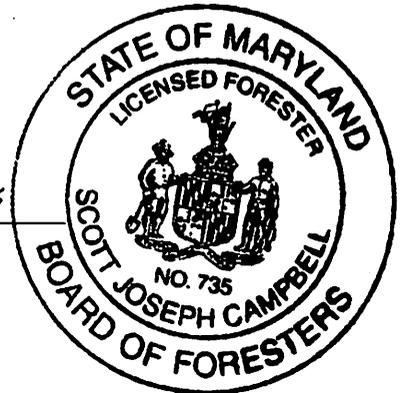


SAVAGE RIVER STATE FOREST ANNUAL WORK PLAN

FISCAL YEAR 2017



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Savage River State Forest
FY-17
Annual Work Plan



**Savage River State Forest
FY-17 Annual Work Plan**

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I. State Forest Overview

Savage River State Forest is approximately 55,155 acres in size and is situated in the northeastern quadrant of Garrett County in Western Maryland. It is a second growth mixed hardwood forest dominated by oak species, sugar and red maple, black cherry, hickory and ash. Owing to high rainfall and certain topographic features, Savage River State Forest contains many excellent quality growing sites stocked with superior quality trees. The forest contains approximately 4,000 acres of conifer plantations, established in the 1940's following state acquisition. Red pine is the dominant tree species within these plantations but other conifers include white pine, Norway spruce, larch, and Scotch pine. These plantations were established as nurse crops to rehabilitate abandoned and depleted farm fields, with the long-term goal of conversion back to native hardwoods as appropriate.

Savage River State Forest has been intensively managed for over 60 years. Forest harvest and grooming operations are undertaken to thin overstocked stands, to effectively deal with public safety concerns, to harvest mature or diseased/dying trees, to improve habitat for certain wildlife species, to assist and provide for certain research needs, to address aesthetic concerns, and to increase the proportion of age/height diversity of forested stands.

II. Annual Work Plan Summary

The FY-2017 Annual Work Plan for Savage River State Forest was formulated in 2015. It contains projects to be undertaken in the areas of Special Projects, Maintenance and Operations, Recreation, Watershed Protection, Ecosystem Restoration / Protection, and Wildlife Management. In addition to the routine operations and management of the State Forest, the FY-17 Annual Work Plan for Savage River State Forest details one special management project and seventeen land management projects that will be the focus of the State Forest management staff for FY-17. All projects and proposals within this Plan have been developed to meet one or more of the Land Management Guidelines and Objectives outlined in the Savage River State Forest Sustainable Management Plan including:

***Forest Economy:** management activities with a purpose to maintain an economically sustainable forest and contribute to the local economy through providing forest-related employment and products.*

***Forest Conservation:** management activities with a purpose to protect significant or unique natural communities and elements of biological diversity, including Ecologically Significant Areas, High Conservation Value Forests and old growth Forests. Old growth forest management serves to restore and/or enhance old growth forest structure and function.*

***Water Quality:** management activities designed to protect or improve ecological functions in protecting or enhancing water quality.*

***Wildlife Habitat:** management activities with a purpose to maintain and enhance the ecological needs of the diversity of wildlife species and habitat types.*

***Recreation and Cultural Heritage:** management activities with a purpose to maintain and enhance areas that serve as visual, public camping, designated trails, and other high public use areas.*

A. Special Management Projects Include:

1. Continued Development of the Certified, State Forest Sustainable Forest Management Plan - with special focus on addressing items identified as in need of improvement as a result of the 2015 FSC/SFI Certification Audits.

2. Forest Stand Delineation, Inventory and Monitoring – Completion of the 5- year project to re-inventory and redefine stands on the entire forest. This critical project will continue in FY-17. To date, 81% of the data collection is completed. With funding reduced in FY-17 for this monitoring work, the project and will allow a thorough analysis of this complete data set from which further management plans will be derived. Inventory work will continue in the form of follow-up monitoring protocols associated with the initial inventory and certification requirements.

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

B. Land Management Projects Include:

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

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

3. One wildlife habitat project involving 34 acres of pine thinning to conserve and protect critical wildlife habitats.

4. 12 Silvicultural projects including:

8 Intermediate Harvests on 282 acres (including the 34 ac. Conifer thinning for wildlife habitat).

4 Regeneration Harvests on 119 acres.

5. Four Noncommercial silvicultural practices to promote regeneration including:

*Two Projects to control interfering and undesirable tall woody vegetation to promote seedling establishment over 102 acres.

*Two Projects to control interfering and undesirable fern, grass and dewberry to promote seedling establishment over 102 acres.

Forest harvest operations are undertaken to utilize mature and dead/dying/diseased trees; to thin overstocked stands; to improve and diversify wildlife habitat; to effectively correct public safety concerns and issues; to reduce the forests vulnerability to insect attack, disease or wildfire hazard; to facilitate certain approved research needs; to improve certain aesthetic aspects of an area; and to improve the proportions of age class and species diversity within stands and management blocks. This forest has been intensively managed for over 100 years, utilizing both even and uneven-aged techniques via selective removals and regeneration harvests. Early records indicate that as cut over land was acquired, foresters ‘culled’ the forest, removing the poorly formed and damaged timber left behind in the wake of the cut and run practices employed by early timber speculators. By removing these undesirable trees, newly forming seedlings were released from competition and were thus cultured into the future growing stock of trees that we enjoy today. The benefits of this work have been significant including: improved wildlife habitat diversity, improved forest health and more abundant mast production, improved utilization of gypsy moth damaged trees, reduced forest fire hazard, and the considerable financial contribution of management to the state and local economies as well as to those employed in the forest products industry.

The FY-17 Annual Work Plan calls for 12 harvests on 401 acres, accounting for the harvest of approximately 1,200,000 Bd. Ft. of saw timber, putting an estimated \$250,000 worth of raw wood products out into the local markets. Much of the silvicultural work laid out in this work plan is focused on initiating seedling development to better insure regeneration successes in future harvests. Much of the value of the harvests in the work plan will be directed back into the forest providing the essential investment in pre-harvest cultural work that will assure the long term sustainable management of these important forest resources.

The cultural operations and management projects outlined within the FY-17 Annual Work Plan are selected to provide significant contributions to sustainability of the forest resources found within the State Forest and the ecosystems associated with it.