

Ohio Department of Natural Resources

Division of Forestry

Annual Work Plan

For

Dean
State Forest

For the Period of

Fiscal Year **2013**
(July 1, 2012 to June 30, 2013)



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June 16, 2012
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June 25, 2012
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OHIO DIVISION OF FORESTRY

I. STRATEGIC PLAN *(Effective 2008)*

Our Vision: Ohio's state forests will be the best managed forest lands in the country, and will be widely recognized as such.

To fulfill this vision, the Ohio Division of Forestry commits to meeting five objectives. We will:

- Manage forests to ensure the health and sustainability of forest systems
- Produce high-quality forest products that contribute to local communities
- Provide recreational opportunities that require a large forest land base
- Provide unique forestry education sites and promote outreach and long-term research
- Maintain a highly trained and well equipped work force

To fulfill these objectives, the Division of Forestry will develop and implement strategies and plans that allow us to accomplish the following goals by 2011:

- Manage forests to ensure the health and sustainability of forest systems
 - *Implement a proven, verifiable approach to sustainable management*
 - *Manage for site-appropriate, native forest systems and species*
 - *Maintain long-term forest productivity through conservation of soil, water, and forest resources*
 - *Retain or promote stand and landscape level wildlife habitat*
 - *Assess the distribution and impact of non-native invasive species*
- Produce high-quality forest products that contribute to local communities
 - *Base State Forest harvest volumes on the goals and guidelines for each forest system, current stand and forest-wide inventories, and science-based silviculture*
 - *Develop marketing strategies to capture the maximum value of forest products*
- Provide recreational opportunities that are compatible with sustainable forest management
 - *Develop a comprehensive recreation plan for the state forest system*
 - *Build recognition for unique and varied recreation opportunities on state forests*
- Provide unique forestry education sites and promote outreach and long-term research
 - *Support forest research with an emphasis on sustainable forest management (silvicultural, prescribed fire, native systems, etc.)*
 - *Develop opportunities to showcase forest management practices to the general public, private landowners, and forest industry*
- Maintain a highly trained and well equipped work force
 - *Develop a training, continuing education, and/or certification standard for all division staff*
 - *Inventory and evaluate equipment and facilities and develop maintenance and replacement schedules*
 - *Develop equipment and facilities budgets based on current and projected needs*
 - *Ensure all staff have appropriate health and safety training*

II. Summary of Strategic Plan Actions

- Manage Dean State Forest under the multiple use concept promoting land management, forest sustainability, and back country recreation.
- Implement policies presented in the revised Land Management Manual that will maintain third party certification.
- Continue to develop employee skills and abilities through training thereby improving productivity and efficiency.

III. Forest Overview

History & Description: Located in the unglaciated hill country of extreme South Central Ohio, Dean State Forest, one of Ohio's first state forests, was established in June of 1916.

The early history of the region centered on Dutch and Irish farmers who emigrated from Pennsylvania. From the early 1800s to about 1900, most of the timber in the area was cut for charcoal to supply blast furnaces for the smelting of locally mined iron ore. The area had also been burned over many times by fires started along the Cincinnati, Hamilton and Dayton Railroad, which ran through Dean State Forest. Thus, when the land was purchased in 1916 for Dean State Forest, it was largely denuded of trees and was used as an early reforestation experimental area to determine the best species and planting methods. Several of the planting, such as the white pine, red pine and tuliptree along State Route 373 in Texas Hollow, are visible results of those experiments and efforts.

In the early 1930s, a Civilian Conservation Camp was located on the forest. Supervised by the Division of Forestry, camp personnel constructed and improved access roads and did much timber stand improvement work. Today, Dean State Forest contains an unbroken block of 2,745 acres of forest land.

A side variety of recreational opportunities exist at Dean State Forest. One popular activity is hunting. Deer, wild turkey, grouse, squirrel and rabbits are hunted in season at Dean State Forest. Several small ponds are located on the forest, and used by anglers. Mushroom hunting is becoming an increasingly popular activity.

Another major influence on Dean State Forest was the Ice Storm of 2003. This ice storm resulted in much downed woody debris. Many trees became uprooted and fell over; some snapped off at the trunk, and excessive amounts of limbs were broken from the treetops. This weather event created a higher fuel loading on the forest floor, stressed living trees, and caused a reduction in growth and vigor, along with other impacts to the forested environment. Throughout much of Dean State Forest, helicopters were successfully used to remove storm-damaged timber.

The above descriptions are just some of the influences on the management of Dean State Forest. The Division of Forestry is striving to address the impacts while continuing to improve recreational opportunities. It is a working forest, so timber harvesting, tree planting, wildlife habitat, forestry research, watershed and soil protection, and production of tree seeds are all in a day's work for forest employees and many local residents.

It should also be noted that during the spring and fall forest fire danger periods, Division of Forestry crews detect and suppress wildfires that occur on state and private lands within the surrounding protection area.

The following document will highlight the annual work planning for Dean State Forest. It is written on a fiscal year basis and will provide direction for the upcoming year's activities. Employees are directed to complete projects with public and employee safety being top priority. Employees reporting to Dean SF also provide significant help with activities at other forests in the southern district, notably at the APV areas in Richland Furnace and Pike SF's. The unit is managed from the southern district office in Chillicothe.

IV. **Resource Management**

Silvicultural Practices: No silvicultural practices are scheduled for Dean State Forest FY 2012.

Invasive Species and Timber Stand Improvement: There are locations throughout Dean State Forest that suffer from invasive species; an Ohio University graduate student has mapped most of these areas. The second cohort of the Ohio Woodland Job Corps treated many of these areas in Dean. These areas may be revisited for potential follow-up treatments. All treatments are handled through the project proposal process.

Boundary The Dean State Forest boundaries are marked once every 5 years. No boundary marking activities are scheduled for this year.

Insects & Disease: Foresters and Staff will continue to monitor for invasive / exotic / epidemic insects and diseases. This includes but is not limited to the Ohio Department of Agriculture's Gypsy Moth Slow-the-Spread Program. In addition forest staff informally monitor for forest pests, both native and exotic.

Utilization & Marketing: Forest products will continue to be offered for sale through both traditional state forest timber sales (stumpage) and merchandising sales. Additionally, firewood permits will be available for sale to the public.

V. Maintenance

Buildings: There are five buildings at Dean State Forest. They are as follows: Office, carpenter shop, equipment barn, gashouse, and the state residence.

The Forest Operations Crew will be responsible for the following:

- Routine maintenance on all buildings.
- Routine upkeep on all buildings and grounds.
- Workspaces will be kept neat and organized.
- Replace the shingles on the oil house.
- Install metal siding on the out buildings.
- Rain gutters on all buildings will be cleaned bi-annually.
- Crew will cut approximately 20 loads of firewood to heat the office.

Vehicles/Equipment: Dean State Forest utilizes four (4) highway vehicles, eight (8) off highway vehicles, two (2) pull behind trailers, and many hand and power tools. All Forest Staff will be responsible for the following:

- All vehicles and equipment will be maintained and in working order.
- Diesel fuel, gasoline, oil, and other maintenance supplies will be purchased as necessary.
- A designated employee will keep fuel books and maintenance records current.

Roads: Dean State Forest includes approximately six miles of roads and 67 culverts and header systems. Forest Operations Crew will be responsible for the following planned workload as well as issues that may arise through the year:

- Inspect headers annually, clean and maintain as needed.
- Utilize road graders to grade gravel roads and maintain ditches as needed (usually about once per year).
- Clear debris from roads as needed.
- Litter pick up as needed.
- Patch potholes as needed.
- Repair slips as needed.
- Monitor and repair the two major slips that occurred in the spring of 2011
- Roadside mowing will occur in accordance with Division of Forestry Policy
- All access roads will be formally inventoried, mapped, and an inspection report will be completed. The results of the inspection report will guide the maintenance efforts of the forest staff. The forest roads scheduled for inspection include 1, 2, 4, 5 and 6.

Note: Dean, Richland and Pike Forests' roads and trails have a rotation inspection schedule.

Signage: Signage will be replaced as needed. They will either be purchased or constructed by forestry staff. Evaluations will be made, as needed, pertaining to the state of degradation, need for maintenance or replacement, and locations of signage.

VI. Recreation

Bridle Trails: Dean State Forest contains over 20 miles of bridle trails. The following are the planned activities for the year:

- Brush hog six miles of trails annually
- Clear trails of debris as needed.
- Paint the bridle trails to visibly mark routes as needed.
- Complete inspections reports for Pinkston, Easter Hollow and the trail to Wayne National Forest. Provide the maintenance recommended based on these inspections.

Camping:

Roadside Camping:

In order to provide for a quality hunting experience:

- The forest manager will administer the roadside camping program
- Forest officers will patrol the areas and enforce forest rules
- Forest staff will collect camping permits

Roadside camping occurs during the following hunting seasons:

Deer – gun & primitive weapons seasons
Wild Turkey – Spring & Fall Seasons

VII. Wildland Fire

Suppression: Dean State Forest staff will be responsible for the initial attack activities on wildfires located within the forest boundaries. Suppression activities will occur within the Dean State Forest Protection area. This includes Lawrence and Gallia counties. This protection area is known for its high fire activity due to arson.

- The staff will also respond to volunteer fire department mutual aid requests within the Dean State Forest Protection Area.
- Area Fire Supervisors will maintain call out sheets and will coordinate wildfire response procedures.

- Area Fire Supervisors will report and update the District Manager of fire suppression activities and potential wildfire conditions.

Prevention: Each fire season, the majority of wildland fires are human caused and usually result from debris burning. In order to promote wildfire prevention and awareness:

- The Fire Supervisor will coordinate media activities such as interviews with the local press for television and newspaper articles. Timing critical releases with high danger fire weather will be critical in increasing public awareness.
- The Crew will maintain fire prevention signs in Lawrence and Gallia counties (one sign per county)
- The Smokey Bear suit is also loaned out to local fire departments and other safety oriented organizations to further promote prevention.
- The Forest will host the Lawrence County Fire Fighter Association meeting once annually.

Training: Well-trained staff with diverse experience levels shall be maintained at all times in order to effectively achieve suppression on wildland fires.

- A fire refresher will be conducted annually
- Firefighters will attend NWCG and other fire training as needed
- Training shall be tracked and recorded shortly after completion

Forest Officers also offer several training opportunities to local fire department including a basic wildfire class and a topographic map reading class.

- These classes will be offered to departments annually on a scheduled basis.
- Forest Officers will create a spreadsheet to track the trainings that are being offered and will locate this file on the M: Drive

Fire Department Contacts: Forest Officers will maintain the contact information for all of the fire departments within the fire protection area. Officers and staff will strive to maintain open communications with departments and to also improve communications.

Officers will attend the Lawrence County firefighters association meeting once a month.

FEPP/FFP: Each year, Forest Officers will inspect FEPP property that has been assigned to the fire departments by the Division of Forestry. The inspections occur from January 1st to mid March 1st. There are a total of 28 departments participating in this program and 83 assigned pieces of equipment.

- Officers will inspect the equipment and perform the appropriate reporting by or before the due date
- Officers will update their supervisor of their current progress weekly, and should also provide the Forest Manger with a list of the FEPP equipment stationed throughout the protection area

VIII. Law Enforcement

Philosophy/Purpose: State Forests currently have nine commissioned law enforcement officers and one commissioned manager. The purpose of these positions is to enforce Ohio Administrative Code and the Ohio Revised Code. One very important aspect of the program is resource protection. Forest Officers protect property boundaries from encroachment, recreation resources from undesignated uses, guard against timber theft and watch for watershed degradation. Specific law enforcement polices and procedures are delineated in the Division's Law Enforcement Manual.

Training: Commissioned officers will receive the following training: Weapons qualifications, law enforcement in-service training, remain current with CPR and First Aid, and TASER certification. Officers are to complete all Continuing Professional Training (CPT) and LEADS Certification training as mandated by the Ohio Attorney General's Office. Non-mandatory training will be offered to officers as workloads and budgets allow.

Reporting: All Forest Officers are to complete and submit annual Criminal Justice Information System (CJIS) reports as required. Officers are required by policy to submit copies of their citation logs to the Division Law Enforcement Administrator twice during the fiscal year. Other reports are to be submitted as required by Department/Division policy and the LE Manual.

Equipment: Officer will be issued all equipment listed in the Division's Law Enforcement Manual. Each officer will be expected to properly maintain all issued equipment.

Patrol Priorities: Priorities for patrol will be established utilizing the following criteria:

1. Responding to emergencies and help requests with jurisdiction
2. Protect and assist visitors through routine patrol of all facilities and incident investigation
3. Issue warnings and citations for violations
4. Investigate and assign wildfire reports for violations
5. Assist in special projects with other forests and agencies

Specific opportunities at Dean Forest are as follows:

- Vehicle patrol forest roads
- Patrol 20 miles of horse trails on APV's.
- Reduce and eliminate four wheeler / APV problems

Special Projects: Identify and request special projects to address specific issues and problems in order to maintain a safe and enjoyable environment for forest users.

Other Duties (VFD's, FEPP, court, boundary, etc.): Attend three (3) fire department association meetings each in Pike, Lawrence and Gallia counties; administer FEPP inspections; court updates; paint 5 miles of boundary; boundary inspection; respond to boundary encroachments by inspecting boundary when/ where encroachments occur; investigate and resolve; investigate fires according to fire manual direction; participate in fire prevention program; update fire department information sheets; aggressively investigate and enforce trash dumping violations.

IV. **Employee Development**

Employee List: Three employees report to Dean State forest. They also work at other state forests in the southern district on special projects.

Equipment Operator- Dean DePriest
Equipment Operator- Tim Boggs
Conservation Aide – Garth Sturgill

Training: Training will be considered as opportunities arise. Law enforcement and fire training have been addressed in the above sections. CPR and First Aid will be offered to all employees. Other training opportunities may include silvicultural and forestry training, equipment operations, all risk response training, and many on the job training experiences.

Other Employee Development: Required personnel will participate in the annual respirator fit test.

X. **Public Information/Outreach**

Planned Events: Dean State Forest will be represented at the Chillicothe Open House in late July.

Partnerships

- Decatur Township Trustees
- Wayne National Forest
- Division of Wildlife
- Local fire departments within the fire protection area
- National Wild Turkey Federation
- Ruffed Grouse Society

Volunteers: Currently, no volunteers are assisting Dean State Forest, but applicants are always welcome.

XI. Budget

Operational Budget: A separate budget is being developed for Dean State Forest. The previous budget was part of Shawnee State Forest's. See Shawnee State Forest Plan For FY12 Budget which includes Dean State Forests operating and staff budget.

Revenue: No timber revenues are currently scheduled for Dean State Forest. Some revenue is generated from the sale of firewood permits.

XII. Safety

Safety: Forest employees participate in monthly training sessions and many other safety oriented discussions in the field. The Division also participates in the Public Employment Risk Reduction Program and will continue to repair minor infractions that resulted from these inspections. Division Staff is also required to attend the Annual Division of Forestry Safety Training. Other safety trainings will be utilized as opportunities arise.

Division staff will be conducting internal hazard and safety assessments and will provide mitigating practices to eliminate or reduce the risk. Forest Staff will also utilize the policies and guidelines contained within the Division Safety Manual to further improve the agency's safety culture.

Any type of emergency (medical, fire, police, etc.) will be acted upon by staff member(s) consistent with their training, experience and ability to act.