

GREEN RIDGE STATE FOREST  
ANNUAL WORK PLAN  
FISCAL YEAR 2024

Prepared: Jesse Morgan 1/9/2024  
(Forest Manager) Date

Reviewed: George Eberling   
Digitally signed by George Eberling  
Date: 2024.01.16 15:44:56 -05'00' Date

Approved: [Signature] 1/25/2024  
(Environmental Specialist) Date

## Forest Overview

Green Ridge State Forest is located in eastern Allegany County. It is the only State Forest located in the Ridge and Valley province. Green Ridge receives the least amount of rainfall in Maryland, averaging 36 inches annually. Consisting of 49,012 acres, Green Ridge is the largest contiguous block of forestland in Maryland within the Chesapeake Bay watershed. It accounts for about 30% of the State Forest System and approximately 12% of all DNR land in Maryland.

The general geographic boundaries of Green Ridge are Town Creek to the west and Sideling Hill Creek to the east. The northern boundary extends to the Mason-Dixon Line. The southern boundary parallels the Potomac River.

Elevations range from 500 feet above sea level on the Potomac River to 2,000 feet on Town Hill.

Three Major highways traverse the forest in an east to west direction: Route 144, Maryland Route 51, and Interstate 68.

In the early 1800's, Richard Caton and William Carroll in partnership owned much of the land that is Green Ridge State Forest today. Richard Caton was the son-in-law to Charles Carroll of Carrollton, a signer of the Declaration of Independence. William Carroll was the grandson of Daniel Carroll of Rock Creek, a framer of the United States Constitution. The land was originally patented from vacant lands during the 1820-1840 period for inclusion into various timber and mining interests, primarily the Town Hill Mining, Manufacturing, and Timber Company. This business venture was financed by the estate of Charles Carroll of Carrollton. The crumbling stone structure known as the Carroll Chimney, part of the steam-powered sawmill built in 1836, is the only known surviving structure of that period.

In the 1880-1912 era, most of the remaining virgin forest was cut and a period of neglect resulted in numerous wildfires. During the early 1900's, the Mertens family of Cumberland attempted to convert the forest into apple orchards and promoted it as "The Largest Apple Orchard in the Universe."

The orchard was subdivided into 10-acre parcels and sold to individuals as investment properties. Five acres of each property parcel was cleared, burned, and planted into apple trees. The remaining five acres had the best trees cut and the poorer trees were left standing. The orchard company went into bankruptcy in 1918. The interests of the corporation were acquired by the State Department of Forestry in 1931.

The first forest management activities at Green Ridge were performed by the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) in the 1930's. Their main focus was fire control. Other work consisted of building roads, trails, recreation enhancements, and the management of existing forest for its future timber and wildlife potential.

During World War II, the CCC camp at Fifteen Mile Creek housed German prisoners of war who were required to cut pulpwood in the forest. As the forest grew it became popular with outdoor enthusiasts, especially hunters. It also contributed more and more to the local wood products industry.

Today, Green Ridge is a diverse forest consisting primarily of a 110 year old even-aged mixed oak forest, mixed with a wide variety of age classes resulting from various silviculture activities beginning in the late 1960's.

The oak consists of a variety of species, including black oak, white oak, red oak, scarlet oak, and chestnut oak. Five native pines grow at Green Ridge: white pine, Virginia pine, pitch pine, table-mountain pine, and shortleaf pine. Flowering dogwood, redbud, and serviceberry are common understory trees.

Upland animals found in abundant numbers on the forest are white-tailed deer, fox and gray squirrel, raccoons, red fox, and cottontail rabbits. Other animals include muskrat, beaver, mink, chipmunks, mice, flying squirrels, weasels, skunks, opossums, bobcat, and black bear.

Wild turkey, ruffed grouse, and woodcock are popular game birds on Green Ridge. Other birds include the pileated woodpecker, red-tailed hawk, and the barred owl. A wide variety of neo-tropical migrants and songbirds also occur on the forest.

Wildflowers such as mayapple, coltsfoot, spring beauty, trillium, bloodroot, and spiderwort flourish at Green Ridge.

# **Green Ridge State Forest Fiscal Year 2024 AWP Summary**

This work plan includes silviculture proposals for a total of 201 managed acres within the 20,000 acre general management zone in which area based sustainable forest management is practiced. Of these managed acres, harvests are proposed. There will be some variation between managed acres and actual harvest acres to provide for various buffers and/or retention areas. Under area based management, the annual target is 200 managed acres.

The silviculture proposals within this plan include 160 acres of variable retention harvests for an estimated 620 mbf of hardwood.

In addition to the above silviculture projects, other maintenance, recreation, ecosystem restoration, watershed improvement, monitoring, and special projects are included in this plan. Specific projects are described within the following pages.

## **Maintenance Projects**

General Maintenance will continue such as maintaining 100 primitive campsites, hazardous tree removal, pole gate installations as needed, mowing and maintenance of handicap access hunting areas, and general maintenance of headquarters complex, shooting range, and outbuildings.

1. Identify and mark all new acquisition boundaries & re-blaze 15 miles of existing state forest boundary.
2. Continue to maintain 100 primitive campsites.
3. Continue to maintain public shooting range.
4. Continue to maintain viewsheds on 6 overlooks.
5. Continue to maintain 4 disabled hunter access roads.

## **Recreation Projects**

- 1. Maintain approximately 62 miles of trails including 50 miles of hiking trails and 12 miles of mountain bike trail.**

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.

- 2. Continue to enhance upland game hunting opportunities by enhancing early successional wildlife habitat at Kirk Orchard, Bull Ring Ranch, Anthony's Ridge, Town Creek, and Kasecamp Bottomlands.**
- 3. Provide 2-4 guided interpretive tours on the forest to share management principles and practices with the public.**

## **SPECIAL PROJECTS**

### **A. Forest Regeneration Inventory:**

A Critical part of achieving long term sustainable forestry is monitoring and measuring the outcomes or responses to the management. Since the Stand delineation and inventory project was completed in 2017, these technician resources will be available to focus on inventory of the regeneration and response to management. This work will include collecting regeneration inventory data under the Silvah protocol and all stands will be sampled 3-5 years post regeneration harvest.

### **B. Continue to Network with Partners:**

GRSF is committed to being a “teaching forest” and strives to reconnect people to the land through providing forest management tours for the general public, hosting training sessions and forest resource-based events, service learning projects, and serving as natural laboratory for schools and universities.

1. Maintain working relationship with Allegany College of Maryland-Forestry Program.
2. Continue participation with Appalachian Forest Heritage Area (AFHA)
3. Continue partnership with the Ridge and Valley Stream Keepers (RVSK). GRSF provides meeting room and shares information in return RVSK monitor water quality in the streams within GRSF.
4. Continue partnership with The Wildlife Management Institute and RGS to work on enhancing early succession wildlife habitat on the forest.
5. Continue to support and collaborate with Volunteer groups to facilitate the spirit of service on the forest and reconnect people to the land.





## Silviculture Proposal Narrative

**Proposal Name:** East Valley Rd

**Managed Area:** 52 Acres

**Harvest Area:** 41 Acres

### Resource Impact Assessment

**Forest Community Types and Development:** This is a mixed oak stand within the general forest area. According to the GRSF specified 100 year rotation, this stand is mature at 118 years. Furthermore, it is an overstocked stand. These facts constitute the selection of this stand for regeneration silviculture treatment.

**Rare, Threatened and Endangered (RTE) species:** There are no known RTE species currently on or impacted by this site.

**Habitats and Species of Management Concern:** There are no known habitats or species of management concern on this site.

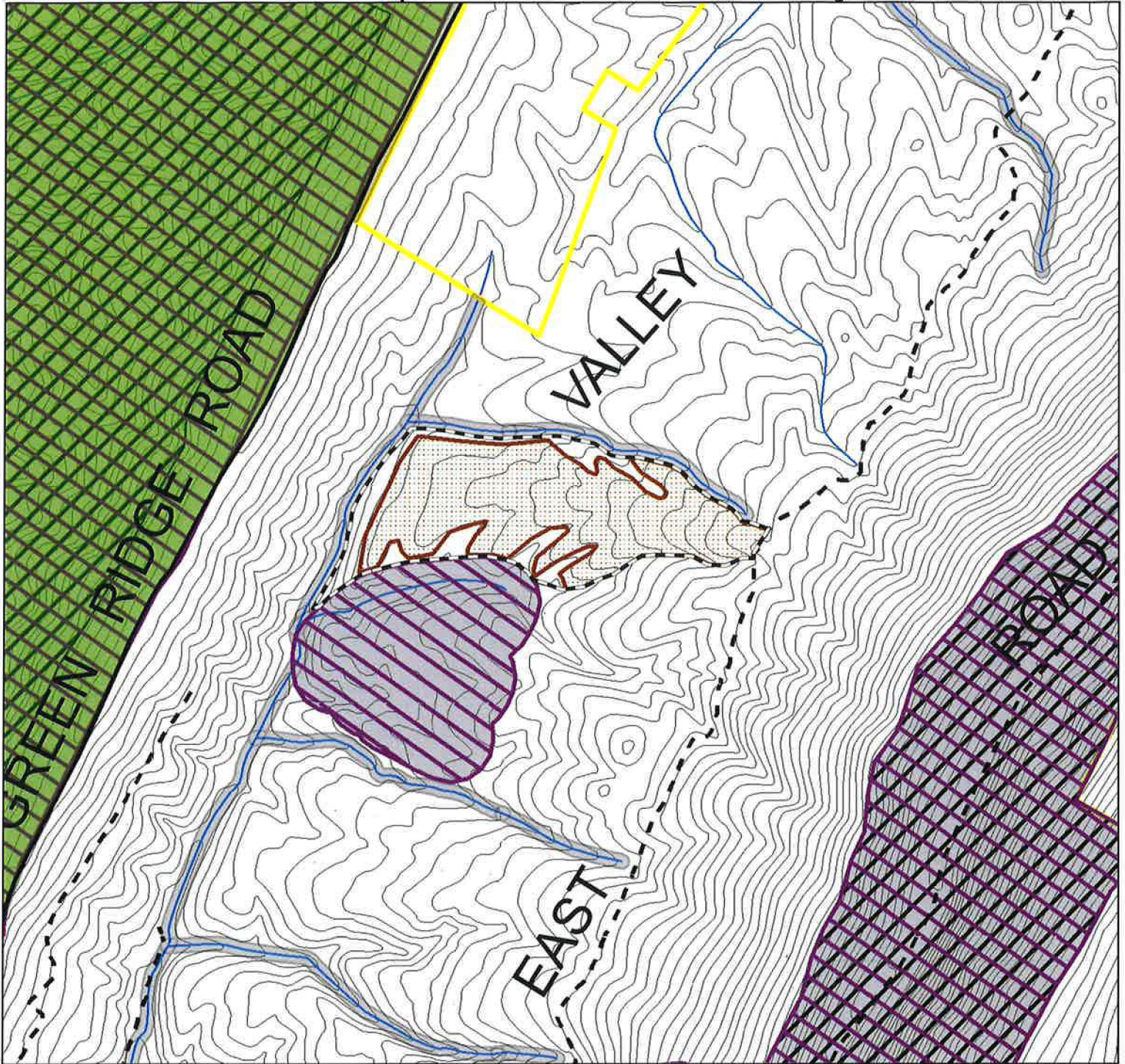
**Water Resources:** Water resources will be protected on this site. Access to the site is an existing road. All streams are already identified as HCVF and will be protected by a 50-foot wide no-cut forest buffer.

**Soil Resources:** Soil resources on this site will be protected under the *Maryland Department of Natural Resources-Forest Service: Ruting Guidelines for Forest Operations on Maryland State Forests*.

**Historic Conditions:** This stand like most of GRSF likely developed on its own over the past 118 years into what it is today despite the fact that it was commercially clearcut, and likely the ground was converted to fruit orchards afterwards. Historically this site was likely dominated by American chestnut. However, chestnut blight has eliminated American chestnut from having a dominant position in the landscape.

**Silvicultural Prescription:** The recommendation for this stand is to regenerate the stand under the principles of variable retention. The objective is to achieve regeneration of a mixed oak stand while maintaining some attributes of the original stand for wildlife habitat, natural heritage, and aesthetics values.

# FY-2024 Proposed Harvest East Valley Rd



Compartment - 66  
 Managed Area - 52 Acres  
 Harvest Area - 41 Acres  
 Age - 118  
 Type - Mixed Oak  
 TPA - 220  
 AGS - 101 sq. ft.  
 Stocking - 117%  
 Growth Rate - <2%  
 Soil Type - Lehew  
 Site Index - 62  
 Composition - BO-35%  
 CO-25



1 inch = 1,000 feet



## Legend

-  Managed Area
-  Harvest Area
-  Wildlands
-  OGEMA
-  ESA
-  HCVF
-  GRSF Boundary

## Silviculture Proposal Narrative

**Proposal Name: Stafford Rd**

**Managed Area: 52 Acres**

**Harvest Area: 48 Acres**

### Resource Impact Assessment

**Forest Community Types and Development:** This is a mixed oak stand within the general forest area. According to the GRSF specified 100 year rotation, this stand is mature at 123 years. Furthermore, it is an overstocked stand. These facts constitute the selection of this stand for regeneration silviculture treatment.

**Rare, Threatened and Endangered (RTE) species:** There are no known RTE species currently on or impacted by this site.

**Habitats and Species of Management Concern:** There are no known habitats or species of management concern on this site.

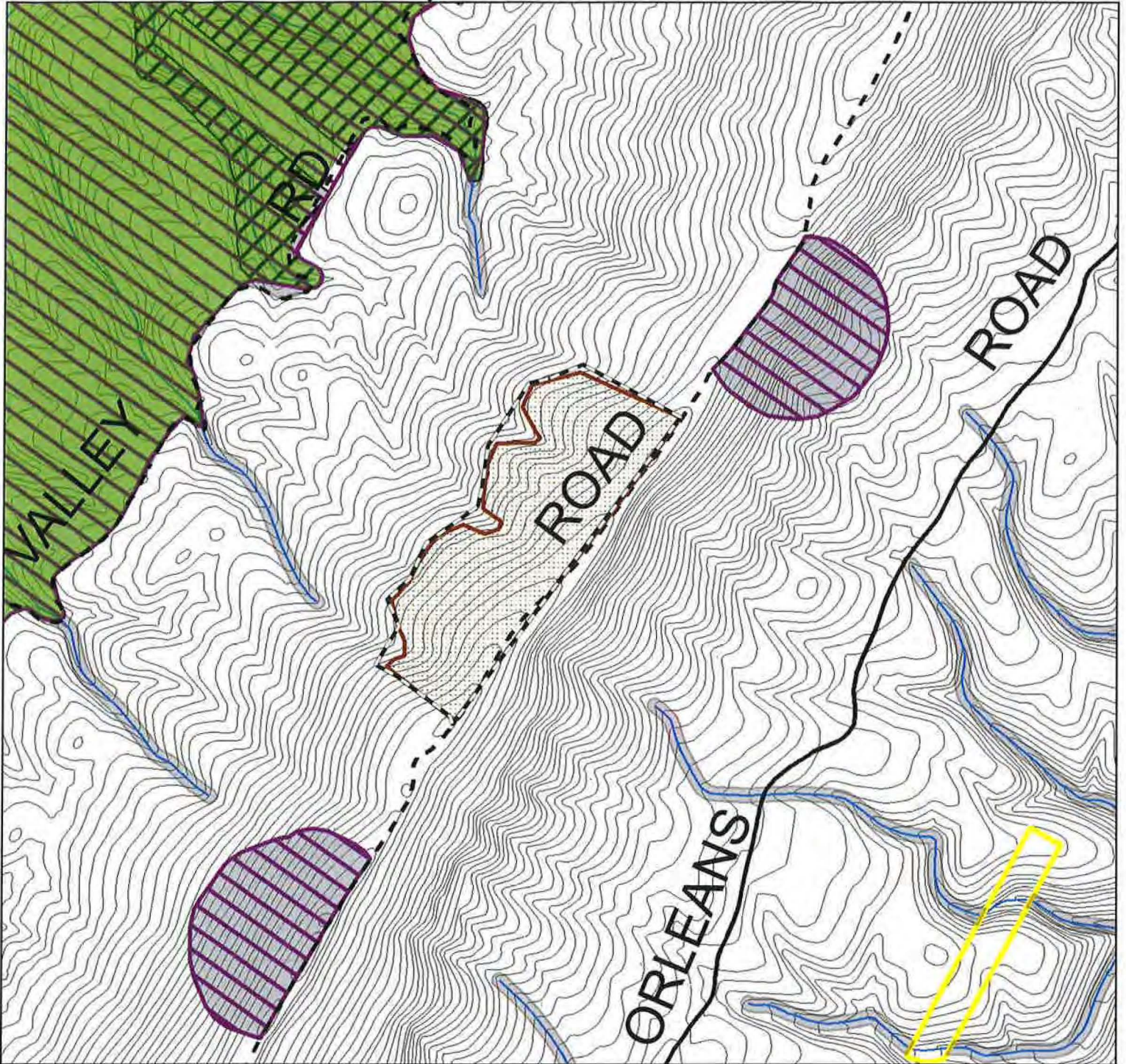
**Water Resources:** Water resources will be protected on this site. Access to the site is an existing road. All streams are already identified as HCVF and will be protected by a 50-foot wide no-cut forest buffer.

**Soil Resources:** Soil resources on this site will be protected under the *Maryland Department of Natural Resources-Forest Service: Ruting Guidelines for Forest Operations on Maryland State Forests*.

**Historic Conditions:** This stand like most of GRSF likely developed on its own over the past 108 years into what it is today despite the fact that it was commercially clearcut, and likely the ground was converted to fruit orchards afterwards. Historically this site was likely dominated by American chestnut. However, chestnut blight has eliminated American chestnut from having a dominant position in the landscape.

**Silvicultural Prescription:** The recommendation for this stand is to regenerate the stand under the principles of variable retention. The objective is to achieve regeneration of a mixed oak stand while maintaining some attributes of the original stand for wildlife habitat, natural heritage, and aesthetics values.

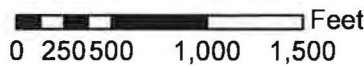
# FY-2024 Proposed Harvest Stafford Rd



Compartment - 56  
 Managed Area - 52 Acres  
 Harvest Area - 48 Acres  
 Age - 123  
 Type - Mixed Oak  
 TPA - 201  
 AGS - 98 sq. ft.  
 Stocking - 108%  
 Growth Rate - <2%  
 Soil Type - Dekalb  
 Site Index - 47  
 Composition - BO-55%  
                   CO-30%



1 inch = 1,000 feet



## Legend

-  Managed Area
-  Harvest Area
-  Wildlands
-  OGEMA
-  ESA
-  HCVF
-  GRSF Boundary

## Silviculture Proposal Narrative

**Proposal Name:** Oldtown Orleans Rd

**Managed Area:** 41 Acres

**Harvest Area:** 33 Acres

### Resource Impact Assessment

**Forest Community Types and Development:** This is a mixed oak stand within the general forest area. According to the GRSF specified 100 year rotation, this stand is over-mature at 125 years. Furthermore, it is an overstocked stand. These facts constitute the selection of this stand for regeneration silviculture treatment.

**Rare, Threatened and Endangered (RTE) species:** There are no known RTE species currently on or impacted by this site.

**Habitats and Species of Management Concern:** There are no known habitats or species of management concern on this site.

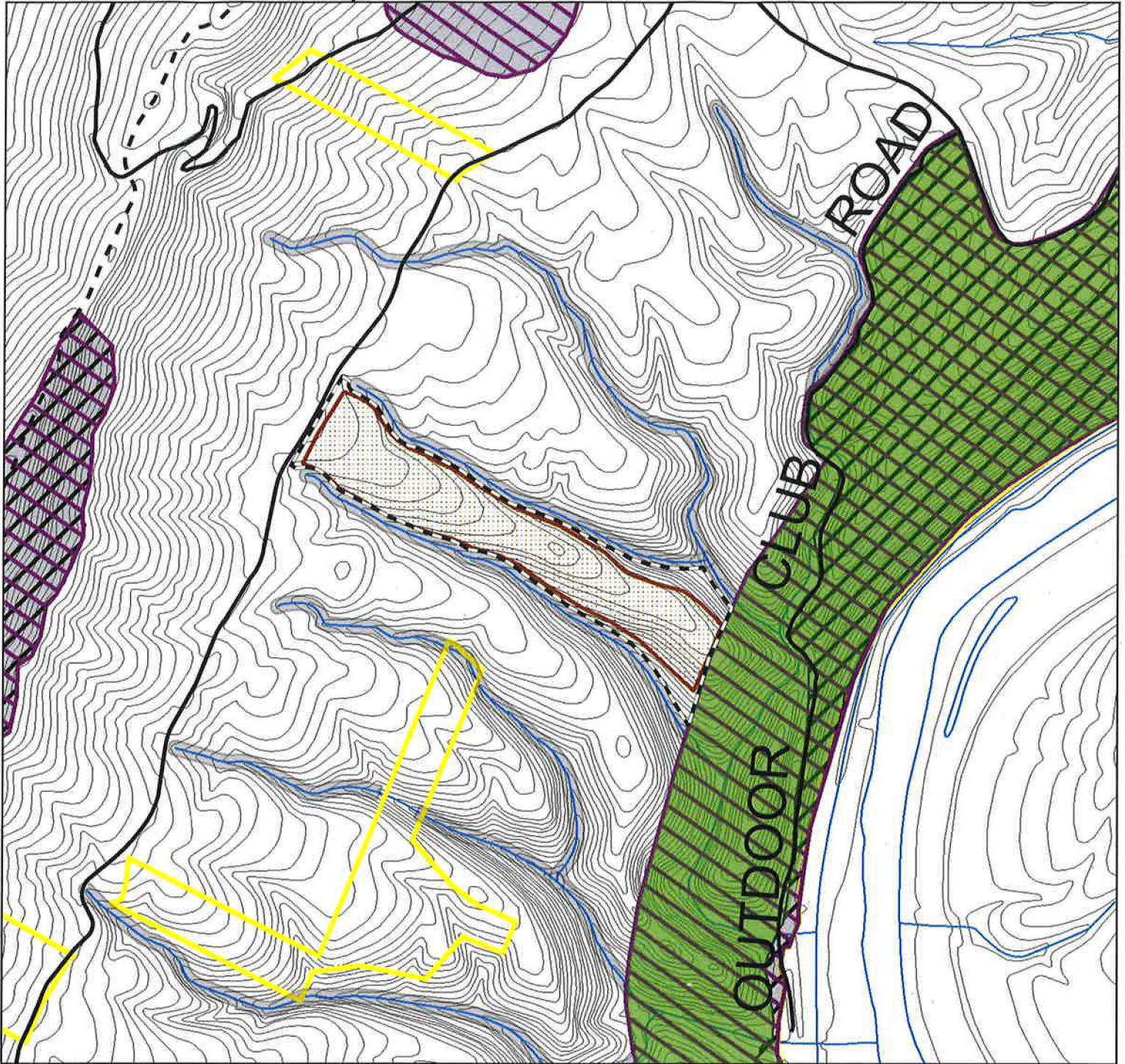
**Water Resources:** Water resources will be protected on this site. Access to the site is an existing road. All streams are already identified as HC VF and will be protected by a 50-foot wide no-cut forest buffer.

**Soil Resources:** Soil resources on this site will be protected under the *Maryland Department of Natural Resources-Forest Service: Rutting Guidelines for Forest Operations on Maryland State Forests*.

**Historic Conditions:** This stand like most of GRSF likely developed on its own over the past 125 years into what it is today despite the fact that it was commercially clearcut, and likely the ground was converted to fruit orchards afterwards. Historically this site was likely dominated by American chestnut. However, chestnut blight has eliminated American chestnut from having a dominant position in the landscape.

**Silvicultural Prescription:** The recommendation for this stand is to regenerate the stand under the principles of variable retention. The objective is to achieve regeneration of a mixed oak stand while maintaining some attributes of the original stand for wildlife habitat, natural heritage, and aesthetics values.

# FY-2024 Proposed Harvest Oldtown Orleans Rd



Compartment - 60  
 Managed Area - 41 Acres  
 Harvest Area - 33 Acres  
 Age - 125  
 Type - Mixed Oak  
 TPA - 238  
 AGS - 106 sq. ft.  
 Stocking - 115%  
 Growth Rate - <2%  
 Soil Type - Lehew  
 Site Index - 52  
 Composition - CO- 59%



1 inch = 1,000 feet



## Legend

-  Managed Area
-  Harvest Area
-  Wildlands
-  OGEMA
-  ESA
-  HCVF
-  GRSF Boundary

## **Silviculture Proposal Narrative**

**Proposal Name: Wallizer Rd**

**Managed Area: 56 Acres**

**Harvest Area: 38 Acres**

### **Resource Impact Assessment**

**Forest Community Types and Development:** This is a mixed oak stand within the general forest area. According to the GRSF specified 100 year rotation, this stand is over-mature at 106 years. Furthermore, it is an overstocked stand. These facts constitute the selection of this stand for regeneration silviculture treatment.

**Rare, Threatened and Endangered (RTE) species:** There are no known RTE species currently on or impacted by this site.

**Habitats and Species of Management Concern:** There are no known habitats or species of management concern on this site.

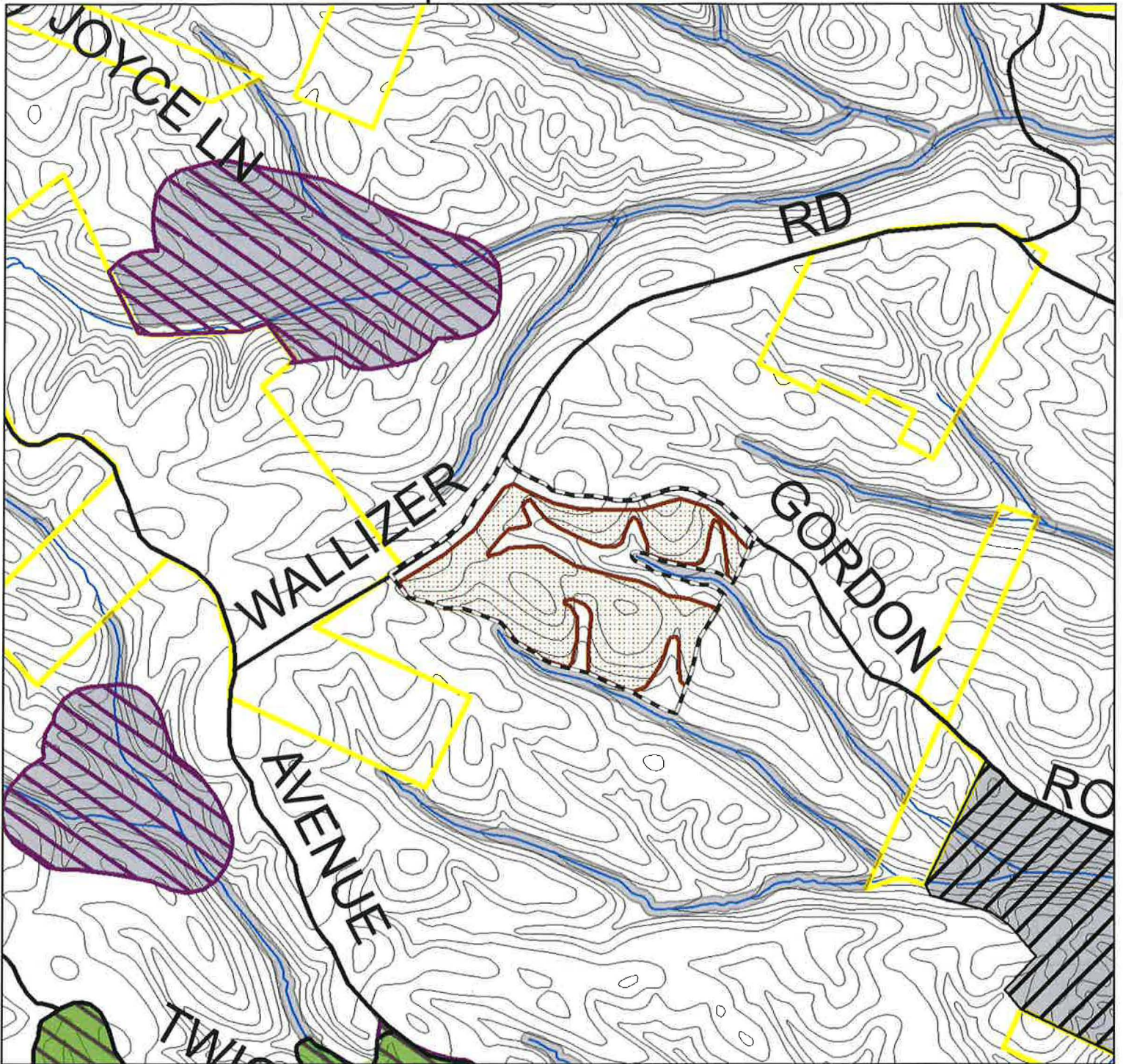
**Water Resources:** Water resources will be protected on this site. Access to the site is an existing road. All streams are already identified as HCVF and will be protected by a 50-foot wide no-cut forest buffer.

**Soil Resources:** Soil resources on this site will be protected under the *Maryland Department of Natural Resources-Forest Service: Rutting Guidelines for Forest Operations on Maryland State Forests*.

**Historic Conditions:** This stand like most of GRSF likely developed on its own over the past 106 years into what it is today despite the fact that it was commercially clearcut, and likely the ground was converted to fruit orchards afterwards. Historically this site was likely dominated by American chestnut. However, chestnut blight has eliminated American chestnut from having a dominant position in the landscape.

**Silvicultural Prescription:** The recommendation for this stand is to regenerate the stand under the principles of variable retention. The objective is to achieve regeneration of a mixed oak stand while maintaining some attributes of the original stand for wildlife habitat, natural heritage, and aesthetics values.

# FY-2024 Proposed Harvest Wallizer Rd



Compartment - 14  
 Managed Area - 56 Acres  
 Harvest Area - 38 Acres  
 Age - 106  
 Type - Mixed Oak  
 TPA - 207  
 AGS - 112 sq. ft.  
 Stocking - 103%  
 Growth Rate - <2%  
 Soil Type - Weikert  
 Site Index - 69  
 Composition - WO- 34%  
                   SO-29%



1 inch = 1,000 feet



## Legend

-  Managed Area
-  Harvest Area
-  Wildlands
-  OGEMA
-  ESA
-  HCVF
-  GRSF Boundary



## **WATERSHED IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS**

Continue to establish and enhance riparian buffers along Town Creek with volunteer tree planting projects. Non invasive tree and shrub species will be planted to establish forest buffers and enhance wildlife habitat.

## **SPECIAL WILDLIFE HABITAT PROJECTS**

1. Continue Implementation of the Kirk Orchard, Anthony's Ridge, and Kasecamp Bottoms, and Town Creek Special Wildlife Habitat Plans.
2. Continue rotational mowing and brush management in approved grasslands and other wildlife openings.

## **ECOSYSTEM RESTORATION PROJECTS**

1. Work will continue to suppress ailanthus populations on the forest. Focus will be put on roadside populations, Special Wildlife Habitat areas, and individuals found within harvest proposal areas. Research has shown that suppression of ailanthus is most successful when using basal bark or cut surface treatments prior to harvest.

## MONITORING PROJECTS

1. MD DNR Fisheries will continue to monitor aquatic populations in Town Creek and the Potomac River. The Ridge and Valley Stream Keepers will also continue to monitor water quality in the streams within the region.
2. GRSF staff will monitor regeneration of stands by completing post harvest regeneration inventories on all final rotation harvests during 2<sup>nd</sup> & 5<sup>th</sup> growing season.
3. MD DNR Wildlife & Heritage Service will continue to research and monitor T&E species on the forest including wood turtle, timber rattlesnake, and several lepidoptra species.
4. MD DNR Wildlife & Heritage Service will continue to monitor big game harvest on the State Forest via required hunter harvest check in system.
5. GRSF staff will continue to monitor and document all timber operations within the forest on a weekly basis.
6. Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA) will continue to monitor spongy moth, hemlock wooly adelgid, and other insect pest populations on the forest.
7. MD DNR Wildlife & Heritage Service will continue to monitor whip-poor-will populations with annual spring nightjar survey.
8. MD DNR Wildlife & Heritage Service will coordinate monitoring of GWWA population with spring surveys.

# Operational Management

## 1. Introduction

This section of the plan is designed to cover the annual cost and revenues associated with the operational management of Green Ridge State Forest. It is the Department's intent that most of the revenues generated from the GRSF will be used to pay for the management and operation of the Forest. As stated in Chapter 1 of this plan, "*The primary goal of the Green Ridge State Forest Sustainable Management Plan is to demonstrate that an environmentally sound, sustainably managed forest can contribute to local and regional economies while at the same time protecting significant or unique natural communities and elements of biological diversity.*"

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 on Revenues and Operational costs associated with the Green Ridge State Forest. These figures are only estimates that are based on projected revenues and operational expenses. Yearly changes in the timber markets and weather conditions can severely affect revenues. Also weather can greatly affect recreation revenue. Operational expenses will vary from year to year mainly based on costs associated with proposed projects. For many special projects other sources of revenues such as matching grants will be sought to help offset the cost to the Department.

## 2. Green Ridge State Forest Revenue

*Estimated: \$300,000 to \$325,000*

Revenues that are generated from the Green Ridge State Forest are deposited into the Department's Forest Reserve Fund. In order to cover expenses out of this Fund, a Green Ridge Forest Budget must be developed a year in advance as part of the larger DNR budget. It then goes through the legislative approval/review process along with all other state operating budgets. Once adopted, the budget goes into effect the first day of the fiscal year (July 1<sup>st</sup>).

Forest Product Sale Revenue: *Estimated: \$200,000 to \$225,000*

This revenue is generated from the sale of forest products, which are identified in the Annual Work Plan. Traditional forest products include pulpwood and sawtimber from intermediate and regeneration harvests. This revenue is tied to forest harvest activities identified in the annual work plan and will vary each year. With the current age class distribution of the forest most revenue will be from regeneration final harvest operations.

Recreation Revenue: *Estimated: \$100,000 to \$125,000*

This revenue is generated from the sale of camping permits, fuel wood permits, and shooting range permits.

## **Other Revenue/Funding Sources**

*Annual Amounts vary, Estimated: \$NA*

Other budgetary funding that is utilized on an annual basis in the management of Green Ridge State Forest comes from a variety of sources including the Forest or Park Reserve Fund and General Funds.

## **Grants**

*Annual Amounts vary, Estimated for FY-2024: \$0*

Other funding comes in the form of grants through state and federal sources and are primarily utilized in recreation, habitat and watershed restoration projects. These funds are project specific. Some funding will be obtained through partnerships and grants, such as National Recreation Trail Grants funds. Expenses include the installation recreation improvements, removing invasive species and re-establishing native plant communities and habitat.

## **3. OPERATIONAL COST:**

*Estimated total Annual Expenses: \$411,181*

Operational expenses are those costs paid directly out of the GRSF operational budget by the State Forest Manager and vary based on approval of operational budgets. 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-2024 budget proposal was prepared in August of 2022.

### **Staffing Cost**

*Classified Salaries, Wages and Benefits, Estimated: \$230,200*

This cost is associated with Departmental State Personnel classified salaries. This staff is responsible for developing and implementing annual work plans, managing the daily activities on the forest, including resource management, recreation program management, maintenance, and administration.

*Contractual Staffing, Estimated: \$96,259*

This cost is associated with contractual staffing associated with operations of the state forest. Contractual personnel are responsible for assisting classified personnel in 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 assist with implementing all maintenance, recreational, silviculture, and ecosystem restoration projects.

### **Land Operation Cost**

*Estimated: \$84,722*

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, pre-commercial thinning and other forest management practices. Some of these costs will vary greatly from year to year based on the activities identified in the Annual Work Plan.

## **Forest Certification, Inventory & Monitoring Program**

*Estimated: \$10,000*

This estimate reflects the annual cost of various on-going inventory and research projects on the forest. Expenses are directly tied to Forest Certification. The purpose of forest monitoring is to accurately evaluate forest health and the effects of specific management activities. Resource managers will use the information to make informed future management decisions (i.e. adaptive management). Cost would cover both forest resource and sensitive habitat inventories and monitoring the effects of various restoration projects.

Expenses for forest certification will vary from year to year and will be at their highest at the initial certification and then every five years when the re-certification is done. Routine audits are used to verify compliance with the various certification programs. The goal is to certify Green Ridge State Forest under both the Sustainable Forest Initiative (SFI) and the Forest Stewardship Council (SFC). Each certifying agency takes a slightly different look at what is needed for sustainable forest management. Expenses will include fees for audits and annual monitoring programs for compliance with the certification requirements.

Future plans include hiring additional staffing to cover wildlife management activities, restoration projects, recreation management, monitoring, and additional forestry related activities outlined in this Sustainable Resource Management Plan for Green Ridge State Forest.

### **4. Summary**

This is the general breakdown on Revenues and Operational Cost associated with the Green Ridge State Forest for FY-2024. As described, these figures will vary from year to year. This generalization of the operating budget suggests the importance of maintaining income levels in order to achieve the goals set forth in the other portions of this plan (i.e. sustainability).

## **Green Ridge State Forest Public Comments Received for the FY24 Annual Work Plan**

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 trails 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.

---

**\*\*State Forest staff received the following form-letter comment from 20 different commenters. Rather than posting the same comment 20 times, the names of the commenters have been added below this comment\*\***

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.

Sincerely,

Jacob Mullis, Adam Linstedt, Michael "Sean" Godsey, Gabriel Jahn, John Higgins, Matt Levine, Joshua Foster, Aaron Conran, Ernest Rodriguez, Peter Pavlov, Mark Howard, Ben Reisse, Justin Summers, Martin Albrecht, Aryana Albrecht, Julian Albrecht, Kenya P. Wardhani, Shawn Beaumont, Juan Velasquez, Julio Barrera-Oro

---

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 the 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

---

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:

### **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.

Bonnie Borsa  
President  
Maryland Ornithological Society

---

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.

Thank you,

Jennifer Bishop

---

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 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.

---

The Mid-Atlantic Off Road Enthusiasts (MORE) is pleased to have the 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

---

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.

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

---

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.

Thank You

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

---

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

---

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.

Sincerely,

Barbara Dolan



---

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 draws 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.

Sincerely,

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.

Sincerely,  
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.

Sincerely  
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