

Ohio Department of Natural Resources

Division of Forestry

Annual Work Plan

For

PIKE State Forest

For the Period of

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



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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 Pike State Forest under the multiple use concept promoting land management, forest sustainability, and back country recreation.
- Continue to implement new policies as 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: Pike State Forest is located in the hills of south central Ohio in northwest Pike County and southeast Highland County. Land acquisition began in 1924, with the objective of returning abused hill farms and fire-damaged timberlands to productive forests. The Civilian Conservation Corps and the Division of Forestry completed most of the reforestation work in the 1930s with the planting to trees of eroded hillsides. Presently there are over 12,000 acres broken into 13 separate, irregular tracts. This separation makes it difficult to manage for continuous recreational facilities, as well as the management and patrol of the forest resource. Opportunities offered within the forest include timber harvesting, research and many recreational activities.

This forest is administered at the District level and no permanent field staff currently report to Pike State Forest.

IV. Resource Management

Silvicultural Practices (Scheduled Harvests, Cruising, Marking, TSI, etc.):

The following areas were marked in FY 2012 but have not yet been sold:

				Acres	Acres	Acres
State Forest	Compartment	Vol. Bd. Ft.	Tons Pulp	Clearcut / Openings	Shelterwood / Deferment	Selection / Improvement
Pike	A-2, A-5	851,304	1,208		65	89
Pike	A-8	329,443	996		60	
Pike	B-13	310,293	95			94

The following areas will be marked in FY 2013:

				Acres	Acres	Acres
State Forest	Compartment	Vol. Bd. Ft.	Tons Pulp	Clearcut / Openings	Shelterwood / Deferment	Selection / Improvement
Pike	A-26	726,684	3,454		79	127
Pike	B-28, B-29	1,054,246	1,588	10	91	
Pike	D-9, D-10	540,352	1,249		60	

These planned harvests resulted from previous cruising and are expected to be marked in FY 14 or beyond.

				Acres	Acres	Acres
State Forest	Compartment	Vol. Bd. Ft.	Tons Pulp	Clearcut / Openings	Shelterwood / Deferment	Selection / Improvement
Pike	A-26, A-27	351,355	1,270		69	
Pike	C-5, C-6	1,677,537	2,300		146	
Pike	D-24	749,000	1,350			202

Approximately 5% of the acreage in the forest will be assessed for potential silvicultural prescriptions during FY 13. The exact locations of the cruises have not yet been determined. The cruises will follow the stand-based cruising model used in FY 12.

Merchandising: The Division of Forestry will continue merchandising a limited portion of its scheduled management activities. This effort will consist of hiring a Master Logging company, through competitive bidding, to cut and deliver tree length logs to a centralized location where Division of Forestry personnel will manufacture them into sellable and sorted products. This process maximizes the Division's rate of return for its products. The Division's staff will continue to identify sales for merchandizing throughout the year.

Minerals: The Division of Forestry is currently reviewing and pursuing the potential for oil and gas activity on each state forest. In coordination with other Divisions within the Department of Natural Resources, Best Management Practices have been developed and suitability analyses have also been conducted. During this analysis, specific areas within the land holding Divisions of the Department have been identified as potential locations for the various types of oil and gas activity. Also, the mineral rights for each property are also

being researched and identified in preparation for potential leasing activity. These leases may be with the state or with other private mineral rights owners on state lands. In either case, the Division is fully prepared to manage and implement these activities with the least amount of disturbance necessary to accomplish the task.

Invasives: Common invasives at Pike State Forest include: *Ailanthus altissima* (Tree of Heaven), *Lonicera japonica* (Japanese Honeysuckle), *Rosa multiflora* (Multiflora Rose), and *Paulownia tomentosa* (Princesstree). Division staff will continue to identify areas to control throughout the year through the project proposal process.

Boundary: Pike State Forest is encompassed by roughly 98 miles of boundary. Current rotation for painting entire boundary is every four (4) years. This year, approximately 24 miles, more or less, will be painted to meet the goal.

Licenses/Leases: None currently issued.

Insects & Disease: Not only in the forest but also throughout the entire area monitoring stations are in place for the gypsy moth. That project is managed by the Department of Agriculture. Forest staff informally monitors for a number of forest pests, including emerald ash borer, gypsy moth, Asian long-horned beetle as well as numerous other pests.

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.

Research: Currently no ongoing research projects are taking place within Pike State Forest. Opportunities to conduct research projects exist for any person or groups. The only requirement being a special use permit needs to be applied for and approved for the activity.

Summary (2-3 year projects): Implement post harvest cruising to better develop the growth & yield model. Develop a backlog of scheduled sales to project at least 2 years of proposed treatments.

V. Maintenance

Buildings: There are three (3) buildings in use; service center, garage and a gashouse. They will be maintained in a safe, organized, and clean condition. This applies to the inside and outside. Once a year they will be inspected for needed repairs including windows, doors, gutters, downspouts, roofing, eaves and painting. Items needing corrected will be attended to as soon as possible. Any damage occurring to buildings will be attended to immediately. There is one old barn located on Greenbriar Ridge road.

Infrastructure (water, wastewater, utilities): The septic system was replaced in July 2009. It is a leach field type septic system.

Vehicles/Equipment: Items will be evaluated for serviceability and safety and a decision will be made to distribute some items to other forests or keep the items at this location.

Roads: There are no forest roads. Access roads will be mowed and creek crossing graded and maintained as needed. 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.

Signage: Signs are used to mark and identify trails, identify areas and for information purposes. They are used in the All-Purpose Vehicle area, on horse trails and hiking trails. Carsonite posts, wooden signs, and yellow plastic signs are used. Appropriate decals are used with the carsonite signs. They are replaced when damaged or vandalized. Wooden signs are routed with the description and painted. Usually they are repainted but occasionally require replacement. Yellow plastic signs are used for information and interpretive purposes.

Residences: There is one (1) residence currently being occupied by a forestry employee. It is adjacent to the Pike State Forest Headquarters on State Route 124.

Dams: There exists one (1) earthen dam at Pike State Forest at Anderson Lake. The dam and area is maintained as needed.

Capitals Projects: Currently there are no capitals projects planned for Pike State Forest.

Summary (2-3 year future projects): Maintain the facility in a working condition. Increase interpretive signage in the APV area.

VI. Recreation

Trails (bridle, backpack, etc.): There are approximately 33 miles of bridle trails that will be maintained and cleared on an as needed basis (e.g., after significant storm events). Once a year we will clear the trails of downed debris. We also will work with the Ohio Horseman's Council to brush them back when it is needed. Some of the trails that follow along access roads will be mowed once a year; after a weather event (i.e. heavy rain, high winds and ice) we will check the trails for obstacles. From time to time it is necessary to reroute a section of trail to take advantage of a better route. The Buckeye Trail Association maintains approximately 43 miles of the Buckeye Trail that traverse Pike State Forest east to west. The BTA performs all maintenance on this trail.

Campgrounds: N/A

APV Areas: The APV trail system is the only system with seasonal closure. The trail system is closed from Deer Gun Season to April 1st. There are ten (10) miles of APV trails on Pike State Forest. They will be maintained to control erosion and re-graded using motorized equipment twice a year. All trails will be open and passable during the recreational user season. Sanitary facilities will be monitored and maintained on a weekly basis. Signs will be replaced as needed. All parking areas, access roads, and emergency roads will be supplemented with gravel. The one vista will remain open through vegetative control measures.

Shooting Ranges: N/A.

Grants: A Recreational Trails Program (RTP) grant is used for reimbursement of maintenance costs on the APV area. Each year all equipment and personnel costs are tracked and the Division is reimbursed at a rate of 80% of costs.

Summary (2-3 year future projects): Over the next two (2) years, the entire bridle trail system will be graded with mechanical equipment. Culvert headers will be constructed for the roadway through the novice area. Aesthetic and functional barriers will be constructed along the edges in the APV parking lot areas.

VII. Wildland Fire

Suppression: The Division of Forestry has the statutory authority for fire suppression and protection within the hill country of the state. Pike State Forest is responsible for these duties in Pike and portion of Highland Counties. Division of Forestry employees serve as initial attack resources within the forest boundaries and assist VFD's outside the forest boundaries, when requested. Most requests involve the use of heavy equipment.

Prevention: Public education and awareness is key to fire prevention programs. Prevention programs utilizing Smokey Bear will be as follows: in Pike County; Fair, Oktoberfest, Dogwood Festival, Jingle Bells Parade and various school programs. Additionally, we will participate with a fire prevention program at the 5th Grade Conservation Field Day

Prescribed Fire: No activity planned. The Division of Forestry fully acknowledges the use of prescribed fire as a management tool and is currently collecting data across the southern district in order to better implement a prescribed fire program. The data collected and resulting analysis, will present both the effects of past prescribed burns and opportunities for additional prescribed fire. Two types of burns are being assessed. This includes site preparation burns to determine the effectiveness of establishing oak/hickory on that particular stand

and release burns to encourage the success of already established oak/hickory due to previous management practices. The results of the data analysis may yield additional prescribed fire opportunity for future fiscal years.

Inter-Agency Fire Crew: The Interagency Fire Crew supports the national effort to suppress wildland fire to protect lives, personal property and natural resources. Participation is strictly voluntary, but all Division of Forestry employees are encouraged to participate in the program.

Training: Members of the Interagency Fire Crew will attend one (1) Interagency Refresher Class. The Fundamentals of Wildland Fire course will be taught in each county at a minimum once per a year.

Fire Department Contacts: The Forest Officer will attend at least one (1) VFD Association Meeting in the protection area each month. Annually the officer will contact each department and complete the Division's VFD contact information forms.

FireWise: Pike State Forest will continue to support the Division's FireWise efforts.

FEPP/FFP: The Federal Excess Personal Property (FEPP) program is a program administered by the Division of Forestry that loans equipment to fire departments for their use in fire control. Division staff a minimum of once each year must inspect loaned equipment.

Grants: The Division administers several grant opportunities for volunteer fire companies. Pike State Forest will promote the opportunities to local VFD's.

Summary (2-3 year future projects): Explore any potential opportunities to utilize prescribed fire for oak regeneration purposes.

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

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.

Summary (2-3 year future projects): Continue to focus on projects to protect user safety and positive visitor experiences.

IV. Employee Development

Employee List/Vacancies/Table of Organization: This forest is administered at the District level with law enforcement and fire area supervision specifically assigned to District Staff. Land management and operations duties will be assigned as needed.

Training (tuition reimbursement, etc): 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.

X. Public Information/Outreach

Planned Events: Pike State Forest will be represented at the Chillicothe Open House in late July. Staff will present timber revenue checks to the county commissioners and the local school boards.

Partnerships: Pike Lake State Park, township trustees, National Wild Turkey Federation, Ruffed Grouse Society, and local VFD's

Volunteers: Buckeye Trail Association and the Pike County Chapter of the Ohio Horseman's Council

Interpretive Programs: Continue to participate and support 5th Grade Days at Pike Lake State Park.

XI. Budget

Operational Budget (personnel, maintenance): A separate budget is being developed for Pike State Forest.

Revenue: Revenue from Pike State Forest is generated from timber sales, firewood permits, and special use permit applications. A percentage of this income is returned to the local township, county, and local school district through the Trees to Textbooks Program.

Summary (2-3 year projected budget): Future budgets cannot be anticipated and the Division is currently composing the budget for this fiscal year.

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.