

Plan for woods must be redone

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The Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR), as in 1995 and 2007, rejected the Township’s 2020 stewardship plan for the White’s Woods Nature Center because it failed to preserve our state-funded forest’s recreation and conservation opportunities for future generations. The plan must be redone.

DCNR’s Bureau of Recreation and Conservation Director Tom Ford underscored, “All projects must be consistent with Project 70 guidelines; no project can detract from the recreation opportunities ..., nor disrupt the ecological function at the site.”

DCNR also questioned several points in the 2020 stewardship plan, writing:

1. The Township plan appears to reflect “a disconnect among the stated goals, the proposed management activities and practices and the wishes and desires of the public.”
2. DCNR is “not familiar” with mulching the forest floor and is “highly concerned about unintended consequences.”
3. “[D]isturbing the soil typically promotes the spread of invasive plants and is even more concerning when coupled with opening the canopy...”
4. “The proposed harvest...could significantly alter recreational values, noticeably reducing overhead shade...and overall aesthetics.”
5. Dead trees are natural and even beneficial.

6. DCNR questions the...assertion that the stand is “overstocked.”

7. “Extra care is necessary for the protection of vulnerable and at risk plant and animal species.”

DCNR’s response emphasized that, “as a community-owned forest, we believe that it is critical for the township to understand the wishes and desires of its residents and, most importantly, identifying and understanding the values citizens hold...” Further, “Based on these community values, specific goals and management activities could then be developed...”

DCNR listened to public input — petitions, surveys, letters, emails and their conversations with Woods walkers. Hundreds of citizens of White Township and the Borough worked on behalf of our community in the last year to protect our park. I am so grateful to each.

Supervisors, this is the third time DCNR has told you to listen to your citizens.

Read DCNR’s response: <https://www.friendsofwhiteswoods.org/dcnr-rejection-of-timbering-plan>.

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