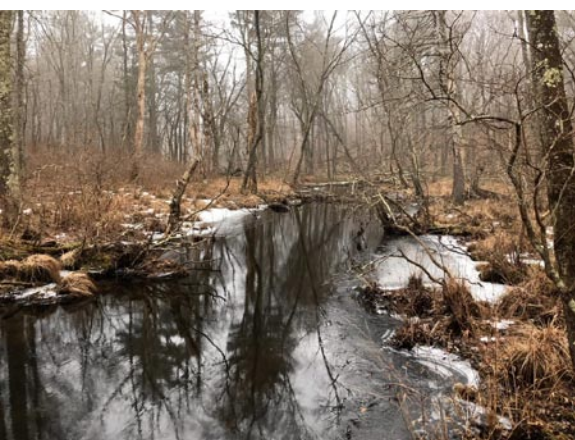


Pennsylvania's Delaware State Forest Grows By 555 Acres

By Joshua Lynsen

BUSHKILL, Pa. (June 26, 2023) — Pennsylvania's Delaware State Forest is growing by 555 acres thanks to The Conservation Fund and the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources Bureau of Forestry (DCNR). The forest's expansion, announced today, will provide public access opportunities while maintaining the area's rural character.

Expansion of the state forest in Bushkill results from the purchase and transfer of a former hunting camp, provides connectivity and expands public access to existing state forest land. The Conservation Fund acquired the private property at auction in July 2021. Now owned and managed by the DCNR as part of the Delaware State Forest, the newly protected property will offer future access for hunting, fishing, hiking, camping, birding and more.



This new part of the Delaware State Forest includes more than 50 acres of wetlands along with Red Rock Run, a stream that supports native trout. Additionally, it boasts a diversity of natural features that create critical wildlife habitat for local plant and animal species. The added acres also contain several seeps and springs. With the addition of these 555 acres, the Delaware State Forest totals 85,114 acres.

"DCNR is grateful for the opportunity to take over as stewards of this beautiful forested area and we are excited about the what's in store for Delaware State Forest with this new addition," DCNR Secretary Cindy Adams Dunn said. "We look forward to expanding access for recreational opportunities, while also sticking to our core mission of preserving natural spaces for future generations. Special thanks to The Conservation Fund for making this acquisition possible, and the U.S. Forest Service for funding support of this transfer."

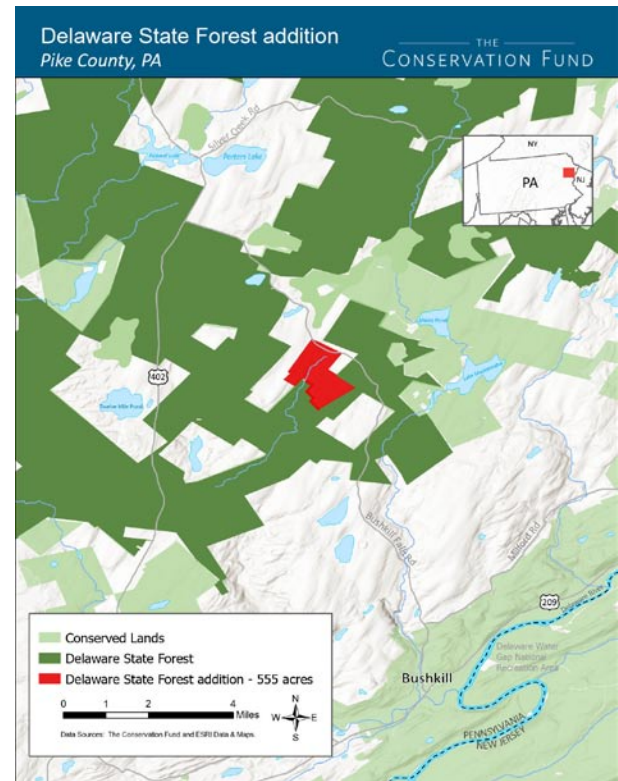
The property was stewarded by a private hunting club for generations. It is known to support high-quality mixed oak and northern hardwoods forests and pockets of grassland meadow habitat for white tailed deer, black bear, turkey, porcupines, bobcats, native wildflowers, ground nesting birds and turtles. At the same time, the land was an enticing site for development, creating an urgency when the land went to auction.

"Permanently conserving these 555 acres and adding them to the Delaware State Forest affords the highest level of protection of the land while ensuring the greatest possible public access," said Kyle Shenk, the Fund's Northeast Regional Director. "It's the best of both worlds — and a sensational outcome for the people of Pennsylvania."

Funding from the DCNR Bureau of Recreation and Conservation and from a federal grant awarded to the DCNR Bureau of Forestry through the U.S. Department of Agriculture Forest Service's Forest Legacy Program, which is funded through the Land and Water Conservation Fund, made the permanent protection of this forested landscape possible. Pennsylvania's federal congressional delegation representing Pike County — U.S. Senator Bob Casey Jr., U.S. Senator John Fetterman and U.S. Representative Matt Cartwright — supported the use of federal funding for this project.

"Preserving the health and longevity of this land is vital to the well-being of the families in Pike County who enjoy hunting, fishing, and camping on its lands," said U.S. Senator Bob Casey Jr. "By adding these lands to Delaware State Forest, we can maintain its rural character, better ensure its viability for generations to come, and provide greater access to the public to explore and enjoy."

"Pennsylvania has some of the most beautiful natural landscapes in the world and I'm proud to bring home federal funding that preserves our pristine outdoor spaces," said U.S. Representative Matt Cartwright. "Expanding Pennsylvania's Delaware State Forest invests in the health and wellness of our communities while boosting our regional economy through enhanced recreational opportunities."



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