SAVAGE RIVER STATE FOREST
ANNUAL WORK PLAN

FISCAL YEAR 2024

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Savage River State Forest
FY-24
Annual Work Plan

Savage River State Forest
FY-23 Annual Work Plan

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I. State Forest Overview

Savage River State Forest is approximately 55,273 acres in size and is situated in the northeastern quadrant of Garrett County in Western Maryland. It is a second growth mixed hardwood forest dominated by mixed oak species, sugar and red maple, black cherry, hickory and ash. Owing to high rainfall and certain topographic features, Savage River State Forest contains many excellent quality growing sites stocked with superior quality trees. The forest contains approximately 2,800 acres of conifer plantations that were established in the 1940's following state acquisition. Red pine is the dominant tree species within these plantations but other conifers include white pine, Norway spruce, larch, and Scotch pine. These plantations were established as nurse crops to rehabilitate abandoned and depleted farm fields, with the long-term goal of conversion back to native hardwoods as appropriate.

Savage River State Forest has been intensively managed over the past nine decades. Forest harvest and grooming operations are undertaken to thin overstocked stands, to effectively deal with public safety concerns, to harvest mature or diseased/dying trees, to improve habitat for certain wildlife species, to assist and provide for certain research needs, to address aesthetic concerns and to increase the proportion of age/height diversity of forested stands.

II. Annual Work Plan Summary

The FY-2024 Annual Work Plan for Savage River State Forest was formulated in 2023. It contains projects to be undertaken in the areas of Special Projects, Maintenance and Operations, Recreation, Watershed Protection, Ecosystem Restoration / Protection, and Wildlife Management. In addition to the routine operations and management of the State Forest, the FY-24 Annual Work Plan for Savage River State Forest details eight land management projects that will be the focus of the State Forest management staff for FY-24. All projects and proposals within this Plan have been developed to meet one or more of the Land Management Guidelines and Objectives outlined in the Savage River State Forest Sustainable Management Plan including:

Forest Economy*: management activities intended 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, State Forest Sustainable Forest Management Plan - with special focus on addressing items identified as in need of improvement as a result of the 2019 FSC/SFI Certification Audits.

2. Forest Stand Delineation, Inventory and Monitoring – Completion of the project to re-inventory and redefine stands on the entire forest. This critical project will continue in FY-24. To date, 100% of the data collection in harvestable stands is completed. Areas of HCVF including wildlands, ecologically significant areas, old growth, old growth ecosystem management areas and areas that preclude timber harvest operations will be inventoried secondarily to the harvestable areas. The project will allow a thorough analysis of this complete data set from which further management plans will be derived. Inventory work will continue in the form of follow-up monitoring protocols associated with the initial inventory and certification requirements.

3. Non-Native Invasive Species (NNIS) Inventory and Control Work - The Sustainable Forest Management Plan calls for various responses to NNIS and the Forest Inventory Project has allowed for a broad view of the problem forest wide.

. **B. Land Management Projects Include:**

1. Continuation of the ecosystem restoration project involving control of invasive and exotic plants forest wide.

2. Continuation of the ecosystem restoration efforts involving control of invasive, exotic forest pests, particularly the Hemlock wooly adelgid.

3. 5 Silvicultural projects including:
5 Intermediate Harvests on 294 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 since its inception, 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 is enjoyed 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 of management to the state and local economies as well as to those employed in the forest products industry.

The FY-24 Annual Work Plan outlines 5 harvests on 294 acres, producing a harvest of approximately 1,200,000 board feet of sawtimber and accounting for an estimated $400,000 worth of raw wood products entering local markets. Much of the silvicultural work laid out in

this work plan is focused on initiating seedling development to better ensure 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 safeguard the long term sustainable management of these important forest resources. The cultural operations and management projects outlined within the FY-24 Annual Work Plan are selected to provide significant contributions to the sustainability of forest resources found within the State Forest and the ecosystems associated with it.

III. General Location Map for FY-24 Land Management Project Proposals

Approximately 294 Acres

Map Key	
1. Compartment 13 Stands 6 & 11	*47-Acre Hardwood Thinning*
2. Compartment 15 Stands 19, 31 & 50	*49-Acre Hardwood Thinning*
3. Compartment 17 Stands 35,72,100,101,107,108	*40.5-Acre Hardwood Thinning*
4. Compartment 39 Stands 10-14	*60-Acre Hardwood Thinning*
5. Compartment 37 Stands 3, 4 & 7	*97.5-Acre Hardwood Thinning*

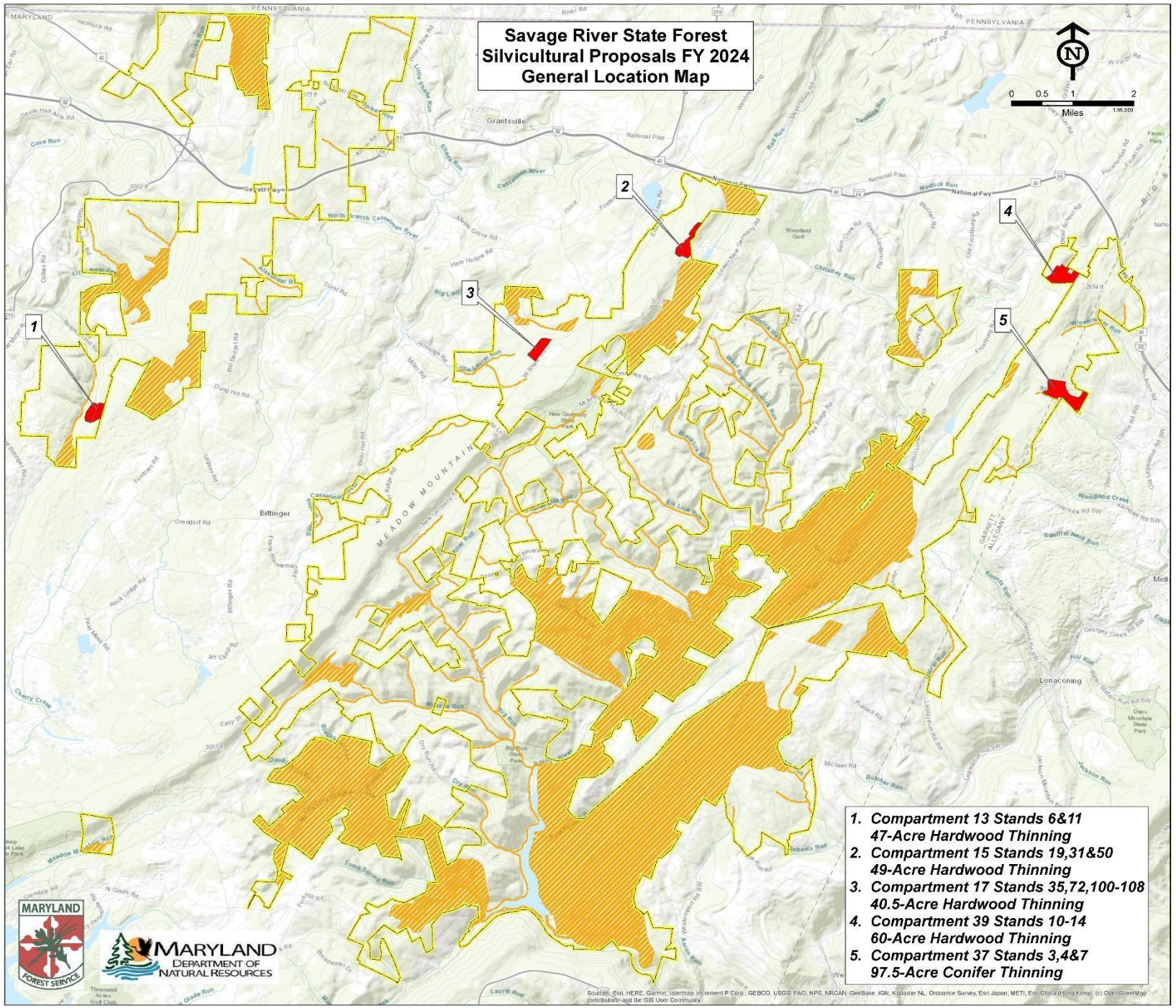


Figure 1. General location map of FY-24 silvicultural proposals

IV. Special Projects - Forest Resource Management and Planning

A. Continued Development of the Certified State Forest Sustainable Forest Management Plan.

Beginning in 2011, the Forest Service began revising the long term sustainable management plans for all three of the State Forests in the Western Region. The initial framework follows the sustainable management plan format established for the State of Maryland's Chesapeake Forest on the Eastern shore. The Department's goal is to have the updated sustainable forest management plans receive dual third party certification under both the Forest Stewardship Councils (FSC) and Sustainable Forestry Initiatives (SFI) standards and guidelines.

Throughout the course of the last seven years, broad resource assessments have been carried out identifying the various management units and features located on the forests including identification and mapping of High Conservation Value Forest Areas (HCVF), much of which was formerly identified as the State Forests "Special Management Zone". Within the HCVF are located a broad range of Ecologically Significant Areas (ESA). These areas typically contain rare, threatened or endangered species and their critical habitats. By spring of 2011 initial drafts of the Forest's Sustainable Management Plan were developed and shared with stakeholders for initial comment and review. The plans were submitted to both the FSC and SFI organizations in the spring of 2011, at which point audits have been completed on all three of the western state forests. Following the audits, draft plans and audit findings were presented to the State Forests Citizen Advisory Committees for review and comments. The Draft Sustainable Management Plans were made available for public comment fall of 2011. Revisions and updates to the Sustainable Management Plan were completed in April of 2019.

Each year the State Forests Management Program is audited for compliance to the standards set forth by the Certifying Organizations. Any shortcomings in the programs identified during the audits are identified in a Corrective Action Reports (CARs) and/or observations identified as being in need of improvement in order to be "certified" as sustainably managed forest lands under the internationally recognized FSC and SFI standards. These corrective actions vary from simple formal documentation of routine practices, to more complex policy and procedure development involving various stakeholders and partners. The program requires that all of these items be addressed before the next annual audit, with some needing more immediate attention. A minor corrective action request was issued by SFI in regard to leaking equipment on a harvest site and the apparent absence of safety equipment. A corrective action plan was formulated that would add the items to the BMP checklist and confirmation of compliance would be done during each site visit by Forest Service Staff or agents.

State Forest staff time and field operations are adjusted and redirected to assist in addressing any Corrective Action items in the course of the next year.

B. Forest Stand Delineation, Inventory and Monitoring

A critical part of developing long term sustainable management plans is the availability of up-to-date forest inventory data. Initial stand data collection has been completed on the harvestable areas of the forest using the SILVAH Inventory System developed by the US Forest Service which incorporates intense surveys of both the overstory and understory to assist in the formulation of appropriate silvicultural prescriptions in specific forest types. The demand for this important data set is increasingly evident as special projects evolving out of demands placed by

Forest Certification Standards utilize this data set for project planning including the Annual Work Plan and the Non-Native Invasive Species Inventory.

What had historically been carried out on a 10-year interval offering a snap shot in time view of the forest, has evolved into an annual sampling approach that gives a more frequent look at overall forest condition throughout the years. This approach will allow a much closer watch on developing forest conditions and allows for more rapid and timely responses. This approach is especially valuable in light of the numerous and frequent introductions of foreign insects, diseases, and invasive plants that can rapidly disrupt forest systems. The initial Stand Delineation and Inventory Project will be continued as a Forest Monitoring program as required under certification in order to allow for documented observations of changing conditions throughout the forest. Program focus will include: monitoring of developing regeneration sites allowing for the timely response to the investment in intensive silvicultural work such as herbicide control of invasive and interfering plants and prescribed fire; NNIS monitoring and control work; silvicultural results with respect to management objectives and outcomes and recreation/visitor impacts, etc.

V. Maintenance and Operations

Aside from the detailed cultural work planned for the State Forests, the following is a partial list of projects that are often on-going from year to year and are an integral part of State Forest operations: Routine maintenance projects include building repair and maintenance, vehicle maintenance, mowing at the office facility, snow removal, repair and replacement of fire rings and tables at the camp sites, brush hogging trails and repair of road surfaces.

A. Maintenance and Management of Roads and Trails

There are approximately 107 miles of trail and hardened road surface on the forest and approximately 1/3 of the mileage is maintained each year. Maintenance in these areas includes brush hogging, mowing, rehabilitation of road surfaces, removal of downed trees, trail corridor maintenance, and maintenance of trail drainage features. Herbicide usage has been integrated into the road maintenance regime in order to control growth in areas where mechanical control methods are not feasible (i.e. steep slopes, narrow paths, rocky areas). The use of herbicide along forest roadways can also reduce operational costs for the maintenance staff by controlling unwanted vegetation along these travel corridors for several years, when applied properly.

A trail maintenance specific grant (RT 23-16) has been awarded to the Maryland Forest Service through the Recreation Trail Program (RTP). These funds, administered by the Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) State Highways Administration (SHA), will be used to deploy a programmatic approach to non-motorized trail maintenance in the Western Region State Forests (Green Ridge, Savage River, Potomac Garrett).

The trail maintenance tasks will be accomplished by a 6-8 person AmeriCorps certified saw crew and/or a trail crew. We anticipate logging 1,280 - 1600 labor hours in each State Forest and a total of 4,480 labor hours within the Western Region over the term of this grant. No new trails will be constructed as part of this project. All of the work will be conducted on existing trails and on land owned and managed by the Maryland Department of Natural Resources.

B. Boundary Line Maintenance

Savage River State Forest currently has 336 miles of boundary line, including interior lines, exterior lines and road frontage. Boundary maintenance is critical to the management of all public lands. In order to keep up with this effort, State Forest staff maintain approximately 60 miles of line each year. In addition to routine marking and painting, considerable effort is spent on researching, relocating, or establishing missing and/or new line, as well as addressing boundary conflicts. As conflicts arise, every effort is made to resolve the issue in a timely and professional manner. Often, this work leads to the need for a licensed surveyor and legal recourse in order to resolve the issue. With the assistance of Land Planning and Acquisition staff, a minimum of five miles of previously unpainted and/or missing boundary line are to be reestablished until the entire forest boundary is demarcated.

C. Campground Operation and Maintenance

There are 81 primitive camp sites that are maintained on a regular schedule throughout the year. Major campsite maintenance coincides with major holidays, the end of winter and at the traditional end of the camping in late summer/early fall. The campsites are also frequented during the white-tailed deer firearms seasons in the fall and winter, during spring turkey season in early spring and during the opening weekend of trout season in late winter/early spring. Maintenance and operation of these primitive campsites includes: managing group site reservations; maintenance of information / bulletin boards; camper contacts to insure policies are understood; self-registration fee collections and deposits; weekly site inspection and cleaning; hazardous tree evaluation and removals; grass mowing (typically the week before the summer holidays and otherwise as needed); maintenance and replacement of picnic tables, lantern posts, and fire rings; and site impact monitoring.

D. Rifle Range Maintenance and Management

There is a 100-yard shooting range on the forest that is open to the public year round located at 3250 New Germany Road. Maintenance is ongoing and includes replacing backstops as well as the backstop stands, trash clean-up, mowing and weed eating around the facility, plowing the entrance road, restocking range permits, collecting range fees and posting range closures when necessary. Prior to and during the various hunting seasons, range use increases appreciably resulting in more frequent maintenance visits. Typically, at the conclusion of spring turkey season, the backstops and stands from the previous year are replaced, depending on the severity of damage.

The shooting range is open daily from 8 a.m. to dusk and offers hunters an ideal location to sight in weapons. The range features ten stations with distances ranging from 25 to 100 yards. Hunters can pay the $5.00 daily fee at the range using envelopes provided. The annual pass costing $25 and the family pass costing $50 are available at the Forest Headquarters Office. Rules and regulations are posted at the range, with the only restrictions being no fully automatic weapons and no clay pigeons.

VI. Recreation

H. **Recreation Opportunities** (See Figure 2 p. 12)

1. Hiking, Biking and Horseback Riding Trails

Savage River State Forest has over 70 miles of trails open to hikers, mountain bikers and horseback riders of any ability. Not all trails are open to all recreational pursuits and it is recommended that before engaging in any activities visit or contact the state forest headquarters to become aware of any trail restrictions. A backpacking permit must be obtained at the forest headquarters or at any of the self-registration areas. Trail guides featuring a topographic map and trail descriptions can be purchased at the forest headquarters.

2. Off Road Vehicles

Snowmobile and off-road vehicle operators can enjoy many miles of scenic trail along the Meadow Mountain Trail, East Shale Road, Margraff Plantation, Negro Mountain Trail and the newly constructed St. John's Rock ORV Trail. Unlike the aforementioned trails, the St. John's Rock ORV Trail is the first trail on Department lands ever designed specifically for ORV enthusiasts. Features include a multi-site primitive campground designed to support ORV riders, children's riding trails within the campground, technical spur loops and hare scramble style trail sections for all terrain vehicles and motorcycles, a full-size rock crawl area for jeeps and four-wheel drive vehicles and miles of forest access roads for all purpose riding opportunities. The total trail system is approximately 13 miles in length with varying challenges for riders of all skill levels. The trail officially opened to the public on July 23, 2017.

Be sure to display a current Department of Natural Resources ORV permit, available at the forest headquarters or online at www.dnr.maryland.gov.

3. Hunting

Hunting is permitted throughout the forest except where posted with safety zone signs. The 55,000 acres of Savage River State Forest includes two state park areas (New Germany and Big Run) where hunting is prohibited. The forest boundaries are marked with yellow paint on trees - a yellow bar as you enter the forest and a yellow dot as you exit the forest. Hunting on or crossing private land within or near the State Forest requires the written permission of the land owner. Parking is permitted along roadways as long as traffic is not blocked. Hunters must have a valid Maryland Hunting License and should refer to the current Hunting & Trapping guide for season dates and specific regulations.

Several access roads are opened every fall to accommodate hunters. These gated roads are opened prior to squirrel season in September and remain open through January 31. A copy of the road-opening schedule is available in the Forest Headquarters Office. Opened roads can be used by all hunters and allow for vehicular traffic. Due to the nature of these roads, the use of four-wheel drive is recommended. Handicapped hunter access roads are also available. More details about handicapped accessibility appear in this brochure and on the current road-opening schedule.

*Hunter Safety Classes, required for the purchase of a license, are taught periodically through the Department of Natural Resources. These classes are usually offered in the county at one of the local State Parks.

4. Trapping

Trapping is permitted both on land and in the water. A permit can be issued for trapping on Savage River State Forest at the Regional DNR Wildlife Office in Flintstone. Trappers are required to obtain a certificate of trapper education from the Department of Natural Resources. Trapper education courses are held statewide. Refer to the current Hunting & Trapping Guide for complete regulations. A valid hunting license is required when applying for a trapping permit.

5. Fishing

Anglers with a Freshwater Fishing License have the opportunity to catch multiple species of fish in the Savage River Reservoir including walleye, large-mouth bass, smallmouth bass, yellow perch, bluegill and several trout species. Anglers with a trout stamp can fish the Savage River for wild brook trout and stocked brown and rainbow trout. Tributaries of the Savage River, including Middle Fork, Poplar Lick and Blue Lick to name a few, provide a unique backcountry fishing experience for native brook trout that is unsurpassed in the region. The majority of the Savage River watershed is within the Zero Creel Limit Area for brook trout and can only be fished with artificial flies and lures. For regulations, creel limits and special management areas consult the Maryland Freshwater Sportfishing Guide or contact the Western Maryland Fisheries Office at (301) 334-8218.

6. Boating/Paddling

The Savage River Reservoir provides excellent boating and paddling opportunities. Three public boat launches offer convenient access at Dry Run Road, Big Run State Park and ¼ mile north of the dam breast on Savage River Road. Gasoline engines are prohibited on the reservoir. Recreational whitewater releases occur periodically throughout the year on Savage River below the dam that are sponsored and coordinated by the Upper Potomac River Commission, Savage River State Forest, Garrett College Adventuresports Institute and several commercial boating outfitters. The events are at no cost to the participants, but donations are accepted to cover the cost of shuttle services and on site restroom facilities.

7. Winter Recreation

Cross-country skiers and snowshoers of all abilities can enjoy a winter wonderland on the New Germany, Margraff Plantation, and Mount Aetna trails. The Asa Durst Trails are recommended for a backcountry snowshoe experience. Snowshoers must be careful to walk beside and not on cross-country tracks as it disrupts them.

8. Geocaching

Currently, 28 goecaches are located throughout Savage River State Forest for those interested in testing their navigational and tracking skills. All geocaches must reviewed and approved by the staff before being placed anywhere on the forest. Applications and general rules for geocache placement are available at the state forest headquarters.

9. Maps

Brochures and maps are available at the Savage River State Forest Headquarters Office located at 127 Headquarters Lane, Grantsville, Maryland 21536.

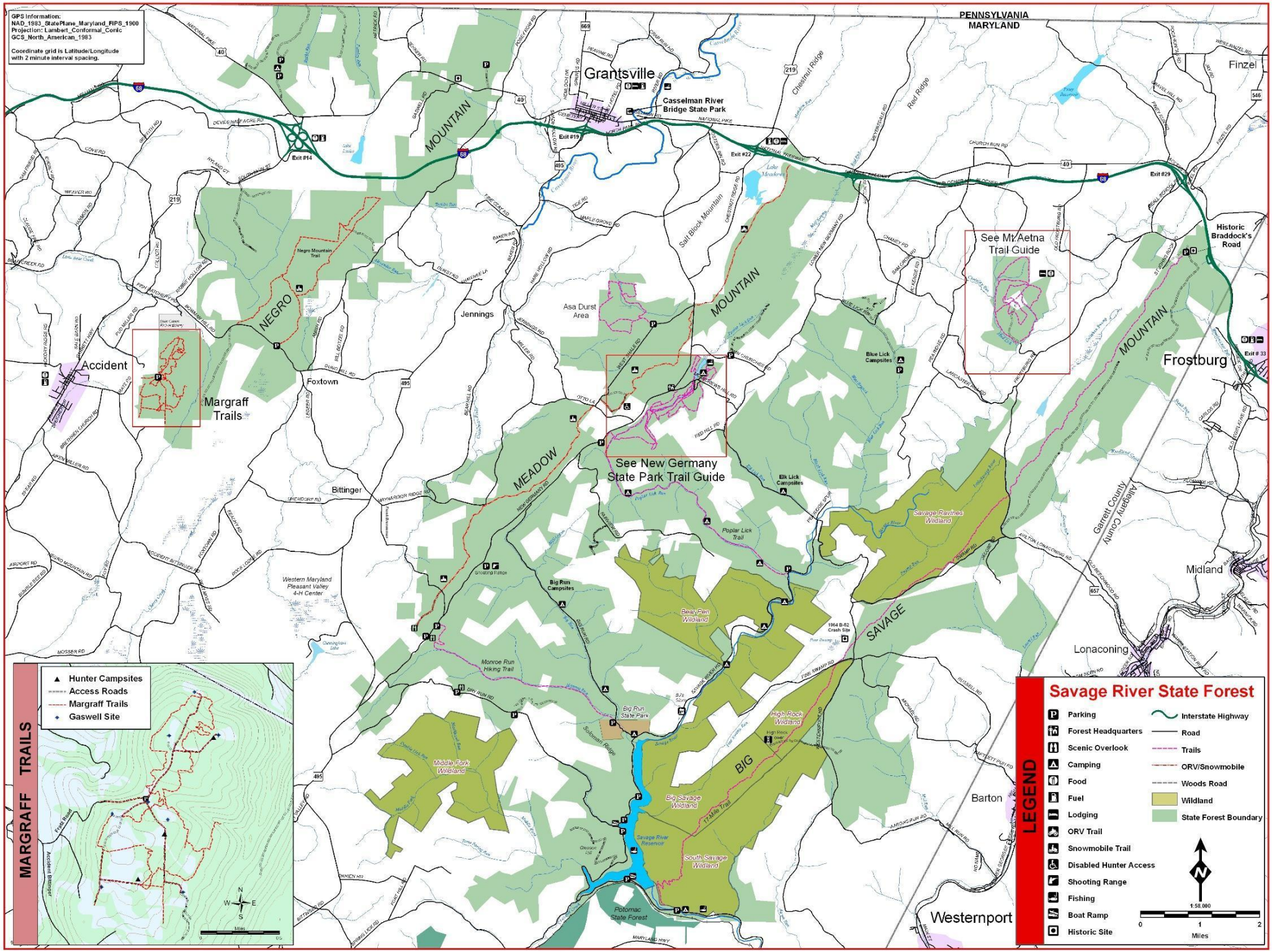


Figure 2. Recreational Opportunities on Savage River State Forest

I. Recreation Proposals

1. St. John's Rock Trail Expansion

Project Description: The Saint John's Rock (SJR) ORV Trail network is located near Finzel, MD, within the boundaries of Savage River State Forest (SRSF). The overall goal of the project is to enhance the quality and expand the variability of motorized recreational opportunities on public land and to provide desired trail user experiences on the trail so they will not look for those experiences off designated trail areas. To satisfy the stated goals, this project concept proposal includes three components: 1) Explore options to modify existing timber harvest infrastructure to expand motorized recreational opportunities within the SJR ORV Trail network, 2) Evaluate the current quality and delivered user experience of the existing SJR ORV Trails to identify opportunities for improvement using professional trail builders and utilizing the latest trail building techniques, 3) Develop 5 to 6 miles of natural surface singletrack for motorcycles and electric bicycles, which will enhance and diversify the current recreational opportunities that exist within the SJR ORV Trail network.

Project review is requested to generate comment letters suitable for demonstration of compliance with NEPA. For areas where trail development polygons are presented, project reviewers will have an opportunity to field review the proposed trail alignment before final.

This proposed project would be funded through the Maryland ORV Excise Tax fund.

Purpose: The purpose of this proposed project is to increase available recreation time or "seat time" available to the motorized trail user group. The SJR ORV Trail network currently offers a total of 12.5 miles of motorized trail that includes a campground, a full-size vehicle rock crawl area, and a kids loop. All the existing trails are bi-directional, which extends the mileage available as users can back track on trails in the opposite direction. The width of the existing trails is the limiting factor that determines what types of OHV equipment can access certain sections of trail. Motorcycles and 4-wheelers have access to all available miles of trail, side by sides have access to approximately 11 miles of trail, and full-size off-road vehicles can access approximately 7 miles of trail.

The following sections will expand on each component of the proposed project.

Component 2: Evaluate the current quality and delivered user experience of the existing SJR ORV Trails to identify opportunities for improvement using professional trail builders and utilizing the latest trail building techniques.

The most recent trail addition to the SJR ORV Trail network was built (2022) by professional trail builders from the International Mountain Bike Association. This .65-mile trail connects the SJR Campground to the White Oak Loop trails. The trail was built with a small excavator utilizing a machine operator and a one-person hand crew. The result is a natural surface trail that aligns with the landscape and includes built in water management features (grade reversals), provides a quality and safe user experience, has natural flow, and is environmentally sustainable.

It appears that the existing SJR loops and scrambles were built with a skid steer utilizing a blade. The results can be best described as roughed in trail corridors that are below grade with a lot of exposed loose rock (see photos attached). Although the trails do provide a challenging "technical" experience, that experience is consistent throughout all of the originally built trails without differentiation across trail difficulty ratings.

We propose that the White Oak Loop, the Red Oak Loop, and all of the Scrambles be evaluated for potential enhancements utilizing the proper equipment under the management of professional trail builders. The total mileage associated with this project component is approximately 4.5 miles. The end goal would be to provide users with an appropriate trail experience based on advertised trail difficulty, create flow and motion by reworking existing trail features, and improve the sustainability of the existing trails through the installation of water management elements. This proposed work under this component would be focused within the existing trail corridor. No new trail is proposed.

Please see the attachments below, under the label **Component #2** for maps and photos.

Component 3: Develop 5 to 6 miles of natural surface singletrack for motorcycles and electric bicycles, which will enhance and diversify the current recreational opportunities that exist within the SJR motorized trail network.

We have identified two polygons as areas for potential singletrack trail development for motorcycles and electric bikes within the SJR ORV Trail network. By adding true singletrack we are further diversifying the types of trails available while expanding potential user experiences.

One of the proposed polygon areas is located adjacent to the existing Red Oak Loop with a large portion of the polygon overlapping with a past timber harvest (Compartment 38, Stand 13). The timber harvest proposal was included in the FY-18 SRSF AWP with no comments from the ID-Team. The timber has since been harvested.

The second proposed polygon is located adjacent to the existing Scramble trails. This polygon would support trails that could be aligned along contour and designed to connect each existing section of Scramble trails. Although the existing Scramble trails were slated to be designed as singletrack, they are wider and support the use of both 4- wheelers and motorcycles.

The proposed trails to be designed in these polygons would be true singletrack with a width of 24 to 36 inches, the trail layout would employ a "rolling contour concept", to passively manage drainage and erosion, to limit environmental impacts, and reduce maintenance intervals. The design will include characteristics such as: "the half rule" to manage drainage, maximum trail grades supported by local soils, and incorporation of frequent grade reversals. Trails will be constructed by contracted trail construction professionals using mechanized equipment.

Please see the attachments below, under the label **Component #3** for maps.

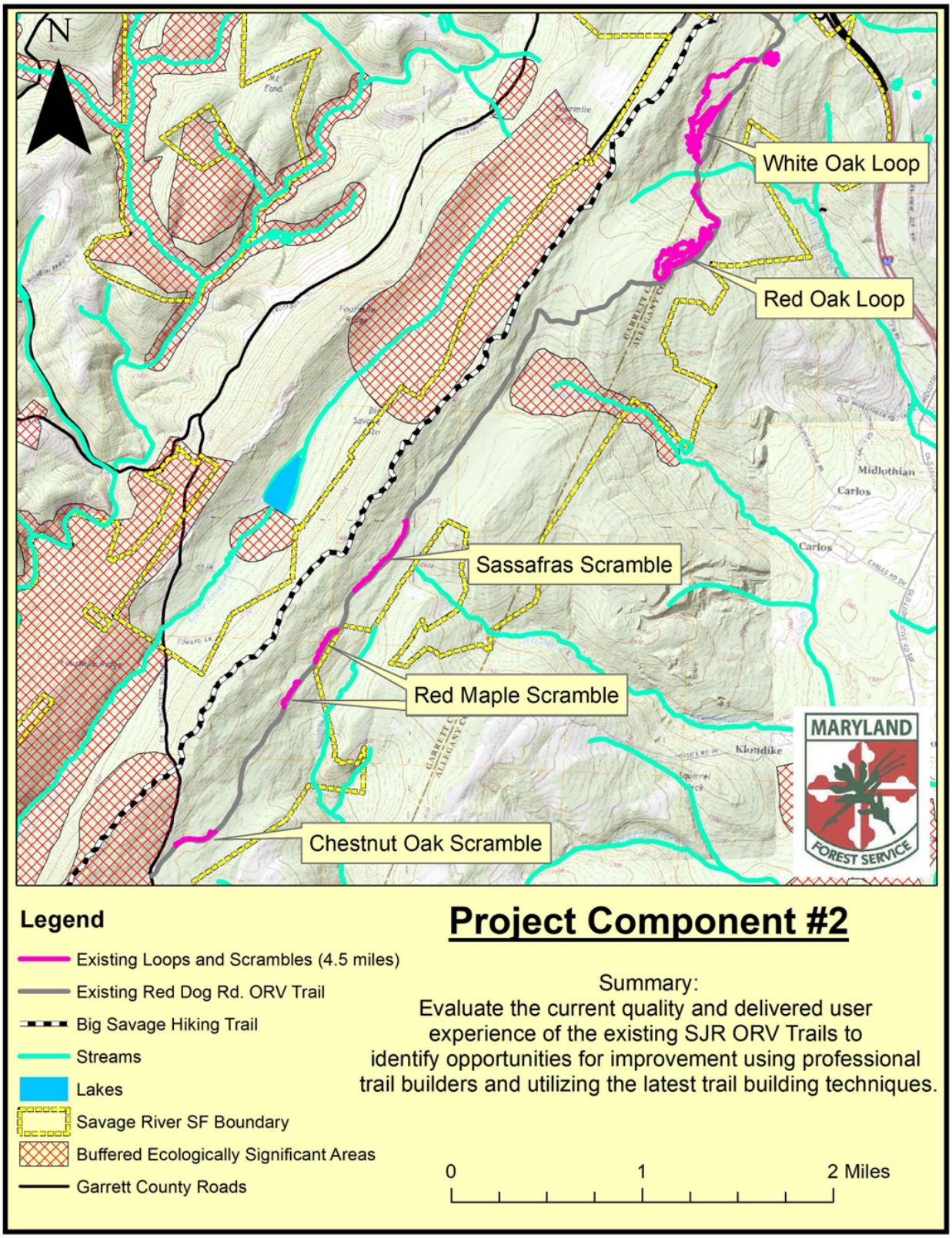
General Site Conditions: All of the proposed project components can be accessed via existing timber harvest infrastructure or by existing SJR ORV Trail network features. Trail user dispersal was considered when selecting the proposed trail development areas. To avoid sensitive ecosystem impacts, the Ecologically Significant Area GIS layer that includes the secondary

boundaries (added buffer) was used to identify proposed trail development areas. The intent of this project is to avoid impacting water resources, habitats and species of management concern, as well as rare threatened and endangered species. As with any project, an opportunity to engage in a field review will be accommodated.

Attachments: (project location map is required)

See below for maps and photos. GIS files are available upon request.

Component #2 Maps and Photos:



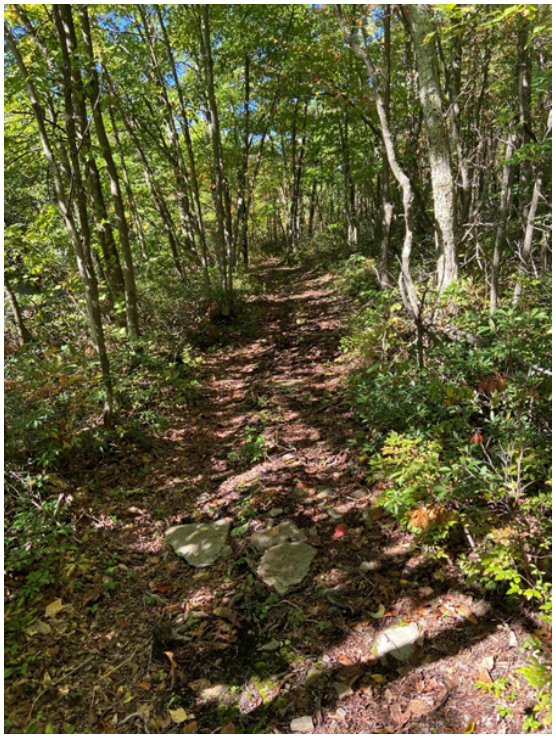


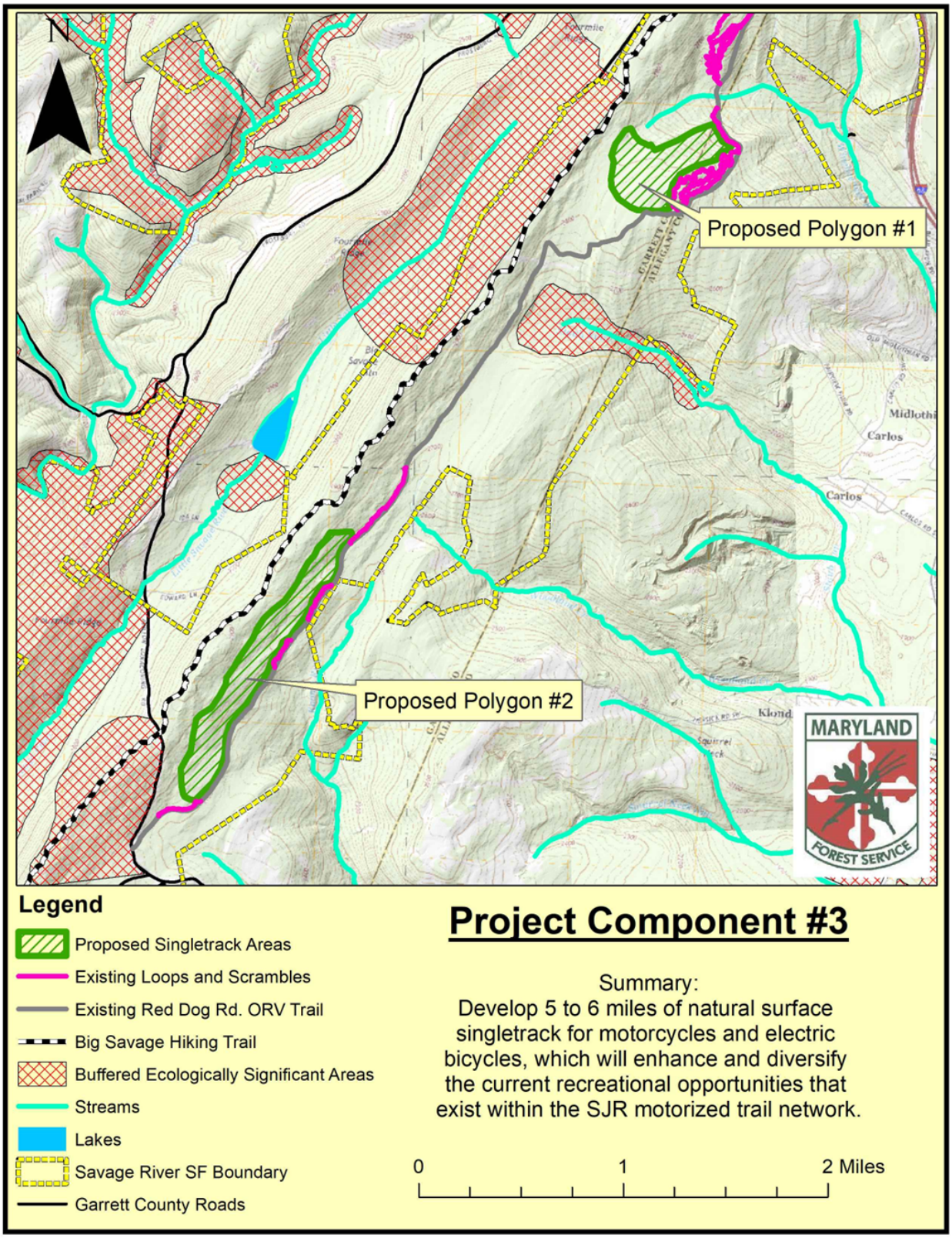
Photo: original SJR trail example

Photo: original SJR trail example

Photo: new SJR trail example

Photo: new SJR trail example

Component #3 Map:



2. Margraff Plantation Trail Expansion

Project Description: The intent of this project is to revitalize approximately 5.5 miles of existing trail and develop another 5 miles of new natural surface shared use singletrack trail in the Margraff Plantation area within Savage River State Forest. Trail wayfinding and trailhead signage improvements will also be an element of this project. Trailhead infrastructure, including parking expansion, will be evaluated for future upgrades as a separate project. Project review is requested to generate comment letters suitable for demonstration of compliance with NEPA.

This project is being funded through Program Open Space FY-23 ($400,000).

The existing trails will be evaluated for drainage improvement, short reroutes to address fall line segments, and possible trail realignment to improve user experience, sustainability, and to reduce required maintenance intervals. Existing trail and vegetation corridor width specifications will be determined based on site specific characteristics and established goals.

The proposed new trails will be built to current trail sustainability standards with a tread width specification of approximately 24-48 inches. The desired Recreation Setting Characteristics will be natural backcountry with some enhanced middle country features to broaden the user experience and trail difficulty. The trail layout will employ a “rolling contour concept” to passively manage drainage and erosion, to limit the environmental impact, and reduce required maintenance intervals. This follows recommendations offered by natural surface trail references from the US Forest Service, Student Conservation Association, and International Mountain Bicycling Association and includes characteristics such as: “the half rule" to manage drainage, maximum trail grades supported by local soils, and incorporation of frequent grade reversals.

Trails will be constructed by contracted trail construction professionals using mechanized equipment. Construction will be Permitted under the General Permit for construction of natural surface recreation trails provided to DNR by MDE in 2019 and renewed in 2022 for three additional years.

Purpose: The purpose of this project is to further develop and enhance the trail user experience on public land in Savage River State Forest. The Margraff Plantation trail network is conveniently located near the small town of Accident, MD, and easily accessed from State Route 219. The property offers residents and area visitors an alternative to the busier State Parks near the Deep Creek Lake resort area. The existing trails were established approximately 20 years ago and have seen a fluctuation in use over time due to issues associated with lack of maintenance and better alternatives. There have also been several timber harvests that have altered the experience quality and associated use of the trail network. Recently, through an MOU with the SRSF Manager, Garrett Trails (a local non-profit trail organization) and a local Boy Scout Troop have maintained the trails, which has reinvigorated interest in this area as a recreation destination. Furthermore, the COVID-19 Pandemic has resulted in an exponential increase in outdoor recreation resulting in the need for additional trail resources. The outdoor economy has experienced a growth period with trail users helping to stimulate local economies through purchases during travel. This trail revitalization and development project could help stimulate the local economy and result in positive economic impacts to the small town of Accident and the surrounding area.

These types of recreation infrastructure investments have resulted in measurable economic benefits such as: generating revenue, lowering healthcare costs, increasing tourism, enhancing property values, and attracting new businesses.

Developing additional trail-based recreation resources in Maryland's State Forest have been recommended and supported by commissions and management plans. Examples include: The Glendenning Commission, The Maryland Outdoor Recreation Economic Commission, and Maryland's Land Preservation and Recreation Plan.

General Site Conditions: The property is a managed forest and hosts several natural gas storage wells. Besides trail-based recreation opportunities, the property also provides opportunities for hunters, wildlife viewers, and campers. There is a small trailhead parking area near the entrance of the property as well as a network of gravel roads that service the gas storage wells.

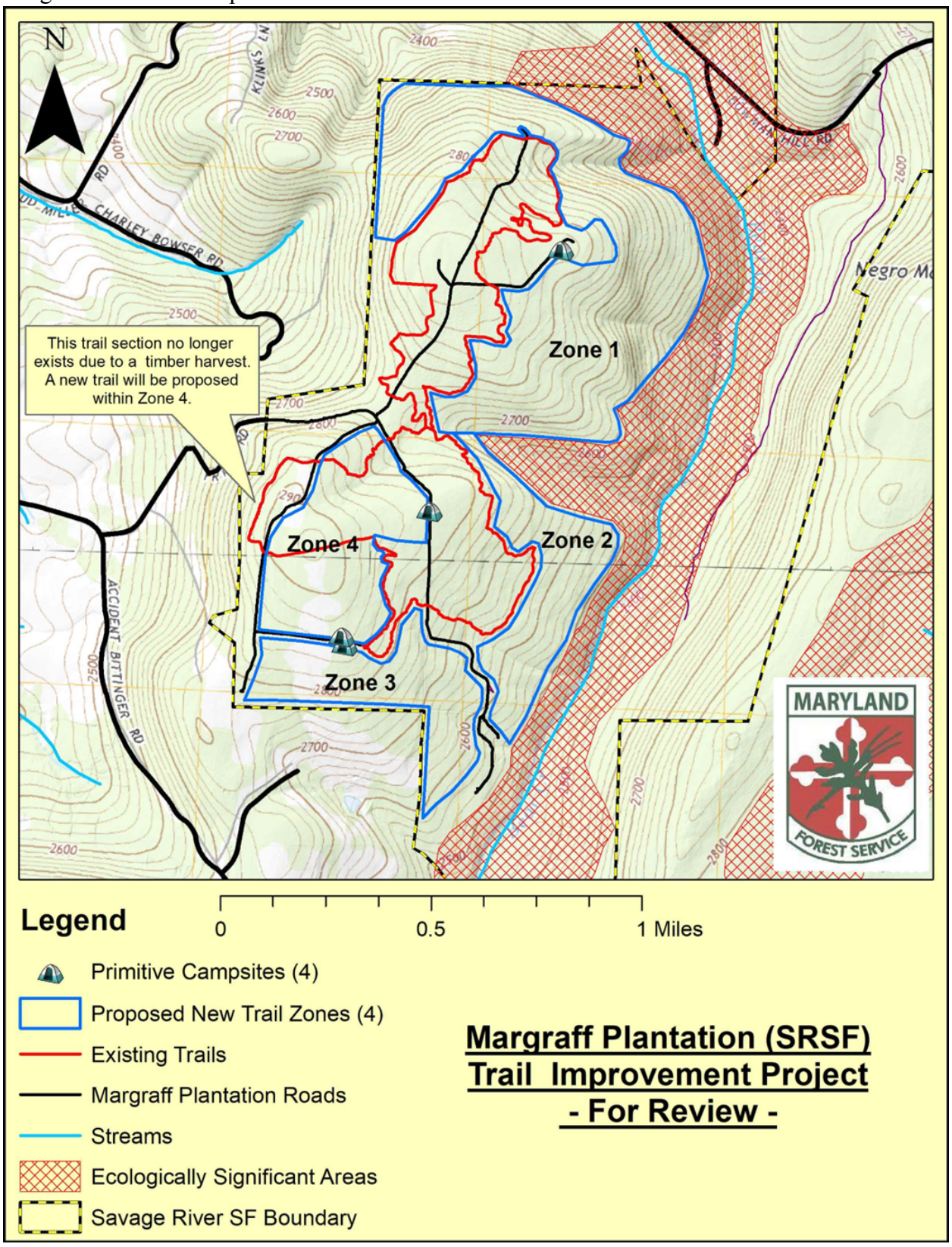
An examination of the public resources data shows a large Ecologically Significant Area surrounding Bear Creek. Any proposed new trail or modifications to existing trail will remain outside of these delineated areas. For this project review, a set of polygons (4) have been drawn to highlight areas that we believe could support new trails. Once these proposed "zones" have been reviewed through the ID Team review process, adjustments will be made to these zones based on the review comments. Then a proposed trail alignment will be generated within the approved zones for further discussion in the field.

A map has been inserted below to support the review process. A polygon (zones) shapefile will also be provided.

Attachments:

Project map includes proposed zones for review and potential trail development.

Margraff Plantation Map



3. Meadow Mountain Trail Improvements / Funding

Project Description:

The intent of this project proposal is to complete the following:

- Complete critical drainage maintenance at multiple points along the length of the Meadow Mountain Trail (MMT), between Chestnut Ridge Road and the Maryland Forest Service property line shared with the University of Maryland approximately one mile north of the Route 495 trail head.
- Resurface the MMT with packed limestone between the Frank Brenneman Road overlook section and the Maryland Forest Service property line shared with the University of Maryland approximately one mile north of the Route 495 trail head (currently no aggregate caps this section).
- Resurface specific lengths of the MMT with packed limestone.
- Expand existing trail head parking areas and develop new ones to enhance handicap accessibility and accommodate an increase in trail use.
- Build permanent pads at trailheads for portable bathroom rentals.
- Design and install co-branded signage at trailheads, along the trail, and points along New Germany Road and Route 495.
- Build hiker and cyclist friendly pass throughs at all of state forest gates along the trail.
- Build a wheelchair accessible ramp at the Frank Brenneman Road overlook platform.
- Design and install interpretive panels along the trail showcasing cultural and environmental elements about the area that the trail travels through.

The existing trail tread will be evaluated for potential drainage improvements and vegetation growth that would impact new aggregate installation. New aggregate installation would take place within the existing trail tread borders. Expansion of existing trail head parking and development of new parking would increase capacity for day use and could take advantage of former logging landing pads in several locations. Pads for portable bathrooms would be designed to accommodate all users. Signs with location identifiers would be installed along the entire length of the trail identifying it as a partnership between the Maryland Department of Natural Resources (MD DNR), Garrett County Board of Commissioners and Garrett Trails Non-Profit, while also recognizing the trail as part of the Potomac National Heritage Trail and the Eastern Continental Divide Loop (ECDL). Signage would also be installed along county and state roads to the east and west of the MMT, directing users to various trail heads. Pass throughs at state forest gates would be designed to prevent unauthorize access of motorized vehicles, while allowing the unimpeded travel of hikers and cyclists of all abilities. A wheelchair ramp at the Frank Brenneman Road overlook would allow users of all abilities to access the platform. Interpretive panels would maintain branding and design elements found in earlier installations during Phase 3 of the MMT trail construction and reflect the environmental and cultural heritage of our area.

The proposed improvements would be made in accordance with current US Forest Service trail sustainability standards and DNR, MDE and County erosion and sediment control standards that would reduce environmental impacts and maintenance intervals. Trail improvements would be made by contracted trail construction professionals using mechanized equipment, contracted by the County, and

supervised by the County, DNR and Garrett Trails. Work would be performed in accordance with all DNR, MDE, and County grading regulations.

Purpose:

The purpose of this project is to develop and enhance trail user experiences on the Meadow Mountain Trail (MMT), as described on page 13 of the SRSF FY 2022 AWP. The MD DNR owned section of the MMT extends from 39.68577 N and 79.09406 W along the eastern continental divide for approximately 12.5 miles to 39.57210 N and 79.21281 W. At that point the trail continues across University of Maryland property for approximately 1 mile to Route 495, 39.56335 N and 79.22236 W. It functions as a timber haul road for ongoing silviculture activities identified in the annual Savage River State Forest work plan and is unique to Garrett County as it also hosts multiple user groups including hikers, bikers, handicap hunters and snowmobilers.

The trail is part of the Eastern Continental Divide Loop (ECDL), a 150-mile trail connecting Garrett County to the Great Allegheny Passage (GAP), funded in part by grants and other funding secured by Garrett Trails and the Garrett County Board of Commissioners. There have been three previous phases of construction that have greatly enhanced the user experience. Funding totaling $975,000 has been secured through a 2022 federal omnibus appropriations bill. Depending on the required use parameters of the funds, we recommend that a portion be set aside for ongoing maintenance related to the MMT. The MMT passes near and is connected by spur trails to New Germany and Big Run State Parks. It also connects the town of Grantsville to the state parks and Bittinger.

Currently most sections of the trail are surfaced with crush and run limestone gravel. The proposed final surfacing, using compacted crusher fines, will greatly increase the accessibility of the trail for all types of bike tires, hiker footwear and adaptive trail equipment. The trail signage in place could be improved by communicating allowed and restricted use, adding distance markers along the trail, and identifying trail development partners. Parking area improvements would increase trailhead capacity, reduce erosion, and increase accessibility for adaptive trail users. At specific trailheads, porta john bathrooms that are handicap accessible would enhance the user experience and reduce impacts in those areas. Forest service gates along the trail do not currently allow for unimpeded pedestrian travel around them. The proposed changes at gate locations would include excavation and resurfacing work next to the gates to allow that travel while still prohibiting motorized access. The overlook platform at 39.569 N and 79.208 W does not accommodate wheelchair users, and adding a ramp, lowering the handrail, and removing vegetation in front of the platform would serve a traditionally underserved community. Interpretive panels would inform the trail user about the unique mountain heritage of the area, fostering a deeper appreciation for the forest resources that sustain our communities.

General Site Conditions:

The MMT is in a managed state forest that offers opportunities for hunting, fishing, camping, wildlife viewing and commercial timber harvests. Several state parks, rivers, streams, and the Savage River

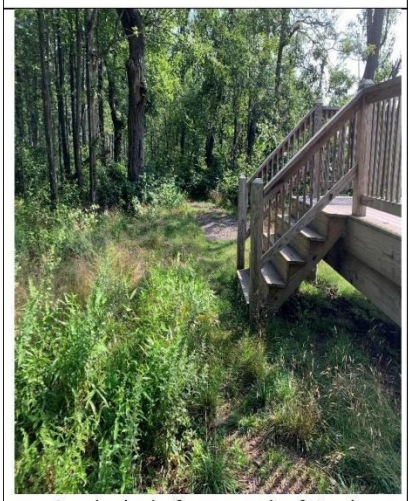
Reservoir are nearby and utilized extensively for outdoor recreation. The trail also connects to the University of Maryland 4-H Environmental Education & Camping Center property in Bittinger, MD.

Attachments: Example site photos, MMT Site Map

Example drainage remediation site

Example of a potential parking area development site, Frank Brenneman Road

Spur trail to Route 495 from the overlook trail



Overlook platform, south of Frank Brenneman Road

Example of current trail signage

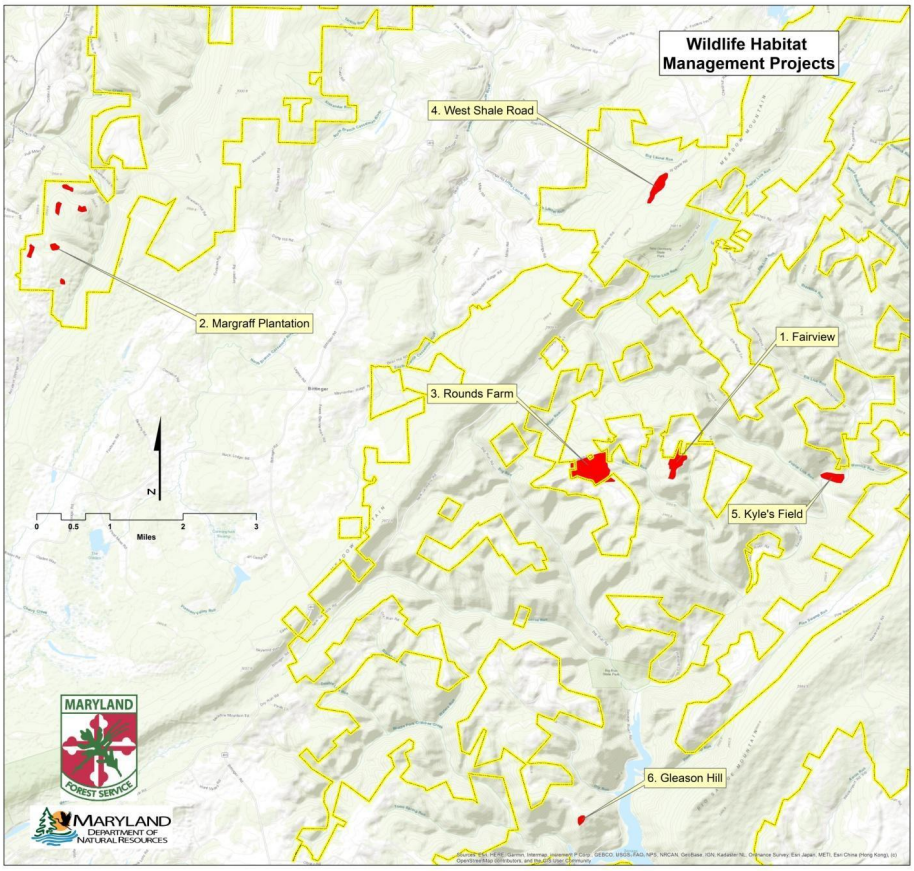
Example of current interpretive signs

VII. Wildlife Habitat Management Projects

A. General Wildlife Habitat Maintenance

Approximately 38.5 acres of wildlife specific projects have been implemented throughout the state forest. These projects are located in the Margraff tract of Compartment 14 east of Accident, MD, the Nature Conservancy acquisition of Fairview Road, the "Rounds Farm" located off Pea Patch Road, West Shale Road, "Kyle's Field" off Savage River Road and Gleason Hill. General practices include liming and fertilizing as well as planting of cover and grain crops, where appropriate. Plantings include millet, peas, corn, turnips (*Brassica spp*.), warm season grasses, native wildflowers and clover (See Wildlife Habitat Management Projects map and summary, p. 14).

As part of the Mentored Hunt Program, a stocked pheasant hunt will take place on the Horse Farm property, West Shale Wildlife Area and Margraff Plantation in late November. This is a do-it-yourself hunting opportunity for junior license holders, apprentice license holders and lapsed hunters. A random lottery drawing will take place and all successful applicants will receive a packet of information with maps and other helpful information. More information is also available on the Maryland DNR Wildlife and Heritage Service web page: http://dnr.maryland.gov/wildlife/Pages/ hunt_trap/Mentored-Hunt-Program.aspx.



VIII. Ecosystem Restoration / Protection Projects

A. Non-Native Invasive Species (NNIS) Control

Across the State, a biological invasion of non-native and invasive plants is spreading into fields, forests, wetlands and waterways. Referred to in a variety of ways including exotic, non-native, alien or non-indigenous, invasive plants impact native plant and animal communities by displacing native vegetation and disrupting habitats as they become established and spread over time. Early Detection and Rapid Response (EDRR) to control the spread of problematic species is important for the conservation of native flora and fauna. Control efforts often require considerable resources including labor, time and money.

As in many cases, the introduction of these widespread and invasive plants cannot be prevented. It is important to evaluate and plan control efforts in order that such efforts contribute meaningfully to the success of forest conservation plans. EDRR efforts targeting NNIS discovered during the forest wide inventory have been successful in identifying and controlling a number of NNIS populations. Species-specific management plans have been developed for two notable species including Japanese knotweed and Yellow Archangel (See Appendix 2 and 3).

The State Forest staff has treated and/or is monitoring several plant colonies or sites including: five tree-of-heaven sites, ten Japanese knotweed sites, two mile-a-minute weed sites and one yellow archangel site (See corresponding map for locations).

1. Japanese knotweed (*Fallopia japonica*). Several areas of Savage River State Forest have become infested with the invasive plant Japanese knotweed (*Fallopia japonica*). Seven treatment areas have been delineated and six of them will be treated and monitored to determine the most effective course of action for suppressing and ultimately eradicating the plant from these areas of the forest. Knotweed growth below the Savage River Reservoir has reached a critical level and will not be treated at this time due to the overwhelming investment that would be required to reach any reasonable level of control. As more effective treatment methods become available for large areas, this area will be reevaluated in regard to implementing a control plan.

The initial treatments occurred in the first week of June, 2011. Treatments in all areas of the forest involve a two-step process that includes both mechanical and chemical means of control. First, the knotweed is cut and allowed to grow back for 8 weeks, reaching only 2 to 4 feet in height. Second, the new growth is treated with a 2% solution of glyphosate as the active ingredient. Treatment of these areas has been repeated on a yearly basis and will continue until the plant has been eradicated from the target areas.

2. Yellow archangel (*Lamiastrum galeobdolon).* Dry Run, a tributary of the Savage River and Savage River Reservoir has been infested with the aggressively growing, non-native invasive perennial, yellow archangel (*Lamiastrum galeobdolon).* The infestation of the area most likely originated from a private residence which was abandoned and the once maintained yard area was neglected, allowing the plant to escape to the adjacent property. After establishing a colony at the head of the watershed, the plant quickly enveloped the drainage from the private residence to the high water mark of the Savage River Reservoir, encompassing nearly 15 acres of forest land.

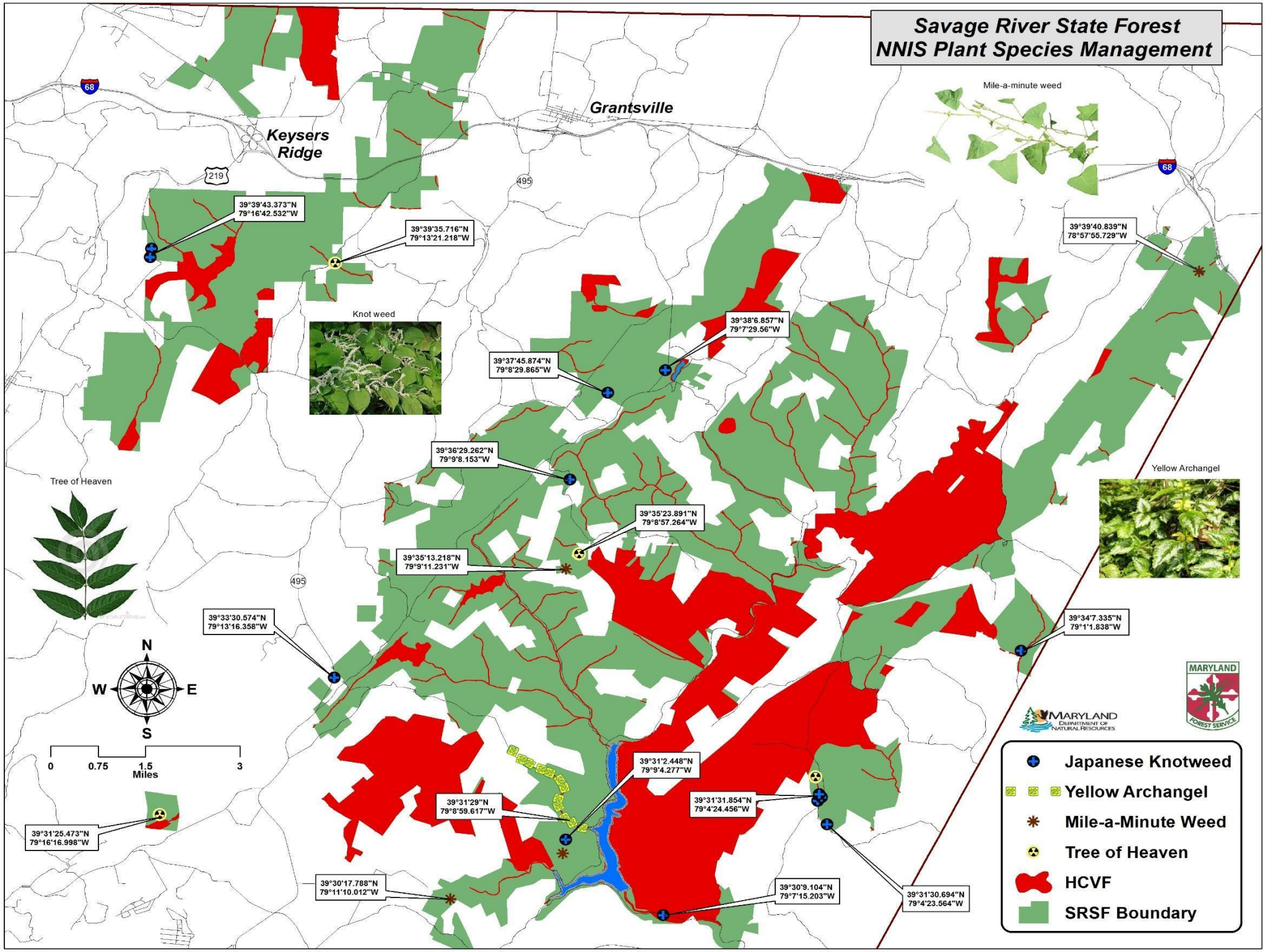
The plant grows quickly and out-competes native vegetation for resources. Yellow archangel spreads in several ways; by seed, by stem fragments, and by rooting at the nodes of the

stem. This makes the plant very difficult to control and requires multiple applications of herbicide and diligent monitoring to limit the spread of the plant in natural forest environments. There is no projected end date for the herbicide treatments due to the persistent nature of this plant and efforts will be made annually until the spread of the plant is contained or the plant is eradicated. Recent late season snowfalls and above average rainfall have limited any attempts to control the species. Successful eradication of this plant is anticipated given the relatively confined area of infestation. Site monitoring will continue after the eradication of the plant for at least 5 years.

3. Mile-a-Minute Weed (*Persicaria perfoliata*) A small patch of mile-a-minute weed (*Persicaria perfoliata*), another aggressive non-native invasive, was discovered in Compartment 29A. The area was treated in FY 19 with a 2% glyphosate solution, but a field survey revealed that the initial treatment was unsuccessful. Herbicide treatment of triclopyr was applied for two consecutive years and monitoring of the site will continue into FY 20 and beyond until the plant has been eradicated. A previously discovered patch of mile-a-minute weed in Compartment 38 near the St. Johns Rock ORV Trail that was seemingly removed during the excavation for the trail campground reemerged and has been treated. Monitoring of the area will continue and the site will be treated as necessary in order to eradicate this plant from the site.

4. Tree-of-Heaven (*Ailanthus altissima*) Individual stems of the exotic invasive tree-of-heaven have been identified in several areas of the forest. Control measures including both mechanical and chemical have been implemented to remove this species from the limited areas in which it is present. These plant colonies are now part of our long term monitoring program, with follow-up treatments planned as necessary in the interest of preventing these species from establishing themselves in the otherwise natural forest communities in which they were found.

Savage River State Forest
NNIS Plant Species Management



IX. Monitoring and Research Projects

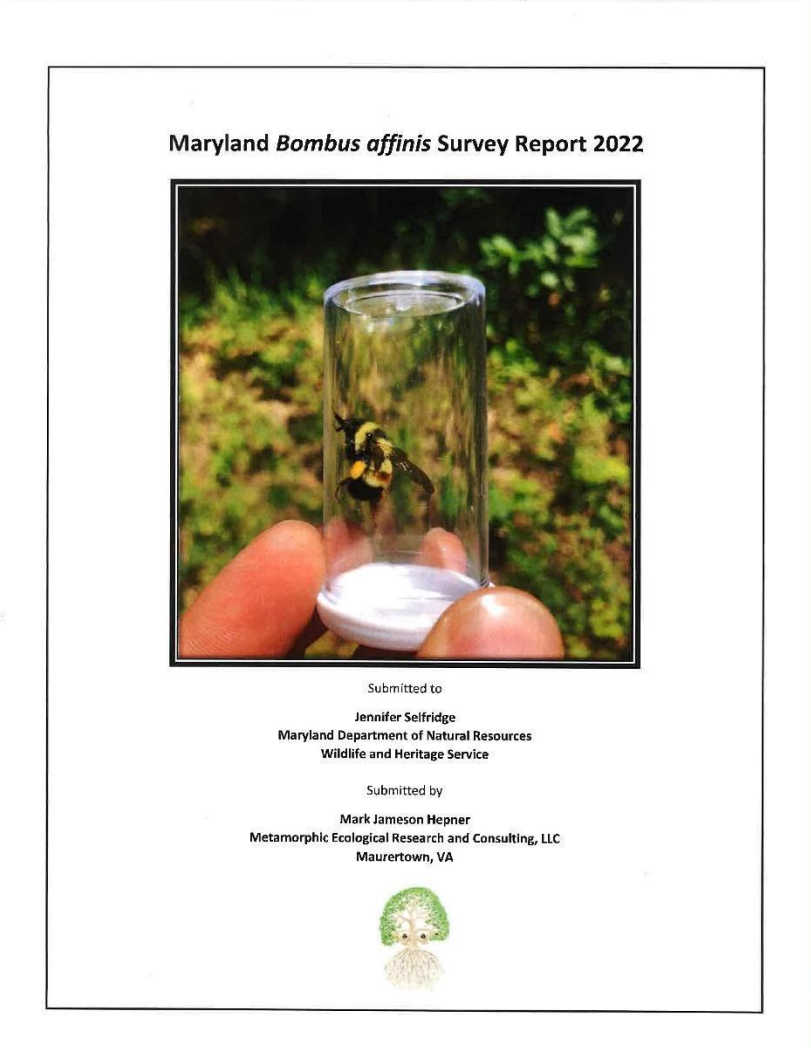
A. Monitoring

1. *Silvicultural Activities*

All silvicultural operations taking place on Savage River State Forest will be monitored on a weekly basis and more frequently when adverse weather conditions arise to ensure that all Best Management Practices are being followed. Regeneration harvests will be monitored five and ten years after harvest. Non-native invasive species will be monitored yearly and herbicide treatment regimens will be implemented as necessary to eradicate these species from the forest ecosystem. Management documents outlining specific treatments and monitoring schedules have been drafted for the individual species.

B. Research Projects *(Full write-ups of each project are available at the State Forest Office)*

1. Rusty-patched Bumblebee (Bombus affinis) surveys


Maryland *Bombus affinis* Survey Report 2022

Submitted to

Jennifer Selfridge
Maryland Department of Natural Resources
Wildlife and Heritage Service

Submitted by

Mark Jameson Hepner
Metamorphic Ecological Research and Consulting, LLC
Maurertown, VA

Introduction

The rusty patched bumble bee (*Bombus affinis*) (RPBB), an endangered species, was once a common species throughout the northeast including Maryland but last seen in the State in 2002. In the spring of 2022, the Maryland Department of Natural Resources requested a RPBB survey within the State. Metamorphic Ecological Research and Consulting, LLC ecologist Mark Hepner, a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) RPBB recovery permit holder and regional species expert, identified areas of the State with the highest likelihood of finding RPBB and are listed in Table 1. The areas are located in Garrett County in the western mountains of Maryland and surrounding the North Branch Potomac River and Savage River drainages and tributaries.

Survey Locations

Surveys were composed of visually inspecting areas with the highest likelihood of RPBB, to find RPBB was the goal of this effort. The Savage River State Forest (SRSF), Potomac State Forest (PSF), Big Run State Park (BRSP), and Wolf Den State Park (WDSP) were areas identified via aerial imagery and topographic mapping as the highest likelihood of RPBB, Table 1 and Table 2. The Maryland *Bombus affinis* Survey Map indicates where surveys were completed and also provided as a KMZ file send via email, Attachment 1. Representative photographs of habitat surveyed are provided in Attachment 4.

Table 1. Maryland State Forests and Maryland State Parks where rusty patched bumble bee surveys took place in 2022.

Potomac State Forest	**Savage River State Forest**	**Big Run State Park**	**Wolf Den Run State Park**
Lost Land Run Road	Savage River Road	Big Run Road	Huckleberry Rocks Area
Wallman Road	Big Run Road		Potomac River Area
Laurel Run Road	Dry Run Road		North Hill Area
North Branch Potomac River	Spring Lick Road		
	Westernport Road		
	Savage Ravines		

Table 2. Locations where rusty patched bumble bee surveys took place in 2022. Numbers correspond to locations on Maryland *Bombus affinis* Survey Map in Attachment 1.

Number	Location	Latitude	Longitude
1	SRSF Westernport Road	39.61150	-79.10666
2	SRSF Savage River Road Poweline	39.58334	-79.09108
3	SRSF Spring Lick Road	39.49649	-79.18463
4	SRSF Poplar Lick Field	39.58657	-79.09163
5	SRSF Maryland Highway 135	39.46225	-79.19260
6	SRSF Little Savage River Powerline	39.59500	-79.04000
7	SRSF Blue Lick Road	39.64976	-79.06506
8	SRSF Blue Lick Run Road	39.64381	-79.06237
9	SRSF Fairview Road Powerline	39.59809	-79.15115
10	SRSF New Germany Road Pollinator Planting	39.55091	-79.22527
11	PSF Laurel Run Road	39.34804	-79.28660
12	PSF Wallman Road	39.30864	-79.28614
13	PSF Lost Land Run Road Wetlands	39.38117	-79.27457
14	PSF Lost Land Run Road North Branch Potomac River	39.36462	-79.23190
15	WDSP Huckleberry Rocks	39.38564	-79.25299
16	WDSP Potomac River	39.37271	-79.21045

Bumble Bees Encountered

There were 10 bumble bee (*Bombus*) species seen during the 2022 surveys, Table 3. Photographs of each bumble bee species and caste encountered during the survey are provided in Attachment 3. The RPBB and yellow banded bumble bee (*B. terricola*) (YBBB) were found during the 2022 survey, Table 4 and Attachment 2. The RPBB was found at two locations within the PSF, Attachment 5. These records represent the first RPBB found in Maryland in 20 years. The YBBB was found at three locations within the SRSF, including two locations within the same area. These records are the first YBBB to be found in Maryland in 10 years.

Table 3. Bumble bee species that were encountered during the 2022 rusty patched bumble bee survey.

Common Name	Scientific Name
Brown-belted bumble bee	*Bombus griseocollis*
Two-spotted bumble bee	*Bombus bimaculatus*
Half-black bumble bee/Sanderson's bumble bee	*Bombus vagans/Bombus sandersoni*
Sanderson's bumble bee/Half-black bumble bee	*Bombus sandersoni/Bombus vagans*
Rusty patched bumble bee	*Bombus affinis*
Yellow banded bumble bee	*Bombus terricola*
Fernald cuckoo bumble bee	*Bombus flavidus*
Eastern common bumble bee	*Bombus impatiens*
Confusing bumble bee	*Bombus perplexus*
Northern golden bumble bee	*Bombus fervidus*

Table 4. Rusty patched bumble bee and yellow banded bumble bee location and floral resource data. Numbers correspond to locations on Maryland *Bombus affinis* / *Bombus terricola* Map in Attachment 2.

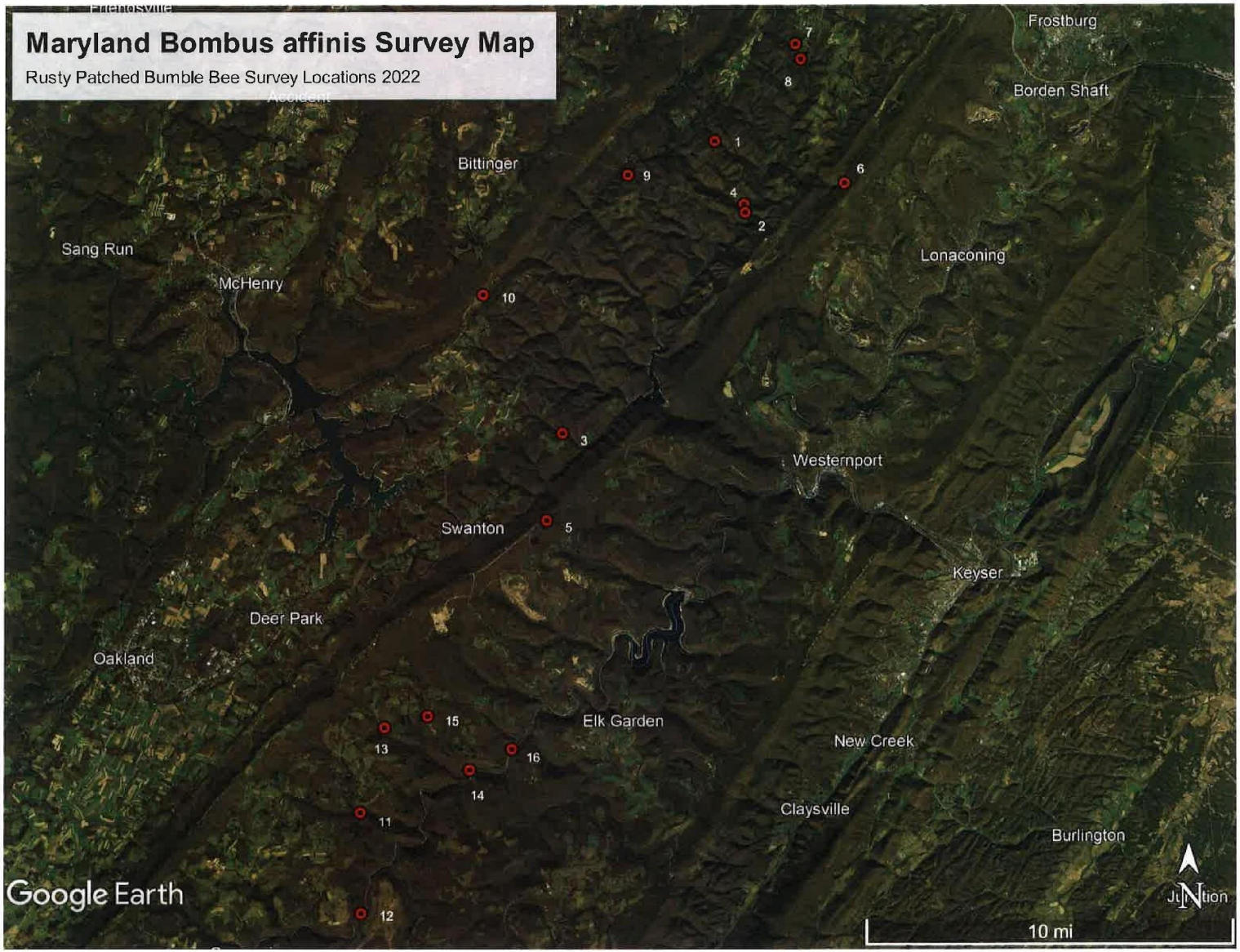
Number	Common Name	Scientific Name	Caste	Floral Resource	Latitude	Longitude
1	Rusty patched bumble bee	*Bombus affinis*	Worker	Black Cohosh (*Actium racemosa*)	39.32845	-79.27554
2	Rusty patched bumble bee	*Bombus affinis*	Worker	Hollow Joe-pye weed (*Eutrochium fistulosum*)	39.31255	-79.28397
3	Yellow banded bumble bee	*Bombus terricola*	Worker	Wild Hydrangea (*Hydrangea arborescens*)	39.61125	-79.10582
4	Yellow banded bumble bee	*Bombus terricola*	Worker	Wild Hydrangea (*Hydrangea arborescens*)	39.61150	-79.10666
5	Yellow banded bumble bee	*Bombus terricola*	Male	Sunflower species (*Helianthus* sp.)	39.46225	-79.19260

Future Surveys

The finding of RPBB in Maryland within the PSF is encouraging for the species continued existence in the Appalachian region and represents the northern extent of the species currently known range. The fact that they were using two different floral resources is a good indication that the Maryland population is still a generalist. Future surveys should include a more intense survey of floral bloom availability throughout the season (March-September) in areas of the PSF and along the North Branch Potomac River (NFPR). Areas that should be investigated during May-July include forested slopes with blueberry/huckleberry (*Vaccinium* sp.), mountain laurel (*Kalmia latifolia*), Rhododendron (*Rhododendron maximum*), and wild hydrangea (*Hydrangea arborescens*). Riparian areas including mid-channel islands along the NFPR and seepy slopes along forest roads should be investigated in July-September. Upland forest and early successional areas should be investigated March-September to determine bloom availability throughout the season. The RPBB likely uses areas differently throughout the season and therefore should be checked for bloom availability as the season progresses. The SRSF has the potential to have RPBB due to the close proximity to known populations and similar bloom and landscape features to areas where they have been found. Maryland is on the northern edge of RPBB known range in the Appalachian region, so there is opportunity for understanding why they occur in areas and do not in other areas. The WDSP has the potential to have RPBB given its proximity to the PSF and similar bloom and landscape features. The WDSP and BRSP have the opportunity for floral resource restoration through plantings and management practices (change in mowing regime).

Summary

The 2022 survey of Maryland for RPBB was successful at locating two RPBB, both workers located on the PSF. The survey also located three YBB on the SRSF. A total of 10 bumble bee species were identified during the survey. The topography, aspects, and bloom along the NBPR and associated drainages and uplands are areas where further investigation for RPBB should be focused. These areas likely provide nesting and over-wintering habitat in addition to foraging habitat discovered in 2022. The SRSF seems to be on the northern edge of the Appalachian range of RPBB and therefore warrants future surveys to determine if the RPBB is present and if not, why is this location not have RPBB. The success of locating RPBB in Maryland in 2022 is encouraging for the species continued existence in the Appalachian region and indicates that Maryland will play an important role in the recovery of RPBB.


Maryland Bombus affinis Survey Map
Rusty Patched Bumble Bee Survey Locations 2022
Frostburg
Borden Shaft
Bittinger
Sang Run
McHenry
Lonaconing
Westernport
Swanton
Keyser
Deer Park
Oakland
Elk Garden
New Creek
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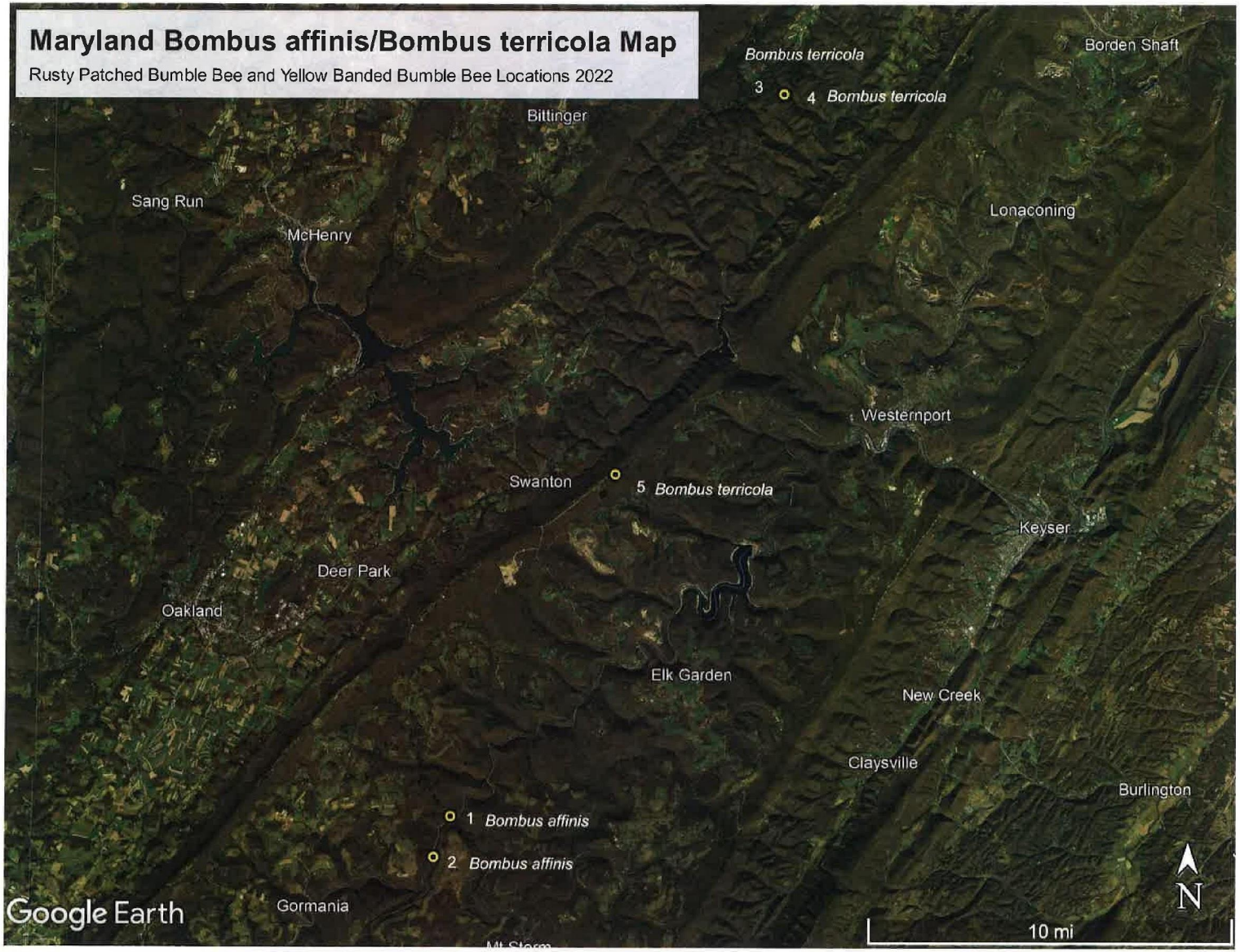
Maryland Bombus affinis/Bombus terricola Map
Rusty Patched Bumble Bee and Yellow Banded Bumble Bee Locations 2022
Bombus terricola
Borden Shaft
3
4 Bombus terricola
Bittinger
Sang Run
McHenry
Lonaconing
Westernport
Swanton
5 Bombus terricola
Keyser
Deer Park
Oakland
Elk Garden
New Creek
Claysville
Burlington
1 Bombus affinis
2 Bombus affinis
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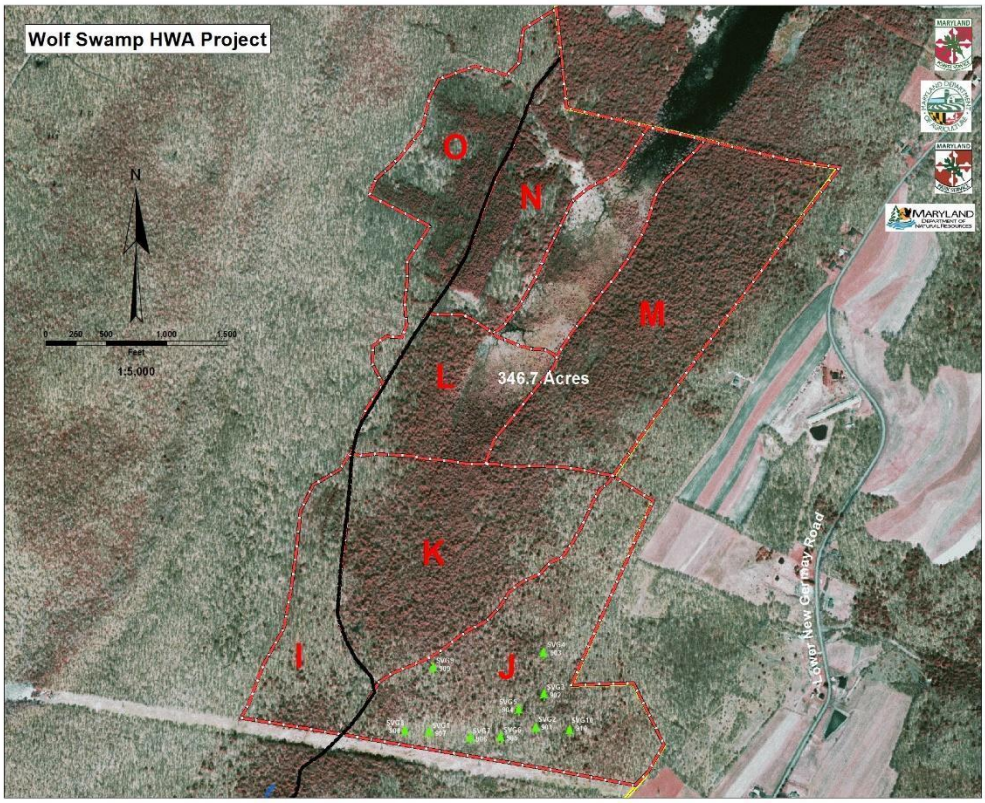
2. Eastern Hemlock: Target-tree Release to Improve the Sustainability of Eastern Hemlock (Tsuga canadensis) in the Southern Appalachian Mountains. US Forest Service Southern Research Station and North Carolina State University.

This ongoing project will develop and validate a silvicultural tool that improves the health and sustainability of eastern hemlock, an ecologically keystone species in the southern Appalachians threatened by HWA. Individual or small clusters of "target" trees (i.e., suppressed or intermediate eastern hemlocks with moderate to good crown health) will be released by removing or girdling other stems competing for sunlight directly above and adjacent to the target trees. Increased sunlight is expected to improve hemlock crown health via improved carbon balance, enhanced foliage production, and reduced HWA settlement rates relative to unreleased trees. Treatments will be replicated at a number of southern Appalachian sites and will evaluate release by girdling versus felling and variations on the size of the resulting canopy gap. Operationally, the tool is expected to prolong hemlock health and survival and increase the efficacy of existing HWA management tools (e.g. biological and chemical control) when integrated with them (Jetton, Robert M., Mayfield, Albert E., Keyser, Tara, and Rhea, James 2017). The project will involve fifteen treatment sites; 10 located in the northern end of Wolf Swamp in Compartment 16 and five located along an unnamed tributary of Elk Lick Run in Compartment 26. Post treatment data collection was completed on all sites in March 2018 and again in July 2018 involving hemlock health at one year, adelgid density, vegetation measurements and data analysis. Follow up data collection and analysis is scheduled for Fall 2022 and will continue through the Fall of 2023.



3. Passive acoustic monitoring of bird migration in the Appalachians

Benjamin Van Doren, Ph.D.
Cornell Lab of Ornithology
vandoren@cornell.edu / 914-364-1027

PURPOSE OF RESEARCH

- Collect passive audio recordings at open-sky sites in the Appalachians.
- Use recently-developed machine listening tools to the extract and identify the flight calls of migrating birds in audio recordings.
- Quantify the passage of migratory birds over study sites and relate this information to weather conditions and geography.
- Incorporate concurrent audio data collected from other sites in the region to track species' movements through the Appalachians.

BACKGROUND

Accurate, efficient, and non-invasive methods for monitoring animals are essential for biology and conservation. Small, highly mobile organisms present distinct challenges in these regards, especially migratory songbirds. Many species travel thousands of miles each year under the cover of darkness, and these nocturnal movements frequently stymie both traditional and modern monitoring methods. Given recent population declines among migratory birds and accelerating environmental change, there is an urgent need for non-invasive tools and robust applied methods to monitor nocturnal avian migrations at individual resolution, under a range of conditions, and in areas that are presently inaccessible (e.g. boreal wilderness) or inhospitable (e.g. deserts or ocean).

Acoustic monitoring can address these gaps. Migratory birds utter species-specific vocalizations, or "flight calls," during nocturnal migratory flights. By recording and identifying flight calls, scientists can monitor bird movements across large areas using widely available audio recorders. Acoustic monitoring of flight calls can provide insight into long-distance migrations and reveal poorly known and overlooked local movements that are difficult to detect by traditional means. However, the need for expert human knowledge to detect and identify calls is a major hurdle methods development and a barrier to widespread use. Automating the detection and identification of flight calls would greatly increase data throughout and allow for continent-wide networks to monitor nocturnal bird migration. In turn, improved acoustic tools for monitoring bird migration would provide an important resource for applied conservation and policy initiatives.

The last several years have seen rapid progress in the development of methods for automated acoustic monitoring. BirdVox (https://wp.nyu.edu/birdvox/), BirdNET (https://birdnet.cornell.edu/), and Merlin Sound ID (https://merlin.allaboutbirds.org/sound-id/) are prime examples of recent methods developed in partnership with the Cornell Lab of Ornithology for acoustic monitoring of bird sounds. Using these automated acoustic approaches greatly increases data throughput over traditional, manual approaches while achieving reliable

estimates of migration intensity and phenology. However, fully realizing their potential will require deploying networks of acoustic sensors across large spatial extents, something that has not yet been attempted. The proposed work seeks to demonstrate the feasibility of this approach for monitoring bird migration through the Appalachians.

METHODS

Data Collection

Hardware

We propose to install acoustic recording units developed by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology during fall 2022. These units consist of an Old Bird 21c microphone (Old Bird, Inc.) connected to a customized Swift Passive Acoustic Recording Unit (Cornell Lab of Ornithology). The devices are powered by a 12V 18Ah sealed lead acid battery and charged by a small solar panel (appx. 1 x 1 ft). The Swift recording unit will record continuous audio to an onboard SD card. The Swift unit and battery are contained in a weatherproof Pelican 1200 case. The 21c microphone can be mounted on a pole or tower, secured to a roof, or set directly on the ground.

Location

We propose to install a microphone at High Rock Tower. We will discuss attachment with Sean Nolan. The microphone would likely be lashed to the tower with straps, and a control box and solar panel placed at the base or secured separately.

Timeline

We plan to deploy microphones between September 5–10, 2022. Deployment should take approximately one hour. We will visit microphones for maintenance between September 30–October 5, and again between November 1–5. These visits should take less than one hour. We will retrieve microphones between November 28–December 2. We hope for the study to continue in subsequent seasons and years.

Personnel

Benjamin Van Doren and Claire Nemes will install microphones and make subsequent visits.

Impacts

This study will have minimal impact on natural areas; the only disturbance will be to an approximately 1x1 ft area of ground in order to place the microphone, Pelican case, and solar panel. No biological material will be removed, and we do not anticipate any impacts to rare species or communities.

Analysis

We will use a convolutional neural network built on Merlin Sound ID (Cornell Lab of Ornithology) to extract and classify nocturnal flight calls present in the audio recordings. To improve performance, we will augment the model with a random sample of background noise from each recording site. We will summarize species counts nightly and use linear mixed models to understand how weather conditions (e.g. wind, temperature, and precipitation) drive bird migration along the Appalachians. We will also use acoustic data from other Appalachian sites to understand how migration timing and species composition vary through the region.

Anticipated Products

Collected data will form the basis for one or more scientific publications, as well as a publicly released neural network model for flight call classification.

4. Late Successional Forest Management Project. The Nature Conservancy.

The MD/DC Chapter of The Nature Conservancy is collaborating with
Maryland Forest Service and the Maryland Wildlife and Heritage Service to implement a "Late-successional Forest Management Project" in western Maryland. The long-term goal of this project is to demonstrate the potential of using Structural Complexity Enhancement (SCE) methods to accelerate the development of late-successional characteristics in western MD forests. Young- to-mid successional forests lack the structural complexity present in diverse, late-successional forests. However, "maintain and enhance species and structural diversity" is one of the climate adaptation strategies which would enhance climate resilience at landscape-scale. TNC will partner with Northern Institute of Applied Climate Science (NIACS), to use their Forest Adaptation Resources as a guide in developing this project.
TNC, in consultation with DNR resource professionals, have identified two treatment sites, plus a reference site (a designated old-growth area) at Savage River State Forest (SRSF) to implement this project. The two treatment sites are located in between a wildland and an Ecologically Significant Area (ESA). There are "confirmed old growth sites" within the OGEMA, that are limited in size and connectivity. Hence, applying this type of silvicultural treatments with primary objectives of fostering old-growth conditions, would enhance old growth ecosystem functionality, which is a recommended action in the Sustainable Forest Management Plan for SRSF.

SCE is the use of a combination of silvicultural techniques to promote structural complexity in forest ecosystems including creating multi-layered canopies, increasing the number of snags and coarse woody debris, and increasing the number of large living trees. This complexity in vegetation structure and age-class distribution has a direct effect on the biological diversity in a forested system. At landscape scale, late-successional forests are a necessary element of landscape diversity, which enhances climate resilience. Recent studies have suggested that forests managed with SCE treatments have the potential to increase carbon storage and provide additional climate change mitigation benefits.The proposed project is part of a larger initiative to demonstrate different SCE treatments toforesters and landowners. In consultation with DNR resource professionals, TNC will develop communication materials such as pamphlets,

infographics, videos and presentations to disseminate the learning outcomes of the project. In addition, field tours and workshops will be organized for foresters and landowners to promote understanding of SCE techniques as an option in forestmanagement. Landowner adaptation of SCE will have a positive effect on the natural resources of Maryland by improving late-successional wildlife habitat and landscape diversity. Enhanced climate resilience of the landscape and improved ecosystem services will have numerous benefits to the natural environment and the citizens of the state.

5. Statewide Wood Turtle Population Assessment and Management.

Project Description: Maryland is participating in a regional Comprehensive State Wildlife Grant Project (11 states involved) from 2021-2023 to begin implementation of the 2018 northeast wood turtle conservation plan.

There are three main tasks to be achieved:

1. Conduct standardized visual encounter surveys in streams and along stream banks and use mark-recapture techniques to estimate population (this is a continuation of work done by DNR ecologist Ed Thompson until his retirement in 2018). DNA will be collected from a sample of turtles in priority populations and turtles will be pit-tagged; both methods to aid in law enforcement efforts related to confiscations from illegal collecting activities, and to refine regional genetic unit assignments. eDNA will be sampled from streams at 30 sites statewide.
2. Identify nesting habitat and, if needed and permission can be obtained from individual land unit managers, conduct management to enhance nesting opportunities. This would mostly involve invasive vegetation management but could include installing predator excluders and/or nesting substrate manipulation.
3. Work with willing land unit managers to establish BMP's for field mowing (wood turtles spend summers in hayfields and pastures) and roadway management to reduce roadkill.

General Site Conditions: Surveys will be conducted in a variety of small to large streams and rivers. Wood turtles prefer streams with hard sand or gravel bottoms (not clay or muck), moderate current, and clear water, and mostly use pools (not riffles). Management will occur primarily along stream banks and adjacent upland areas.

Project Considerations: Standardized population surveys require three surveys per season (spring and/or fall) for a maximum of six surveys. Each survey is of a 1 km stream reach, attempting to complete the 1 km survey in 1 hour of active searching. Turtles are measured, marked and released back at point-of-capture immediately. eDNA will be collected at the beginning of each survey at the 30 sites chosen statewide, three water samples per survey. DNR is partnering with the Susquehannock Wildlife Society (SWS) and Mid-Atlantic Center for Herpetology and Conservation (MACHAC). Staff from SWS (primarily Scott McDaniel and Brian Durkin) and from MACHAC (Lori Erb) will be conducting most of the Central Region surveys while DNR-NHP staff will be focused on the Western Region surveys. SWS and

MACHAC will have DNR-issued Scientific Collecting Permits. Individual DNR land unit staff will be offered the opportunity to participate in surveys and report wood turtle sightings.
In addition to the projects outlined above, we continue to collaborate with other agencies within DNR and the Maryland Department of Agriculture on various ongoing monitoring and research based projects:

Maryland Department of Environment – Biological stream surveys
Maryland Department of Agriculture - Forest pest trapping
Maryland Department of Agriculture – Eastern Hemlock treatment
Bureau of Mines, Abandoned Mine Land – Water treatment (docers)
Wildlife and Heritage Service – Black bear bait station survey
Wildlife and Heritage Service – Hard mast survey

X. Silvicultural Proposals

COMPARTMENT 13 – Stand 6 STAND A FY-24

Description / Resource Impact Assessment

Location: This proposal is located approximately 1.5 miles south of Bowman Hill Road in Compartment 13 in stand 6. The harvest area is approximately 1.5 miles down the state forest access road known as "Bowman Hill South" along the east side of the road. The access road entrance is approximately 1.5 miles northwest of the intersection of Bowman Hill Road with Foxtown Road.

Forest Community Type and Condition: This 25.5-acre site contains a large sawtimber mixed oak stand that is approximately 112 years old with an average merchantable diameter of 21.8 inches. The overstory consists of northern red oak (43%), yellow-poplar (38%), red maple (6%), sugar maple (6%) and black cherry (5%). The stocking in this stand is at 73% relative density with a basal area of 166 ft^2/acre and 155 trees per acre. The stand is currently overstocked with unacceptable growing stock (UGS) accounting for approximately 60% of the basal area. A significant portion of the undesirable growing stock is yellow-poplar showing signs of butt defect and large diameter red oak trees with low merchantable height and large spreading crowns. Desirable regeneration is currently present in the understory but suppressed by the tight canopy of the overstory and resulting lack of sunlight reaching the forest floor. A sizable cohort of yellow-poplar saplings was also found dispersed throughout the stand.

Interfering Elements: Interfering understory plant competition was found to be minimal within the stand as a result of past understory treatments. The understory received a low-volume understory herbicide application for fern treatment in 2014 and was followed up with a hack-n-squirt treatment of all undesirable saplings / poles in 2018. Tall woody interference occupies approximately 20% of the stand consisting primarily of sweet birch and American beech. Low woody interference was found to occupy approximately 3% of the site, consisting primarily of witch-hazel. Rhizomatous fern interference was noted to be a minimal issue while only affecting 20% of the site due to the tight canopy conditions. All the understory conditions are favorable to facilitate the growth of the oak regeneration present, but the tight canopy has the stand sitting stagnant.

In addition to interfering vegetation, the presence of white-tailed deer can have a negative influence on the regeneration success of the stand. Overbrowsing can facilitate failure of desirable seedling establishment and in extreme cases shift in species composition dominated by undesirable tree species. Field evaluations of the site estimated deer browse impact to be moderate. Monitoring of deer browse impacts will coincide with regeneration inventories to determine if additional measures need to be implemented to reduce deer herbivory and increase the likelihood of regeneration establishment on the site.

Historic Conditions: State Forest records indicate that the proposal area has not been harvested since state acquisition. The stand received understory treatments in 2014 and 2018 to address

fern and undesirable pole / sapling issues. The adjacent stand to the east was thinned in 1999 and the adjacent stand to the south was regenerated in 2003. No evidence of fire was observed during the inventory.

Rare, Threatened and Endangered Species: No rare, threatened or endangered species have been identified on the site that would be impacted by the silvicultural prescription.

Habitats and Species of Management Concern: The management proposal does not contain or border any areas that have been designated as High Conservation Value Forest. A small intermittent tributary to Bear Creek was observed along the southern end of the proposal area and plans are to establish a buffer along this stream and exclude from the harvest proposal.

Water Resources: This stand drains west into Bear Creek within the Youghiogheny River Watershed. The proposed silvicultural treatments will be outside of all HCVF and stream buffer areas. No heavy equipment will be permitted within the protective riparian buffers of any streams or associated wetlands per the requirements set forth in the State Forest Sustainable Forest Management Plan.

Soil Resources: The predominant soil types of this site are Dekalb and Gilpin Very Stony Loams, 15-25% Slopes (DgD) and Meckesville Very Stony Silt Loam, 8-25% Slopes (MdD). The soils are composed mainly of sandstone with some shale and siltstone found throughout. These soils are moderately deep and well drained with moderate equipment limitations on the lower slopes associated with a high water table. The site has good productivity for woodland management, with a site index of 75-85 for upland oaks and 85-95 for yellow-poplar. The productivity of the site will be protected by minimizing the haul roads and skid trails per the Department's Best Management Practices and rutting guidelines.

Recreation Resources: No developed recreational resources are located within the stand. The access road serves primarily as hunter access and hunting opportunities may be limited should the harvest be active during the big game hunting seasons.

Management and Silvicultural Recommendations:

The proposed silvicultural treatment for this site is a commercial thinning given that competitive regeneration is present but suppressed and the overstory contains a significant component of undesirable growing stock (UGS). A crown thinning will be implemented, removing approximately 90 ft^2 of basal area per acre and reducing the residual basal area to 70-80 ft^2. Thinning a large diameter stand such as this is difficult as large crowns require additional trees to be removed to avoid residual damage. Removals will be concentrated on undesirable growing stock in the large sawtimber size class, notably all yellow-poplar exhibiting butt defect and large diameter northern red oak. Estimated yield for the thinning is approximately 7,000 board feet per acre. Residual trees will benefit from the improved spacing post-harvest with increased vigor, growth rates and overall stand health. Retention will favor small and medium sawtimber trees of superior form and health to facilitate seedling establishment of the future stand. The understory is already in a favorable condition to facilitate regeneration establishment. Post-harvest monitoring will be conducted to determine if the present regeneration has responded to the thinning and if additional regeneration has established on the site. The long-term goal for

the site is to have a desirable cohort of regeneration occupying the site when a final removal harvest is conducted to release the regeneration as the new stand of trees.

COMPARTMENT 13 – Stand 11 **STAND B** **FY-24**

Description / Resource Impact Assessment

Location: This proposal is located approximately 1.5 miles south of Bowman Hill Road in Compartment 13 in stand 11. The harvest area is approximately 1.5 miles down the state forest access road known as "Bowman Hill South" along the east side of the road. The access road entrance is approximately 1.5 miles northwest of the intersection of Bowman Hill Road with Foxtown Road.

Forest Community Type and Condition: This 21.5-acre site contains a medium sawtimber mixed oak stand that is approximately 81 years old with an average merchantable diameter of 13.7 inches. The overstory consists of northern red oak (49%), red maple (21%), sweet birch (17%), yellow-poplar (4%) and black cherry (3%). The stocking in this stand is at 97% relative density with a basal area of 144 ft^2/acre and 713 trees per acre. The stand is currently overstocked with unacceptable growing stock (UGS) accounting for over 50% of the basal area. Desirable regeneration is currently lacking due to a thick mid-canopy layer of undesirable tall-woody interference and the tight canopy of the overstory. A significant cohort of desirable yellow-poplar and oak saplings was also found present in the understory.

Interfering Elements: Interfering understory plant competition is sufficient to cause complications in desirable regeneration efforts with the majority of the site containing some form of significant interference. This interference coupled with the tight canopy of the mature overstory trees is significantly hindering regeneration establishment on the site. Tall woody interference occupies approximately 100% of the stand consisting primarily of sweet birch and witch hazel. Low woody interference was found to occupy approximately 42% of the site, consisting primarily of witch-hazel. Rhizomatous fern interference was noted to be a minimal issue while only affecting 8% of the site due to the tight canopy conditions.

In addition to interfering vegetation, the presence of white-tailed deer can have a negative influence on the regeneration success of the stand. Overbrowsing can facilitate failure of desirable seedling establishment and in extreme cases shift in species composition dominated by undesirable tree species. Field evaluations of the site estimated deer browse impact to be moderate. Monitoring of deer browse impacts will coincide with regeneration inventories to determine if additional measures need to be implemented to reduce deer herbivory and increase the likelihood of regeneration establishment on the site.

Historic Conditions: State Forest records indicate that the proposal area was thinned in 1999. The adjacent stand to the south was thinned at the same time, but this section appears to have been cut much harder than the current proposal area. The adjacent stand to the southwest was

regenerated in 2003 and the adjacent stand to the north was marked and sold in 2022 and is awaiting harvest.

Rare, Threatened and Endangered Species: No rare, threatened or endangered species have been identified on the site that would be impacted by the silvicultural prescription.

Habitats and Species of Management Concern: The management proposal does not contain or border any areas that have been designated as High Conservation Value Forest.

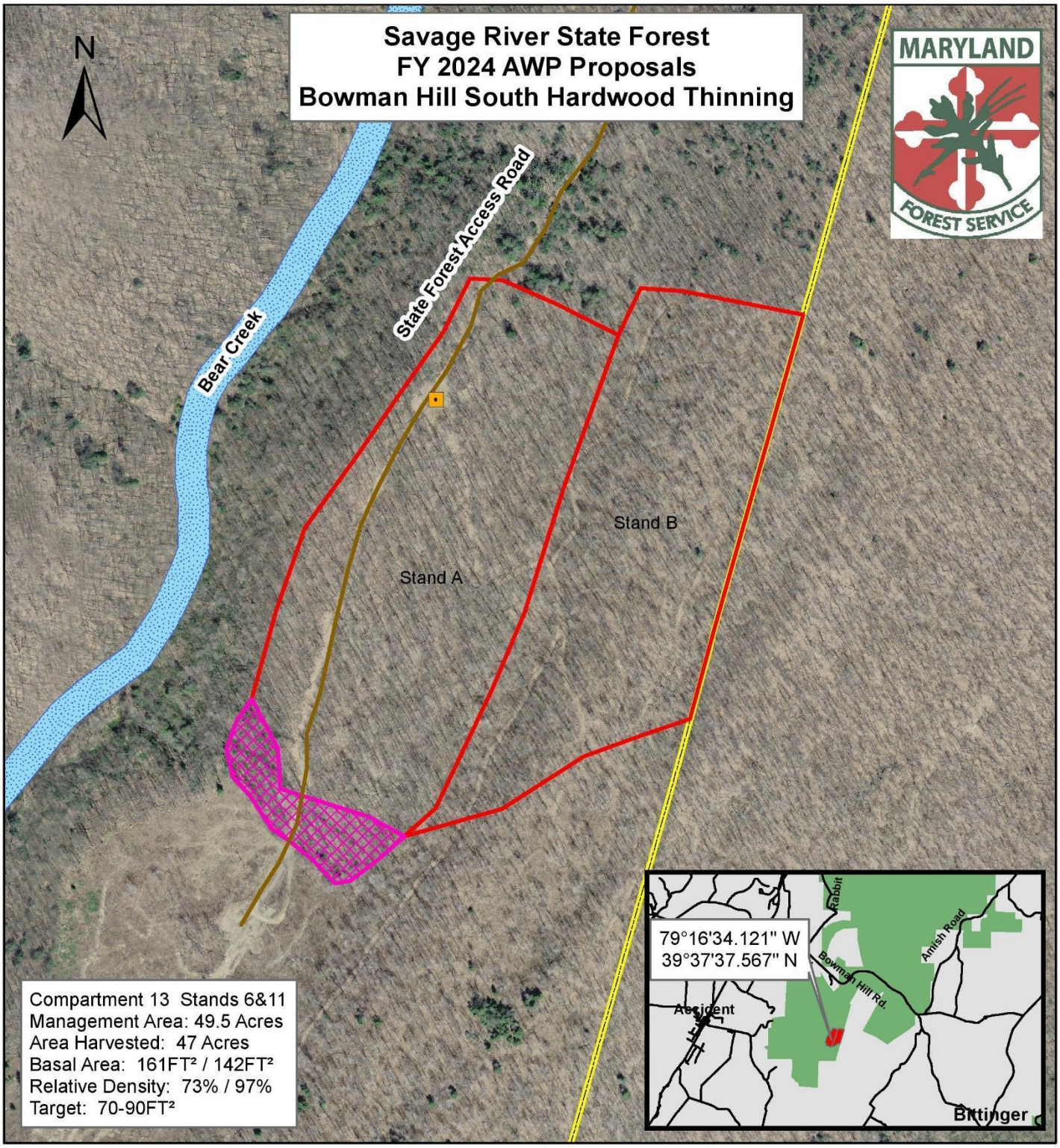
Water Resources: This stand drains west into Bear Creek within the Youghiogheny River Watershed. The proposed silvicultural treatments will be outside of all HCVF and stream buffer areas. No heavy equipment will be permitted within the protective riparian buffers of any streams or associated wetlands per the requirements set forth in the State Forest Sustainable Forest Management Plan.

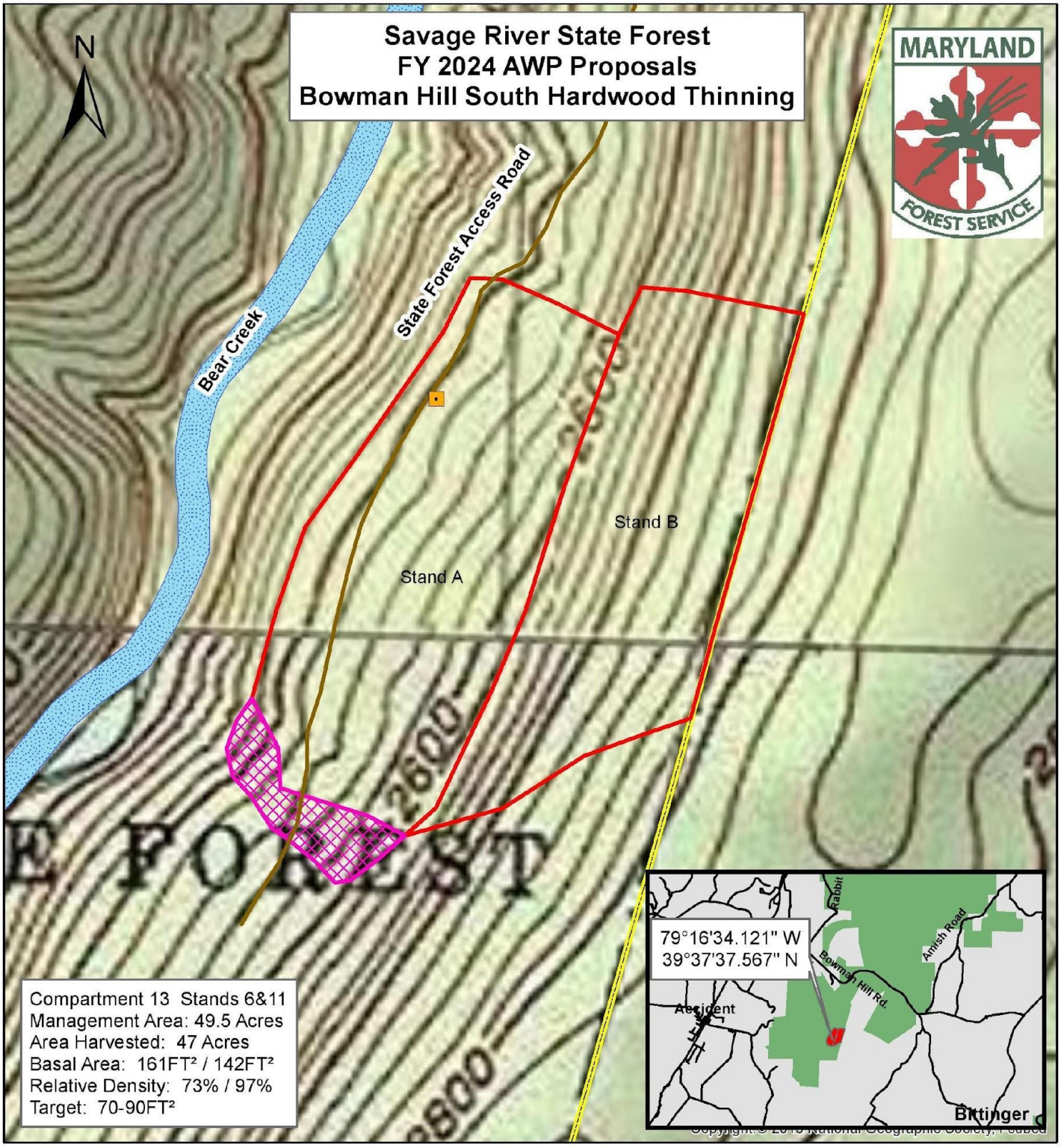
Soil Resources: The predominant soil type of the site is Very Stony Land (VsF). The soils are composed mainly of sandstone with some shale and siltstone found throughout. These soils are relatively shallow with exposed rocks and boulders in areas and well drained with moderate equipment limitations primarily associated with exposed areas of surface rock. The site has good productivity for woodland management, with a site index of 65-75 for upland oaks. The productivity of the site will be protected by minimizing the haul roads and skid trails per the Department's Best Management Practices and rutting guidelines.

Recreation Resources: No developed recreational resources are located within the stand. The access road serves primarily as hunter access and hunting opportunities may be limited should the harvest be active during the big game hunting seasons.

Management and Silvicultural Recommendations:

The proposed silvicultural treatment for this site is a commercial thinning given that competitive regeneration is present but suppressed and the overstory contains a significant component of undesirable growing stock (UGS). A crown thinning will be implemented, removing approximately 70 ft^2 of basal area per acre and reducing the residual basal area to 70-80 ft^2. Removals will be concentrated on undesirable growing stock in the medium sawtimber size class coupled with mature individual trees that will afford large canopy gaps and facilitate regeneration establishment in the understory. Estimated yield for the thinning is approximately 3,000 board feet per acre. Residual trees will benefit from the improved spacing post-harvest with increased vigor, growth rates and overall stand health. Retention will favor small and medium sawtimber trees of superior form and health to facilitate seedling establishment of the future stand. The process of the timber harvest should break the mid-story canopy of undesirable tall-woody interference and afford additional sunlight to the understory and established regeneration which is currently suppressed. Post-harvest monitoring will be conducted to determine if the present regeneration has responded to the thinning and if additional regeneration has established on the site. The long-term goal for the site is to have a desirable cohort of regeneration occupying the site when a final removal harvest is conducted to release the regeneration as the new stand of trees.


Savage River State Forest
FY 2024 AWP Proposals
Bowman Hill South Hardwood Thinning
N
MARYLAND
FOREST SERVICE
State Forest Access Road
Bear Creek
Stand A
Stand B
Compartment 13 Stands 6&11
Management Area: 49.5 Acres
Area Harvested: 47 Acres
Basal Area: 161FT² / 142FT²
Relative Density: 73% / 97%
Target: 70-90FT²
79°16'34.121" W
39°37'37.567" N
Rabbit
Amish Road
Bowman Hill Rd.
Accident
Bittinger
Landing
Access Road
Buffer
Harvest Area
Savage River SF Boundary
Old Growth Ecosystem Area
Ecologically Significant Areas
Old Growth
SRSF Wildlands
streams and 50' buffers
Wetlands of State Concern
1 inch = 417 feet
1:5,000
0 125 250 500 750 1,000
Feet
MARYLAND
DEPARTMENT OF
NATURAL RESOURCES



- Landing
- Access Road
- Buffer
- Harvest Area
- Savage River SF Boundary
- Old Growth Ecosystem Area
- Ecologically Significant Areas
- Old Growth
- SRSF Wildlands
- streams and 50' buffers
- Wetlands of State Concern

1 inch = 417 feet

1:5,000

0 125 250 500 750 1,000 Feet

MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

COMPARTMENT 15 – Stands 19, 31 & 50 **FY-24**

Description / Resource Impact Assessment

Location: This proposal is situated adjacent to the East Shale Road ORV Trail with haul road entrance approximately 1.8 miles north of the intersection with New Germany Road and approximately 1.0 mile south from the terminus of Ellis Drive. Haul road construction will be part of the contract and involve approximately 0.5 miles of road construction and improvements over an existing but unimproved roadbed.

Forest Community Type and Condition: This 51.5-acre site contains a medium sawtimber mixed oak stand that is approximately 81 years old with an average merchantable diameter of 15.4 inches. The overstory consists of northern red oak (63%), red maple (19%), black cherry (9%), and chestnut oak (4%). The stocking in this stand is at 88% relative density with a basal area of 162 ft²/acre and 283 trees per acre. The stand is currently overstocked with unacceptable growing stock (UGS) accounting for approximately 40% of the basal area. Desirable regeneration is currently lacking due to a heavy sapling / pole canopy layer of undesirable stems and the tight canopy of the overstory trees. A sizeable sapling component of maple and oak poles is also present in the understory.

Interfering Elements: Interfering understory plant competition is sufficient to cause complications in desirable regeneration efforts with the majority of the site containing some form of significant interference. This interference coupled with the tight canopy of the mature overstory trees is significantly hindering regeneration establishment on the site. Tall woody interference occupies approximately 74% of the stand consisting primarily of sweet birch and striped maple. Low woody interference is minimal occupies approximately 13% of the site, consisting primarily of witch-hazel. Rhizomatous fern interference was noted to occupy approximately 50% of the site.

In addition to interfering vegetation, the presence of white-tailed deer can have a negative influence on the regeneration success of the stand. Overbrowsing can facilitate failure of desirable seedling establishment and in extreme cases shift in species composition dominated by undesirable tree species. Field evaluations of the site estimated deer browse impact to be moderate. Monitoring of deer browse impacts will coincide with regeneration inventories to determine if additional measures need to be implemented to reduce deer herbivory and increase the likelihood of regeneration establishment on the site.

Historic Conditions: State Forest records indicate that the proposal area has not been harvested since state acquisition. The adjacent stand to the north was thinned in 2015 while the stands to the west along East Shale Road were thinned in 2015 and most recently in 2022. No evidence of fire was observed during the stand inventory.

Rare, Threatened and Endangered Species: No rare, threatened or endangered species have been identified on the site that would be impacted by the silvicultural prescription.

Habitats and Species of Management Concern: The management proposal contains no established HCVF areas. A small ephemeral stream along the southern end of the harvest area

was noted during the inventory and will be excluded from the harvest. The proposal area is relatively close to the Wolf Swamp ESA, but no harvesting is to occur within this designated area of high conservation value forest.

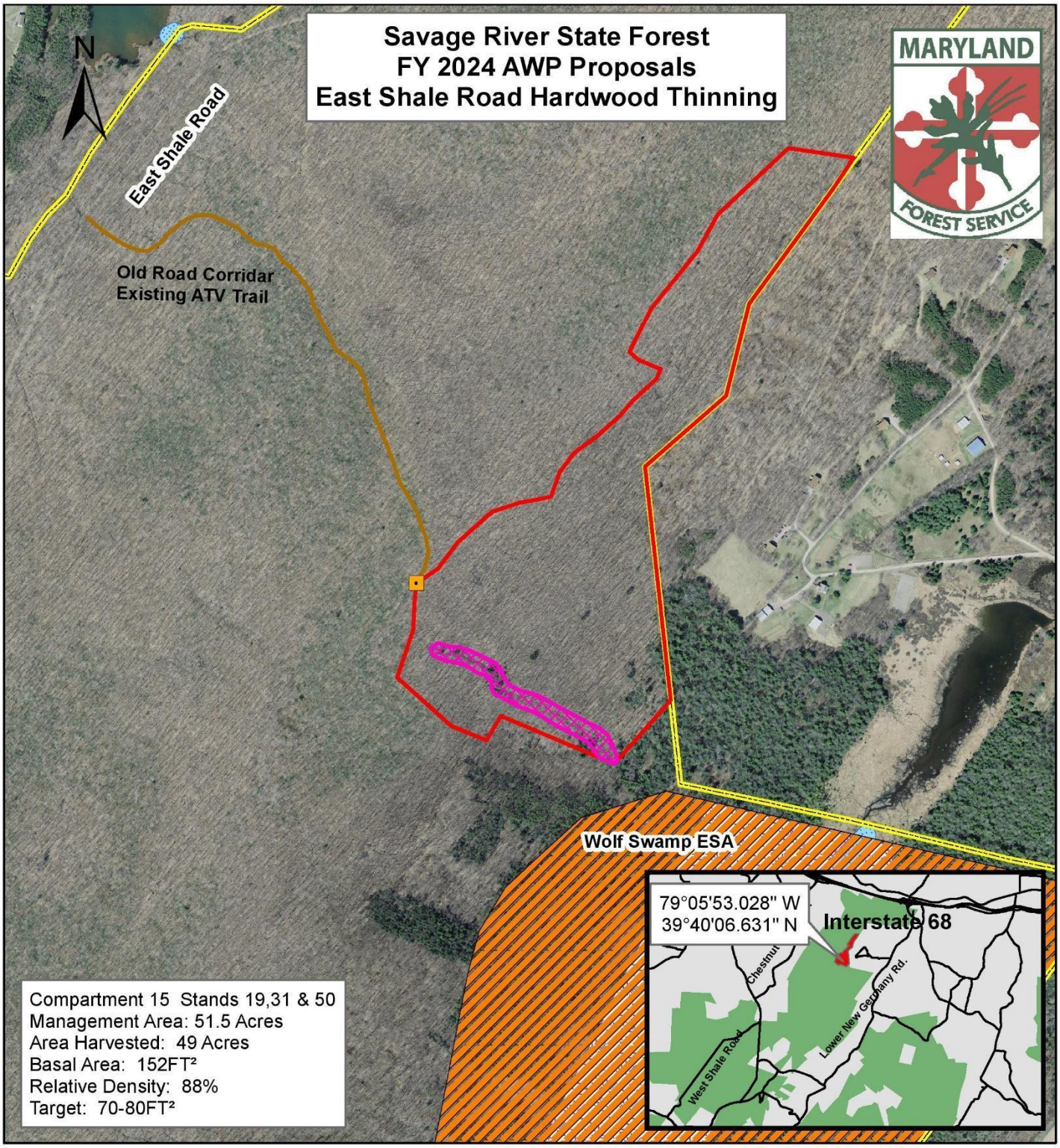
Water Resources: This stand drains east into Wolf Swamp flowing into Red Run, a tributary of Big Piney Creek and the Cassellman River within the Youghiogheny River Watershed. The proposed silvicultural treatments will be outside of all HCVF and stream buffer areas. No heavy equipment will be permitted within the protective riparian buffers of any streams or associated wetlands per the requirements set forth in the State Forests Sustainable Forest Management Plan.

Soil Resources: The predominant soil types of this site are Dekalb and Leetonia Very Stony Sandy Loams, 15-25% slopes (DlD) and the Dekalb Channery Loams (DbD2 / DbC2). The soils are composed mainly of sandstone. These soils are moderately deep and well drained with slight equipment limitations elevating to moderate with slope and primarily associated with a high water table. The site has good productivity for woodland management, with a site index of 65-75 for upland oaks. The productivity of the site will be protected by minimizing the haul roads and skid trails per the Department's Best Management Practices and rutting guidelines.

Recreation Resources: No developed recreational resources are located within the stand. The East Shale Road ORV Trail / Northernmost segment of the Meadow Mountain Trail will serve as the haul road for the harvest.

Management and Silvicultural Recommendations:

The proposed silvicultural treatment for this site is a commercial thinning given that competitive regeneration is lacking and the stand is overstocked. A crown thinning will be implemented, removing approximately 70 ft^2 of basal area per acre and reducing the residual basal area to 70-80 ft^2. Removals will be concentrated on undesirable growing stock in the medium sawtimber size class coupled with mature individual trees that will afford large canopy gaps and facilitate regeneration establishment in the understory. Estimated yield for the thinning is approximately 4,000 board feet per acre. Residual trees will benefit from the improved spacing post-harvest with increased vigor, growth rates and overall stand health. Retention will favor small and medium sawtimber trees of superior form and health to facilitate seedling establishment of the future stand. The process of the timber harvest should break the mid-story canopy of undesirable tall-woody interference and afford additional sunlight to the understory and established regeneration which is currently suppressed. Post-harvest monitoring will be conducted to determine if the present regeneration has responded to the thinning and if additional regeneration has established on the site. The long-term goal for the site is to have a desirable cohort of regeneration occupying the site when a final removal harvest is conducted to release the regeneration as the new stand of trees.



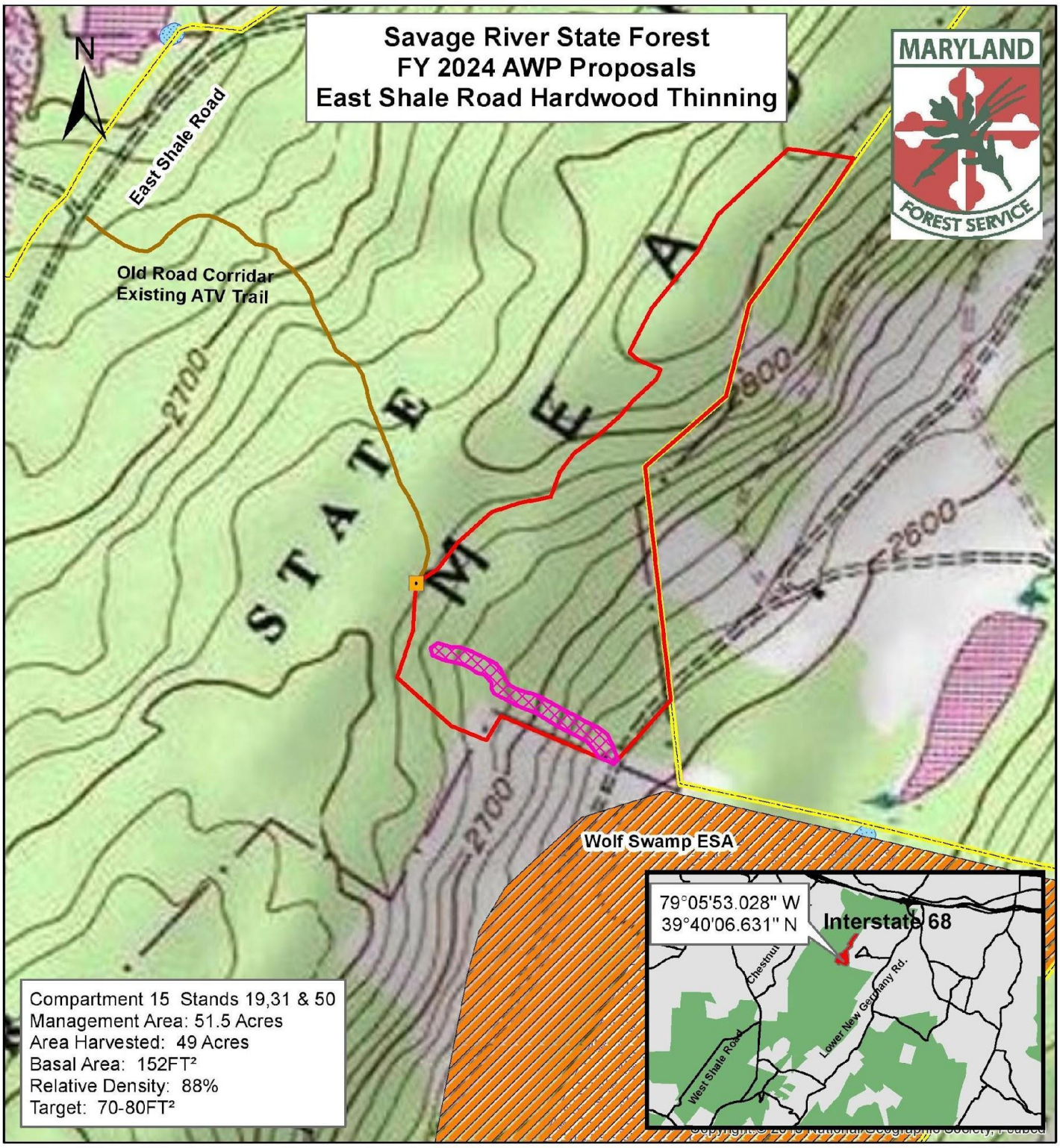
- Landing
- Haul Road (To Be Built)
- Buffer
- Harvest Area
- Savage River SF Boundary
- Old Growth Ecosystem Area
- Ecologically Significant Areas
- Old Growth
- SRSF Wildlands
- streams and 50' buffers
- Wetlands of State Concern

1 inch = 667 feet

1:8,000

0 200 400 800 1,200 1,600 Feet

MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES


Savage River State Forest
FY 2024 AWP Proposals
East Shale Road Hardwood Thinning
MARYLAND
FOREST SERVICE
N
East Shale Road
Old Road Corridar
Existing ATV Trail
2700
2800
2600
STATE
Wolf Swamp ESA
79°05'53.028" W
39°40'06.631" N
Interstate 68
Chestnut
Lower New Germany Rd.
West Shale Road
Compartment 15 Stands 19,31 & 50
Management Area: 51.5 Acres
Area Harvested: 49 Acres
Basal Area: 152FT²
Relative Density: 88%
Target: 70-80FT²
Landing
Haul Road (To Be Built)
Buffer
Harvest Area
Savage River SF Boundary
Old Growth Ecosystem Area
Ecologically Significant Areas
Old Growth
SRSF Wildlands
streams and 50' buffers
Wetlands of State Concern
1 inch = 667 feet
1:8,000
0 200 400 800 1,200 1,600
Feet
MARYLAND
DEPARTMENT OF
NATURAL RESOURCES

COMPARTMENT 17 – Stands 35,72,100,101,107,108 **FY-24**

Description / Resource Impact Assessment

Location: This harvest proposal is accessible off West Shale Road in the area of the state forest commonly referred to as the Asa Durst Homestead located approximately 1.5 miles west of the intersection of New Germany Road and West Shale Road.

Forest Community Type and Condition: This 40.5-acre site contains a medium sawtimber mixed oak stand that is approximately 84 years old with an average merchantable diameter of 15.4 inches. The overstory consists of northern red oak (41%), red maple (34%), sweet birch (9%), black cherry (6%) and cucumber magnolia (5%). The stocking in this stand is at 70% relative density with a basal area of 117 ft^2/acre and 295 trees per acre. The stand is currently overstocked with unacceptable growing stock (UGS) accounting for over 50% of the basal area. Desirable regeneration is currently present but suppressed by a thick mid-story layer of undesirable tall-woody interference. A significant portion of the current regeneration is established oak seedlings greater than three feet in height.

Interfering Elements: Interfering understory plant competition is sufficient to cause complications in desirable regeneration efforts with the majority of the site containing some form of significant interference. This interference coupled with the tight canopy of the mature overstory trees is significantly hindering regeneration establishment on the site. Tall woody interference occupies approximately 92% of the stand consisting primarily of sweet birch and striped maple. Low woody interference is minimal occupies approximately 17% of the site, consisting primarily of witch-hazel. Rhizomatous fern interference was noted to be a minimal issue while only affecting 19% of the site.

In addition to interfering vegetation, the presence of white-tailed deer can have a negative influence on the regeneration success of the stand. Overbrowsing can facilitate failure of desirable seedling establishment and in extreme cases shift in species composition dominated by undesirable tree species. Field evaluations of the site estimated deer browse impact to be moderate. Monitoring of deer browse impacts will coincide with regeneration inventories to determine if additional measures need to be implemented to reduce deer herbivory and increase the likelihood of regeneration establishment on the site.

Historic Conditions: State Forest records indicate that the proposal area contains two small patch harvests from the late 1980's and a roadside harvest along the extent of West Shale Road in 2003. The current state of the stand is "patchy" with a combination of previous harvests at various stages of stocking and overstory composition. The goal with the proposed harvest is to provide a uniform (manageable) stand while releasing the desirable regeneration that established following the previous harvests.

Rare, Threatened and Endangered Species: No rare, threatened or endangered species have been identified on the site that would be impacted by the silvicultural prescription.

Habitats and Species of Management Concern: The management proposal contains does not contain or border any areas that have been designated as High Conservation Value Forest.

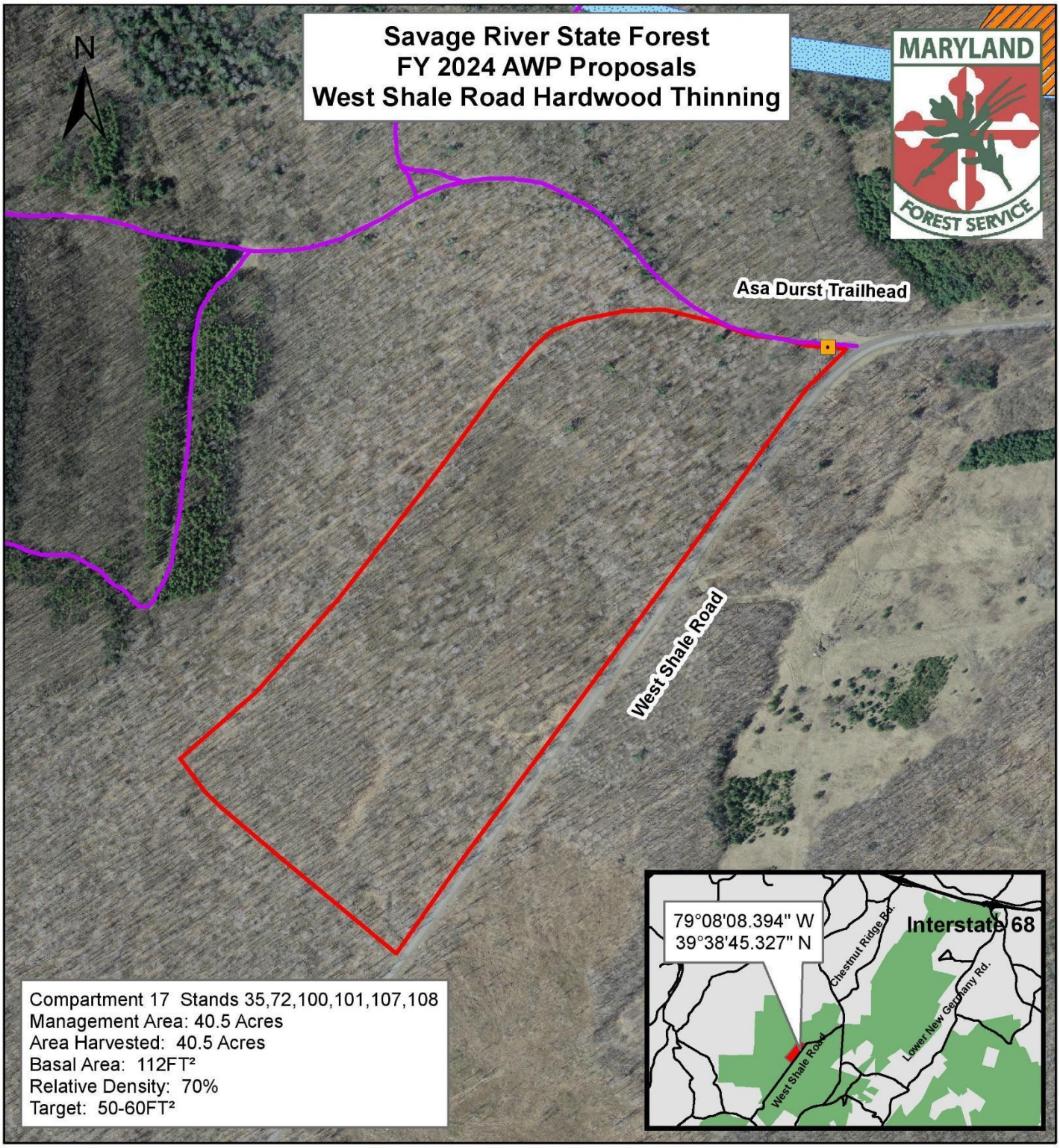
Water Resources: This stand drains north into Big Laurel Run, a tributary to the Cassellman River within the Youghiogheny River Watershed. The proposed silvicultural treatments will be outside of all HCVF stream buffers and designated wetland areas. No heavy equipment will be permitted within the protective riparian buffers of any streams or associated wetlands per the requirements set forth in the State Forests Sustainable Forest Management Plan.

Soil Resources: The predominant soil types of the site are Dekalb and Gilpin Very Stony Loams, 0-15% slopes (DgC) along with Cookport and Ernest Very Stony Silt Loams, 0-8% Slopes (CuB). The soils are composed mainly of sandstone with some shale and siltstone found throughout. These soils are moderately deep and moderately well drained with slight equipment limitations becoming moderate with slope and primarily reflecting a relatively high water table. The site has good productivity for woodland management, with a site index of 65-75 for upland oaks. The productivity of the site will be protected by minimizing the haul roads and skid trails per the Department's Best Management Practices and rutting guidelines.

Recreation Resources: No developed recreational resources are located within the stand. The trailhead for the Asa Durst Hiking Trails will serve as the landing for the harvest and the proposal borders the initial section of the hiking trail for a short section. Impacts to the trail system will be minimal but the parking area will be occupied by logging equipment while the sale is active.

Management and Silvicultural Recommendations:

The proposed silvicultural treatment for this site is a commercial thinning given that competitive regeneration is present but suppressed and the overstory contains a significant component of undesirable growing stock (UGS). A crown thinning will be implemented, removing approximately 60 ft^2 of basal area per acre and reducing the residual basal area to 50-60 ft^2. Removals will be concentrated on undesirable growing stock in the medium sawtimber size class coupled with mature individual trees that will afford large canopy gaps and facilitate regeneration establishment in the understory. Estimated yield for the thinning is approximately 2,500 board feet per acre. Residual trees will benefit from the improved spacing post-harvest with increased vigor, growth rates and overall stand health. Retention will favor small and medium sawtimber trees of superior form and health to facilitate seedling establishment of the future stand. The process of the timber harvest should break the mid-story canopy of undesirable tall-woody interference and afford additional sunlight to the understory and established regeneration which is currently suppressed. A harvest retaining 50-60 ft^2 of retention is a bit aggressive, but the current stocking of the stand is relatively low as a result of the previous harvests. The 50-60 ft^2 retained should still result in a shade-intermediate post-harvest structure and allow the current oak seedlings to advance to the sapling phase. Post-harvest monitoring will be conducted to determine if the present regeneration has responded to the thinning and if additional regeneration has established on the site. The long-term goal for the site is to have a desirable cohort of regeneration occupying the site when a final removal harvest is conducted to release the regeneration as the new stand of trees.



Landing
Asa Durst Trails
Harvest Area
Savage River SF Boundary

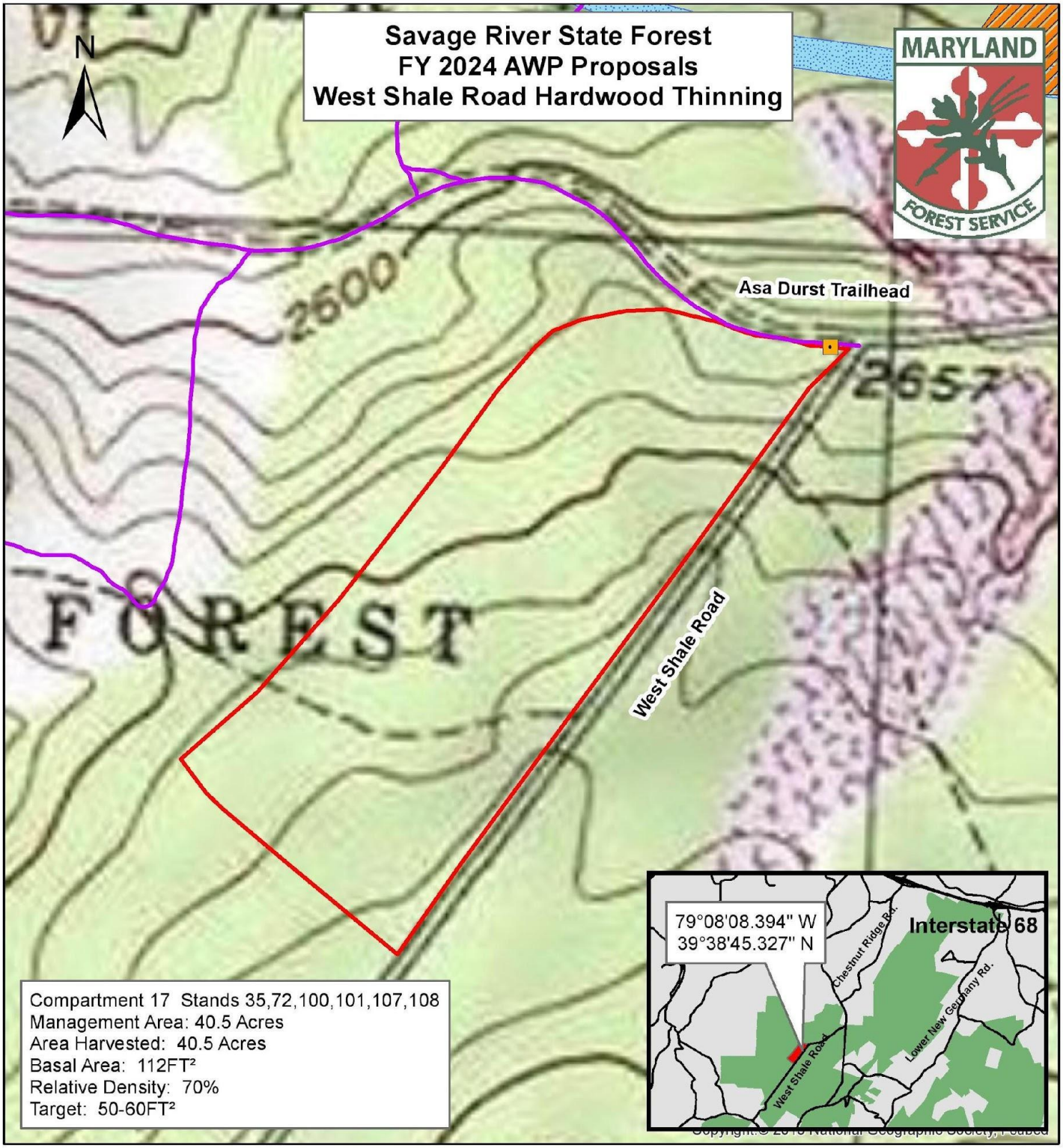
Old Growth Ecosystem Area
Ecologically Significant Areas
Old Growth
SRSF Wildlands
streams and 50' buffers
Wetlands of State Concern

1 inch = 417 feet

1:5,000

0 125 250 500 750 1,000 Feet

MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES



- Landing
- Asa Durst Trails
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1 inch = 417 feet

1:5,000

0 125 250 500 750 1,000 Feet

MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

COMPARTMENT 37 – Stands 3, 4 & 7 **FY-24**

Description / Resource Impact Assessment

Location: Location: This harvest proposal is accessible off the St. Johns Rock ORV Trail via an existing forest access located approximately 4 miles north of the trail intersection with Avilton-Lonaconing Road.

Forest Community Type and Condition: This 100-acre site contains a large sawtimber mixed oak stand that is approximately 94 years old with an average merchantable diameter of 17.5 inches. The overstory consists of northern red oak (47%), red maple (25%), black cherry (5%) and sugar maple (3%). The stocking in this stand is at 74% relative density with a basal area of 137 ft²/acre and 215 trees per acre. The stand is currently overstocked with unacceptable growing stock (UGS) accounting for approximately 40% of the basal area. Desirable oak regeneration is currently present in the understory, with a significant portion of that regeneration being established oak seedlings greater than three feet in height.

Interfering Elements: Interfering understory plant competition is sufficient to cause complications in desirable regeneration efforts with the majority of the site containing some form of significant interference. This interference coupled with the tight canopy of the mature overstory trees is significantly hindering regeneration establishment on the site. Tall woody interference occupies approximately 60% of the stand consisting primarily of striped maple, sweet birch and witch-hazel. Low woody interference occupies approximately 44% of the site, consisting primarily of striped maple and witch-hazel. Rhizomatous ferns and grass occupy only a minimal area of the stand (4%) due to the low levels of sunlight reaching the forest floor. Non-native invasive species were not observed within the stand.

In addition to interfering vegetation, the presence of white-tailed deer can have a negative influence on the regeneration success of the stand. Overbrowsing can facilitate failure of desirable seedling establishment and in extreme cases shift in species composition dominated by undesirable tree species. Field evaluations of the site estimated deer browse impact to be moderate. Monitoring of deer browse impacts will coincide with regeneration inventories to determine if additional measures need to be implemented to reduce deer herbivory and increase the likelihood of regeneration establishment on the site.

Historic Conditions: State Forest records indicate that the proposal area has not been harvested since state acquisition. The small adjacent stands to the east and west were regenerated in 2007. A larger stand north of the powerline was thinned in 1996. No evidence of fire was observed during the stand inventory.

Rare, Threatened and Endangered Species: No rare, threatened or endangered species have been identified on the site that would be impacted by the silvicultural prescription.

Habitats and Species of Management Concern: The management proposal borders the streamside management zone established along Staub Run. No harvest activities are to occur in this designated stream buffer and all BMP's will be enforced to protect the site quality and prevent sediment and erosion impacts.

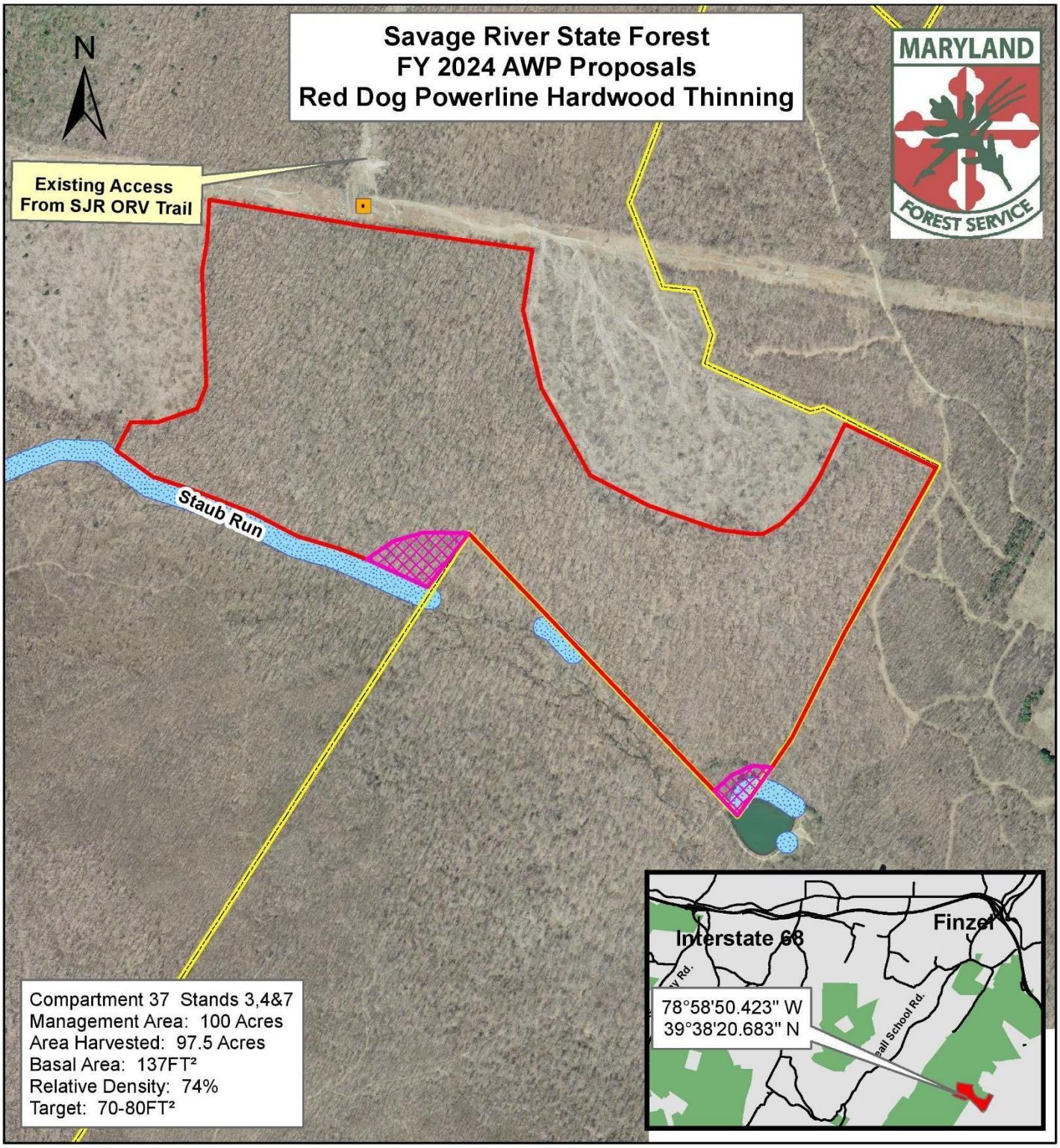
Water Resources: This stand drains southeast into Staub Run within the George's Creek Watershed. The proposed silvicultural treatments will be outside of all HCVF and stream buffer areas. No heavy equipment will be permitted within the protective riparian buffers of any streams or associated wetlands per the requirements set forth in the State Forest Sustainable Forest Management Plan.

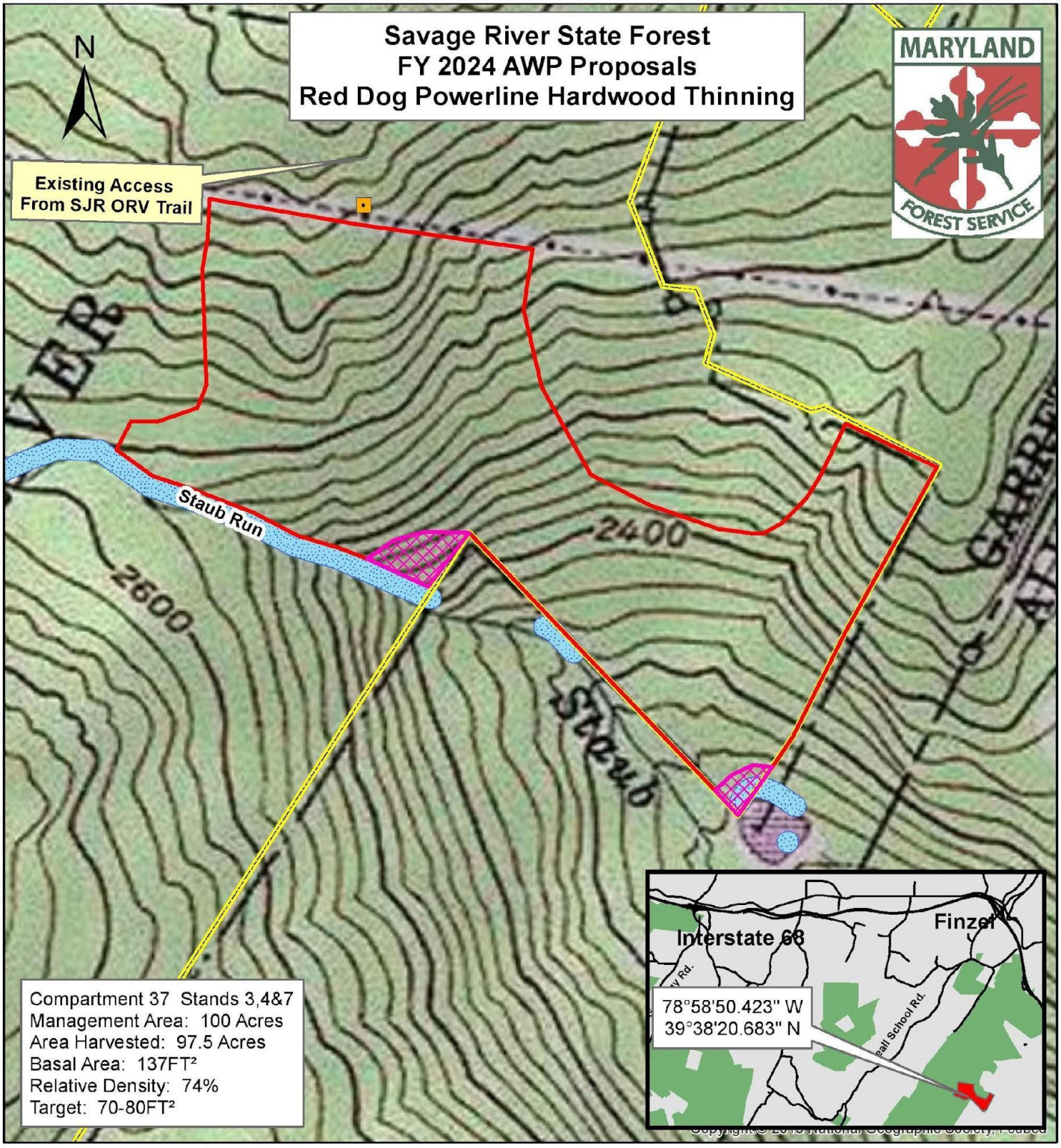
Soil Resources: The predominant soil types of this site are Cookport and Ernest Very Stony Silt Loams, 0-8% Slopes (CuB), Dekalb and Gilpin Very Stony Loams, 15-25% Slopes (DgD) and areas of Very Stony Land (VsD and VsF) scattered throughout. The soils are composed mainly of sandstone with some shale and siltstone found throughout. These soils range from moderately deep to somewhat shallow and include areas of exposed surface rock and boulders. Equipment restrictions are slight to moderate on steeper slopes and areas of exposed surface rock. The site has good productivity for woodland management, with a site index of 65-75 for upland oaks. The productivity of the site will be protected by minimizing the haul roads and skid trails per the Department's Best Management Practices and rutting guidelines.

Recreation Resources: The St. John's Rock ORV Trail access road will serve as the haul road for the harvest. The proposal area does not directly contain any of the ATV trails, but the main access road will be impacted by logging equipment while the harvest is active.

Management and Silvicultural Recommendations:

The proposed silvicultural treatment for this site is a commercial thinning given that competitive regeneration is present but suppressed, and the stand is overstocked. A crown thinning will be implemented, removing approximately 60 ft^2 of basal area per acre and reducing the residual basal area to 70-80 ft^2. Removals will be concentrated on undesirable growing stock in the medium sawtimber size class coupled with mature individual trees that will afford large canopy gaps and facilitate regeneration establishment in the understory. Estimated yield for the thinning is approximately 3,000-3,5000 board feet per acre. Residual trees will benefit from the improved spacing post-harvest with increased vigor, growth rates and overall stand health. Retention will favor small and medium sawtimber trees of superior form and health to facilitate seedling establishment of the future stand. Post-harvest monitoring will be conducted to determine if the present regeneration has responded to the thinning and if additional regeneration has established on the site. The long-term goal for the site is to have a desirable cohort of regeneration occupying the site when a final removal harvest is conducted to release the regeneration as the new stand of trees.


Savage River State Forest
FY 2024 AWP Proposals
Red Dog Powerline Hardwood Thinning
N
MARYLAND
FOREST SERVICE
Existing Access
From SJR ORV Trail
Staub Run
Compartment 37 Stands 3,4&7
Management Area: 100 Acres
Area Harvested: 97.5 Acres
Basal Area: 137FT²
Relative Density: 74%
Target: 70-80FT²
Interstate 68
Finzel
78°58'50.423" W
39°38'20.683" N
Landing
Buffers
Harvest Area
Savage River SF Boundary
Old Growth Ecosystem Area
Ecologically Significant Areas
Old Growth
SRSF Wildlands
streams and 50' buffers
Wetlands of State Concern
1 inch = 625 feet
1:7,500
0 200 400 800 1,200 1,600
Feet
MARYLAND
DEPARTMENT OF
NATURAL RESOURCES



- Landing
- Buffers
- Harvest Area
- Savage River SF Boundary
- Old Growth Ecosystem Area
- Ecologically Significant Areas
- Old Growth
- SRSF Wildlands
- streams and 50' buffers
- Wetlands of State Concern

1 inch = 625 feet

1:7,500

0 200 400 800 1,200 1,600 Feet

MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

Description / Resource Impact Assessment

Location: This proposal is located along the east side of St. John's Rock Road approximately 1 mile southeast of the intersection of St. John's Rock Road with Beall School Road and Old Frostburg Road. The harvest area is adjacent to St. John's Rock Road and immediately across from the entrance to the St. John's Rock ORV Trail.

Forest Community Type and Condition: This 64.5-acre site contains a medium sawtimber mixed oak stand that is approximately 90 years old with an average merchantable diameter of 15.8 inches. The overstory consists of red maple (34%), northern red oak (24%), white oak (13%), black cherry (7%) and eastern hemlock (5%). The stocking in this stand is at 85% relative density with a basal area of 135 ft²/acre and 292 trees per acre. The stand is currently overstocked with unacceptable growing stock (UGS) accounting for over 50% of the basal area. Desirable oak regeneration is currently present in the understory, with a significant portion of that regeneration being established oak seedlings greater than three feet in height. A sizeable sapling component of predominantly maple poles is also present in the understory.

Interfering Elements: Interfering understory plant competition is sufficient to cause complications in desirable regeneration efforts with the majority of the site containing some form of significant interference. This interference coupled with the tight canopy of the mature overstory trees is significantly hindering regeneration establishment on the site. Tall woody interference occupies approximately 93% of the stand consisting primarily of striped maple and witch-hazel. Low woody interference occupies approximately 70% of the site, consisting primarily of sweet birch and witch-hazel. Rhizomatous ferns occupy approximately 50% of the site with the concentration being in the previous thinning area from 1996.

In addition to interfering vegetation, the presence of white-tailed deer can have a negative influence on the regeneration success of the stand. Overbrowsing can facilitate failure of desirable seedling establishment and in extreme cases shift in species composition dominated by undesirable tree species. Field evaluations of the site estimated deer browse impact to be moderate. Monitoring of deer browse impacts will coincide with regeneration inventories to determine if additional measures need to be implemented to reduce deer herbivory and increase the likelihood of regeneration establishment on the site.

Historic Conditions: State Forest records indicate that the proposal area was partially thinned in 1996 while the large stand to the north was thinned in 2007. No evidence of fire was observed during the stand inventory.

Rare, Threatened and Endangered Species: No rare, threatened or endangered species have been identified on the site that would be impacted by the silvicultural prescription.

Habitats and Species of Management Concern: The management proposal contains the streamside management zone established along an unnamed tributary of Savage River. No harvest activities are to occur in this designated stream buffer and all BMP's will be enforced to protect the site quality and prevent sediment and erosion impacts. An existing crossing will be

evaluated for use and if a new stream crossing is needed the proper permits will be requested from MDE.

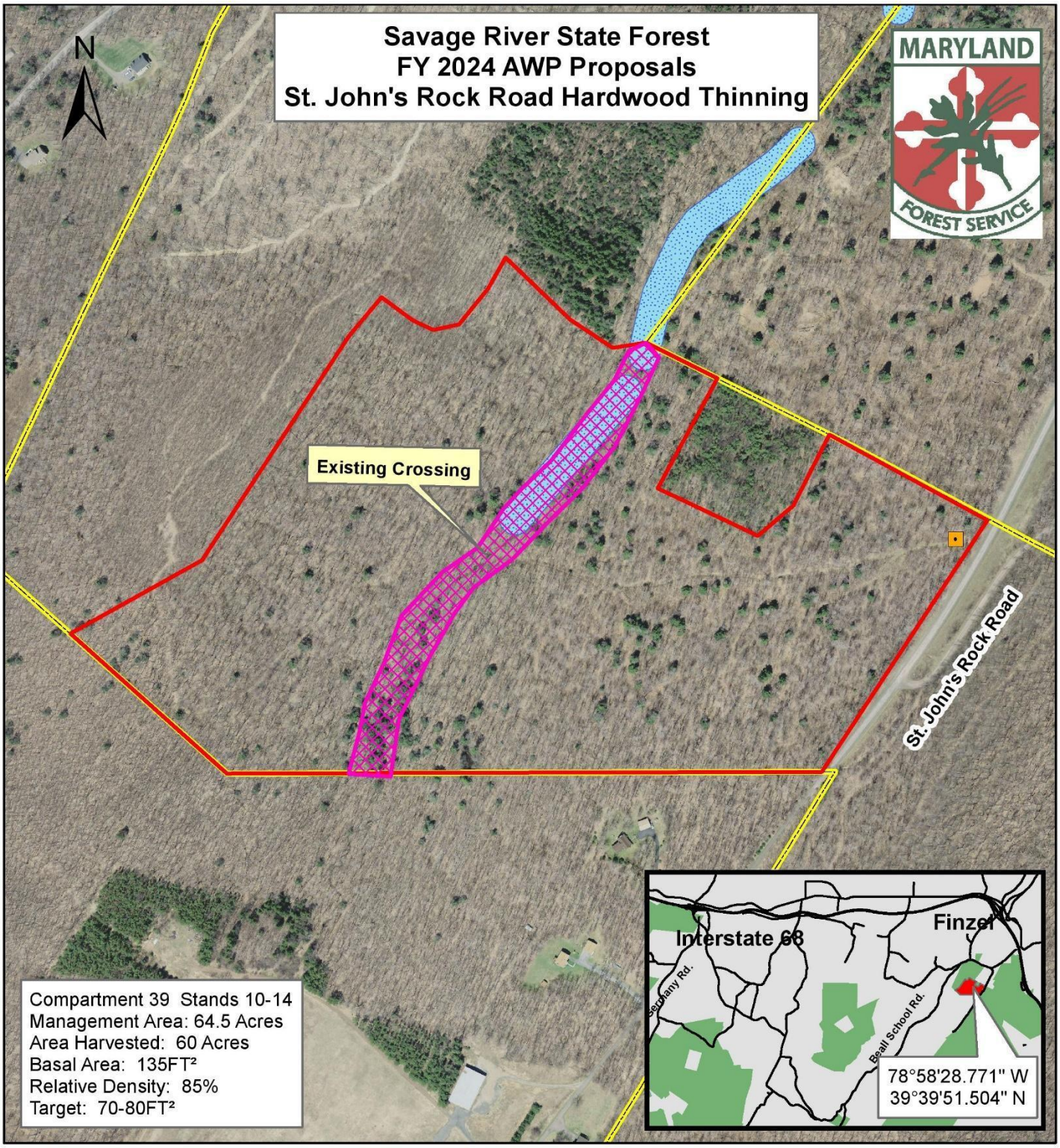
Water Resources: This stand drains north into Savage River within the Savage River Watershed. The proposed silvicultural treatments will be outside of all HCVF and stream buffer areas. No heavy equipment will be permitted within the protective riparian buffers of any streams or associated wetlands per the requirements set forth in the State Forest Sustainable Forest Management Plan.

Soil Resources: The predominant soil types of this site are Dekalb-Gilpin-Lehew Very Stony Loams, 15-25% Slopes (DcD) and Albrights Very Stony Silt Loam, 0-15% Slopes (AgC). These soils are composed mainly of sandstone with siltstone and spots of shale found throughout. These soils are moderately deep and range from well drained on upper slopes to somewhat poorly drained on the lower slopes. Equipment restrictions range from slight on upper slopes to moderate on lower slopes due to an elevated water table. The site has good productivity for woodland management, with a site index of 65-75 for upland oaks. The productivity of the site will be protected by minimizing the haul roads and skid trails per the Department's Best Management Practices and rutting guidelines.

Recreation Resources: No developed recreational resources are located within the stand. The access road for the stand is primarily utilized for hunting access. Hunting opportunities may be disrupted for the duration of the harvest and access to the site may be limited depending on the timing of the harvest.

Management and Silvicultural Recommendations:

The proposed silvicultural treatment for this site is a commercial thinning given that competitive regeneration is present but suppressed, and the stand is overstocked. A crown thinning will be implemented, removing approximately 60 ft² of basal area per acre and reducing the residual basal area to 70-80 ft². Removals will be concentrated on undesirable growing stock in the medium sawtimber size class coupled with mature individual trees that will afford large canopy gaps and facilitate regeneration establishment in the understory. Estimated yield for the thinning is approximately 3,000 board feet per acre. Residual trees will benefit from the improved spacing post-harvest with increased vigor, growth rates and overall stand health. Retention will favor small and medium sawtimber trees of superior form and health to facilitate seedling establishment of the future stand. The process of the timber harvest should break the mid-story canopy of undesirable tall-woody interference and afford additional sunlight to the understory and established regeneration which is currently suppressed. Post-harvest monitoring will be conducted to determine if the present regeneration has responded to the thinning and if additional regeneration has established on the site. The long-term goal for the site is to have a desirable cohort of regeneration occupying the site when a final removal harvest is conducted to release the regeneration as the new stand of trees.



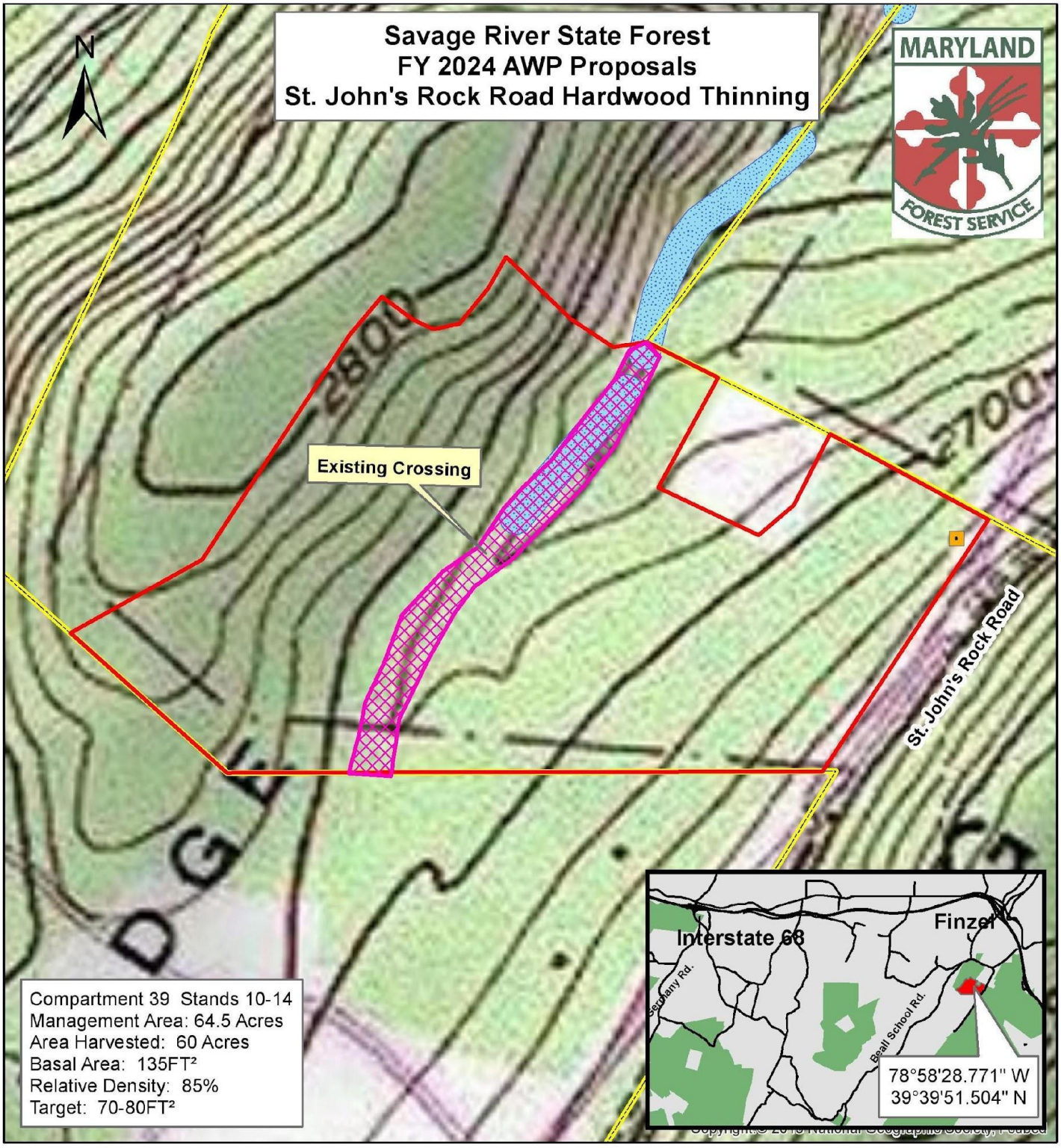
- Landing
- Buffer
- Harvest Area
- Savage River SF Boundary
- Old Growth Ecosystem Area
- Ecologically Significant Areas
- Old Growth
- SRSF Wildlands
- streams and 50' buffers
- Wetlands of State Concern

1 inch = 417 feet

1:5,000

0 125 250 500 750 1,000 Feet

MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES


Savage River State Forest
FY 2024 AWP Proposals
St. John's Rock Road Hardwood Thinning
N
MARYLAND
FOREST SERVICE
Existing Crossing
St. John's Rock Road
2800
2700
Compartment 39 Stands 10-14
Management Area: 64.5 Acres
Area Harvested: 60 Acres
Basal Area: 135FT²
Relative Density: 85%
Target: 70-80FT²
Interstate 68
Finzel
Sebrany Rd.
Beall School Rd.
78°58'28.771" W
39°39'51.504" N
Landing
Buffer
Harvest Area
Savage River SF Boundary
Old Growth Ecosystem Area
Ecologically Significant Areas
Old Growth
SRSF Wildlands
streams and 50' buffers
Wetlands of State Concern
1 inch = 417 feet
1:5,000
0 125 250 500 750 1,000
Feet
MARYLAND
DEPARTMENT OF
NATURAL RESOURCES

Operational Management and Budget Summary

A. Introduction
B. Funding Sources
C. Operational Cost

Submitted Budget Request

The submitted annual budget for Savage River State Forest totals $582,120.00. Of that amount, $433,117 goes to fund classified salaries and benefits for four employees; $42,488.00 funds two contractual employees and $106,515 for forest operations. Savage River has generated revenue that greatly exceeded its cost of operation for many years. The majority of revenue is obtained from the sale of forest products. Successful marketing in selling a mix of species and grades of wood products that the market most demands has contributed to substantial revenue generation over the years.

Operational Management

A. Introduction

This section of the plan is designed to cover the annual cost and revenues associated with the operational management of Savage River State Forest State Forest (SRSF). It is the Department's intent that all revenues generated from SRSF will be used to pay for the management and operation of the Forest. The numbers expressed in this section are only estimates and averages of annual expenses and revenues. These numbers will fluctuate each year based on management prescriptions, economic conditions and public use of the forest.

The following information is a breakdown of Revenues and Operational costs associated with SRSF. These figures are only estimates that are based on projected revenues and operational expenses. Yearly changes in timber markets and weather conditions can severely affect revenues. Operational expenses will vary from year to year and the numbers below are based on the budget request submitted for FY-2024.

B. SRSF Funding Sources: Estimated - *$582,120*

State Forests in Maryland are funded from several sources. The first source is the revenue generated by the forests. These funds are deposited in the Department of Natural Resources Forest or Park Reserve Fund and must be appropriated by the General Assembly through the annual budgeting process before being spent. The state forest budget is prepared approximately one year before the beginning of the fiscal year in which it will be spent. The budget then goes through the legislative approval/review process along with all other state operating budgets. Once adopted, the budget goes into effect July 1st, the first day of the fiscal year. Revenue generated by the state forest is designated special fund revenue. There may be special funds provided from the Department of Natural Resources Forest or Park Reserve Fund

that are not generated by this particular forest or there may be a lesser amount of special funds shown in the budget than was generated on this specific forest.

Another source of funding for the state forest is Recreational Trail Grants. These grants are competitive and are generally limited to $80,000 per year per grant. The source of this funding is the Federal Department of Transportation administered through the Maryland Department of Transportation, State Highway Administration. These funds are designated as reimbursable funds. Savage River State Forest has requested Recreational Trail Grant funds in the amount of $30,000.00 for personnel to maintain the newly developed 13-mile long St. John's Rock ORV Trail.

C. Operational Cost: Estimated Annual Expenses - *$567,313*

Operational expenses are those costs paid directly out of the Savage River State Forest operational budget. The Forest Manager prepares a proposed operational budget for the forest based on instructions provided approximately one year in advance of the fiscal year. The FY-2023 budget proposal was prepared in August of 2021.

▪ *Classified Salaries, Wages and Benefits: $433,117*

This cost is associated with Special Funds which are state tax revenues provided annually. These funds are used to pay the salaries of the Maryland classified employees responsible for the management, operation and maintenance of the State Forest along with our Western Region Trails Planner.

▪ *Contractual Staffing: $56,857*

This cost is associated with contractual staffing associated with operations of the state forest. Contractual personnel are responsible for conducting work outlined in the annual work plan, managing the daily activities on the forest, including boundary line work, maintenance of trails, forest roads, maintaining primitive campsites, a public shooting range, overlooks, wildlife habitat areas, and implementing all maintenance, recreational, silviculture and ecosystem restoration projects.

▪ *Land Operation Costs: $77,339*

This includes expenses for office and field equipment, vehicles, gates, gravel, signs, boundary paint, roadwork contracts and construction, trash removal from illegal dumping, boundary line work & surveying, tree planting, site preparation, control of invasive species, non-commercial thinning and other forest management practices. These costs vary greatly from year to year based on the activities identified in the Annual Work Plan.

D. Summary

This is the general breakdown on Revenues and Operational Costs associated with the Savage River State Forest. As described, these figures will vary from year to year. A more detailed picture on revenues and operational cost will be reviewed quarterly as the actual picture develops within implementation of Annual Work Plan and as operating budgets are approved

XII. Appendices
Appendix 1: Yellow Archangel Management Plan

Savage River State Forest Non-Native Invasive Plant Management:
Yellow Archangel (*Lamiastrum galeobdolon)*

Compartments 54 and 55; Dry Run Road

Description:

Dry Run, a tributary of the Savage River and Savage River Reservoir has been infested with the aggressively growing, non-native invasive perennial yellow archangel (*Lamiastrum galeobdolon).* The infestation of the area most likely originated from a private residence which was abandoned and the once maintained yard area was neglected, allowing the plant to escape to the adjacent property. After establishing a colony at the head of the watershed, the plant quickly enveloped the drainage from the private residence to the high water mark of the Savage River Reservoir, encompassing nearly 15 acres of forest land (See Invasive Species Management Map, p.20).

The plant grows quickly and out-competes native vegetation for resources. Yellow archangel spreads in several ways; by seed, by stem fragments, and by rooting at the nodes of the stem. This makes the plant very difficult to control and requires multiple applications of herbicide and diligent monitoring to limit the spread of the plant in natural forest environments. There is no projected end date for the herbicide treatments due to the persistent nature of this plant and efforts will be made annually, weather permitting, until the spread of the plant is contained or the plant is eradicated. Site monitoring will continue after the eradication of the plant for at least 5 years.

Treatment:

Ideal herbicide application time for this species occurs in March when the plant is beginning to grow and native plants are dormant. Weather conditions, particularly snow, have precluded the application of treatment in recent years. Approximately one acre of the drainage was treated from the bridge at the intersection of Savage River Road and Dry Run Road north for nearly 600’ in length and 75’ in width using a glyphosate based herbicide. All herbicide applications are conducted by registered employees working under the license of a certified applicator (Permit No. 30914-77618; Categories 2 and 6). The next treatment is scheduled for late March to early April of 2019 depending on weather conditions.

Treatment Schedule	
Monitoring	Chemical
April – September (Annually)	Early March to April (Annually)

Appendix 2: Japanese Knotweed Management Plan

Savage River State Forest Invasive Plant Management:
Japanese Knotweed (Fallopia japonica)

Description:

Several areas of Savage River State Forest have become infested with the invasive plant Japanese knotweed (*Fallopia japonica*). The number of treatment areas that have been delineated (See Invasive Species Management Map, p.19) continues to grow and those of manageable size will be treated and monitored to determine the most effective course of action for suppressing and ultimately eradicating the plant from these areas of the forest. Knotweed growth near the Savage River Reservoir has reached a critical level and will not be treated at this time due to the overwhelming investment that would be required to reach any reasonable level of control. As more effective treatment methods become available for large areas, this area will be reevaluated in regard to implementing a control plan.

Japanese knotweed is a fast-growing, herbaceous, rhizomatous perennial that forms dense patches and shades out all nearly all native species. The plant originated in East Asia and was imported as an ornamental in the late 1800's. Also called Mexican bamboo, fleece flower, hu zhang, the plant can grow to heights of greater than 10 feet and can inhabit almost any terrestrial environment whether shaded or in full sunlight. It is difficult to control due to the massive number of seeds that are produced and the rhizomatous adaptation of the plant. Multiple applications of mechanical and chemical control as well as diligent monitoring will be necessary to control the spread of the plant in natural forest environments. There is no projected end date for the herbicide treatments due to the persistent nature of this plant and efforts will be made annually until the spread of the plant is contained or eradicated from the identified areas.

Treatment:

The initial treatments occurred in the first week of June, 2011 at campsite 171 on Rabbit Hollow Road and on Fairview Road approximately one mile from the intersection with New Germany Road. Both locations have small populations of knotweed. Treatments in all areas of the forest involve a two-step process that includes both mechanical and chemical means of control.

First, the knotweed is cut and allowed to grow back for 8 weeks, reaching only 2 to 4 feet in height. Second, the new growth is treated with a 2% solution of glyphosate as the active ingredient. Treatment of these two areas has been repeated on a yearly basis and other areas of infestation that are considered manageable are added to the treatment regime as they are discovered.

Several new areas have been added to the management plan including three patches adjacent to Route 495, just north of the intersection with New Germany Road, two patches located on Westernport and Aaron's Run Road, just south of the High Rock Tower, one small patch adjacent to the Handicapped Hunter Road on West Shale Road and a large occurrence along New Germany Road located approximately one mile north of the state forest headquarters. Product application is/was conducted by registered employees working under the license of a certified applicator permit (Permit No. 30914-77618; Categories 2 and 6). The next scheduled mechanical treatment will occur June 2022 followed by the herbicide treatment in July 2022.

Treatment Schedule		
Monitoring	Mechanical	Chemical
March – June 2018	June 1, 2018	July 27, 2018
March – June 2019	June 1, 2019	July 27, 2019
March – June 2020	June 1, 2020*	July 27, 2020*
March – June 2021	June 1, 2021*	July 27, 2021*
March – June 2022	June 1, 2022*	July 27, 2022*
March – June 2023	June 1, 2023	As needed

* Treatment schedules may be altered/eliminated depending on the efficacy of the previous treatment applications.

Fiscal Year	*Planned Harvest*	*Bd. Ft. Vol. Harvested*	*Gross value*
2013	**488,000 BD FT**	**863,049**	**$161,910.00**
2014	**1,020,000 BD FT**	**521,526**	**$72,689.77**
2015	**1,020,000 BD FT**	**1,286,994**	**$275,126.44**
2016	**1,000,000 BD FT**	**941,285**	**$225,796.59**
2017	**1,200,000 BD FT**	**853,347**	**$248,487.50**
2018	**1,200,000 BD FT**	**1,152,074**	**$205,100.00**
2019	**1,200,000 BD FT**	**1,406,680**	**$401,481.00**
2020	**1,200,000 BD FT**	**1,161,591**	**$304,172.62**
2021	**1,200,000 BD FT**	**784,520**	**$289,280.00**
2022	**1,200,000 BD FT**	**1,354,237**	**$526,109.00**

Appendix 3: 10-Year Timber Harvest Summary Table

Appendix 4: 2022 SFI / FSC Audit Summary

Maryland Department of Natural Resources Forest Service

2022 Audit Summary

Date of Field Evaluation: 19-21 April 2022
Locations: Chesapeake Forest Lands / Pocomoke State Forest
Third Surveillance Audit
Tucker Watts, SFI Lead Auditor
Beth Jacqmain, FSC Lead Auditor

Sustainable Forestry Initiative

2022 Minor Corrective Action Request

SFI FM Std, Section 14.1.1: MINOR CAR
The summary audit report will be posted on the *SFI Inc.* website (www.sfiprogram.org) for public review.

Non-Conformity Evidence
The 2021 Surveillance Audit Report is not present on the SFI website, no confirmation that is has been submitted to SFI, Inc. was witnessed by the auditor. During the audit the 2021 Surveillance Audit Report was submitted to SFI, Inc. and posted to their website. Witnessed email and verified on SFI, Inc. website.

CAR has been closed.

Forest Stewardship Council

2022 Observation; no Corrective Action is required

Indicator 7.3.a Workers are qualified to properly implement the management plan; all forest workers are provided with sufficient guidance and supervision to adequately implement their respective components of the plan.

Observation Justification and/or Explanation
DNR could improve knowledge of and familiarity with FSC ESRA policies that have been adopted by MD DNR as part of implementing the new FSC pesticides policy.

Appendix 5: Interdisciplinary Team Review and Comments

Maryland Department of Natural Resources State Forests

Savage River State Forest
FY-23 Annual Work Plan
ID Team Review
In-person meeting not applicable – members provided electronic copy for review

ID Team Members: Leonard Cage (MDE), Seth Moessinger (Fisheries), Sean Nolan (SRSF), Erin Thomas (Parks), Dan Feller (WHS), George Eberling (MFS), Rick Latshaw (Wildlife), Walt May (NRP), Jack Perdue (MFS)

Overview / Discussion of FY 2023 Work Plan:
No field review sessions for silviculture proposals were requested from the I.D. Team. The only comment received regarding the silviculture proposals was from Wildlife and Heritage concerning the Red Dog Road Powerline Thinning:

***Heritage*: Dan Feller / Megan Zagorski**
Red Dog Road Powerline Thinning: Megan and I have reviewed the proposed FY24 SRSF Annual Work Plan proposed timber harvests and have but one recommendation. We would propose a 100' foot buffer along Staub Run to protect foraging and perching habitat for a highly rare dragonfly, the Southern Pygmy Clubtail (*Lanthus vernalis* - S2). This species is associated with small rocky heavily shaded forest streams. This species is often sympatric with brook trout as is the case here and would therefore an expanded buffer would provide optimal habitat protection for that species as well. This stream also feeds into a pond downstream that supports another rare dragonfly, the Chalk-fronted Skimmer (*Ladona julia* - S3).

***Fishing and Boating Services*: Seth Moessinger**
DNR Fishing and Boating Services - Freshwater Fisheries Division - Comments Regarding FY2024 Savage River State Forest Annual Work Plan

Text in bold represents FABS' comments/questions. Normal text is taken directly from the FY2024 Savage River State Forest Annual Work Plan to indicate which component a particular comment references.

General Comments: "The overall goal of the project is to enhance the quality and expand the variability of motorized recreational opportunities on public land and to provide desired trail user experiences on the trail so they will not look for those experiences off designated trail areas" (SRSF AWP, Page 17).

The project goal stated here provides a justification for DNR developed trails within the forest as a means of reducing unregulated ORV use. However, one of our concerns with the expansion of ORV trails is that additional opportunities will be created for local users to access existing or construct new trails on private property and attempt to intersect those

trails with the state system. It seems reasonable to assume that local ORV users do not typically haul vehicles to established entry points on state ground. Instead, when opportunities present themselves, they will utilize existing trail networks on private ground, finding or creating access points to state ground where possible. FABS staff have observed this occurring at other state managed ORV trail systems in the area. The net effect is a situation where unregulated ORV impacts continue locally with additional impacts created by out of town ORV users on sanctioned DNR trails. The end result is not necessarily a tempering of impacts across the landscape (as the goal implies), rather an expansion of impacts, which, in the case of ORV use, are significant. Data made available on the quantity, demographics, and county of residence of St. John's Rock trail users would be useful. Is this something the Forest Service (or other relevant DNR entity) currently has or could collect? The data would aid in determining if the goal - reduction of unregulated use - is being met or is simply serving as an unsubstantiated justification for trail development. In addition to a better understanding of the user group, FABS requests information on current and planned levels of enforcement. As stated above within the SRSF AWP, it is a common goal of the agency that where ORV use is permitted it is restricted to designated trails. Is increased funding provided to NRP for frequent policing of the St. John's Rock trail? With what frequency do NRP officers patrol St. John's Rock trail? Is there funding available for the hire of trail stewards or other related staff whose presence would ensure reasonable levels of compliance? If not currently in place, a formalized plan for consistent and effective enforcement is recommended.

"This proposed project would be funded through the Maryland ORV Excise Tax fund (SRSF AWP, Page 17).

The existence of an excise tax suggests a stable revenue stream for expansion of ORV trails on state forest lands (and other state lands). This means that as an agency we can expect a growing number of proposals for trail development in the years to come. FABS recognizes that state forest managers utilize ID teams for the review of Annual Work Plans rather than the standard internal review process and that this system has worked well to simplify review. From information provided by Forest Service staff, the reason behind this parallel process is related to the frequency and quantity of timber harvests that occur annually within the larger state forests. This makes sense. However, given the significant impacts associated with the addition of permanent infrastructure, such as ORV trails, FABS feels that trail development projects warrant a more detailed internal review (at the concept stage) through the standard internal review process and in a manner consistent with DNR's Internal Review Policy for Category II projects. This is particularly the case given instances at other state forests (PGSF) where unanimous ID team recommendations to relocate (not cancel) a proposed trail appear to have been ignored. Good faith efforts by the Forest Service to incorporate the recommendations of colleagues with resource specific expertise need to be demonstrated. DNR's established Internal Review Policy places responsibility on the lead unit of a proposed project to achieve consensus.

Recreation Proposal Specific Comments:

Component 1: Explore options to modify existing timber harvest infrastructure to expand motorized recreational opportunities within the SJR ORV Trail Network.

The map associated with Component 1 indicates that modifications to existing timber harvest infrastructure are to be explored within the Little Savage River watershed. As a general rule, FABS opposes expansion of ORV trails within the Savage River watershed (past example: FABS supported efforts to close Poplar Lick ORV trail due to negative impacts to water quality). The watershed is one of only a few Maryland strongholds for eastern brook trout and one of the largest in the Mid-Atlantic. It is the most intact watershed of its size in the state. FABS collected data indicates that the Little Savage River is a major contributor of cold water to the mainstem Savage River and provides key habitat for migratory brook trout seeking thermal refuge when summer temperature conditions within the Savage River are elevated. Furthermore, it supports one of the highest densities of brook trout within the drainage. Accordingly, protecting the long-term integrity of the stream is a continued priority for FABS. The state's Brook Trout Management Plan highlights several stressors that negatively impact brook trout, a species of greatest conservation need, and a focal species of the Chesapeake Bay Agreement. Among others, stressors affecting brook trout include: sedimentation, thermal pollution, and habitat fragmentation. FABS fully recognizes and supports the important role that the Forest Service plays in promoting/implementing riparian buffers throughout the state. FABS also applauds the Forest Service's efforts to work with non-profit partners to address fish passage barriers by improving existing road infrastructure in the SRSF. These areas of natural partnership and collaboration should be celebrated. FABS also recognizes the Forest Service's mandate to create a diverse set of recreational opportunities and to manage the forest as a timber resource. However, the potential impacts/pitfalls of increased ORV trail development are difficult to ignore, particularly when reliable funding through the excise tax will likely increase pressure for continued development. Photos on page 23 of the AWP provide a clear example of how trail development transforms low impact trails/roads into undeniable sources of erosion. ORV trails elsewhere in the state also provide evidence of erosion even when streams are purposefully avoided during design. Commonly, overland flow/spring runoff follows a path of least resistance down a developed ORV trail, rutting roads and creating opportunities for uncontrolled soil loss and sediment deposition into receiving waters. Even with the use of BMPs, these impacts are difficult to control. The added challenge of controlling user behavior, when operating an ORV, makes ORV trails a risk to the long-term integrity of brook trout habitat within proposed areas. Given that component 1 is proposing exploration at this stage, FABS requests continued involvement in the planning process that should include site visits prior to any formalized plan. FABS will submit more detailed comments about the project at that time.

Component 2: Evaluate the current quality and delivered user experience of the existing SJR ORV Trails to identify opportunities for improvement using professional trail builders and utilizing the latest trail building techniques.

FABS supports the proposed efforts to improve user experience on existing trails. These efforts should necessarily incorporate improvements to existing road surfaces to reduce runoff. Because users likely enjoy more complex (rough) road surfaces, there is the potential that the creation of roughness could increase erosional forces as water runs down existing roadways. Upgrades should necessarily plan for this and construct additional turnouts that allow for overland flow and associated sediments to infiltrate prior to entering defined channels (intermittent or perennial). Where deficient, adequate crowning of surfaces should also be pursued to avoid the development of scoured flow paths down existing roads/trails. FABS fully supports the use of excise tax funds to increase the quality of user experience on existing trails with an attention to minimizing negative impacts related to erosion.

Component 3: Develop 5 to 6 miles of natural surface singletrack for motorcycles and electric bicycles, which will enhance and diversify the current recreational opportunities that exist within the SJR motorized trail network.

New single track trail development for motorcycles/e-bikes is proposed within the Georges Creek watershed - specifically Koontz Run and Winebrenner Run. Both streams support reproducing populations of brook trout, and, accordingly, are not ideal locations for ORV trail development. Given the known impacts of sedimentation on the species (i.e. reduction in availability of spawning habitat and reduction in habitat for aquatic insects, a food source), FABS requests close coordination with Forest Service staff as more specific plans are developed. This should include site visits. Koontz Run is a drinking water supply for the town of Lonaconing. The town has experienced recent problems with water quality associated with their existing infrastructure, resulting in a boil water order for several weeks and a visit by Governor Moore earlier this year. The town is planning to invest heavily in water infrastructure upgrades over the coming decade. A DNR decision to increase trail impacts beyond Red Dog Road in the headwaters of a municipal water supply needs to be carefully considered. This could easily be construed (and justifiably) as a lack of concern for the drinking water quality of a community defined by the state as underserved (https://maryland.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=4258d3e39f6a47fca146b854c0f01e31). Water quality should be front and center in management strategies for DNR lands within municipal water supplies. Infrastructure development of this nature only has the potential to degrade water quality.

Margraff Plantation Trail Expansion

The intent of this project is to revitalize approximately 5.5 miles of existing trail and develop another 5 miles of new natural surface shared use singletrack.

The map provides several polygons highlighting general areas where 5.5 miles of single track trail development will occur. Existing trails are largely situated within lower gradient areas atop hills at the Margraff Plantation. Proposed areas for new development in Zone 1, 2 and 3 appear much steeper in gradient. FABS requests a site visit as more detailed proposals are developed. Bear Creek is a stronghold for brook trout, so we need to ensure

that proposed trail locations do not cause significant impacts. Generally, FABS views well planned mixed use (hiking/biking) trails to be less negatively impactful than ORV/motorized vehicle trails.

Meadow Mountain Trail Improvements

FABS supports efforts to improve critical drainage along the trail. Improvements should necessarily include BMPs to allow overland runoff to infiltrate prior to entering defined channels (intermittent or perennial).

Ecosystem Restoration / Protection Projects Comments:

A. Non-Native Invasive Species (NNIS) Control Japanese knotweed

FABS supports any efforts to control Japanese Knotweed and other invasives within riparian areas to ensure continued functioning of riparian buffers as generators of shade and cold water conditions.

Timber Harvest Proposal Comments:

COMPARTMENT 37 – Stands 3, 4 & 7
Red Dog Powerline Hardwood Thinning

Maps indicate that this timber harvest is to be carried out right up to the established buffer of Staub Run. The stream supports a reproducing brook trout population. BMPs should be carefully implemented and enforced to prevent sedimentation. FABS does not support future conversion of newly established roads/skids into ORV trails at this location.

COMPARTMENT 39 – Stands 10-14
St. John Rock Hardwood Thinning

Maps indicate that this timber harvest is to be carried out right up to the established buffer of an unnamed tributary to the Savage River. The stream supports a reproducing brook trout population. In 2022, FABS staff visually observed sediment loading into this stream directly resulting from a timber harvest on private lands. Additional impacts from harvests on state lands should be minimized, through BMP implementation and enforcement, to the greatest extent possible. This will help to avoid consecutive years of disturbance. A downstream parcel was recently purchased by the City of Frostburg to protect drinking water quality. Subsequent tree plantings were implemented with Forest Service funding and technical support to further enhance water quality. Accordingly, FABS does not support future conversion of newly established roads/skids into ORV/motorized vehicle trails at this location.

Jeff Simcoe responses to FABS comments on SRSF FY24 AWP comments:
General Comments:

“The overall goal of the project is to enhance the quality and expand the variability of motorized recreational opportunities on public land and to provide desired trail user experiences on the trail so they will not look for those experiences off designated trail areas”.

The intent of the stated project goal is focused on keeping users on the defined trails within the St. John's Rock trail system. The proposed project does not attempt to solve the broader issue of illegal entry onto public land from private property. That issue could be addressed through user education, increased monitoring of public land boundaries, and enforcement of local laws. With the establishment of the Garrett and Allegany County ATV Road Permit Program that currently allows permit holders to travel up to 2 miles (soon to be 5 miles) on county roads to access trails, users have a legal option to access public land without the need to build new access points.

Again, the goal of the St. John's Rock trail expansion proposal is not to solve the broader issue of unregulated ORV use on private property. A large consortium of partners with broad stakeholder involvement could help address that issue. The Maryland OHV Alliance is actively working on ORV user education with the goal of being an advocate for sustainable public and private OHV recreation areas. We've also been engaged with Tread Lightly, a national motorized user group nonprofit focused on promoting outdoor ethics to heighten individuals' sense of good stewardship.

In regard to enforcement, there is NRP representation on the SRSF ID Team. Comments specifically addressing the St. John's Rock trail proposal were not submitted. NRP would be the best unit to comment on enforcement efforts.

“This proposed project would be funded through the Maryland ORV Excise Tax fund".

Yes, there is stable funding available for motorized trail construction and maintenance.

The trail projects submitted for AWP review will go through the ID Team review process, which includes public input, as well as the standard DNR internal project review process once decisions are made on final alignment or alternatives are agreed upon. In regard to the PGSF project that was referenced, a unanimous ID Team decision was not reached, the consensus was to continue through the process to review the originally proposed area, including a requested field visit, as it satisfied the intent of the overall goal of the larger phased project. Knowing that there was an alternative that could be explored if the original project area was abandoned.

Recreation Proposal Specific Comments:
Component 1, 2, and 3

To address these comments a much broader conversation focused on sustainable trail construction would need to be arranged. Communicating fisheries specific concerns and potential impacts are appreciated. If alternative areas exist within the St. John's Rock property, they should be explored.

Margraff Plantation Trail Expansion:

As a next step, a preliminary trail alignment will be proposed using Bear Creek as the only identified negative control point. Any proposed trail alignment will be located outside of the identified ESA. As stated in the proposal, the design will employ a "rolling contour concept" to passively manage drainage and erosion, to limit environmental impact, and reduce maintenance intervals. A field visit and DNR internal review will be part of the process of identifying the final trail alignment. Thank you again for providing an opportunity to respond to these comments submitted by FABS. I recognize the important work that FABS does to protect Maryland's aquatic resources and appreciate the opportunity to collaborate on these projects.

Jeff Simcoe, MD Forest Service, Western Region Trail Planner

Appendix 6: Citizens Advisory Committee Review and Comments

Maryland Department of Natural Resources State Forests

Savage River State Forest
FY-23 Annual Work Plan
Citizen's Advisory Committee
In-person scheduled December 6, 2022 @ 6:00 PM

Advisory Committee Members: Mark Diehl, Kevin Dodge, Mike Dreisbach, Steve Green, Rusty Leonard, Michael Minnick,

Meeting Attendees:
Sean Nolan
Michael Johnson
Kevin Dodge
Rusty Leonard
Mark Diehl
Mike Dreisbach
Michael Minnick

Appendix 7: Public Comments

Maryland Department of Natural Resources Forest Service
State Forests Annual Work Plan FY 2023

Public Comments for Savage River State Forest

Savage River State Forest Public Comments Received for the FY24 Annual Work Plan

Dear Maryland Forest Service.

We are long time Maryland residents and avid birders who oppose the expansion of the off-highway vehicle (OHV) trail at St. John's Rock in Savage River State Forest. We also oppose such OHV trails in other State Forests such as Chesapeake and Pocomoke State Forests, Greenridge State Forest, and Potomac and Garret State Forests. OHVs are noisy and interfere with all other activities permitted in our Maryland Forests, such as hunting, fishing, birding, nature observation, and hiking. Stream crossings on such trails cause sediment disturbance, and oil residue pollution. Please do not expand OHV trails in State Forests.

Maureen and David Harvey

To whom it may concern,

I am a hiker, cross country skier, and mountain biker. I am a lifetime resident of Garrett County Maryland. I'm writing in support of the proposed mountain biking trails included in the FY 2024 Annual Work Plans of the Green Ridge, Savage River, and Potomac-Garrett State Forests. I am in favor of six new miles of singletrack between Herrington Manor and Swallow Falls State Parks, five new miles of new singletrack in Savage River Forest, and an upgrade of the 5.5-mile Margraff Plantation loop, as proposed in the annual work plans.

I cannot express how grateful I am for the recent single track trails that have been built in Deep Creek State Park and the trail built last summer in the state forest near Herrington Manor. Riding these tails have become very important to me personally to maintain my physical and mental health. I am grateful for the trails we have and very excited about the prospect of development of several more miles of trail. As a frequent user of the old and new trails between Herrington Manor and Swallow Falls, I am particularly excited about the proposed route of the six new miles of singletrack in this area. I see great potential in these six new miles to link up existing trails and dirt roads so that users can enjoy longer rides without having to compete with automobile traffic on paved county roads. I am sure the prospect of longer rides will be very attractive to visitors. Western Maryland is becoming an increasingly attractive destination for mountain bikers because of places like Deep Creek Lake and the new state forest trails near Herrington Manor. More mountain bike and multi-use trails in the region could make Western Maryland a premiere riding area for locals and visitors from other states. I know proponents of outdoor recreation tourism like to point out the benefits to local economies when we are asking for support for our favorite activity. I can offer only my personal experience to support this. Several times a year I will drive up to 17 hours away from home or fly across the country just to ride purpose built mountain bike trails. When I visit these areas, I patronize hotels, restaurants, grocery stores, and other local businesses.

I am one of several coaches of the youth mountain bike team Garrett County Composite which is part of the National Interscholastic Cycling Association (NICA) Maryland league. Our team focuses on developing community and respect for each other and our environment. We teach that it is a privilege to have and use public trails for mountain biking. We respect and welcome other trail users and teach our kids to take care of our trails. New trails provide more training areas for our student athletes.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Annual Work Plans. I look forward to seeing more mountain bike trails in Western Maryland.

Gary B. Cooper Jr.

Dear Maryland Forest Service Team,

We live in an increasingly noisy world where areas which are quiet are at a premium. Maryland's state forests are rare havens of peace which are open to the public. These forests are used for hiking, horseback riding, birding and hunting. The use of off highway vehicles (OHVs) destroys the peace and tranquility. This one class of user sacrifices the peace and quiet for all other users. I was therefore saddened to learn that there are plans to expand OHV trails at St. John's Rock in Savage River State Park. I urge you not to allow this expansion for the sake of all the other users of the State Forests.

Thank you for considering my plea.

Robin G. Todd PhD
Conservation Committee Chair
Maryland Ornithological Society

I am a mountain biker and Maryland resident who enjoys visiting the western part of the state for its unique outdoor experiences. I'm writing in support of the proposed mountain biking trails included in the FY 2024 Annual Work Plans of the Green Ridge, Savage River, and Potomac-Garrett State Forests. I am in favor of six new miles of singletrack between Herrington Manor and Swallow Falls State Parks, five new miles of new singletrack in Savage River Forest, and an upgrade of the 5.5-mile Margraff Plantation loop, as proposed in the annual work plans. Western Maryland is becoming an increasingly attractive destination for mountain bikers because of places like Deep Creek Lake and Herrington Manor. More mountain bike and multi-use trails in the region could make Western Maryland a premiere riding area for locals and visitors from other states. Outdoor recreation tourism helps bolster the local economy. Visitors like myself also patronize hotels, restaurants, grocery stores, and other local businesses. In 2019, tourism brought in over $25 million in direct consumer taxes for Western Maryland.

Green Ridge State Forest, the largest state forest property in all of Maryland, has only 12 miles of trail open to mountain bikes versus over 50 miles of hiking trails. The existing mountain bike trail also needs some repairs. Please upgrade the current trail in Green Ridge and add more riding

opportunities, either by making more Green Ridge trails multi-use or adding new bike trail. These construction and maintenance proposals will expand ride options in the region, provide a well-rounded ride experience for mountain bikers of all abilities, and help alleviate crowded trails especially at peak season.

Additional mountain biking trails is an investment in youth sports. New trails will provide more training areas for student athletes involved in the National Interscholastic Cycling Association (NICA) Maryland league. This league has over 700 student athletes, 250 coaches statewide. More trails mean more opportunities for all trail users.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Annual Work Plans. I look forward to seeing more mountain bike trails in Western Maryland.

Jacob Mullis, Germantown, MD

I am a Garrett County resident and frequent visitor to Savage River State Forest trails, especially Meadow Mountain. I appreciate and value these natural resources and want to protect them so that I and others can continue to enjoy them for hiking, biking, birding, botanizing, and cross-country skiing.

I respectfully submit the following comments on the FY 2024 Annual Work Plan for Savage River State Forest:

I oppose the expansion of the OHV trails through the state and especially at St. John's Rock in Savage River State Forest. OHV's interfere with all other recreational activities due to their noise, pollution, sediment disturbance, and resulting trash. The current resources don't seem to be fully tilitized so further expansion is unwarranted. Efforts should focus on improving the trails that already exist. This is consistent with stated Maryland Forest Service recreational goals.

I do support the expansion of mountain biking and hiking trails. All trail expansion should involve rigorous oversight in order to mitigate soil disturbance and reduce risk of invasive plant introduction through contaminated materials. This is consistent with the current Land Management Projects and Non-Native Invasive Species (NNIS) INventory and Control Work.

Christine Campe-Price

Greetings Maryland State Forests DNR Team,

I am a mountain biker and Director/Head Coach for the Velociraptors - Eastern Panhandle Composite Youth Mountain Bike Team in the West Virginia Interscholastic Cycling League affiliated with the National Interscholastic Cycling Association. My team has families from Maryland, Pennsylvania, Virginia, and West Virginia. My friends, myself, and our team enjoy

visiting the western part of Maryland for its unique outdoor experiences. I'm writing in support of the proposed mountain biking trails included in the FY 2024 Annual Work Plans of the Green Ridge, Savage River, and Potomac-Garrett State Forests. I am in favor of six new miles of singletrack between Herrington Manor and Swallow Falls State Parks, five new miles of new singletrack in Savage River Forest, and an upgrade of the 5.5-mile Margraff Plantation loop, as proposed in the annual work plans.
Western Maryland is becoming an increasingly attractive destination for mountain bikers because of places like Deep Creek Lake and Herrington Manor. More mountain bike and multi-use trails in the region could make Western Maryland a premiere riding area for locals and visitors from other states. Outdoor recreation tourism helps bolster the local economy. Visitors like myself also patronize hotels, restaurants, grocery stores, and other local businesses. In 2019, tourism brought in over $25 million in direct consumer taxes for Western Maryland.

Green Ridge State Forest, the largest state forest property in all of Maryland, has only 12 miles of trail open to mountain bikes versus over 50 miles of hiking trails. The existing mountain bike trail also needs some repairs. Please upgrade the current trail in Green Ridge and add more riding opportunities, either by making more Green Ridge trails multi-use or adding new bike trail. These construction and maintenance proposals will expand ride options in the region, provide a well-rounded ride experience for mountain bikers of all abilities, and help alleviate crowded trails especially at peak season.

Additional mountain biking trails are an investment in youth sports. New trails will provide more recreational adventure and training areas for student athletes from West Virginia, Virginia, Pennsylvania, and Maryland including the Garrett County Composite team which is part of the National Interscholastic Cycling Association (NICA) Maryland league.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Annual Work Plans. I look forward to seeing more mountain bike trails in Western Maryland.

Michael "Sean" Godsey

I am a mountain biker and Virginia resident who enjoys visiting the western part of Maryland for its unique outdoor experiences. I'm writing in support of the proposed mountain biking trails included in the FY 2024 Annual Work Plans of the Green Ridge, Savage River, and Potomac-Garrett State Forests.

I am in favor of six new miles of singletrack between Herrington Manor and Swallow Falls State Parks, five new miles of new singletrack in Savage River Forest, and an upgrade of the 5.5-mile Margraff Plantation loop, as proposed in the annual work plans.

Green Ridge State Forest has only 12 miles of trail open to mountain bikes versus over 50 miles of hiking trails. The existing mountain bike trail also needs some repairs. Please upgrade the current trail in Green Ridge and add more riding opportunities, either by making more Green Ridge trails multi-use or adding new bike trail. These construction and maintenance proposals

will expand ride options in the region, provide a well-rounded ride experience for mountain bikers of all abilities, and help alleviate crowded trails especially at peak season.

Additional mountain biking trails are also an investment in youth sports. New trails will provide more training areas for student athletes including the Garrett County Composite team which is part of the National Interscholastic Cycling Association (NICA) Maryland league.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Annual Work Plans. I look forward to seeing more mountain bike trails in Western Maryland.

Gabriel Jahn

I'm writing in support of the proposed mountain biking trails included in the FY 2024 Annual Work Plans of the Green Ridge, Savage River, and Potomac-Garrett State Forests. I am in favor of six new miles of singletrack between Herrington Manor and Swallow Falls State Parks, five new miles of new singletrack in Savage River Forest, and an upgrade of the 5.5-mile Margraff Plantation loop, as proposed in the annual work plans.

Western Maryland is becoming an increasingly attractive destination for mountain bikers because of places like Deep Creek Lake and Herrington Manor. More mountain bike and multi-use trails in the region could make Western Maryland a premiere riding area for locals and visitors from other states. Outdoor recreation tourism helps bolster the local economy. Visitors like myself also patronize hotels, restaurants, grocery stores, and other local businesses. In 2019, tourism brought in over $25 million in direct consumer taxes for Western Maryland.

Green Ridge State Forest, the largest state forest property in all of Maryland, has only 12 miles of trail open to mountain bikes versus over 50 miles of hiking trails. The existing mountain bike trail also needs some repairs. Please upgrade the current trail in Green Ridge and add more riding opportunities, either by making more Green Ridge trails multi-use or adding new bike trail. These construction and maintenance proposals will expand ride options in the region, provide a well-rounded ride experience for mountain bikers of all abilities, and help alleviate crowded trails especially at peak season.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Annual Work Plans. I look forward to seeing more mountain bike trails in Western Maryland.

Adam Linstedt, Pittsburgh, PA and Davis, WV

OLD-GROWTH FOREST NETWORK
Connecting people with nature by creating a national network of protected, mature, native forests

PO Box 21
Easton, MD 21601
oldgrowthforest.net
info@oldgrowthforest.net

Dear Secretary of Natural Resources for the Maryland Department of Natural Resources,

Thank you for giving us an opportunity to comment on the 2024 Annual Work Plans for our Maryland State Forests; however, we think the opportunity to comment should be better advertised. There should be an email list one could sign on to receive the plans when they are released.

Given the global, national, and local decline in biodiversity; and the global, national, and local increase in atmospheric greenhouse gases, we feel that our public state forests should remain standing, as much as possible, to counteract both threats. For instance, Washington State Forests are slated to receive income from carbon storage instead of only from wood fiber. We think Maryland should consider a similar adjustment. For more information see this article from the Washington State Department of Natural Resources.

We are strongly opposed to the harvesting of 94-year-old forests (Potomac-Garrett State Forests and Savage Forest) and a 112-year-old forest dominated by large red oaks and tulip poplars in Savage State Forest. We have concerns about other stands slated for cutting, as well, and will send these specific comments separately.

We are disturbed that our MD DNR Department of Forestry calls native species such as red maple, sweetgum, black birch, witch hazel, striped maple, and American beech 'undesirable' and sprays them with herbicides and/or mow them down. Many of our wildlife species, such as Luna moths, cardinals, and warblers (to name a few) depend on these species. We ask for a more holistic approach on our state lands.

According to FSC certification standards (6.3.) "Ecological functions and values shall be maintained intact, enhanced, or restored, including: Forest regeneration and succession." We detect some deficiencies in how this standard is met. For instance, industry-based 'stocking standards' are used to label forests as 'overstocked' and therefore in need of harvest. But our native forest condition, if it were restored, would surpass these stocking standards; therefore, they should not be used as a guideline.

(continued on next page)

Also, there seems to be an emphasis on creating early successional habitat. While early successional habitat is important, it should be kept in mind that: 1) Natural events such as wind storms and ice storms will continually create early successional habitat, 2) Estimates for the amount of early successional habitat naturally occurring in Maryland (pre-1600) are approximately 1-2% (more research is needed), and 3) If it is decided that more early successional habitat is needed it should not be created from our mature forests, instead it should be maintained in already young or disturbed forests.

For the forests,

Dr. Joan Maloof
Founder of the Old-Growth Forest Network

Tom Horton
Environmental Studies Professor at Salisbury University

Matt Pluta
Choptank Riverkeeper, ShoreRivers, Inc.

Joy Chambers
Old-Growth Forest Network County Coordinator for Anne Arundel County
Trustee of Annapolis Opera
Trustee of The Mitchel Art Museum of St. John's College

Patricia G. Tice
MS Field Ecology, Rutgers University
"Hemlock Forest Communities in Northern New Jersey" 1976

Deborah Boggs

Lillie Olson

Catherine Beise

Kayla Green

Ron Boyer

Michael Broder

Monique Mehring

MARYLAND ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY

April 21, 2023

Maryland Department of Natural Resources
580 Taylor Avenue
Tawes State Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401
Email:
stateforests.dnr@maryland.gov

Re. 2024 Draft Work Plans for Maryland's Four State Forests

On behalf of the Maryland Ornithological Society (MOS), I wish to thank DNR for the opportunity to submit comments on the four 2023 draft work plans for Maryland's state forests. Our comments are as follows.

Eastern Region (Chesapeake/Pocomoke State Forest)
We commend the authors on the wealth of information in this plan, including vegetation types and the history of these forests.

We approve of the continuing measures to enhance habitat favored by forest interior birds (FIDs). We are pleased to see that bird watching is mentioned under recreational activities. We are glad to see that there is continued focus on the conservation of the Delmarva Fox Squirrel, but are concerned that proposed monitoring of bees and butterflies appears to have been dropped, aside from monitoring of Lupin and Frosted Elfin in the Furnace Tract (page 51). We applaud the plan for its inclusion of control of invasive species of plants, notably Phragmites.

We oppose the suggested expansion of off-highway vehicle (OHV) access to Eastern Region State Forests. MOS is not opposed to OHVs in principle. We use them ourselves. But while visiting public lands in other states, MOS members have seen the impacts of OHVs against wildlife habitat. They witnessed riparian vegetation beaten down by the passage of OHVs. They also witnessed a stream polluted by engine oil where OHVs crossed and re-crossed the stream. The noise of OHVs spoils the quiet enjoyment of forests by hunters, fishermen, birders, and other wildlife enthusiasts. We believe that expanded OHV access would be exclusive of other public users the Eastern Forests.

Greenridge State Forest
We would have preferred to see a more detailed plan. Bird watching is not mentioned at all as a recreational activity. Despite this omission, Green Ridge State Forest is visited by birders for its notable birds, as evidenced by having no less than fourteen eBird hotspots. We ask that birdwatching be included as a recreational activity, but do note that the 2024 plan for Greenridge acknowledges the presence of

"a wide variety of neo-tropical migrants." We are pleased to see that plans are being made to remove invasive trees and shrubs along Town Creek.

As above in the comments on Eastern State Forests, we oppose the suggestion of extending OHV access to Greenridge State Forest. Briefly, OHVs spoil the enjoyment of the forests by all other users.

Savage River State Forest

We are pleased to see that the plan objectives for forest conservation will seek 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" and maintain and enhance diversity of wildlife and habitat types.

We ask that bird-watching be listed among the Recreation Opportunities. MOS members and other birders already visit it for its rich assemblage of forest interior and other birds. This is evidenced by there being at least least eight eBird Hotspots in Savage River NF. Our members will be visiting some of those hotspots during our 75th Annual Convention May 19-21., 2023.

We are glad to learn of the continuing study of wood turtle populations. And we applaud the proposed passive acoustic monitoring of bird migration in the Appalachians. We similarly applaud the effort to control four non-native plant species as well as the wooly adelgid.

This forest is being maintained for multiple users, most of which are mutually compatible. The notable exception is the OHV user. This noisy form of recreation is disturbing to all who visit the forest to enjoy its peace and tranquility. Furthermore, OHVs can interfere with bird nesting and disturb other forms of wildlife. We note that there are already OHV trails at Meadow Mountain, East Shale Road, Margraff Plantation, Negro Mountain and the newly opened ones at St. John's Rock and the Wolf Den Run State Park.

The current plan for St. John's Rock includes evaluating up to over 4 miles of existing timber harvest infrastructure for conversion to OHV trails, and an additional 5-6 miles for motorcycle and electric bicycles. While we do not object to improvements on existing OHV trials, we oppose extension of trails as being incompatible with other public uses. We note that St. John's Rock is among the eBird hotspots.

An additional 5 miles of OHV trails are envisioned at Margraff Plantation, to be added to the existing 5.5 miles. The plan notes that the existing trails are in need of reinvigoration, so that alone would result in a net gain of 5.5 miles. We do not think a virtual doubling of trail length here would be supportive of shared usage of the public lands.

Potomac and Garrett State Forests
Once more we commend the Plan's objective to protect significant or unique natural communities and biodiversity, such as ecologically significant areas, high conservation value forests, and old growth forests, and efforts to enhance old growth. We applaud efforts to maintain and enhance diversity of wildlife species and habitat types, as well as control invasive plants.

We are particularly pleased to see Bird Watching now listed among the Recreational Opportunities, and that MOS is credited with pointing out the six eBird hotspots.

We commend the plan for its concern for rare and uncommon breeding birds and the ongoing efforts to control certain invasive plant species.

As we have noted above, Potomac/Garrett, and the other forests, are being maintained for multiple users, most of which are mutually compatible. The sole exception is OHV use. This noisy form of recreation is disturbing to all others who visit this forest. Furthermore, OHVs can interfere with bird nesting and disturb other forms of wildlife. We are pleased to see that there is no discussion of expanding OHV use in the Plan, with funding only for sustainability improvements and amenities of the already-existing OHV trails Snaggy Mountain Road, Piney Mountain Road, Laurel Run Road, Wallman Road, and Burkholder Road.

In closing, please note that MOS is a volunteer Maryland organization founded in 1945. We have approximately 1800 members, divided into 15 chapters. MOS is devoted to the enjoyment, study and conservation of wild birds and their habitats, with special focus on Maryland's birds.

We thank you for taking the time to consider our comments and ask that you contact me with any questions or responses to said comments.

Yours sincerely,

Bonnie Borsa

Bonnie Borsa
President
Maryland Ornithological Society

Kurt R. Schwarz
Conservation Chair

Dear, Maryland Forest Service:

Please do not expand OHV trails in Maryland State Forests.
I do not support the expansion of the off-highway vehicle (OHV) trail at St. John's Rock in Savage River State Forest or in any other Maryland State Forests such as Chesapeake and Pocomoke State Forests, Greenridge State Forest, and Potomac and Garret State Forests.
OHVs take away from the escape and serenity that our State Forests offer to those looking to get away from the hustle & bustle and pollution of city/suburban life. OHVs are noisy; they interfere with all other activities, such as hunting, fishing, birding, nature observation, and hiking. Stream crossings on such trails cause sediment disturbance, and oil residue pollution.

Thank you for all that you do, and please do not expand OHV trails in Maryland State Forests.

Anna Schrad

Dear Maryland Forest Service:

As a birder, hiker, and longtime Maryland resident, I strongly oppose the expansion of the off-highway vehicle (OHV) trail at St. John's Rock in Savage River State Forest. I also oppose such OHV trails in other State Forests such as Chesapeake and Pocomoke State Forests, Greenridge State Forest, and Potomac and Garret State Forests. OHV trails fragment habitat, a strong consideration in these times of diminishing biodiversity. The OHVs themselves are noisy, and they interfere with all other activities, such as hunting, fishing, birding, nature observation, and hiking. Stream crossings on such trails cause sediment disturbance, and oil residue pollution. Please do not expand OHV trails in State Forests.

Emily Huang

I received an email stating that the Maryland Forest Service is creating a draft plan that would expand off-highway vehicle (OHV) trails in Savage River State Forest. I am against this 100% and I encourage you to oppose it as well. As I drive around the Virginia, District of Columbia, and Maryland areas I see new construction all around me. This new construction usually involves cutting down existing trees (and small woodland areas) and the new construction increases vehicle traffic all around us.
I want to preserve some areas as pristine natural environments that do not include vehicle traffic within them. I am an avid bird watcher and I would be so frustrated if I was out birding and a car drove by which prevented me from hearing the bird call and then it scared the bird off. I strongly believe in conversation and protecting our natural resources and encouraging vehicle traffic in a State Forest conflicts with conservation and protection. With climate change happening right now, do you really want to encourage the burning of more fossil fuels from cars driving through our forests? Do you really want to encourage more pollution from car exhausts in our forests?

Please reconsider this push to increase OHV trails in Maryland and instead help to protect our beautiful Maryland Forests.

Tracy Thompson, Bowie, MD

Hello -

In regard to the Maryland State Forest Work Plan, I would like to speak on the aspect of trails:

As a member of the Garrett County Composite mountain bike team (as part of MICL and NICA), I have personally experienced the positive impact the new Garrett Forest trails have had on our team, my family, and the community. The new trails have provided us with a fun and exciting outdoor space to exercise, have adventures, and hold team practices. As a Garrett Coyote, mountain biker, and an all-around outdoor enthusiast, I can say with confidence that these trails are designed to cater to riders of all levels. They are beginner-friendly, yet provide experienced riders with a solid challenge.

I also have a small business based on the outdoors called Deep Creek Adventure Bureau where I have held several organized ride / race fat bike events on the Garrett State Forest Trails.

I am grateful for the time and effort put into making these trails sustainable and environmentally friendly. It is heartening to see the commitment to preserving our natural spaces while providing us with opportunities to enjoy them. I can't wait for the expansion!!

For me, the trails in Maryland Forests offer access to play, outdoor experiences, challenges, and exercise.

I would like consideration of the following notes:

1. Consider the element of play and bike-specific features in the shared-use trail design. These could be natural features that are included as alternate lines to accomplish a fun user experience while enhancing the existing natural elements and drainage needs. Also, natural material features create areas where users can practice exhilarating challenges while encouraging users to stay to designated areas.

2. Include language to encourage and plan / consider "fat biking" or winter bike riding in Section 7 (page 12).

3. Post signage to suggest connecting Strava to Trailforks to gather more trail stats. I'm not sure how this works with the State of Maryland and private entities but the information will encourage folks to spread the word and create more data for reporting.

4. In an effort to add another method to trail usage estimates, I would suggest more of the Chronolog photo posts. I've seen this recently at Deep Creek Lake State Park -

https://www.chronolog.io/site/DCL101 and it could be used at trailheads or at unique forest vantage points (like the eagle's nest in Garrett State Forest).

5. Create a mechanism (or better communicate the process) to monitor issues, especially, on the new machined trails. Volunteers would be happy to help with maintenance if there was a process for this!

6. Consider adaptive bicycle access on State Forest land. While adaptive equipment cannot traverse a lot of singletrack, there are several locked gates limiting access to several gravel roads. These gates could be replaced with locked stanchions.

7. CONTINUE WITH THE PROPOSED TRAIL EXPANSIONS. I am in favor of six new miles of singletrack between Herrington Manor and Swallow Falls State Parks, five new miles of new singletrack in Savage River Forest, and an upgrade of the 5.5-mile Margraff Plantation loop, as proposed in the annual work plans. More trails = more folks outside = more opportunities to create community. A network across the state is absolutely desired as we will drive our cars to bike a few miles!

The state forest trails are critical for economic development and public health. And, the economic development impact is real! For example, when I held my third organized fat tire ride on the trails at Garrett State Forest, I had riders from a 150-mile radius visit my town and stay (and eat and shop and spend) for the weekend.

Once again, thank you for making these trails a reality and I am thrilled to have these trails in my backyard. They have had a positive impact on so many of us, and we look forward to many more years of enjoying them.

Sarah M. Myers, Oakland, MD

To the Maryland Forest Service:

Please consider this message as our comment on the draft work plans for the state forests. We have visited Green Ridge and Savage River State Forests, and we look forward to visiting others.

Our concern with the draft work plans is that they contemplate expansion of off-highway vehicle (OHV) routes. We believe the existing OHV routes are enough. We remember some ten years ago a draft report by Maryland DNR that found extensive damage to wildlife habitat and watershed values by OHVs riding in state forests, wildlife management areas, and state parks. That must be avoided!

DNR has already provided OHV riders with a trail in St. Johns Rock in Savage River State Forest (refer to https://dnr.maryland.gov/forests/Pages/ORV/St-Johns-Rock-ORV.aspx) and the new Wolf Den Run State Park (refer to https://dnr.maryland.gov/publiclands/pages/western/wolf-den-run.aspx). DNR's website touts Wolf Den Run as "the largest collection of ORV trails in Maryland". Other OHV opportunities

exist in neighboring states, such as the Hatfield/McCoy trail system in West Virginia and the Rausch Creek Off Road Park in Pennsylvania.

We urge Maryland Forest Service to reject any further expansion of OHV trails in any state forests. We particularly oppose any OHV in Green Ridge, Potomac/Garrett, and in the Eastern Shore forests Chesapeake and Pocomoke. All these forests have diverse public values as wildlife habitat, recreational areas for camping, hiking and wildlife-watching, and as watershed protection.

The noise from OHVs spoils the day for other recreational visitors and disturbs nesting birds. OHVs also impose ecological impacts. When crossing streams, they stir up sediment that must flow down into the Potomac or the other nearby waters. We have seen places where OHVs crossed and re-crossed a stream, each time generating sediment and leaving a sheen of engine oil on the water. The impacts affect riparian organisms such as amphibians and invertebrates, which are food for fish and for wading birds like herons.

The best course is to restrict OHVs to he already-designated routes, and focus DNR's efforts on reducing their impacts in those places. Maryland's state forests are too small to support any more OHV routes. Any funds available from the OHV dedicated fund should be used to restore damaged wildlife habitat and keep the existing OHV trails in good condition.

George and Frances Alderson, Catonsville, MD

Hello,

I'm a long time resident of Maryland (Talbot, Montgomery) and run a national non profit organization based in the state. My family spends a lot of time in our state and County forests and parks.

I am an avid birder and oppose the expansion of the off-highway vehicle (OHV) trail at St. John’s Rock in Savage River State Forest. I also oppose such OHV trails in other State Forests such as Chesapeake and Pocomoke State Forests, Greenridge State Forest, and Potomac and Garret State Forests.

OHVs are noisy, they interfere with all other activities, such as hunting, fishing, birding, nature observation, and hiking. Stream crossings on such trails cause sediment disturbance, and oil residue pollution.

Please do not expand OHV trails in State Forests.

Thank you

Tom Kimbis

Dear Maryland Forest Service,

I am an avid birder and oppose the expansion of the off-highway vehicle (OHV) trail at St. John's Rock in Savage River State Forest. I also oppose such OHV trails in other State Forests such as Chesapeake and Pocomoke State Forests, Greenridge State Forest, and Potomac and Garret State Forests. OHVs are noisy, they interfere with all other activities, such as hunting, fishing, birding, nature observation, and hiking. Stream crossings on such trails cause sediment disturbance, and oil residue pollution. Please do not expand OHV trails in State Forests. State Forests are critical for survival of all wildlife that thrive there.

Thank you!

Kevin Graff

Dear Maryland Forest Service,

As an avid birder I strongly oppose the expansion of the off-highway vehicle (OHV) trail at St. John's Rock in Savage River State Forest. This is a beautiful natural resource will be further disrupted should more trails for noisy and polluting OHVs be built, interfering with all other outdoor activities, including hunting, fishing, birding, nature observation, and hiking. I also strongly oppose such OHV trails in other State Forests such as Chesapeake and Pocomoke State Forests, Greenridge State Forest, and Potomac and Garret State Forests. Stream crossings on such trails cause sediment disturbance, and oil residue pollution. Please do not expand OHV trails in State Forests.

Lynn Kieffer

Folks:

I am firmly against any increase in OHV trails in Maryland State Forests. It will destroy birdlife habitat.

William D. Ellis, PhD, Eldersburg, MD

I am a wildlife conservationist and strongly oppose the expansion of the off-highway vehicle (OHV) trail at St. John's Rock in Savage River State Forest. I also oppose such OHV trails in other State Forests such as Chesapeake and Pocomoke State Forests, Greenridge State Forest, and Potomac and Garret State Forests. OHVs are noisy and disruptive and interfere with other activities, such as hunting, fishing, birding, nature observation, and hiking. Stream crossings on such trails cause sediment disturbance, and oil residue pollution.

I urge you not expand OHV trails in State Forests.

Colin Rees (Dr.)

I understand the Maryland Forest Service is working on draft work plans for several Maryland State Forests. These include expanding off-highway vehicle (OHV) trails in Savage State Forest. I want to add my voice to that of the Maryland Ornithological Society which is opposing expansion of OHV trails in Maryland. After all, there are already five OHV trail systems in State Forests, and a newly opened State Park for OHV use.

If I am out in the woods doing what I like to do— looking for birds, seeing what's in bloom— no one else will know I'm there. However, if an OHV is anywhere nearby, I'll know, and the wildlife will know. One OHV can ruin the experience of nature for many people who are trying to quietly enjoy the outdoors.

Furthermore, OHV trails fragment habitat and lead to pollution when trails cross streams, from sediment and oil. Our woods are already facing challenges from surrounding development-- please don't add further pressure.

I do not want more OHV trails in our state forests.

Julie Maynard, Middletown, MD

Dear Maryland Forest Service,

I am an avid birder and oppose the expansion of the off-highway vehicle (OHV) trail at St. John’s Rock in Savage River State Forest. I also oppose such OHV trails in other State Forests such as Chesapeake and Pocomoke State Forests, Greenridge State Forest, and Potomac and Garret State Forests.

OHVs are noisy, they interfere with all other activities, such as hunting, fishing, birding, nature observation, and hiking. Stream crossings on such trails cause sediment disturbance, and oil residue pollution.

Please do not expand OHV trails in Maryland's State Forests.

Thank you,

Kristen Wesloh, Lusby, Maryland

Dear Maryland Forest Service,

I strongly oppose the expansion of the off-highway vehicle (OHV) trail at St. John's Rock in Savage River State Forest and in other State Forests such as Chesapeake and Pocomoke State Forests, Greenridge State Forest, and Potomac and Garret State Forests. The expansion of these trails will benefit a minority of people and will have substantial impact on the health and function of the forest. Increasing OHV use within the State forests will also adversely impact the more passive, environmentally compatible uses of these areas.

If there is a need for more OHV trails in Maryland that need can be filled on private lands by private enterprises. It should not be the State's responsibility to provide active use opportunities for all activities, especially those that are harmful and degrading to the environment.

Thank you for your consideration.

John Canoles

Maryland Forest Service,

I am a bird watcher, wildlife lover, and very concerned about our deteriorating environment. I strongly oppose the expansion of the off-highway vehicle (OHV) trail at St. John's Rock in Savage River State Forest. I also oppose such OHV trails in other State Forests such as Chesapeake and Pocomoke State Forests, Greenridge State Forest, and Potomac and Garret State Forests.

OHVs are noisy, they interfere with all other activities, such as hunting, fishing, birding, nature observation, and hiking. Stream crossings on such trails cause sediment disturbance, and oil residue pollution. Please do not expand OHV trails in State Forests.

Leave our green spaces GREEN and QUIET!

Anne Myers, Annapolis, MD

Dear Maryland Forest Service,

Please do not expand OHV trails at St. John's Rock in Savage River State Forest or in other State Forests such as Chesapeake and Pocomoke State Forests, Greenridge State Forest, and Potomac and Garret State Forests.

I understand the need for OHV trails but feel that these should be in areas that are not critical wildlife habitat. Both resident and migrating birds that nest in these forests are declining in Maryland due to habitat loss and climate change.

OHVs are noisy, and they disturb nesting birds as well as other wildlife and interfere with all other activities, such as hunting, fishing, birding, nature observation, and hiking. In this very noisy world, people need quiet places to go.

In addition, the vehicles cause erosion and degradation of the soil, destroying native plant communities and encouraging invasives. Stream crossings on such trails cause sediment and oil residue pollution.

Would it be possible to create a dedicated park for OHV's in an area less critical for wildlife conservation?

Beatrice Grabowski

Dear Maryland Forest Service.
I am an avid birder and oppose the expansion of the off-highway vehicle (OHV) trail at St. John's Rock in Savage River State Forest. I also oppose such OHV trails in other State Forests such as Chesapeake and Pocomoke State Forests, Greenridge State Forest, and Potomac and Garret State Forests. OHVs are noisy, they interfere with all other activities, such as hunting, fishing, birding, nature observation, and hiking. They are also gas guzzlers and contribute to climate change. Stream crossings on such trails cause sediment disturbance, and oil residue pollution. Please do not expand OHV trails in State Forests.

Mary Maxey

Dear Maryland Forest Service.

I recently learned from my bird club that consideration is being given to expanding OHV trails in state forests. This made me heartsick. These forests should be a sanctuary for many uses that don't conflict with each other. Driving loud fossil fuel vehicles in these public lands is highly destructive.

I am an avid birder and oppose the expansion of the off-highway vehicle (OHV) trail at St. John's Rock in Savage River State Forest. I also oppose such OHV trails in other State Forests such as Chesapeake and Pocomoke State Forests, Greenridge State Forest, and Potomac and Garret State Forests. OHVs are noisy, they interfere with all other activities, such as hunting, fishing, birding, nature observation, and hiking. Stream crossings on such trails cause sediment disturbance, and oil residue pollution. Please do not expand OHV trails in State Forests.

Toni Evans

Dear Maryland Forest Service,

I am an avid birder and hiker who cherishes opportunities to enjoy Maryland's beautiful and diverse State Forests and other natural areas in a way that minimally impacts wildlife and leaves no trace. I'm writing to state my opposition to the expansion of the off-highway vehicle (OHV) trail at St. John's Rock in Savage River State Forest.

I also oppose such OHV trails in other State Forests such as Chesapeake and Pocomoke State Forests, Green Ridge State Forest, and Potomac and Garrett State Forests. OHVs are noisy and they interfere with all other activities, such as hunting, fishing, birding, nature observation, and hiking. Stream crossings on such trails cause sediment disturbance and oil residue pollution. Please do not expand OHV trails in State Forests.

Jennifer Bishop

Dear Maryland Forest Service.

I am an avid birder and oppose the expansion of the off-highway vehicle (OHV) trail at St. John's Rock in Savage River State Forest. I also oppose such OHV trails in other State Forests such as Chesapeake and Pocomoke State Forests, Greenridge State Forest, and Potomac and Garret State Forests. OHVs are noisy, they interfere with all other activities, such as hunting, fishing, birding, nature observation, and hiking. Stream crossings on such trails cause sediment disturbance, and oil residue pollution. Please do not expand OHV trails in State Forests. We all need some peace and quiet.

June Mullhausen, Churchville, MD

Dear Maryland Forest Service.

I am an avid birder and hike and dog-walker. I oppose the expansion of the off-highway vehicle (OHV) trail at St. John's Rock in Savage River State Forest. I also oppose such OHV trails in other State Forests such as Chesapeake and Pocomoke State Forests, Greenridge State Forest, and Potomac and Garret State Forests. OHVs are noisy, they interfere with all other activities, such as hunting, fishing, birding, nature observation, and hiking. Stream crossings on such trails cause sediment disturbance, and oil residue pollution. Please do not expand OHV trails in State Forests.

Michael Maher

Dear Maryland Forest Service.

I am a birder and fisherman and am opposes to the expansion of the off-highway vehicle (OHV) trail at St. John's Rock in Savage River State Forest. I also oppose such OHV trails in other State Forests such as Chesapeake and Pocomoke State Forests, Greenridge State Forest, and Potomac and Garret State Forests.
Maryland has few state forests and no National Forests. These ares were not set aside to be the equivalent of race tracks for extremely noisy OHVs, dirt bikes or other motorized vehicles, which are extremely noisy and interfere with all other activities, such as hunting, fishing, birding,

nature observation, and hiking. Letting them run across streams is insane under any common sense natural resource management policy framework for all the obvious reasons, and such crossings should be avoided, and any that exist closed and the stream banks restored.
Please do not expand OHV trails in State Forests.

LR Huppman

Dear Maryland Forest service,

I am an enthusiastic hiker, birder, fisher, hunter and naturalist in Maryland. I have lived here my whole 60 years and raised my family to enjoy the beautiful forests of Maryland. I oppose expanding the OHV trail option in Savage River state forest, a treasured retreat of ours. The existing OHV trails are problematic enough, and I are very dismayed to learn that you are planning to add more! I also oppose the other OHV trail expansions in other state forests, particularly the more remote options.

OHVs are noisy and very disruptive to the forest environment. We all need retreats from the hubbub and noise of our lives, and OHVs are a terrible introduction into the forest environment. They affect wildlife, birds and fish with their noise, speed and exhaust. They negatively impact people using the forest to hunt, hike, reflect, relax, observe nature, fish, run, etc. Their tires increase trail erosion and sediment issues in stream crossings. They are too fast, and can be unsafe for other trail users, especially older adults and small children. I have had scary and unpleasant experiences with OHVs at Savage River State Forest, and now feel that those trails are “off limits” to me.

I appreciate that OHVs allow people to get further into the forest more quickly, but at what cost? They are not safe for low mobility folks - they actually require considerable strength and coordination to operate safely- it would be much better to provide more forest access to folks using walkers, canes and wheelchairs, in my opinion.

Please reconsider your plan and re-evaluate the promotion of OHV trails in sensitive, remote areas that are so good for wildlife and all the other human activities.

Fran Toler, Riverdale, MD

Dear Maryland Forest Service,

I am an avid birder and I strongly oppose the expansion of the off-highway vehicle (OHV) trail at St. John’s Rock in Savage River State Forest. I also oppose such OHV trails in other State Forests such as Chesapeake and Pocomoke State Forests, Greenridge State Forest, and Potomac and Garret State Forests. OHVs are noisy, and they interfere with all other activities, such as hunting, fishing, birding, nature observation, and hiking, not to mention the impact on birds and animals. Stream crossings on such trails cause sediment disturbance, and oil residue pollution.
Please do not expand OHV trails in State Forests.

Catherine Czajkowski, Cockeysville, MD

Dear MD Forest Service,

I oppose the expansion of the off-highway vehicle (OHV) trail at St. John's Rock in Savage River State Forest. I also oppose such OHV trails in other State Forests such as Chesapeake and Pocomoke State Forests, Greenridge State Forest, and Potomac and Garret State Forests. I'm a birder and hiker and OHVs are noisy, they interfere with all other activities, such as hunting, fishing, birding, nature observation, and hiking. Stream crossings on such trails cause sediment disturbance, and oil residue pollution.

Please do not expand OHV trails in State Forests. There are already five OHV trail systems in State Forests fragmenting our forests, and a newly opened State Park for OHV use.

Claire Miller, Silver Spring, MD

Dear Maryland Forest Service,

I am an avid birder and oppose the expansion of the off-highway vehicle (OHV) trail at St. John's Rock in Savage River State Forest. I also oppose such OHV trails in other State Forests such as Chesapeake and Pocomoke State Forests, Greenridge State Forest, and Potomac and Garret State Forests. OHVs are noisy, they interfere with all other activities, such as hunting, fishing, birding, nature observation, and hiking. Stream crossings on such trails cause sediment disturbance, and oil residue pollution. Please do not expand OHV trails in State Forests.

Ezekiel Kresie

Dear Maryland Forest Service,

I am an avid birder and oppose the expansion of the off-highway vehicle (OHV) trail at St. John's Rock in Savage River State Forest. I also oppose such OHV trails in other State Forests such as Chesapeake and Pocomoke State Forests, Greenridge State Forest, and Potomac and Garret State Forests. OHVs are noisy and they interfere with all other activities, such as hunting, fishing, birding, nature observation, and hiking. Stream crossings on such trails cause sediment disturbance and oil residue pollution. Please do not expand OHV trails in State Forests.

Please protect our forests and native wildlife.

Caitlin Kelly

Dear Maryland Forest Service.

Let's keep natural areas natural and unmolested by vehicles. I am an avid birder and oppose the expansion of the off-highway vehicle (OHV) trail at St. John's Rock in Savage River State Forest. I also oppose such OHV trails in other State Forests such as Chesapeake and Pocomoke State Forests, Greenridge State Forest, and Potomac and Garret State Forests. OHVs are noisy, they interfere with all other activities, such as hunting, fishing, birding, nature observation, and hiking. Stream crossings on such trails cause sediment disturbance, and oil residue pollution. Please do not expand OHV trails in State Forests.

Neville Fernandes

I am a mountain biker and Maryland resident who enjoys visiting the western part of the state for its unique outdoor experiences. I'm writing in support of the proposed mountain biking trails included in the FY 2024 Annual Work Plans of the Green Ridge, Savage River, and Potomac-Garrett State Forests. I am in favor of six new miles of singletrack between Herrington Manor and Swallow Falls State Parks, five new miles of new singletrack in Savage River Forest, and an upgrade of the 5.5-mile Margraff Plantation loop, as proposed in the annual work plans.

Western Maryland is becoming an increasingly attractive destination for mountain bikers because of places like Deep Creek Lake and Herrington Manor. More mountain bike and multi-use trails in the region could make Western Maryland a premiere riding area for locals and visitors from other states. Outdoor recreation tourism helps bolster the local economy. Visitors like myself also patronize hotels, restaurants, grocery stores, and other local businesses. In 2019, tourism brought in over $25 million in direct consumer taxes for Western Maryland.

Green Ridge State Forest, the largest state forest property in all of Maryland, has only 12 miles of trail open to mountain bikes versus over 50 miles of hiking trails. The existing mountain bike trail also needs some repairs. Please upgrade the current trail in Green Ridge and add more riding opportunities, either by making more Green Ridge trails multi-use or adding new bike trail. These construction and maintenance proposals will expand ride options in the region, provide a well-rounded ride experience for mountain bikers of all abilities, and help alleviate crowded trails especially at peak season.

Additional mountain biking trails is an investment in youth sports. New trails will provide more training areas for student athletes including the Garrett County Composite team which is part of the National Interscholastic Cycling Association (NICA) Maryland league.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Annual Work Plans. I look forward to seeing more mountain bike trails in Western Maryland.

John Higgins, New Market, Maryland

Hello,

I am a resident of Frederick, Maryland and enjoy utilizing Maryland's public lands for various types of recreational activities. I am in support of actions that balance recreation access with resource management and ecological preservation. I believe Maryland's state forests are currently under-utilized for resource based recreation activities compared with other state's forests. State forests offer excellent potential for low-impact, dispersed recreation such as natural surface trail systems.

I have briefly reviewed the work plans for the various forests, and am pleased to see plans to maintain and expand the state's trail access. I'm writing in support of the proposed mountain biking trails included in the FY 2024 Annual Work Plans of the Green Ridge, Savage River, and Potomac-Garrett State Forests. I am in favor of six new miles of singletrack between Herrington Manor and Swallow Falls State Parks, five new miles of new singletrack in Savage River Forest, and an upgrade of the 5.5-mile Margraff Plantation loop, as proposed in the annual work plans.

Specifically, I'd like to see Maryland's state forests follow the lead of MD state parks by creating professionally-constructed trail networks that serve a variety of ability levels. The state's general permit for natural surface trail construction and MPS BMP's for natural surface trail construction have resulted in quality user experiences that limit maintenance strain on land managers. While I understand the need to increase accessibility to some areas, I believe there should also be longer-range, less-developed trail experiences for more advanced and adventurous mountain bikers and hikers. State forests are a perfect location to develop these experiences, which may fall in the "blue" or "black" columns in the MPS trail matrix.

In addition to trails, I support plans for general maintenance to existing roads and facilities. Any opportunities for dispersed camping and increased human-powered connectivity to other state lands are appreciated as well.

Andrew Mueller

Dear State Forests Office:

I am a mountain biker and am part of family who has owned property at Deep Creek Lake, MD since 1990. I enjoy visiting the western part of the state for its unique outdoor experiences. I'm writing in support of the proposed mountain biking trails included in the FY 2024 Annual Work Plans of the Green Ridge, Savage River, and Potomac-Garrett State Forests. I am in favor of six new miles of singletrack between Herrington Manor and Swallow Falls State Parks, five new miles of new singletrack in Savage River Forest, and an upgrade of the 5.5-mile Margraff Plantation loop, as proposed in the annual work plans.

Western Maryland is becoming an increasingly attractive destination for mountain bikers because of places like Deep Creek Lake and Herrington Manor. More mountain bike and multi-use trails in the region could make Western Maryland a premiere riding area for locals and visitors from other states. Outdoor recreation tourism helps bolster the local economy. Visitors like myself also patronize hotels, restaurants, grocery stores, and other local businesses. In 2019, tourism brought in over $25 million in direct consumer taxes for Western Maryland.

Green Ridge State Forest, the largest state forest property in all of Maryland, has only 12 miles of trail open to mountain bikes versus over 50 miles of hiking trails. The existing mountain bike trail also needs some repairs. Please upgrade the current trail in Green Ridge and add more riding opportunities, either by making more Green Ridge trails multi-use or adding new bike trail. These construction and maintenance proposals will expand ride options in the region, provide a well-rounded ride experience for mountain bikers of all abilities, and help alleviate crowded trails especially at peak season.

Additional mountain biking trails is an investment in youth sports. New trails will provide more training areas for student athletes including the Garrett County Composite team which is part of the National Interscholastic Cycling Association (NICA) Maryland league.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Annual Work Plans. I look forward to seeing more mountain bike trails in Western Maryland.

Matt Levine, Arlington, VA and Oakland, MD

Hello,

I am a mountain biker and Maryland resident who enjoys visiting the western part of the state for its unique outdoor experiences. I'm writing in support of the proposed mountain biking trails included in the FY 2024 Annual Work Plans of the Green Ridge, Savage River, and Potomac-Garrett State Forests. I am in favor of six new miles of singletrack between Herrington Manor and Swallow Falls State Parks, five new miles of new singletrack in Savage River Forest, and an upgrade of the 5.5-mile Margraff Plantation loop, as proposed in the annual work plans.

Western Maryland is becoming an increasingly attractive destination for mountain bikers because of places like Deep Creek Lake and Herrington Manor. More mountain bike and multi-use trails in the region could make Western Maryland a premiere riding area for locals and visitors from other states. Outdoor recreation tourism helps bolster the local economy. Visitors like myself also patronize hotels, restaurants, grocery stores, and other local businesses. In 2019, tourism brought in over $25 million in direct consumer taxes for Western Maryland.

Green Ridge State Forest, the largest state forest property in all of Maryland, has only 12 miles of trail open to mountain bikes versus over 50 miles of hiking trails. The existing mountain bike trail also needs some repairs. Please upgrade the current trail in Green Ridge and add more riding opportunities, either by making more Green Ridge trails multi-use or adding new bike trails. These construction and maintenance proposals will expand ride options in the region, provide a well-rounded ride experience for mountain bikers of all abilities, and help alleviate crowded trails especially at peak season.

Additional mountain biking trails are an investment in youth sports. New trails will provide more training areas for student athletes including the Garrett County Composite team which is part of the National Interscholastic Cycling Association (NICA) Maryland league.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Annual Work Plans. I look forward to seeing more mountain bike trails in Western Maryland.

Sincerely,

Joshua Foster, Frederick, Maryland

I am writing to express my support for the proposed mountain biking trails in the FY 2024 Annual Work Plans of the Green Ridge, Savage River, and Potomac-Garrett State Forests. As an avid mountain biker and resident of Maryland, I am excited about the prospect of new and improved trails in Western Maryland.

The proposed plans, including six new miles of singletrack between Herrington Manor and Swallow Falls State Parks, five new miles of singletrack in Savage River State Forest, and an upgrade of the 5.5-mile Margraff Plantation loop, would provide mountain bikers with a diverse range of riding options and enhance the outdoor recreation opportunities in the area.

I believe that additional mountain biking trails would make Western Maryland a premiere riding area for locals and visitors alike. Outdoor recreation tourism is a valuable source of revenue for the local economy, and more mountain bike and multi-use trails would help support local businesses such as hotels, restaurants, and grocery stores.

Moreover, expanding the trails in Green Ridge State Forest, the largest state forest property in Maryland, would be especially beneficial. With only 12 miles of trail currently open to mountain bikes, more opportunities are needed for riders of all abilities. By upgrading the current trail and adding more riding options, we can alleviate crowded trails and provide a well-rounded riding experience.

In addition to benefiting the local economy, new trails would also be an investment in youth sports. More trails would provide additional training areas for student athletes, including the Garrett County Composite team, which is part of the National Interscholastic Cycling Association (NICA) Maryland league.

Thank you for considering my comments on the Annual Work Plans. I strongly support the proposed mountain biking trails and urge you to prioritize their implementation.

Aaron Conran, Middletown, MD

MORE Trails

Thank you for your recent efforts to expand the trails in Deep Creek MD. I enjoy mountain biking even at my older age and visit the western part of Maryland a few times a year for its

unique outdoor experiences. I'm writing in support of the proposed mountain biking trails included in the FY 2024 Annual Work Plans of the Green Ridge, Savage River, and Potomac-Garrett State Forests. I am in favor of six new miles of single-track between Herrington Manor and Swallow Falls State Parks, five new miles of new single-track in Savage River Forest, and an upgrade of the 5.5-mile Margraff Plantation loop, as proposed in the annual work plans.

I've enjoyed Green Ridge State Forest and Rocky Gap over the years and know they both have so much more potential than the primitive trail systems in place today. I appreciate Green Ridge State Forest is the largest state forest property in all of Maryland, however it only has only 12 miles of trail open to mountain bikes versus over 50 miles of hiking trails. The existing mountain bike trail also needs some repairs. Please upgrade the current trail in Green Ridge and add more riding opportunities, either by making more Green Ridge trails multi-use or adding new bike trail. These construction and maintenance proposals will expand ride options in the region, provide a well-rounded ride experience for mountain bikers of all abilities, and help alleviate crowded trails especially at peak season.

It's common knowledge trails helped not only myself, but countless individuals deal with physical and mental wellbeing throughout the pandemic and now we have a desire to keep enjoying the outdoors to address our physical and mental needs for outdoor experiences. I hope you've noticed kids and families on bikes as you manage our great natural surface trail resources, I have. Expanding our mountain biking trails is an investment in our youth and helps create stewards for the future of our public spaces. New trails will provide more training areas for student athletes including the Garrett County Composite team which is part of the National Interscholastic Cycling Association (NICA) Maryland league. Please add more Sustainable, Natural Surface, Multi-use, Public trails to the awesome trail systems in Western Maryland.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Annual Work Plans. I look forward to seeing more mountain bike trails in Western Maryland.

Thank you for your consideration,

Ernest Rodriguez, Falls Church VA

I am a mountain biker and Maryland resident who enjoys visiting the western part of the state for its unique outdoor experiences. I'm writing in support of the proposed mountain biking trails included in the FY 2024 Annual Work Plans of the Green Ridge, Savage River, and Potomac-Garrett State Forests. I am in favor of six new miles of singletrack between Herrington Manor and Swallow Falls State Parks, five new miles of new singletrack in Savage River Forest, and an upgrade of the 5.5-mile Margraff Plantation loop, as proposed in the annual work plans.

Western Maryland is becoming an increasingly attractive destination for mountain bikers because of places like Deep Creek Lake and Herrington Manor. More mountain bike and multi-use trails in the region could make Western Maryland a premiere riding area for locals and visitors from other states. Outdoor recreation tourism helps bolster the local economy. Visitors like myself also

patronize hotels, restaurants, grocery stores, and other local businesses. In 2019, tourism brought in over $25 million in direct consumer taxes for Western Maryland.

Green Ridge State Forest, the largest state forest property in all of Maryland, has only 12 miles of trail open to mountain bikes versus over 50 miles of hiking trails. The existing mountain bike trail also needs some repairs. Please upgrade the current trail in Green Ridge and add more riding opportunities, either by making more Green Ridge trails multi-use or adding new bike trail. These construction and maintenance proposals will expand ride options in the region, provide a well-rounded ride experience for mountain bikers of all abilities, and help alleviate crowded trails especially at peak season.

Additional mountain biking trails is an investment in youth sports. New trails will provide more training areas for student athletes including the Garrett County Composite team which is part of the National Interscholastic Cycling Association (NICA) Maryland league.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Annual Work Plans. I look forward to seeing more mountain bike trails in Western Maryland.

Peter Pavlov, Columbia, MD

Dear Maryland Forest Service.
I am an avid birder and oppose the expansion of the off-highway vehicle (OHV) trail at St. John's Rock in Savage River State Forest. I also oppose such OHV trails in other State Forests such as Chesapeake and Pocomoke State Forests, Greenridge State Forest, and Potomac and Garret State Forests. OHVs are noisy, they interfere with all other activities, such as hunting, fishing, birding, nature observation, and hiking. Stream crossings on such trails cause sediment disturbance, and oil residue pollution. Please do not expand OHV trails in State Forests.

John C. Lowery III

Dear Maryland Forest Service.

As an avid birder and nature enthusiast, I very strongly oppose the expansion of the off-highway vehicle (OHV) trail at St. John's Rock in Savage River State Forest. I am against such OHV trails in other state forests. OHVs are extremely noisy causing interference with all other activities. Trails will be torn up. Vegetation destroyedWhere streams are crossed you will have sediment disturbance, erosion and pollution.

I volunteered for many years as a naturalist in state parks. While I'm sure there are many responsible OHV riders, my experience has been with the opposite. A few adjectives that come to mind are rude, pushy, disrespectful, self-centered and unwanted. While everyone should be free to enjoy nature in whichever way best suits them, most OHV riders care not one bit about nature and think that those who do are wimps. Or worse. I am sure you can come up with places

to convert for their use. Just please do not destroy our forests to do so. There must be some brownfields just waiting for them. Thank you.

Marian Argentino

Dear Maryland Forest Service.

I am an avid birder and oppose the expansion of the off-highway vehicle (OHV) trail at St. John's Rock in Savage River State Forest. I also oppose such OHV trails in other State Forests such as Chesapeake and Pocomoke State Forests, Greenridge State Forest, and Potomac and Garret State Forests. OHVs are noisy, they interfere with all other activities, such as hunting, fishing, birding, nature observation, and hiking. Stream crossings on such trails cause sediment disturbance, and oil residue pollution. Please do not expand OHV trails in State Forests.

Sally Vavrek, Arnold, MD

Dear Maryland Forest Service,

Please do not expand OHV trails in Maryland state forests. I oppose the expansion of the off-highway vehicle (OHV) trail at St. John's Rock in Savage River State Forest. I also oppose such OHV trails in other State Forests most importantly Chesapeake and Pocomoke State Forests, Greenridge State Forest, and Potomac and Garret State Forests. I am a bird watcher and enjoy the peace and quiet I find in our state parks. OHVs are noisy and they interfere with all other activities. The damage they inflict on the environment leads to sediment disturbance and oil residue pollution. Please, please, please do not expand the trail system for OHVs in our lovely state forests.

Suzette Stitely, Trappe, MD

Dear Maryland Forest Service.

I am submitting comments about the MFS proposed increase in off-road vehicle access in states forests. I am a fly fisher and a birder, and a member of both Trout Unlimited and the Maryland Ornithological Society. Any expansion of the off-highway (OHV) trail at St. John's Rock in Savage River State Forest would be disastrous for my use of the same area. The noise and physical disturbance of OHVs interfere with all other nature-based activities including fishing and birding, as well as simple enjoyment of nature by all ages. Stream crossings pollute fragile mountain trout streams with sediment, oil residue and other pollutants, threatening the aquatic invertebrates which support our trout fisheries, as well as the fish themselves. The exhaust emissions pollute what should be clean mountain air (and not exactly the right image is it, in light of climate change?) There are peer-reviewed studies showing the impact on nesting birds from noisy trail disturbance (singing birds move further away or abandon territories, incubating birds are flushed from their nests, greatly increasing risk of nest predation. And what birder can

hear the song of the state-endangered Golden-winged Warbler or other special birds of western Maryland, when competing with the roar of an ORV engine?

For these reasons, I also oppose such OHV trails in other State Forests such as Chesapeake and Pocomoke State Forests, Greenridge State Forest, and Potomac and Garret State Forests. It is the wrong message to the state's nature lovers, and to those concerned with climate change.

Gail B. Mackiernan, Colesville, MD

Dear Maryland Forest Service:

I am an avid birder and oppose the expansion of the off-highway vehicle (OHV) trail at St. John's Rock in Savage River State Forest. I also oppose such OHV trails in other State Forests such as Chesapeake and Pocomoke State Forests, Greenridge State Forest, and Potomac and Garret State Forests. OHVs are noisy, they interfere with all other activities, such as hunting, fishing, birding, nature observation, and hiking. Stream crossings on such trails cause sediment disturbance, and oil residue pollution. Please do not expand OHV trails in State Forests.

Tyler Bell, California, MD

Maryland Forest Service:

I enjoy the outdoors and am an avid birder. I strongly oppose the expansion of the off-highway vehicle (OHV) trail at St. John's Rock in Savage River State Forest (I also oppose such OHV trails in other state forests such as Chesapeake and Pocomoke State Forests, Greenridge State Forest, and Potomac and Garret State Forests). OHVs are ridiculously unnecessary, noisy, and annoying to all. They interfere with all other more pleasant activities, like birding, enjoying nature, and hiking. Driving these stupid things through streams on such trails leaves oil pollution. Please do not expand OHV trails in State Forests.

Jane Kostenko, California, MD

Dear Maryland Forest Service.

I am an avid birder and hiker and oppose the expansion of the off-highway vehicle (OHV) trail at St. John's Rock in Savage River State Forest. I also oppose such OHV trails in other State Forests such as Chesapeake and Pocomoke State Forests, Greenridge State Forest, and Potomac and Garret State Forests. OHVs are noisy, they interfere with all other activities, such as hunting, fishing, birding, nature observation, and hiking. Stream crossings on such trails cause sediment disturbance, and oil residue pollution.

Please do not expand OHV trails in State Forests.

Scott Young

Dear Maryland Forest Service:

I am a hiker and birder and oppose the expansion of the off-highway vehicle (OHV) trail at St. John's Rock in Savage River State Forest.

I also oppose such OHV trails in other State Forests such as Chesapeake and Pocomoke State Forests, Greenridge State Forest, and Potomac and Garret State Forests. OHVs are noisy, they interfere with all other activities, such as fishing, birding, nature observation, and hiking. Stream crossings on such trails cause sediment disturbance, and oil residue pollution. Please do not expand OHV trails in State Forests.

Suzanne Picard, Kensington, MD

Dear Maryland Forest Service.

I am an avid nature lover and birder and frequently visit Maryland state forests to observe and photograph wildlife. I found Maryland state forest to be among the most important natural areas left in Maryland. I strongly oppose the expansion of the off-highway vehicle (OHV) trail at St. John's Rock in Savage River State Forest. I also oppose such OHV trails in other State Forests such as Chesapeake and Pocomoke State Forests, Greenridge State Forest, and Potomac and Garrett State Forests.

OHVs are noisy and seriously interfere with virtually all other activities in state forests, including enjoyment of nature, hunting, fishing, birding, and hiking. Stream crossings on such trails also cause sediment disturbance and oil residue pollution that is harmful to aquatic life.

Please do not expand OHV trails in State Forests.

James A. Moore, Ph.D., J.D., Rockville, MD

Dear Maryland Forest Service.

I oppose the expansion of the off-highway vehicle (OHV) trail at St. John's Rock in Savage River State Forest and at all other other State Forests such as Chesapeake and Pocomoke State Forests, Greenridge State Forest, and Potomac and Garret State Forests. OHVs are noisy, they interfere with all other activities, such as hunting, fishing, birding, nature observation, and hiking. Stream crossings on such trails cause sediment disturbance, and oil residue pollution.

Such use is contrary the purpose of preserving these natural environments for persons, flora, fauna and all migrators who depend on them.

Please do not expand OHV trails in State Forests.

Marilyn Sadowski

Dear Maryland Forest Service.

I am an avid birder and oppose the expansion of the off-highway vehicle (OHV) trail at St. John's Rock in Savage River State Forest. I also oppose such OHV trails in other State Forests such as Chesapeake and Pocomoke State Forests, Greenridge State Forest, and Potomac and Garret State Forests. OHVs are noisy, they interfere with all other activities, such as hunting, fishing, birding, nature observation, and hiking. Stream crossings on such trails cause sediment disturbance, and oil residue pollution. Please do not expand OHV trails in State Forests.

Bobbie Wells, Easton, MD

Dear Maryland Forest Service.

I am an avid birder and oppose the expansion of the off-highway vehicle (OHV) trail at St. John's Rock in Savage River State Forest. I also oppose such OHV trails in other State Forests such as Chesapeake and Pocomoke State Forests, Greenridge State Forest, and Potomac and Garret State Forests. OHVs are noisy, they interfere with all other activities, such as hunting, fishing, birding, nature observation, and hiking. Stream crossings on such trails cause sediment disturbance, and oil residue pollution. Please do not expand OHV trails in State Forests.

Aidan Flinn

Dear Maryland Forest Service,

I am a professional ecologist and conservation advocate, serving on my state and local boards and commissions. I oppose the expansion of off-highway vehicle (OHV) trail at St. John's Rock in Savage River State Forest. I also oppose such OHV trails in other State Forests such as Chesapeake and Pocomoke State Forests, Greenridge State Forest, and Potomac and Garret State Forests. OHVs are noisy, they interfere with quiet outdoors activities such as hunting, fishing, birding, nature observation, and hiking. Stream crossings on such trails cause sediment disturbance and oil residue pollution. Please do not expand OHV trails in State Forests.

Mark Southerland, PhD, Columbia, MD

Dear Md. Forest Service,

I don’t believe that you are really considering the expansion of the off highway vehicle trail at St. John’s Rook in the Savage River State Forest. OHV’s take away the pleasure of visiting any State Forest for fishing, birding, forest bathing, hiking, and the “ awe” of being in a natural setting. Plus the OHV’s crossing streams causes disturbance and oil pollution in the water.

I find it heart breaking that you are considering this expansion in State Forests let alone the Savage River State Forest. It will damage the wildlife that lives in the State Forests affecting bird and other wildlife communication.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Anne Sturm, Barnesville, MD

I am a bird watcher, and nature lover who walks the state parks. I am disturbed by this push to expand off-highway vehicle (OHV) trails into St. John's Rock in Savage River State Forest, Chesapeake, and Pocomoke, etc. I certainly cannot walk such a trail in safety. And the belief that there can be separate bike and hiking trials falls apart whenever I visit places with both, in segregated areas. Even trails with just mountain bikes are too dangerous for pedestrian use. Every time we go to the ‘hiking only’ trails at Loch Raven Reservoir near my home we encounter mountain bikes. One fears getting run over. Riders may wear earbuds turned up so loud that one can hear every note. Now ebikes are capable of speeds up to 40mph! Rugged tires, at such speed, cause instant damage to our hiking trails. Why would YOU, DNR, the the protectors of state forests, consider inviting such destructive vehicles into the forest lands?

Carol Schreter, Baltimore, MD 21209

Dear Maryland Forest Service,

I am an avid birder and oppose the expansion of the off-highway vehicle (OHV) trail at St. John’s Rock in Savage River State Forest. I also oppose such OHV trails in other State Forests such as Chesapeake and Pocomoke State Forests, Greenridge State Forest, and Potomac and Garret State Forests. OHVs are noisy, they interfere with all other activities, such as hunting, fishing, birding, nature observation, and hiking. Stream crossings on such trails cause sediment disturbance, and oil residue pollution. Please do not expand OHV trails in MD State Forests.

Jeremy R. Castle

As an avid birder I oppose the expansion of the off-highway vehicle (OHV) trail at St. John’s Rock in Savage River State Forest. I also oppose such OHV trails in other State Forests such as Chesapeake and Pocomoke State Forests, Greenridge State Forest, and Potomac and Garret State Forests. OHVs are noisy, they interfere with all other activities, such as hunting, fishing, birding,

nature observation, and hiking. Stream crossings on such trails cause sediment disturbance, and oil residue pollution. Please do not expand OHV trails in State Forests.

Jeffrey A Friedhoffer, Columbia, MD

Dear Maryland Forest Service,

My daughters (ages 12 & 8) are avid birds with my husband & I trying to keep up. We oppose the expansion of the off-highway vehicle (OHV) trail at St. John's Rock in Savage River State Forest. I also oppose such OHV trails in other State Forests such as Chesapeake and Pocomoke State Forests, Greenridge State Forest, and Potomac and Garret State Forests.

OHVs are noisy, interfere with quiet nature experiences (noise, pollution & danger of vehicles) such as hiking & birding.

Stream crossings create pollution in streams, disturb wildlife & can cause increased sediment.

Please keep our forests for PEOPLE first. Vehicles are everywhere. We need forests to escape the vehicles & our wildlife needs space where people haven't developed.

Please STOP all expansion of OHV in state forests!

Tara Clifton, Rockville, MD

Hello,

I am writing to express opposition to plans to expand off-highway vehicle trail systems in Maryland state forests. State forests are already used for many beloved uses that would be disturbed by additional OHV trails and by OHV use. Additionally the use of such vehicles in state forests would harm the ecosystems that the state forest system is supposed to protect! Please do not increase OHV trails in any state forests, including Savage River SF, Chesapeake and Pocomoke SFs, Greenridge SF, Potomac SF, or Garrett SF. It's vital that the state continues to protect our resources and conserve them for good.

Leah Franzluebbers, Arnold, MD

Dear Maryland Forest Service:

I am writing to you to submit my public comment on the open public comment period regarding your proposed expansion of off-highway vehicle (OHV) trails in our State Forests. I am a professional field biologist who spends much time in Maryland State Forests and other MD public lands looking/listening for birds and other wildlife species. I emphatically oppose any

expansion of OHV trails in any Maryland State Forests, but especially Green Ridge State Forest, Chesapeake and Pocomoke State Forests, and Potomac and Garrett State Forests. Obviously, OHVs are very noisy, they interfere with all other activities, especially birding but also hunting, fishing, nature observation, camping, and hiking. Stream crossings on such trails cause sediment disturbance and oil residue contamination. Please do NOT expand OHV trails in Maryland State Forests!

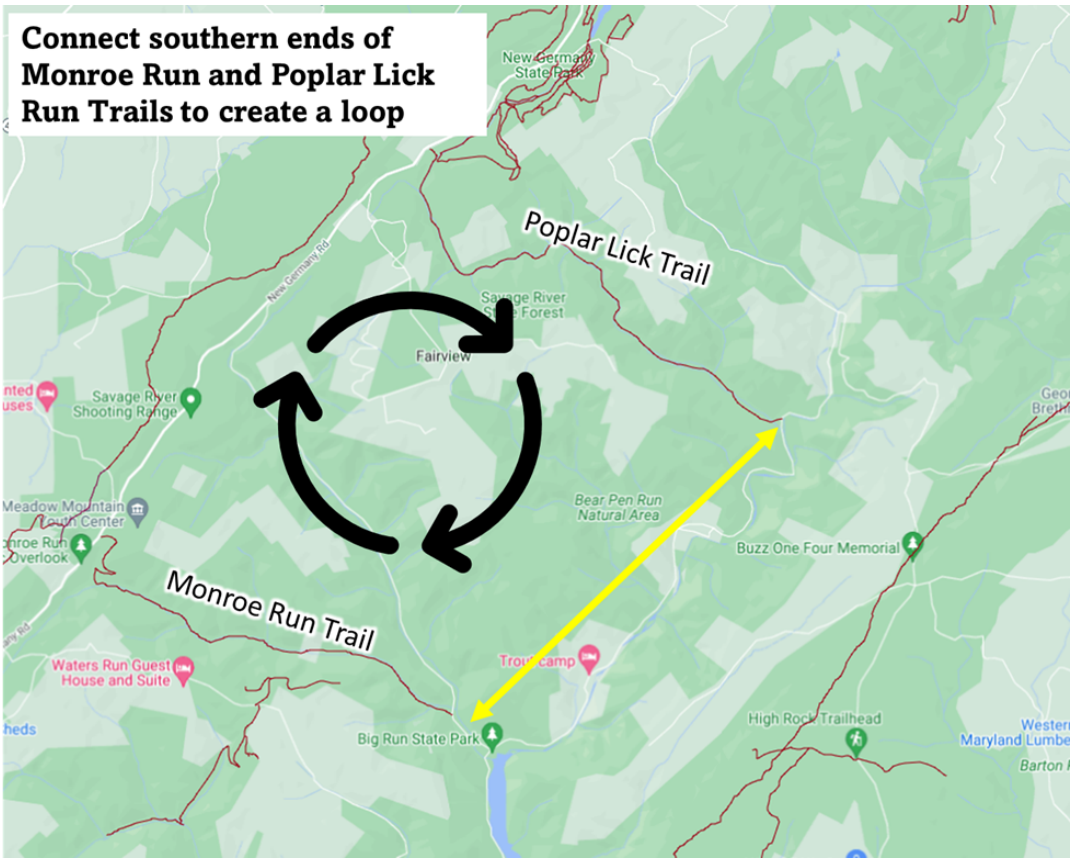
Thank you for your consideration of my comments herein.

Steve Sheffield, Ph.D., Crofton, MD

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the 2024 State Forest Work Plans.
Savage River State Forest
Recreation Proposals

1. St John's Rock Trail Expansion -
1. I commend the idea for expanded trails for e-bikes since they are generally not permitted on most state land trails
2. Some effort should be made to collect and publish user data for this trail system. Many residents complain that a lot of money was spent on the this area and "no one uses it"
2. Meadow Mountain Trail Improvements-
1. Improved signage should be one of the highest priorities, especially at intersections with other spurs and road crossings. First time users of this trail would like not be aware of trail continuation at some of the road crossings or where the spurs lead to
2. New interpretive panels should be developed collaboratively with the community and local organizations. The current panels are generic and provide minimal context for the location and setting
3. meadow mountain trail gates should be at least 40 " wide to allow safe passage for adaptive bikes

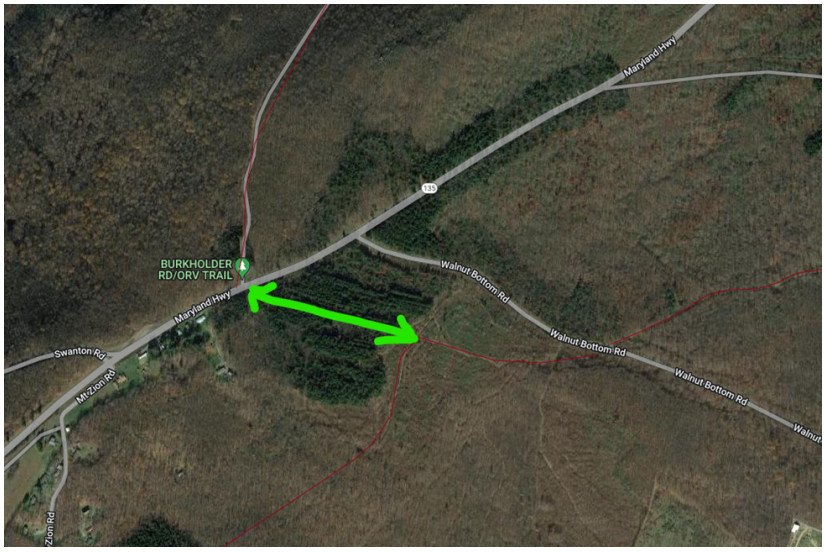
3. New proposal - connection of the southern termini of Monroe Run and Poplar Lick Run trails to create a backpacking loop
1. Opportunities for multi-day backpacking are limited in Garrett County. Although users can stitch together a loop using the Monroe Run, Poplar Lick Run, Meadow Mountain trail and Savage River Road, the use of the road on the southern leg of the loop is not preferable. I propose the investigation of a primitive trail to avoid the use of Savage River Road to complete the loop. Although the terrain would be difficult, it does appear that there is continuous state-owned property and some existing logging roads.



4. New proposal - formalize the “Governor Thomas Trail”
1. Along Savage River Rd, south of the intersection with Dry Run Rd, there is a commemorative sign for the interesting historical figure of Governor Thomas mentioning an overlook, but there does not appear to be one nearby. A bit further south on Savage River Rd is an unnamed trail, relatively unremarkable but with a nice view in the clearing at the top. I propose officially naming the trail the “Governor Thomas Trail”, potentially moving the current sign, or direct users to the trail

Potomac-Garrett State Forest
Recreation Proposals

1. Investigate connector from Burkholder ATV trailhead to Backbone Mtn Trail southern leg
1. Currently in order to create a loop using Backbone Mountain Trail system, users have to use Walnut Bottom Rd and MD Rt 135. I propose a short (appx 1,000 foot) connection from the existing Backbone Mtn trail to a location across the road from the Burkholder ATV trailhead parking area



Chris Nichols

Dear Maryland Forest Service,

You are doing incredible work to protect and preserve Maryland's natural beauty in our forests. We know enough at this point that excessive noise, development, pollution, and erosion result in challenges to forest ecosystems and various animal and plant species. Expanding OHV trails brings all of these negative elements to our forests. Yes, recreational outlets are important for human species, but let's focus those efforts on places where ecosystems are more sustainable for such activities, not our (mostly) pristine forested areas. There's nothing quiet so jarring as having a quiet hike, a forest meditation, or some birdwatching and nature watching disrupted by an unmuffled dirt bike or ATV. Please - no more OHV trails in our state forests.

Thank you,

Steve Roth, Savage, MD

Dear Maryland Forest Service.
I am an avid birder and oppose the expansion of the off-highway vehicle (OHV) trail at St. John's Rock in Savage River State Forest. I also oppose such OHV trails in other State Forests such as Chesapeake and Pocomoke State Forests, Greenridge State Forest, and Potomac and Garret State Forests. OHVs are noisy, they interfere with all other activities, such as hunting, fishing, birding, nature observation, and hiking. Stream crossings on such trails cause sediment disturbance, and oil residue pollution. Please do not expand OHV trails in State Forests.

Ronald L. Davis
Baltimore, MD

Dear Maryland Forest Service.

I am a longtime resident of Maryland, and an avid birder, hiker, and user of Maryland's amazing state forests. I and my family strongly oppose the expansion of the off-highway vehicle (OHV) trail at St. John's Rock in Savage River State Forest. We also oppose such OHV trails in other State Forests such as Chesapeake and Pocomoke State Forests, Greenridge State Forest, and Potomac and Garret State Forests. OHVs are noisy, they interfere with all other activities, such as hunting, fishing, birding, nature observation, and hiking. Stream crossings on such trails cause sediment disturbance, and oil residue pollution. Please do not expand OHV trails in State Forests.

In addition to the native environmental impacts, as a woman who frequently hikes and birdwatches solo, I know that OHVs allow a certain element of human into forests that are not always safe for woman or even men who enjoy forests by themselves.

Please keep our state forests safe and for nature.

Thank you,

Tawna Mertz

Dear Maryland State Forest Service:

I am writing on behalf of the Audubon Society of Central Maryland (ASCM), a 501c3 chapter of the National Audubon Society. ASCM opposes the expansion of the Off Highway Vehicle (OHV) trail in Savage River State Forest as proposed in the draft forest work plan. Our organization owns two wildlife sanctuaries in Frederick County, and we know that OHVs are disruptive to the environment and to the visitor experience. We urge you to remove the plan for OHV expansion before finalizing your draft.

OHV recreation on public lands threatens ecological communities and visitor satisfaction. Visitors who prefer any other type of activity, whether hunting, fishing, birdwatching, hiking, photography, or family nature walks, lose value in their experience from the noise, danger, and physical site damage caused by OHVs. Noise also disrupts wildlife habitat, interfering with communication and inflicting stress on wildlife. Trails fragment habitats and encourage the spread and proliferation of invasive species, which are major threats to wildlife, to forest regeneration and production, and to visitor enjoyment of natural spaces. Perhaps most significantly, the trails cause major erosion, degrading the forest and its vital waterways.

Pioneering conservationist Aldo Leopold called soil "the basic resource." In a 1924 speech, he said, "By expensive planting and a generation or two of waiting, a ruined forest can again become productive—if the soil is there. . . . But if the soil is gone, the loss is absolute and irrevocable."

Please protect the future of our irreplaceable state forests by limiting OHV access to public lands to existing the existing trail at Savage River. Expanding that trail would set a precedent for irrevocable degradation throughout our precious Maryland state forests.

Thank you.
Julie Dunlap, Advocacy Chair, Audubon Society of Central Maryland

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Dear Maryland Forest Service.
I am an avid birder and oppose the expansion of the off-highway vehicle (OHV) trail at St. John's Rock in Savage River State Forest. I also oppose such OHV trails in other State Forests such as Chesapeake and Pocomoke State Forests, Greenridge State Forest, and Potomac and Garret State Forests. OHVs are noisy, they interfere with all other activities, such as hunting, fishing, birding, nature observation, and hiking. Stream crossings on such trails cause sediment disturbance, and oil residue pollution. Please do not expand OHV trails in State Forests. People need forests for peace and quiet and to experience nature. Noise pollution is a huge problem, why introduce it to our forests?

Jean S. Wheeler, Harford County MOS Member

Please continue the work on expanding hiking and backpacking trails.

Through hiking on the Big Savage Trail with shelters and potable water would be a great draw for those seeking multiday outdoor adventures.

Maintenance of existing trails also a must.

When forest cutting is necessary on tracks adjacent to trails a border of uncut trees should be considered.

Also, when tree cutting does occur on plots next to trails educational signage could be posted explaining the forest harvesting practices to lessen the out cry from tree huggers.

Dave Ramsey

I am a mountain biker and Maryland resident who enjoys visiting the western part of the state for its unique outdoor experiences. I'm writing in support of the proposed mountain biking trails included in the FY 2024 Annual Work Plans of the Green Ridge, Savage River, and Potomac-Garrett State Forests. I am in favor of six new miles of singletrack between Herrington Manor and Swallow Falls State Parks, five new miles of new singletrack in Savage River Forest, and an upgrade of the 5.5-mile Margraff Plantation loop, as proposed in the annual work plans.

Western Maryland is becoming an increasingly attractive destination for mountain bikers because of places like Deep Creek Lake and Herrington Manor. More mountain bike and multi-use trails in the region could make Western Maryland a premiere riding area for locals and visitors from other states. Outdoor recreation tourism helps bolster the local economy. Visitors like myself also patronize hotels, restaurants, grocery stores, and other local businesses. In 2019, tourism brought in over $25 million in direct consumer taxes for Western Maryland.

Green Ridge State Forest, the largest state forest property in all of Maryland, has only 12 miles of trail open to mountain bikes versus over 50 miles of hiking trails. The existing mountain bike trail also needs some repairs. Please upgrade the current trail in Green Ridge and add more riding opportunities, either by making more Green Ridge trails multi-use or adding new bike trail. These construction and maintenance proposals will expand ride options in the region, provide a well-rounded ride experience for mountain bikers of all abilities, and help alleviate crowded trails especially at peak season.

Additional mountain biking trails is an investment in youth sports. New trails will provide more training areas for student athletes including the Garrett County Composite team which is part of the National Interscholastic Cycling Association (NICA) Maryland league.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Annual Work Plans. I look forward to seeing more mountain bike trails in Western Maryland.

Sincerely,

Mark Howard, Dunkirk MD

I am a mountain biker and Maryland resident who enjoys visiting the western part of the state for its unique outdoor experiences. I'm writing in support of the proposed mountain biking trails included in the FY 2024 Annual Work Plans of the Green Ridge, Savage River, and Potomac-Garrett State Forests. I am in favor of six new miles of singletrack between Herrington Manor and Swallow Falls State Parks, five new miles of new singletrack in Savage River Forest, and an upgrade of the 5.5-mile Margraff Plantation loop, as proposed in the annual work plans.

Western Maryland is becoming an increasingly attractive destination for mountain bikers because of places like Deep Creek Lake and Herrington Manor. More mountain bike and multi-use trails in the region could make Western Maryland a premiere riding area for locals and visitors from other states. Outdoor recreation tourism helps bolster the local economy. Visitors like myself also patronize hotels, restaurants, grocery stores, and other local businesses. In 2019, tourism brought in over $25 million in direct consumer taxes for Western Maryland.

Green Ridge State Forest, the largest state forest property in all of Maryland, has only 12 miles of trail open to mountain bikes versus over 50 miles of hiking trails. The existing mountain bike trail also needs some repairs. Please upgrade the current trail in Green Ridge and add more riding opportunities, either by making more Green Ridge trails multi-use or adding new bike trail. These construction and maintenance proposals will expand ride options in the region, provide a well-rounded ride experience for mountain bikers of all abilities, and help alleviate crowded trails especially at peak season.

Additional mountain biking trails is an investment in youth sports. New trails will provide more training areas for student athletes including the Garrett County Composite team which is part of the National Interscholastic Cycling Association (NICA) Maryland league.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Annual Work Plans. I look forward to seeing more mountain bike trails in Western Maryland.

Ben Reisse

Dear Maryland Forest Service,

We are avid birders and overall nature enthusiasts. We are against the expansion of the off-highway vehicle (OHV) trail at St. John's Rock in Savage River State Forest. One OHV on

an otherwise quiet trail will negatively affect the birds, butterflies, critters, people, and surrounding environment. That means fewer people will take advantage of this great resource and eventually affect your funding.

In addition, we adamantly oppose such OHV trails in other State Forests such as Chesapeake and Pocomoke State Forests, Greenridge State Forest, and Potomac and Garret State Forests. The idea of allowing OVH has little merit.

OHVs are incredibly noisy, they interfere with all other outdoor activities, such as hunting, fishing, birding, nature observation, and hiking.

Our natural forest spaces are an oasis. Let's keep it that way. A quiet way to enjoy the day listening to all that nature has to offer and not the noise of many engines.

Stream crossings on such trails cause sediment disturbance, and oil residue pollution. Do not expand OHV trails in State Forests. This serves one special interest group at the risk of alienating others. We need quiet spaces in our lives to enjoy safely.

Lastly, noise pollution is real and affects all living creatures including you. The quality of life goes down with excess noise and gas fumes. Thank you for taking the time to read my comments. We typically support the forest service but in this we cannot.

Linda Roberts & Stephen Berzinskas, Columbia, MD

To whom it may concern:

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Additional mountain biking trails is an investment in youth sports. New trails will provide more training areas for student athletes including the Garrett County Composite team which is part of the National Interscholastic Cycling Association (NICA) Maryland league.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Annual Work Plans. I look forward to seeing more mountain bike trails in Western Maryland.

Justin Summers, Annapolis, MD

Dear Maryland DNR,

Me, my two kids (aged 9 and 6) and my wife are mountain bikers and Maryland residents who enjoy visiting the western part of the state for its unique outdoor experiences. I'm writing in support of the proposed mountain biking trails included in the FY 2024 Annual Work Plans of the Green Ridge, Savage River, and Potomac-Garrett State Forests. I am in favor of six new miles of singletrack between Herrington Manor and Swallow Falls State Parks, five new miles of new singletrack in Savage River Forest, and an upgrade of the 5.5-mile Margraff Plantation loop, as proposed in the annual work plans.

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Additional mountain biking trails is an investment in youth sports. Our kids love riding out in Maryland's nature, where they develop athletic skills and an appreciation for our state's nature! New trails will provide more training areas for student athletes including the Garrett County Composite team which is part of the National Interscholastic Cycling Association (NICA) Maryland league.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Annual Work Plans. I look forward to seeing more mountain bike trails in Western Maryland.

Martin Albrecht
Aryana Albrecht
Julian Albrecht
Kenya P. Wardhani

Bethesda, MD

To whom it may concern:

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Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Annual Work Plans. I look forward to seeing more mountain bike trails in Western Maryland.

Shawn Beaumont, Marriottsville, MD

Hi,

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Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Annual Work Plans. I look forward to seeing more mountain bike trails in Western Maryland.

Juan Velasquez, Rockville, MD

I am a mountain biker and Maryland resident who enjoys visiting the western part of the state for its unique outdoor experiences. I'm writing in support of the proposed mountain biking trails included in the FY 2024 Annual Work Plans of the Green Ridge, Savage River, and Potomac-Garrett State Forests. I am in favor of six new miles of singletrack between Herrington Manor and Swallow Falls State Parks, five new miles of new singletrack in Savage River Forest, and an upgrade of the 5.5-mile Margraff Plantation loop, as proposed in the annual work plans.

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Additional mountain biking trails is an investment in youth sports. New trails will provide more training areas for student athletes including the Garrett County Composite team which is part of the National Interscholastic Cycling Association (NICA) Maryland league.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Annual Work Plans. I look forward to seeing more mountain bike trails in Western Maryland.

Julio Barrera-Oro, Olney, MD

The Mid-Atlantic Off Road Enthusiasts (MORE) is pleased to have to opportunity to provide input on the FY24 State Forest Annual Work Plans for Green Ridge, Savage River, and Potomac-Garrett State Forests. I am Dave Magill MD Advocacy Director for MORE, a primarily volunteer run organization.

MORE is the premier mountain biking and trail-building advocacy club in the Mid-Atlantic region of D.C., Maryland, and Virginia. MORE's mission is to build an inclusive mountain biking community and to increase access to natural-surface trails throughout the region for all riders (and for all non-motorized users).

Founded in 1992, MORE has advocated for natural-surface trails throughout the DC-MD-VA area and has helped build an impressive network of multi-use trails and a strong community of trail users. MORE maintains over 800 miles of natural-surface trails in over 60 state, county, federal and city parks and forests in Maryland, Virginia, and Washington, D.C., building on the work of hundreds of MORE volunteers and over 15,000 volunteer hours annually. Beyond trail building and advocacy, MORE works with the community to successfully manage multi-use natural surface trails, and hosts ride events and group rides for kids and adults.

MORE is probably best known to the State Forest service through our decades of volunteer work at Cedarville State Forest. MORE members hand-built many of the trails at Cedarville, and continue to maintain them. Over the last few years, our territory where we provide volunteer services has been expanding west, to include Washington and Allegheny Counties. Many of our members also travel to Garrett county for its recreational opportunities. As a result, our club has

a great interest in seeing an expansion of natural surface, public, multi-use trails open to bikes and other non-motorized users in the state forests throughout Maryland.

We are very pleased to see the following included in your work plans:

Six new miles of professionally designed and constructed singletrack between Herrington Manor and Swallow Falls State Parks
Five new miles of professionally designed and constructed singletrack in Savage River State Forest
An upgrade of the 5.5-mile core loop at the Margraff Plantation
We ask that you keep looking for opportunities to grow trail recreation even more in these state forests. Forestry management and trail-based recreation have proven to be very compatible throughout the US, and enhancing recreation enhances support for forestry budgets in general.

We believe these are some key points for your consideration:

Western Maryland is becoming an increasingly attractive destination for mountain bikers because of places like Deep Creek and Herrington Manor. The proposed additional trails will not only expand the ride options in the region but also provide a well-rounded ride experience for mountain bikers of all abilities.
Additional trails in Green Ridge, Savage River, and Potomac-Garrett State Forests will help alleviate crowded trails especially at peak season in Deep Creek and Herrington Manor.
Green Ridge State Forest, the largest state forest property in all of Maryland, has only 12 miles of trail open to mountain bikes, vs 50+ miles of hiking trails. And the existing mountain bike trail can use some fixing up. Please upgrade the current trail and add more riding opportunities, either by making more Green Ridge trails multi-use or adding new trail.
Additional mountain biking trails are an investment in youth sports. New trails will provide more training areas for student athletes including the Garrett County Composite team which is part of the National Interscholastic Cycling Association (NICA) Maryland league.
More trails and a wider range of ride experiences will allow for more races and events to take place in the area.
Tourism is a big part of the region's economy. Visitors who engage in outdoor recreation also support hotels, resorts, restaurants, and other local businesses. In 2019, tourism brought in over $25 million in direct consumer taxes for Western Maryland.

Again, thank you for the opportunity to comment and we look forward to continuing and growing MORE's partnership with DNR on state forest lands.

Dave Magill, MD Advocacy Director, MORE

Hi all,

First i support and am a member of the MD OHV alliance.

As a long time OHV enthusiast, the OHV trail proposal is a step in the right direction at Saint John's Rock (SJR) in Savage River Forest. The OHV Title Tax Fund was designed specifically for the creation and maintenance of trails, and this is exactly in line with the given intent. I look forward to this growth at SJR and want it to continue to provide an equal and comparable facility to Wolf Den Run State Park, with an equal diversity in trail types.
I urge you to utilize this fund in other State-owned Forestry land where OHV access is limited or non-existent, like the Eastern Region Forests.

Billy Gleaves, Woodbine, MD

Hello,

As a long time OHV enthusiast, the OHV trail proposal is a step in the right direction at Saint John's Rock (SJR) in Savage River Forest. The OHV Title Tax Fund was designed specifically for the creation and maintenance of trails, and this is exactly in line with the given intent. I look forward to this growth at SJR and want it to continue to provide an equal and comparable facility to Wolf Den Run State Park, with an equal diversity in trail types.

I urge you to utilize this fund in other State-owned Forestry land where OHV access is limited or non-existent, like the Eastern Region Forests.

Shaun Bogan

Hi, I live near the savage river state forest and spend a lot of time outdoors in Allegany and Garrett county. It would be fantastic is the St. Johns rock ORV trails would allow non motorized mountain bikes. Especially since they are developing trails for electric bikes. The eastern part of Garrett County has minimal hiking/biking dual purpose trails, and I would love to see more in the savage river state forest up on Big Savage itself. Thank you for your time.

Mike Edelman

Hi,

As a long time OHV enthusiast the OHV trail proposal is a step in the right direction at Saint John's Rock in Savage River Forest. The OHV title Tax fund was designed specifically for the creation and maintenance of trails, and this is exactly inline with the given intent. I look forward to this growth and want it to continue to provide an equal and comparable facility to Wolf Den Run State Park. With an equal diversity in trail types.

I urge you to utilize this fund in other State-owned Forestry land where OHV access is limited or non-existent, like the Eastern Region Forests.

James Ratino

Hi,

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I urge you to utilize this fund in other State-owned Forestry land where OHV access is limited or non-existent, like the Eastern Region Forests.

Ben Dunkerton

The OHV trail proposal is a step in the right direction at Saint John’s Rock (SJR) in Savage River Forest. The OHV Title Tax Fund was designed specifically for the creation and maintenance of trails, and this is exactly in line with the given intent. I look forward to this growth at SJR and want it to continue to provide an equal and comparable facility to Wolf Den Run State Park, with an equal diversity in trail types.

Specifically St John's Rock needs to be expanded to include trails for full-size vehicles. At a minimum, the outer existing trails on the loops should be widened.

Ken Kyler

Hi,
As a long time OHV enthusiast (Jeep wrangler owner) , the OHV trail proposal is step in the right direction at Saint John’s Rock (SJR) in Savage River Forest. The OHV Title Tax Fund was designed specifically for the creation and maintenance of trails, and this is exactly in line with the given intent. I look forward to this growth at SJR and want it to continue to provide an equal and comparable facility to Wolf Den Run State Park, with an equal diversity in trail types.
I urge you to utilize this fund in other State-owned Forestry land where OHV access is limited or non-existent, like the Eastern Region Forests.

I live in Prince George county (Temple Hills), and its a long drive over to Western Maryland when I want to drive my jeep on trails. My last trip to Wolf Den we were there open to close. It was a fun day, but a very long one due to the 3+ hour drive. (We left at 6am and returned home at 8pm). Having deticated trails on the easter side of the state would greatly cut down on the travel time and would make the day much more enjoyable and not as mentally draining due to the long drive to the trails, spending the day driving the trails, and then driving back home.

The staff at Wolfden were very nice, they provided us with maps and directions. The trails were maintained, and there were clean porta potties at both locations! As a female, I very much appreciated having a clean, dedicated space to use the restroom at the entrance to the trails.

Shawn Holmquist

At this time, I do not have substantive comments but I do want to alert you that the document released for public comment is apparently incomplete. I noticed two sections where material is missing:

Section VI. Recreation-4. Savage River State Forest Shooting Range. The only text for this section states:
"Critical Maintenance funding has been allocated to renovate the shooting range in FY23

Insert Details". The words "Insert Details" are highlighted in yellow.

Section VIII. Ecosystem Restoration / Protection Projects - B. Wolf Swamp Hemlock Wooly Adelgid Management appears to be missing entirely. I visually searched the entire PDF for this section but could not find it.

There may be other missing material but I stopped reading after noticing these sections are not present. I also want to add that even though page numbers are shown in the Table of Content, the pages of the document are not numbered, making it very difficult to find material. The page numbers shown in the Table of Contents do not correspond to the pages of the PDF: for example, the Table of Contents shows that the section on the Savage River State Forest Shooting Range renovations should appear between pages 9 and 18, but the "Insert Details" text for that section is actually on page 31 of the PDF.

I hope that a complete document can be supplied for public review before the public comment deadline. Perhaps the deadline should be delayed while a complete draft is prepared.

Marcia Watson, Bowie, MD

That section references the ongoing Hemlock Treatments that MDA has been doing throughout the county. They have not treated any of our trees for a few years so I pulled the project description out of the work plan . . . but I forgot to pull it out of the table of contents. I just removed it and deleted all the page number references. When we added descriptions for the trail proposals and inserted a bunch of pictures it messed up the formatting for the page numbers.

Easiest fix was just to get rid of the page numbers. As for the shooting range inquiry, I'm still waiting for details.

Sean Nolan, Forest Manager, Savage River State Forest

Hi,
As a long time OHV enthusiast, the OHV trail proposal is a step in the right direction at Saint John's Rock (SJR) in Savage River Forest. The OHV Title Tax Fund was designed specifically for the creation and maintenance of trails, and this is exactly in line with the given intent. I look forward to this growth at SJR and want it to continue to provide an equal and comparable facility to Wolf Den Run State Park, with an equal diversity in trail types.
I urge you to utilize this fund in other State-owned Forestry land where OHV access is limited or non-existent, like the Eastern Region Forests.

Paul Layer, Damascus, MD

Hello,

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I urge you to utilize this fund in other State-owned Forestry land where OHV access is limited or non-existent, like the Eastern Region Forests.

I have to travel to Pennsylvania and West Virginia to enjoy OHV trails that are worth the drive.

I would love to be able to stay local to my state and spend my money locally to enjoy OHV activities.

Steven Borgfeld

Hello,

As a long time OHV enthusiast, the OHV trail proposal is a step in the right direction at Saint John's Rock (SJR) in Savage River Forest. The OHV Title Tax Fund was designed specifically for the creation and maintenance of trails, and this is exactly in line with the given intent. I look forward to this growth at SJR and want it to continue to provide an equal and comparable facility

to Wolf Den Run State Park, with an equal diversity in trail types. I am particularly interested in seeing the creation of new trails or expansion of existing trails to accommodate full size 4x4 vehicles, like Jeeps and other SUVs.

I urge you to utilize this fund in other State-owned Forestry land where OHV access is limited or non-existent, especially those on the Eastern Shore.
Matthew Malone

Good day;
Excellent work being done by your colleagues at the Maryland Forest Service.

As a long time OHV enthusiast, the OHV trail proposal is a step in the right direction at Saint John's Rock (SJR) in Savage River Forest. The OHV Title Tax Fund was designed specifically for the creation and maintenance of trails, and this is exactly in line with the given intent. I look forward to this growth at SJR and want it to continue to provide an equal and comparable facility to Wolf Den Run State Park, with an equal diversity in trail types.

I urge you to utilize this fund in other State-owned Forestry land where OHV access is limited or non-existent, like the Eastern Region Forests.

Charles W Schaefer, Waynesville, North Carolina

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I urge you to utilize this fund in other State-owned Forestry land where OHV access is limited or non-existent, like the Eastern Region Forests.

The Wolf Den Run State Park has already drawn lots of people to the area and Saint Johns Rock has the same opportunity, although I think it missed the mark the first time around. I strongly support additional resources being utilized to improve this recreational OHV area, to include more opportunities for full-size (Jeep) OHV enthusiasts.

I'll also add that you're sitting on other areas that could easily be opened for this use as well. Closed trails in Green Ridge State Forest and Potomac State Forest could be opened up with immediately attract recreational users to these areas.

I would also encourage you to consider how volunteer groups such as the Maryland Off Highway Vehicle Alliance could best be utilized to help improve or maintain areas such as this.

Andrew Taylor, Capital Off Road Enthusiasts - Treasurer

Hello,

Thank you for publishing the State Forest Annual Work Plans. I'm encouraged to see the attention given to Recreational Activities, and one of the reasons I purchase an annual pass. Please continue to protect camping in all the State Forests and consider adding more to the Eastern Region Forest Lands. As an enthusiast of ORV driving I would like to also encourage the development of the St.Johns Rock trails. Especially to support full sized vehicles. Overlanding and vehicle based camping/travel is growing and expansion of the trail would support that activity. Maybe even consider connecting SJR to Wolf Den Run via an off-highway full size vehicle trail with camping along the way. Not a lot needs to be done to the trails. The pictures you included in the Savage River plan for the SJR trail before and after showed a lot had been done to the trail. Besides widening the trail, rough terrain would be fine and more welcome for the ORV. With that, I would also like to recommend planning for a Backcountry Discovery Route. I've noted that there is a small piece that goes through Maryland (ridebdr.com), but it could definitely be expanded. The Daniel Boone Back Country Byway (sfwda.org/dbbb) is a great example.

Thanks for all you do in protecting our State Forests.

Javier Armendariz, Elkridge, Maryland

Hi,
As a long time OHV enthusiast, the OHV trail proposal is a step in the right direction at Saint John’s Rock (SJR) in Savage River Forest. The OHV Title Tax Fund was designed specifically for the creation and maintenance of trails, and this is exactly in line with the given intent. I look forward to this growth at SJR and want it to continue to provide an equal and comparable facility to Wolf Den Run State Park, with an equal diversity in trail types.
I urge you to utilize this fund in other State-owned Forestry land where OHV access is limited or non-existent, like the Eastern Region Forests.
Sincerely,

Adam Kalke, President of Maryland Competition Riders

To whom it may concern -

I enjoyed watching tonight's segment Outdoors Delmarva on WBOC, focused on possible plans to allow access to public lands for off-road vehicles.

I began riding motorcycles in 2019, at age 58.

If there were public lands for riding, I'd have a dirt bike tomorrow.

The Eastern Shore of Maryland depends a great deal on tourism, and outdoor recreation for our economy. Opening up logging roads, and single trail areas on the Eastern Shore for OHV's would draw even greater numbers of sportsmen and sportswomen from Delaware and Virginia to the Shore.

I hope you can make this proposal a reality.

Thank you,

Michael Atkins

Good Afternoon,
I am a resident of Garrett County and live in Accident Maryland. We frequently use the trails at Margroff, we hike and mountain bike and cross country ski the trails usually a couple times per week. I read the proposal for the new trails and I'm very excited that this is happening so close to home.

Nancy Zbel

To the Maryland State Forest Director,

I have lived near the Savage River State Forest in the Savage River watershed for over 40 years, so will be commenting only on that work plan. Thank you for the opportunity.

The SRSF is over 55,000 acres in size, so it seems like a huge intact land unit. The reality is quite different. SRSF is best likened to a block of swiss-cheese. It has many holes within it which are privately owned. How these in-holdings are managed significantly impacts the SRSF. Some landowners illegally run ORV's onto public land. Some clear-cut their land to the boundary. Some plant exotic invasive species (like Japanese barberry, Norway maple, Japanese spiraea, burning bush, etc). Most fail to take any action to control exotic invasives on their land. All of these actions (or lack thereof) impact the capacity of SRSF to support our regional biodiversity. So when planning timber harvests, it's important to take into account the condition of these private inholdings. How many landowners are actually managing for old-growth forest? A few may have conservation easements that prioritize this, but the majority do not. The only place that old-growth can be maintained/created is on our public land. I'm not opposed to timber harvests but these should be limited to younger stands.

Trail and road maintenance is needed but serious consideration must be taken when herbicides are applied. At the Meadow Mt Fire Tower overlook, a population of mountain laurel was

destroyed by apparent herbicide drift. Native plants are the preferred food for herbivorous insects, which in turn feed a variety of vertebrates. In fact nearly all terrestrial birds rear their young on insects, mainly caterpillars of butterflies, moths, and sawflies. To protect biodiversity herbicides should be avoided, unless they're the only tool available to combat exotic invasive species.

The 'primitive campsites' in SRSF have exceeded the carrying capacity of the land to support them. In past decades these sites were rarely used, so there was plenty of time for a site to heal from soil compaction. Also in the past most campers practiced camp etiquette (for example, digging cat holes away from streams for human waste). This is no longer the case. The sites along Big Run Road should be permanently closed. These campers could easily be accommodated at Big Run State Park. Sites along Elk Lick & Savage River should be reconfigured with a Clivus Multrum or portable toilet positioned in a central location.

There are many trails in the SRSF for a variety of users, and these all require regular maintenance and monitoring. Here are some examples:

Asa Durst is a popular trail for bird-watching and botanizing; a narrow wooden bridge over Big Laurel Run would improve accessibility for hikers/bikers, while discouraging illegal ORV use.

High Rocks is being accessed by people more concerned with spray painting graffiti on the rocks than appreciating the view and RTE species that live there; due to its notoriety since the murder, this area requires a much more stringent monitoring effort by MD Natural Resources Police.

St Johns Rock ORV trail system is large enough; any expansion near Callahan Swamp or into the Savage River watershed should be avoided to protect biodiversity.

Trails and roads provide an avenue for the introduction of exotic invasives species. So it's critical that these areas be monitored and infestations controlled. The SRSF is woefully understaffed. At the very least they require a new permanent staff person who continually monitors trails/timber roads for invasives and coordinates volunteers in control efforts. One possible source of income to fund this position could be from carbon storage reimbursements.

I care very deeply about the Savage River State Forest, as does my husband. Since 2005 we have led annual volunteer efforts to battle Japanese spiraea and garlic mustard in the Bear Pen Wildland. In past years, we coordinated the planting of thousands of red spruce (to maintain conifer cover along native brook trout streams where hemlock were being killed by HWA) and monitored streams as part of DNR's Marcellus Shale Stream Monitoring Coalition. We also placed a conservation easement on a 70 acre property that shares ~ 3/4 miles boundary with SRSF to prevent future development. These constructive comments are being shared so that the SRSF becomes a refuge for biodiversity in our changing climate.

Respectfully submitted,

Liz McDowell, Grantsville, MD

Hello!

I wanted to take a moment to share my thoughts on the 2024 State Forest Work plans for GreenRidge, Savage River, and the Potomac Forest lands as I am a resident of Cresaptown and live with a few miles of the Dan's Mountain State park.

I am very happy to see that much attention in the various state forestry annual reports include a deep focus on invasive non-native plant and animal mitigation plants. Based upon my observations across Western Maryland and Southern Pennsylvania I feel that perhaps this focus may not have enough reach and go far enough. I live on the side of Dan's Mountain in Cresaptown, Maryland. In the forest behind my home large woody branch vines have grown unabated for decades and now have formed intense clusters which can be found mounting and spreading from tree to tree. The vines are thick and woody and grow plentiful on the canopies on our native trees. In addition to the aforementioned state forests I recommend looking at all state lands as well as the development of a public awareness program to encourage private land owners on how to recognize these invasive vines and how and when to best address their removal. We know through research that mature and Old Growth forest are the most efficient types of forest for natural process activities such as carbon sequestration. Too reach our State goals of carbon dioxide neutralization and cleaner air we should harness the power of our natural sequestration process our treasured forests provide.

I thank you for your time. Please feel free to reach out to me if you have any questions.

John M. Fetchero, Cresaptown, MD

Thank you for considering the proposal to expand the ORV trail network at the St. Johns Rock road area. I would certainly welcome such an addition to expand the area responsibly, and I am impressed with the cooperation between the Maryland DNR and the Maryland OHV Alliance. Together we have opened two new legal riding areas in an area otherwise absent of trail riding opportunities. I , for one, would prefer to spend my money in the state of Maryland to support local ORV and the associated businesses that can profit from continued responsible use of our natural resources. Admittedly, it would be great if something a bit closer to central Maryland was available, as well as the Eastern Shore area. Again, thank you for all that you do for our community.

Tom Phipps

Dear DNR,

It has come to my attention that Maryland DNR is considering expanding OHV trails in some of the Maryland State Forests.

I thoroughly enjoy the birds and wildlife while walking through Shad Landing and Milburn Landing State Parks and Forest. They are very quiet places where I can enjoy the serenity of the forest.

Increasing OHV trails would destroy the peacefulness of the forest and put added pressure on the wildlife. So much of wildlife habitat is fragmented and it is your responsibility to protect what little undisturbed habitat is left.

I vehemently oppose expanding OHV trails in Maryland State Parks and Forests.

Barbara Dolan

Dear Sirs,

As a birdwatcher and Garrett County resident I am opposed to planning for any additional OHV trails in Garrett County state forests. The operation of these vehicles damage the land and spoil the forest experience for hikers, bikers, campers, nature lovers. The 2,000 acre Wolf Den State Park has been acquired for their use in Garrett County. That land allows for a lengthy trail system for OHV riders.

Sheila Hughes

As a hiker and a birder, I oppose further sites opened up to OHV. Goodness, the whole idea of getting out in nature is to HEAR IT and experience the quiet of it. We need MORE sanctuaries, not less. These motorized machines disturb the peace and quiet, scare away the birds and animals that hunters stalk. They leave offensive air pollution and destroy fragile habitat.

I encourage you to think of other species that must share this planet with us (often destructive) humans.

Thanks for listening.

Joy Mayfield

To whom it may concern,

I have lived in Maryland all of my life, as did my father, grandfathers and great grandfathers.

I hike, bird watch, hunt and hike in the forest.

I strongly oppose the expansion of trails for off-highway vehicles.

The disruptions caused by these types of vehicles are not compatible with the mission statement " to provide for wise stewardship and enjoyment by people."

Adding noise, pollution, and soil erosion is probably not considered good stewardship.

Interesting study opportunity, once you can easily haul in your cooler on the back of your ATV, how much easier is it to toss your trash deep in the woods?

Again, I oppose the expansion of OHV trails and do not see it as compatible with the mission statement of the Maryland Park Service.

Thank you,

William Price

I strongly oppose additional OHV trails I'm existing forests. Having more OHV trails in forests severely decreases the enjoyment of many other activities. I am an avid hunter, fisherman, hiker, birder and nature enthusiast.

In this hectic world with 24-7 connectivity, noise pollution etc. a welcome respite is getting out in nature to enjoy solitude, nature and calmness.

Imagine if you bought a quite little farmette in the country, then the FFA informs you that they will be constructing an airport with high flight counts and Jumbo jets. Your tranquility, gone.

Please reconsider this poor decision.

Charlie Parker

State forests in Maryland, particularly Garrett and Allegany counties should not have any more OHV trails made which harm our forests and wildlife and the one that is just west of Frostburg (St. Johns Rock) is completely under utilized.

As a resident of Garrett county and having 2 artificial legs (lost in Vietnam war), I get around just fine in our forests and need no ATV, noise or fumes ruining our forests.
Sincerely,

Kenny Braitman, Garrett County resident

I just read the Mission Statement of DNR's Forest Management, and was moved by the words. And now with the advanced knowledge of what truly makes a sustainable, and fully diverse forest community to pass on to Maryland's future generations of humans….and to protect aged, and still aging habitats of old growth forests for posterity, and to further transition established

wildlife habitats….now seems the perfect time to be a better national leader in setting aside wide swaths of those important acres of flora, and fauna, and to carefully trim away the less valuable planned timber for harvesting. The existing and more valuable old growth forest, and old standing connected habitats for wildlife continuation can be more utilized as 'Eco-Tourism' trails, and paths, campgrounds, and more Maryland State, County, and even City Parklands. And Maryland's forests are perfectly situated to be large drawls for many in the ever expanding populations, and also harvesting the valuable available tourist dollars at newly established trails, or parks….and for the surrounding business communities.

John A. Rafter

NO!

Jim Speicher

I oppose the construction of the planned

OHV trails.in STATE Forests. They are disruptive.

Tom Cimino

I absolutely oppose creating more off-highway vehicle (OHV) trails in any Maryland state forests. Such trails would interfere with all other uses (like birding, hunting, fishing and hiking) in our forests. Why should a small minority of forest users be allowed to overwhelm all other uses for these precious state lands.

Thank you,

Brian Smith

I am an avid birder, hiker and naturalist, and oppose any expansion of off-highway vehicle (OHV) trails in Maryland State Forests. OHVs are very noisy, and Interfere with activities such as hiking, birding, nature observation etc.

Please do not expand OHV trails in State Forests.

Thank you.

Marlies Smith

I am a lifelong Maryland resident who has visited our state forests for many years to hike, bird watch, fish.

No more OHV trails should be added in Maryland's state forests. The state forests are used by many members of the public such as hikers, mountain bikers, backpackers, birders, campers, photographers, etc. All of these users would be adversely impacted by noisy off highway vehicles either through disturbance of animals, or noise pollution.

I think it would be bad policy to allow a minority of state forest users (OHV riders) to impact the experience of a majority of the public that visit Maryland's state forests.

Thank you for your consideration.

James Wilkinson, Columbia, MD

Please do NOT allow additional OHV trails. I know you are receiving many letters decrying how these trails affect people, but the forests themselves and the animals they contain are under ever growing stress from building encroachment and power and farming development. Please maintain the pristine land we have in Maryland and help OHV riders to find ways to have fun that don't pollute those formerly pristine forests with oil, exhaust, noise and high speed constant movement.
In hope you will agree to reserve these forests.

Barbara Rice, Hagerstown, MD

Please don't ruin our beautiful natural areas by allowing off- road vehicle access. They are loud and dangerous to hikers & bicyclists, as well as to the birds, animals and plants in these areas. We need to preserve our natural world, not destroy it or allow off road vehicles to ruin our for everyone else.
Thanks!

Rebecca Hart

Put me down for a NO on more OHV trails.

Lines need to be drawn where we don't run roughshod over every landscape.

Folks want to enjoy the forests- walk. Those with disabilities that cannot walk, wouldn't be "enjoying" the forest anyway on an OHV, they'd just be adding to its demise.

J Miller, Mt. Airy, MD

Please do not add any more OHV roads to Maryland National forests. Besides being polluting with carbon and noise, they disturb more quiet activities such as hiking, birding and hunting. They break up habitat for native flora and fauna. Encouraging this kind of activity is not where we should be going. We need to preserve our planet as much as possible.

Thank you,
Dorothy Brown

I strongly oppose opening Maryland's beautiful State Forests to off-highway vehicles. We have protected these lands so well for the future of our children. Short term gains in political donations by ohv sellers cannot possibly be worth the damage to habitats for wildlife and birds that will be caused by OHV use.

What are you thinking??

Monna Ashley, Maryland resident and birder

Thank you for your wonderful work maintaining this state's forest and giving us vibrant green spaces to enjoy. I am a hiker and love to explore our different state forests. Quiet time in nature revives my soul.
Please do not expand trails for OHV traffic. The use of such trails increases noise levels and pollution in the forests. Traffic will ruin the experience for bird watchers. Additionally, the trails itself create habitat barriers for animals and plants.

Anke Deibler

As a person who enjoys the great outdoors it is getting increasingly difficult to find quiet places to go and feel I get away from the noise of day to day life. Do we really need more OHV trails in State Forests? Have you ever tried to listen to birds when these vehicles come buzzing by? There are already five OHV trail systems in State Forests, and a newly opened State Park for OHV use. Doesn't my mental health matter seeking some peace and quiet in nature? I do not support more OHV trails in State Forests.

Sue Muller

I believe this is a good thing. I'm about to go out to state den to go off road for the first time. Not many people know about it. I live out in Harford county and a lot of people out here are always looking for a place like this to enjoy the beautiful lands that God has provided for us. This also allows people to go off road and do it legally as long as they leave it as they found it or better.

It would be nice if we could find a suitable legal place near Harford County and maybe one day DNR will work with us to find that place, but for now I'm happy to see this is coming together for us to enjoy in state forests.
J. Winterstein

I recently received information that the DNR is looking at the possibility of expanding off-highway vehicle (OHV) access and trails in some of our state parks and forests. If this is true, I encourage you to oppose this effort. I understand the need to balance recreation and preservation, but both can exist without OHV trails. I want to point out some positives of keeping existing or new trails for hiking and biking only:

- Cleaner forests and parks
- Quieter, more natural air and water for wildlife
- Improved safety of wildlife and pedestrian visitors

I typically think of this as a political issue, but if there are natural resource management reasons for allowing OHVs, I'd be interested in hearing them!

Thank you for your time,
Nathaniel Miller, Bowie, MD

Please do not expand off-highway vehicle trails in any of our state forests. I love enjoying nature in our beautiful Maryland. I am an avid birder and hiker. Off-roading in our parks disrupts everyone who enjoys nature. Off-roading also damages the land, especially at stream crossings, and habitats.

Let them do this recreational activity elsewhere!

Thank you for your consideration.

Kris Phillips, Carroll County, MD