

**THE YEAR
IN REVIEW
ALLEGHENY
NATIONAL FOREST
2002**

FOREST SUPERVISOR MESSAGE



Kevin B. Elliott
Forest Supervisor

Our mission is clear—caring for the land and serving people. I feel energized at work each morning because the employees and partners of the Allegheny National Forest believe passionately in conserving our public lands. When Congress created our national forests, they envisioned managing the lands for the benefit of the many generations to come. The sum of our responsiveness to the public and our efforts to provide—in cooperation with our supportive partners—a range of ecological, social, and economic benefits to the

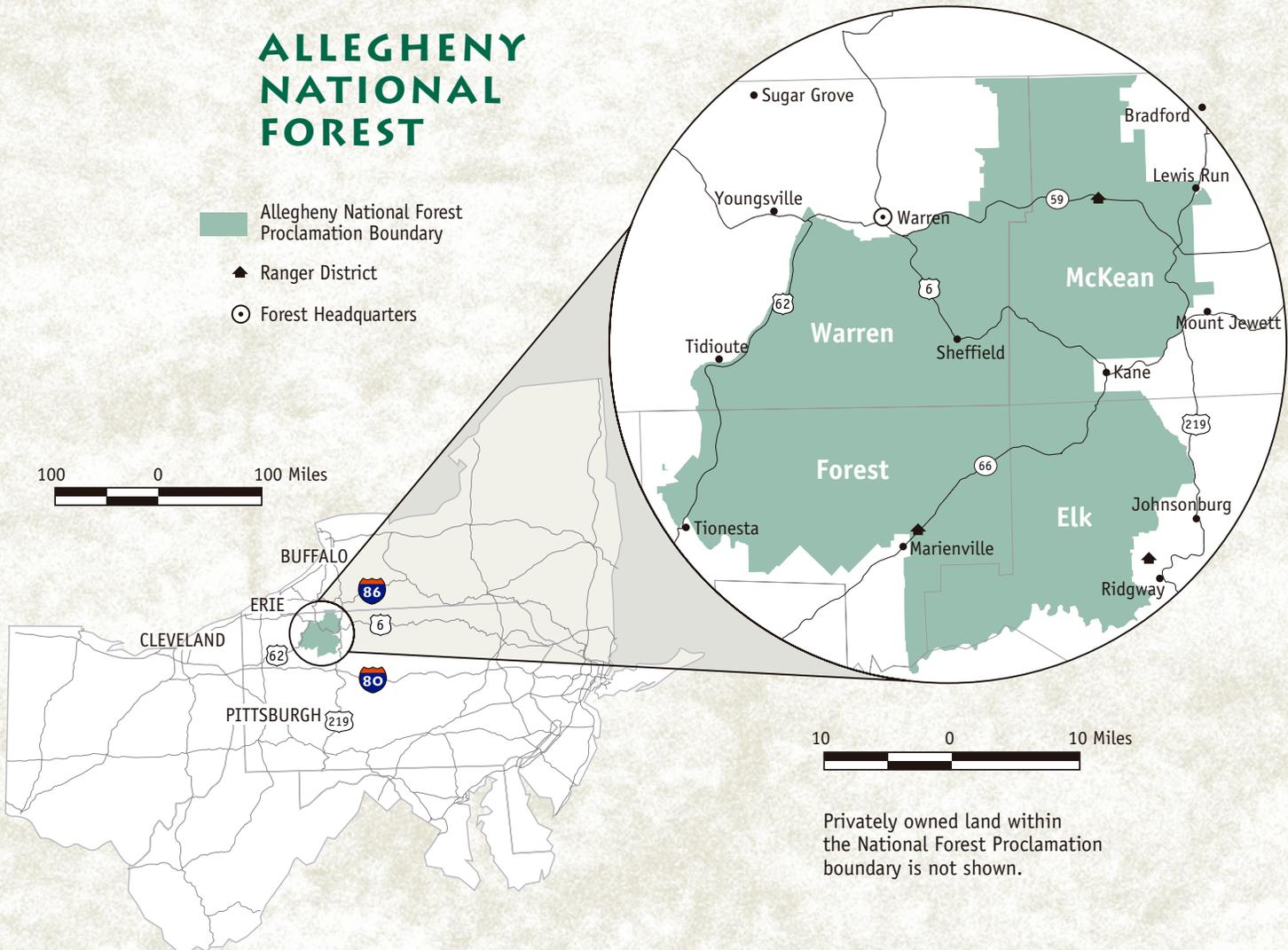
public equals our reputation as good stewards of the forest entrusted to us.

Our reputation begins with our forest plan—a key focus of the Allegheny in 2002. I am excited by the many positive social and scientific developments that have occurred since our forest plan was last updated in 1986. My vision is to incorporate these developments into our revised forest plan by 2006. The integral components of the plan will remain public involvement, the best science available, and the value of natural resources stewardship.

In this report, you can read more about forest planning and our many other highlights from 2002. I am confident you will agree that our Allegheny National Forest is in good health and good hands. With continued support from our partners and the public, future generations will have the opportunity to benefit from our own national forest.

Allegheny National Forest
222 Liberty Street
Warren, PA 16365
814-723-5150

ALLEGHENY NATIONAL FOREST



PROTECT THE NATURAL RESOURCES ENTRUSTED TO US.

THE ALLEGHENY NATIONAL

Forest is one of 155 national forests managed by the Forest Service, and the only one in Pennsylvania.

The motto "Land of Many Uses" appropriately captures our goal of maintaining a healthy forest that provides wood products, oil, gas and minerals, and recreational opportunities while protecting watersheds and wildlife habitats.

We practice conservation in all that we do. Since the Forest Service began managing the Allegheny in 1923, protecting the Forest's natural resources while balancing multiple uses has been a consistent priority. We strive to meet the needs of today without compromising the needs of future generations.

Gifford Pinchot, the first chief of the Forest Service, summed it up when he said national forest lands should be managed "for the greatest good of the greatest number in the long run."

FIRE PREPAREDNESS

The Allegheny works cooperatively with the state of Pennsylvania to support fire detection flights. We hosted two firefighter refresher-training sessions and coordinated the Forest's pre-suppression efforts during fire season. We also supported national fire suppression efforts with nearly 100 individual dispatches of Forest employees on firefighting assignments.



FOREST PLANNING

The Allegheny began preparations for revising the Forest Plan in 2002. An outreach and advertisement of a forest plan analyst was completed in support of that effort. Four resource projects were monitored and evaluated for compliance in implementing forest plan objectives, including two timber sales, one oil gas and minerals project, and one road project. The planning staff was actively involved with the Pennsylvania Ecosystem Management Advisory Committee, and made numerous forest-planning presentations to local groups, clubs and universities.

INVENTORY AND MONITORING

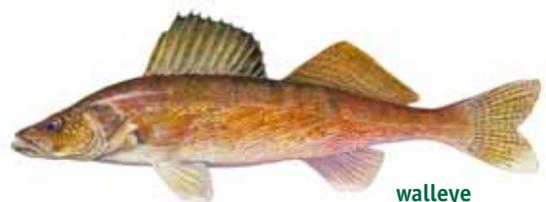
Wildlife and fisheries biologists monitored the health and populations of Management Indicator Species that included deer, barred owls, rattlesnakes, brook trout and walleye. Conservation assessments were completed for nine species of dragonflies, one plant and one fish.

Soil quality conditions were monitored on the Feather Timber Sale. The timber staff re-measured 35 Forest Health Monitoring permanent plots, which were originally installed and first measured between 1998 and 2001.

Several program areas began entering inventory data for Heritage Resources, legacy data, wildlife openings and hydrological data. A new Geographic Information System layer was

developed for the Scenery Management System. In addition, a noxious weed inventory of the Hickory Creek Wilderness was completed.

Working with Penn State and other partners, the Allegheny completed major updates and reorganization of GIS data coverages on watersheds, trees and shrubs, heritage, roads and road density, bats, land and railroads. In-house training on ArcView and ArcGIS were conducted to ensure our employees are current with the most recent technology available.



walleye

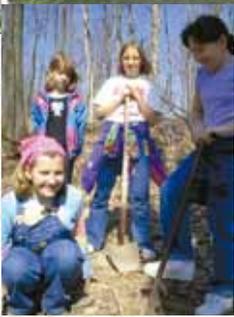
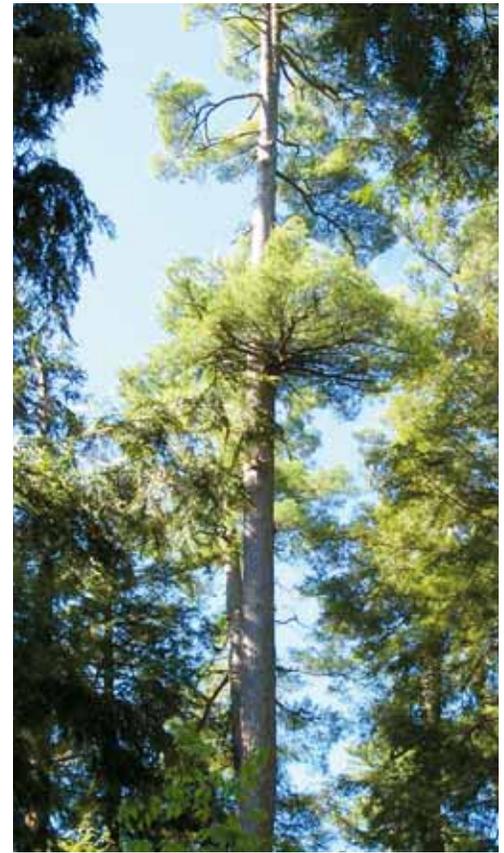


HEALTHY FORESTS INITIATIVE

The President’s Healthy Forests Initiative addresses the need to reduce obstacles to restoring forest health. The Allegheny faces a number of divergent threats to its forest health, including deer browsing on young trees, insect infestations, drought and the limited establishment and survival of tree seedling species.

Silviculturists—working together with researchers—have developed promising new strategies for dealing with tree mortality and the decline of hardwood forests. Along with key partners, the Allegheny has launched a new program designed to collect data on forest health to better assess conditions and trends in the health of forest ecosystems.

We continue to work closely with the Northeastern Forest Experiment Station and Forest Health Protection staff to explore the need for long-term studies to find the multiple causes of hardwood mortality.



LANDS

In 2002, the Allegheny lands staff resolved five claims of encroachment on National Forest Service lands, maintained 7.7 miles of boundary lines, surveyed more than six miles of boundary line, and conducted boundary line support of resource activities. This crucial work is part of a larger effort by the Forest lands staff to protect our public resources.

YOU CAN HELP PREVENT THE SPREAD OF ZEBRA MUSSELS

Non-native species are invading our Forest and its waterways. The zebra mussel—first documented in this country in 1988—has forced the Allegheny to require visitors to take aggressive action to halt its spread. Boaters should remove all plants and animals from watercraft and trailers, drain excess water from boats and canoes, dispose of unwanted live bait on land, and thoroughly rinse watercraft and equipment following use in the Allegheny Reservoir or Allegheny River. If possible, allow five days for the boat and equipment to fully dry before returning to the waterways.

Working together, we can take action to reduce the threat posed by zebra mussels.



RESTORE THE LAND TO CONSERVE OUR NATURAL HERITAGE.

WHEN THE FOREST SERVICE

first began managing the Allegheny in 1923, this area was known as the “Allegheny brush pile” and the “lands that nobody wanted.” With a clear vision, thoughtful planning and diligent effort the Allegheny has become the lush green Forest that we know today.

Our partnerships with the Northeastern Research Station and local universities enabled us to complete important research, monitoring and data collection. These partnerships benefit the Forest and provide a link to the surrounding communities, while providing valuable hands-on training to students.

In 2002, we continued administrative studies related to herbicide effects. We also worked with a host of partners and volunteers to:

- monitor, inventory and restore stream quality;
- locate and map cultural resource sites;
- improve wildlife habitat through the planting of seedlings and shrubs; and
- construct wildlife structures.



VEGETATIVE MANAGEMENT



Above: Forest health condition without fencing, herbicide and fertilizer treatments. Right: Healthy forest condition with a rich diversity of species and age classes.



Forest health, regeneration and sustainability are the desired outcome of our vegetative management efforts. In 2002, the Allegheny continued its reforestation work on site prep, planting, and herbicide and fertilization treatment to facilitate seedling growth in planned and completed timber sale areas. To protect seedlings from deer grazing, fencing in these areas was installed and maintained. Thinning projects were completed to improve the health and vigor of existing timber stands. To reduce competition for water, nutrients and light, 48 acres of noxious weeds were treated, and herbicide monitoring occurred on 15 acres of Forest land.

THREATENED, ENDANGERED AND SENSITIVE SPECIES: WHAT WE'RE DOING TO HELP

FEDERAL SPECIES	ALLEGHENY NF ACTIVITIES
INDIANA BAT	Survey known Indiana bat hibernaculum.
BALD EAGLE	Conduct surveys annually to identify roosts.
NORTHERN RIFFLESHELL MUSSEL	Completing conservation assessments.
CLUBSHELL MUSSEL	Surveying known habitat.
SMALL WHORLED POGONIA	Developing and implementing new survey strategy.
REGIONALLY SENSITIVE SPECIES	ALLEGHENY NF ACTIVITIES
WATER SHREW	Surveying wetland habitat.
YELLOW-BELLIED FLYCATCHER	Surveys and conservation assessment completed.
LONG-EARED MYOTIS	Surveys of habitat in progress.
TIMBER RATTLESNAKE	Surveys and conservation assessment in progress.
FIVE ALLEGHENY DARTERS	Surveys and conservation assessments in progress.
LONGSOLID MUSSEL	Surveys in progress.
NINE ALLEGHENY DRAGONFLIES	Surveys and conservation assessments completed.
ALLEGHENY WETLAND PLANTS	Surveys and draft conservation assessment completed.

All T&E monitoring was compiled in a report for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

WILDLIFE AND FISHERIES OPERATIONS & IMPROVEMENT AND THREATENED & ENDANGERED SPECIES (TES)

Our management objective is to protect and provide for wildlife and fisheries. The Allegheny completed 1,546 acres of wildlife habitat enhancements, including the construction of 24 wildlife structures. We implemented waterfowl improvements on two impoundments with assistance from our partners.

The Allegheny also accomplished habitat work with the National Wild Turkey Federation, Pennsylvania Game Commission, Ducks Unlimited, and the Ruffed Grouse Society.



We completed bat surveys on 23 sites and conducted telemetry studies on two bats.

We monitored fisher and otter populations in partnership with Frostburg State University and monitored American Bald Eagles in cooperation with the Pennsylvania Game Commission and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. We also screened watercraft for presence of zebra mussels, and improved habitat with assistance from local sportsman groups and the Boy Scouts.

In conjunction with the Kinzua Fish & Wildlife Association and the Corps of Engineers, we improved 39 acres of fish habitat in the Allegheny Reservoir. We also constructed, monitored, and installed fish habitat improvement structures.

We completed bat surveys on 23 sites, and conducted telemetry studies on two bats. We also completed conservation assessments for nine dragonflies in cooperation with Western Pennsylvania Conservancy.

In cooperation with Sand County Foundation, the Forest Sciences Laboratory and several industrial forest owners, we developed and implemented the Kinzua Quality Deer Cooperative Management Plan.

KNUTSEN-VANDENBERG TRUST FUND

The Knutsen-Vandenberg (K-V) Trust Fund is a national program established to provide resources for replanting and restoration of timber sale areas. In concert with appropriated funds, the K-V Trust Fund provides crucial money for reforestation, timber stand improvement, herbicide treatment, fertilization and fencing. These funds are also used to create wildlife openings and structures. The Allegheny worked cooperatively with the Northeastern Research Station on administrative studies of the effects of herbicides, and worked with Penn State on re-introducing and monitoring of fishers.



PROTECT OUR EAGLES

Fishing line discarded along the shoreline of Allegheny National Forest waterways is a potential hazard to foraging American bald eagles. During the 2002 National Public Lands Day event, volunteers cleaned up trash and fishing line from Kinzua Dam downstream to Dixon Island, from Big Bend boat launch up to Kinzua Dam, and from Dewdrop Run out to the point in the Reservoir.



PROVIDE FOR PEOPLE, NOW AND INTO THE FUTURE.

“PROVIDING THE GREATEST

good for the greatest number in the long run” was the mantra of Gifford Pinchot, the first chief of the Forest Service. The Allegheny continues to provide sensible forest management to ensure that our public lands are available for all who wish to use and enjoy them. These natural resources serve many different purposes, and are important to the people who depend on them. Our goal is to balance human impact with nature’s capacity to grow and regenerate.

The Allegheny National Forest is a rich source of natural resources and it:

- provides critical natural resources such as oil, gas, minerals, clean water and wood fiber;
- provides recreation opportunities such as camping, hiking, hunting, fishing, skiing, boating, scenic driving and wildlife viewing;
- provides information, programming and facilities to enhance visitors’ experience;
- provides opportunities for employment;
- provides wilderness and solitude;
- provides a connection to our past through access to historic sites and their cultural significance.



HERITAGE: THE PAST IS PRESENT

We value our past, and work hard to ensure that future generations will experience the forest’s cultural heritage. In 2002, we evaluated eight sites throughout the forest for nomination to the National Register of Historic Sites. At Indian Valley, we completed a campground heritage survey. We removed and replaced woody vegetation with

soft vegetation at Irvine Flats, and erected a Civilian Conservation Corps commemorative sign at Farnsworth Fish Hatchery. With invaluable support from partners and volunteers, we conducted several archaeological programs, including an archaeological dig at Buckaloons, and three archaeology field schools in partnership with local universities.

MINERALS AND GEOLOGY

The Allegheny National Forest is rich in resources and has an actively managed minerals and geology program. Of the 513,161 acres that comprise the Allegheny National Forest, 93% of the oil, gas and mineral rights are privately owned by individuals and corporations. In 2002, 259 new wells were drilled, 79 geologic areas were administered, 82 operation plans were processed and 1,405 oil, gas and mineral operations were administered. Sixty-four wells were plugged by operators.

TIMBER



Continued implementation of the Allegheny National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan (referred to as “the forest plan”) allowed the Allegheny to continue providing timber and other forest products to local purchasers. With commercial timber sales as the primary tool, 14.9 million board feet of new volume was offered. Timber, Special Use, common variety minerals and recreation receipts totaled \$2,243,904.44, one quarter of which was returned to local govern-

ments for funding schools, road maintenance and other social services. Twenty-five percent payment to Counties were as follows: Elk \$636,713.38, McKean \$770,500.33, Warren \$836,690.73. Forest County elected to receive payment under the Title I & III of the Secure Rural School and Communities Self Determination Act of 2000, which totaled \$1,421,172.54.

The Allegheny staff worked to ensure future projects by inventorying nearly 20,000 acres of forest land, completing environmental analyses on proposed projects, and making preparations for advertisement and award of future timber sales.

WILDERNESS

The Allegheny has two nationally designated Wildernesses, Hickory Creek Wilderness (8663 acres), and Allegheny Islands Wilderness (368 acres over seven islands). The Wilderness Ranger conducted eight 'Leave No Trace' education programs, hosted a Student Conservation Association summer intern, and worked with Friends of Allegheny Wilderness volunteer group on trail maintenance in spring and fall.



Above: a view from the Hickory Creek Wilderness; Below: Courson Island, a portion of the Allegheny Islands Wilderness;



RECREATION AND FACILITY CONSTRUCTION AND MAINTENANCE

Business plans are prepared for each recreation and facility construction and maintenance project to ensure adherence to both timeline and budget. Business plan projects for Minister Creek Recreation Area, Beaver Meadows and Loleta were implemented in 2002, and the boat-to-camping areas at Hooks Brook, Handsome Lake and Hopewell were rehabilitated. Recreation Use Fees were implemented at Pinegrove and Hopewell Campgrounds, and seven sweet-smelling toilets were installed at Laurel Mill, Beaver Meadows, Kelly Pines, Twin Lakes, Handsome Lake, Hooks Brook and Hopewell. The rehabilitation of Kelly Pines dispersed recreation site area continued through 2002. A shower facility for Buckaloons Recreation Area was designed, and the Buzzard Swamp Trail was completed.



MAINTAINING OUR ROADS AND TRAILS

In 2002, we administered 1,194 miles of roads and 26 bridges in our jurisdiction, and examined 50 percent of our roads as part of a Forest-wide analysis.

The Allegheny Roads staff also maintained 414 miles of roads to standard, maintained 26 existing bridges, and inspected all bridges and 39 major culverts. The roads staff also prepared timber sale road packages for two miles of road construction, 39 miles of reconstruction, administered 1,267 miles of system roads (which includes oil gas and minerals and township jurisdiction roads) and maintained 1,194 miles of Forest Service jurisdiction roads.



Working to keep forest roads to standard.

Thirty-seven percent of all Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) riding in Pennsylvania is on National Forest system lands. The Allegheny has 108 miles of trails that are open to ATV use, and 360 miles open to snowmobile use. This extensive motorized trail system—combined with 645 miles of non-motorized hiking and cross-country ski trails—is maintained to standard annually.

The Trails crew coordinated 106 miles of heavy maintenance of ATV trails, 179 miles of general maintenance of hiking and cross country ski trails, and maintained 11 miles of trails in the Hickory Creek Wilderness. Our staff administered four state-funded maintenance contracts (covering more than 106 miles), reconstructed 14 miles of the Timberline ATV trail, and completed our rehabilitation of Marienville's Penoke Boardwalk ATV/Bike Trail.

Credits: Fire color photo on pp. 3, National Interagency Fire Center. Walleye photo on p. 3, US Fish & Wildlife Service. Zebra mussel photo on p.4, United States Geological Survey. Small whorled pogonia photo on page 5: Paul Wiegman, Western Pennsylvania Conservancy. Eagle photo on page 6: Bill Simbeck. Bat photo on this page, Bill Simbeck.



NONDISCRIMINATION STATEMENT

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, or marital or family status. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.) Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) should contact USDA's TARGET Center at 202/720-2600 (voice and TDD).

To file a complaint of discrimination write USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, Room 326-W, Whitten Building, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call 202/720-5964 (voice or TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

