76,000.00 worth of raw wood products out into the local markets. Much of the silvicultural work laid out in this work plan is focused on initiating seedling development to better insure regeneration successes in future harvests. Much of the value of the harvests in the work plan will be directed back into the forest providing the essential investment in pre-harvest cultural work that will assure the long term sustainable management of these important forest resources.

The cultural operations and management projects outlined within the FY-20 Annual Work Plan are selected to provide significant contributions to sustainability of the forest resources found within the Potomac-Garrett State Forest and the ecosystems associated with it.

III. General Location Maps for FY-20 Land Management Proposals (Map Key)

Potomac State Forest Mapped Sites

Wildlife Proposals

1. **PG-2020-W-03** Comp. 12 Stand 4
(Regeneration via. patch clearcuts with wetland management to promote shrub expansion.)

Silvicultural Proposals (Potomac State Forest)

1. **PG-2020-S-01** Comp. 6 Stand 8 (Non-commercial TSI and patch cuts.)
2. **PG-2020-S-02** Comp. 11 Stand 16 (Regeneration via. patch clearcuts)
3. **PG-2020-S-03** Comp. 12 Stand 4 (Regeneration via. patch clearcuts)
4. **PG-2020-S-04** Comp. 12 Stand 7 (Regeneration via. patch clearcuts)
5. **PG-2020-S-05** Comp. 12 Stand 8 (Regeneration via. patch clearcuts)

Silvicultural Proposals (Garrett State Forest)

6. **PG-2020-S-06** Comp. 31 Stand 5 (Weeding / treatment of interfering vegetation)
7. **PG-2020-S-07** Comp. 31 Stand 6 (Weeding / treatment of interfering vegetation)
8. **PG-2020-S-08** Comp. 34 Stand 9 (*Proposal dropped due to discovery of globally rare species on site, area included as part of nearby ESA*)
9. **PG-2020-S-09** Comp. 41 Stand 5 & 7 (Regenerate via overstory removal)
10. **PG-2020-S-09** Comp. 42 Stand 12 & 13 (Regenerate via overstory removal)