

# POTOMAC-GARRETT STATE FOREST ANNUAL WORK PLAN

## FISCAL YEAR 2023



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SFI-00050

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**Potomac-Garrett State Forest**  
**FY-23**  
**Annual Work Plan**



**Potomac-Garrett State Forest  
FY-23 Annual Work Plan**

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(PG-23-P-01)

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(PG-23-P-02)

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## I. State Forest Overview

The Potomac-Garrett State Forests situated in southwestern Garrett County in Western Maryland have the distinction of being the birthplace of forestry conservation in Maryland. The generous donation of 1,917 acres by the Garrett Brothers in 1906 not only serves as the foundation of the Garrett State Forest, but is the root of both Maryland's present Public Lands system and Forest Service. Mountain forests, streams and valleys make up the nearly 19,000 acres of this State Forest. The forest cover is predominantly a second growth mixed hardwood forest dominated by mixed oaks, sugar and red maples, black cherry, basswood, ash and birch. The geography of this area provides for a wide range of growing conditions from the harsh, wind and ice swept ridge tops of Backbone Mountain to the deep rich slopes above the North Branch of the Potomac River. Much of the State Forest lands contain excellent quality hardwoods.

Potomac-Garrett State Forest has been intensively managed over the past nine decades. Forest harvest and grooming operations are undertaken to thin overstocked stands, to effectively deal with public safety concerns, to harvest mature, 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-23 Annual Work Plan for Potomac-Garrett State Forest was formulated in 2021. 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-23 Annual Work Plan for Potomac-Garrett State Forest details four land management projects that will be the focus of the State Forest management staff for FY-23. 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 Potomac-Garrett State Forest Sustainable Management Plan including:

***Forest Economy:*** management activities intended 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 resulting from the 2021 FSC/SFI Certification Audits.
- 2. Forest Stand Delineation, Inventory and Monitoring** - Completion of the project to re-inventory and redefine stands on the entire forest. This critical project will continue in FY-23. To date, 100% of the forest wide data collection has been completed. The project 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.
- 4. Ecologically Significant Area (ESA) Management Plan Development** - Wildlife and Heritage staff continue to develop descriptions and management plans for the ESA areas to be included in the Potomac-Garrett State Forest Sustainable Forest Management Plan guidance document. These plans offer a look at the critical habitat elements that make up each of the designated Ecologically Sensitive Areas, and offer insights on management approaches that will assure continued protection of critical habitats, including some of the active management that has taken place to further assure protection of the rare, threatened and endangered species these areas are set up to protect.

#### **B. Land Management Projects Include:**

- 1.** Continuation of the ecosystem restoration project involving control of invasive and exotic plants forest wide. A 31-acre NNIS control project in Compartments 30 and 32 will focus herbicide treatments on Japanese barberry (*Berberis thunbergii*) and multi-flora rose (*Rosa multiflora*) followed by annual monitoring and retreatment when necessary.
- 2.** 3 Silvicultural projects including:
  - 2 white oak timber stand improvement projects on 54 acres.
  - 1 11-acre red spruce release.

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 since its inception, 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-23 Annual Work Plan outlines 4 non-commercial silvicultural projects on 96 acres. The silvicultural work laid out in this work plan is focused on non-native invasive species control, initiating seedling development, retaining established regeneration, particularly white oak, and conserving a dwindling population of the once prominent red spruce on the forest landscape. This cultural work will safeguard the long-term sustainable management of these important forest resources. The cultural operations and management projects outlined within the FY-23 Annual Work Plan are selected to provide significant contributions to the sustainability of forest resources found within Potomac-Garrett State Forest and the ecosystems associated with it.

No additional commercial harvests have been included in the FY-23 Annual Work Plan due to the volume harvested in FY-22 in a follow-up regeneration harvest as outlined and approved in the FY-14 Annual Work Plan. Sufficient regeneration, particularly of mixed oak species, has progressed from the established cohort into the competitive size class following the first stage of the regeneration system initiated in FY-14. This final harvest will release the competitive oak seedlings, allowing them to fully occupy the site and establish the future stand. Approved harvest proposals from the FY-22 Annual Work Plan will be carried over into FY-23, consisting of three harvests on 97 acres, producing a harvest of approximately 520,000 board feet of sawtimber accounting for an estimated \$125,000 worth of raw wood products entering local markets.

### **III. General Location Map for FY-23 Land Management Project Proposals**

**Approximately 96 Acres**

#### **Map Key**

- 1. Compartment 30,32 Multiple Stands    31-Acre Non-Native Invasive Species Control*
  
- 2. Compartment 36 Stands 1,5            34-Acre Non-Commercial White Oak Timber Stand Improvement*
  
- 3. Compartment 43 Stand 2              20-Acre Non-Commercial White Oak Timber Stand Improvement*
  
- 4. Compartment 46 Stand 11            11-Acre Red Spruce Release*



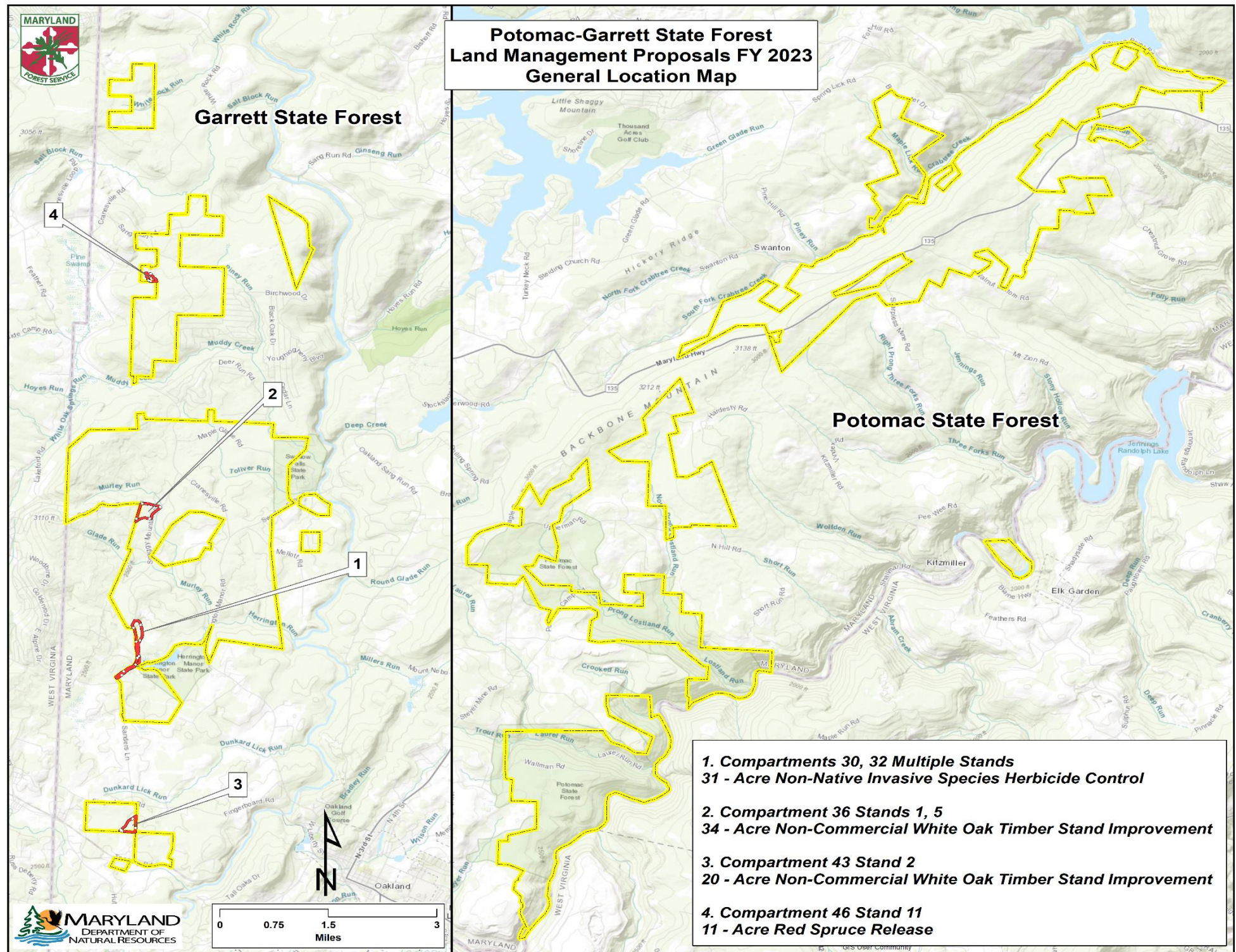


Figure 1. General location map for FY-23 land management proposals.