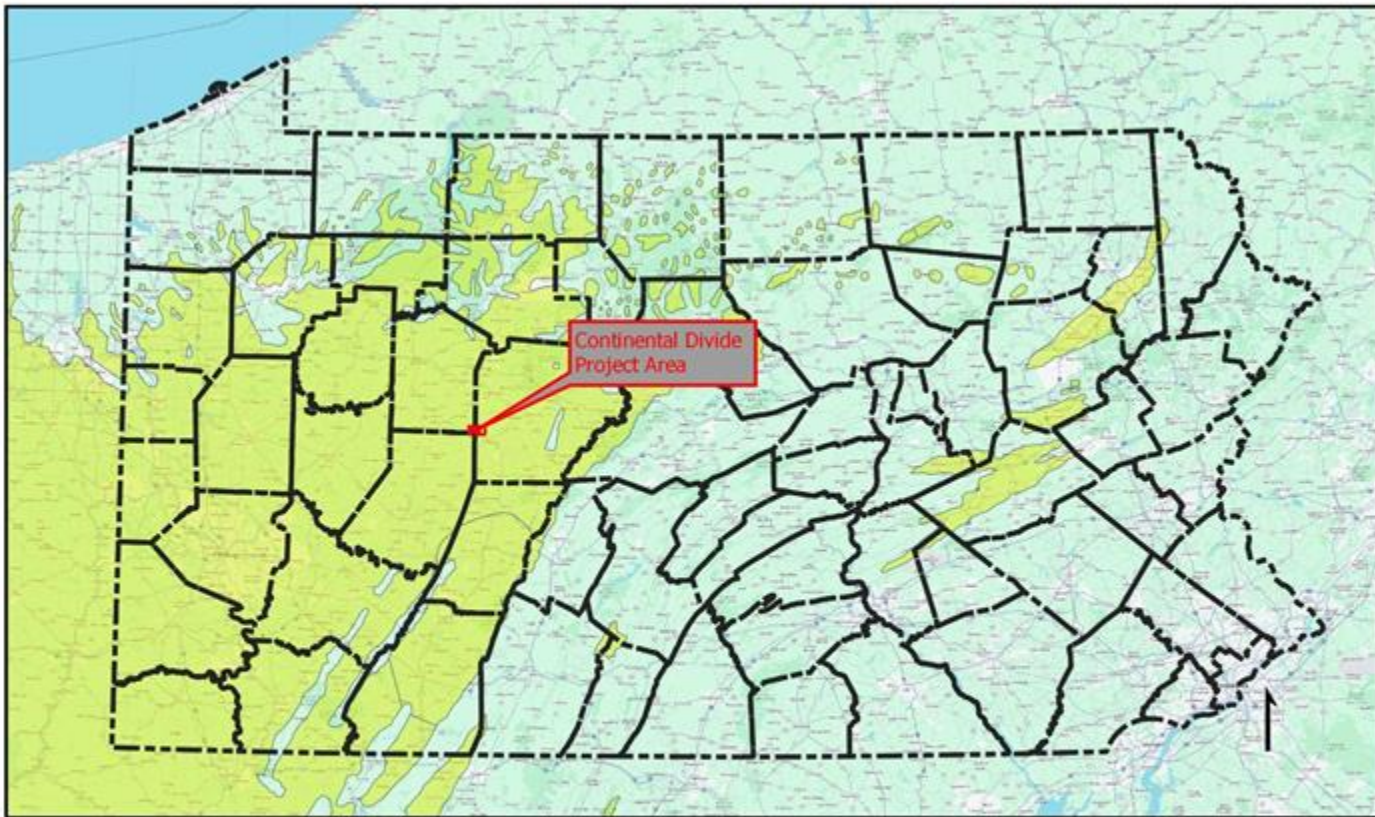



# Reforestation Pennsylvania's Green Heart: The Continental Divide Reforestation Project



Eric Oliver  
Reforestation Coordinator





Appalachia coal fields 

0 50 100 km



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1939



1951



1968



1981



2024



# Project Details

- Total acreage: 121 ha (~300 ac.), ~61 ha (~150 ac.) planted in 2024 and another ~61 ha to be planted in 2025
- All private landowners.
- Split between Jefferson and Clearfield Counties in Pennsylvania
  - Drainage divide between West Branch of Susquehanna (Atlantic Ocean) and Mahoning Creek (Gulf of Mexico)
- Private landowners also contributing as a match to the grants received.
- Total project budget: \$573,210.41



# Work timeline

October 2023: Begin mowing of autumn olive followed closely by cut stump treatment with herbicide of first phase (~61 ha)

February 2024: Begin ripping of the planting areas in first phase.

April 2024: Planting of ~130,000 trees to complete first phase.

Fall 2024: Invasive removal for second phase.

Late winter/early spring 2025: Ripping of second phase.

April 2025: Planting of second phase. (Approx more 130,000 trees)

# Site conditions before work started





**Smerkar Services**

**Napieralski Forestry  
Services, Inc.**

**Contractors**



**October 2023- AO  
mowing**



**Cut stump herbicide application**



**February 2024-  
Decompaction**



Un-ripped area- compaction



Ripped area- decompacted

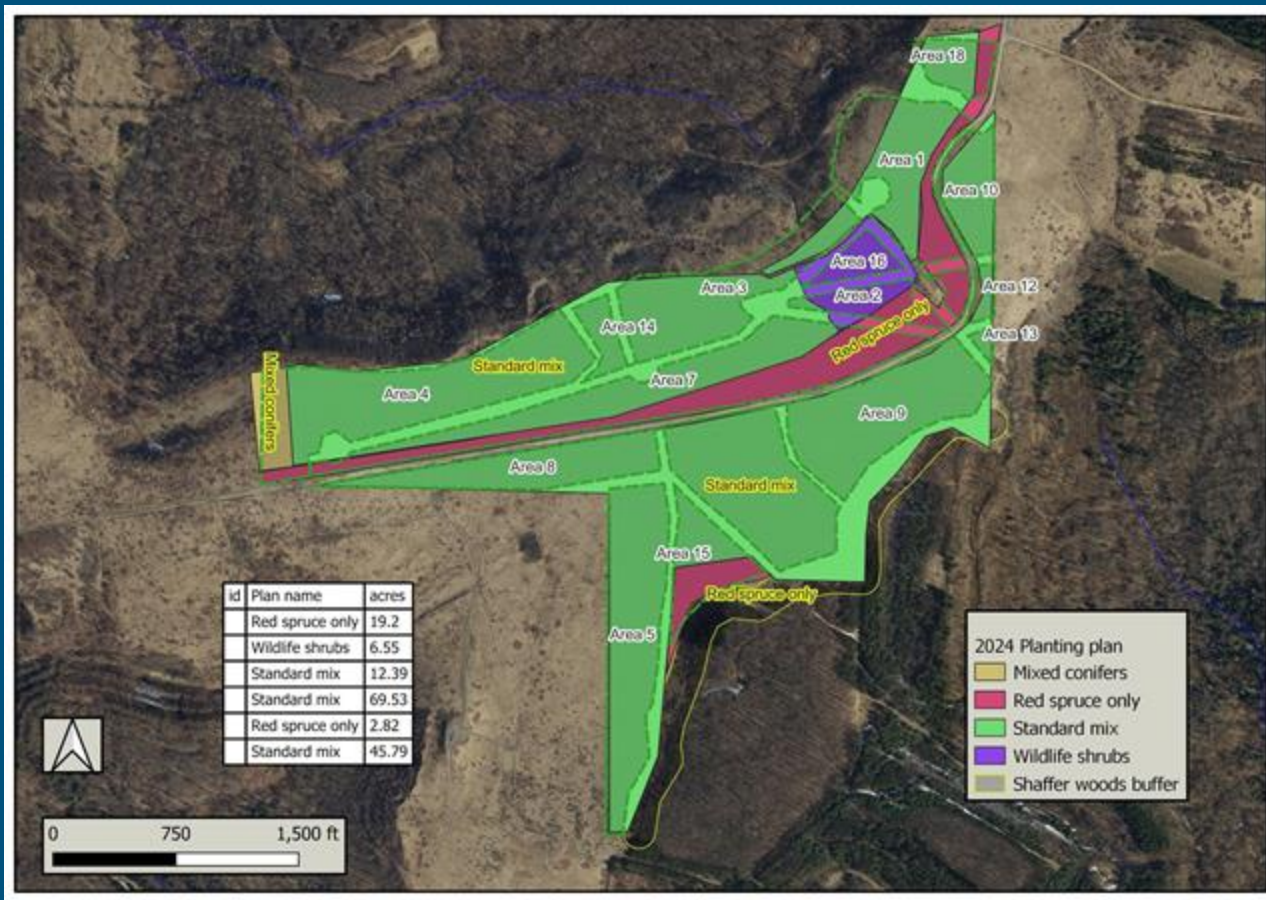
# Site conditions once preparation was completed







**Pushed up piles of Autumn Olive- 2025 work area**



# Planting plan- layout

**Conifer Species**

White Pine

Virginia Pine

Balsam Fir

White Spruce

Red Spruce

**Hardwood Species**

Red Oak

White Oak

Black Cherry

Chestnut Oak

Tulip Poplar

Quaking Aspen

Big Tooth Aspen

Black Locust

Sugar Maple

American Beech

**Wildlife Shrub Species**

Persimmon

American crabapple

Silky dogwood

Black chokeberry

Hazelnut

Black gum

Wild Plum

# Planting plan- species



# What does it take to pull a project of this size off?

- Funding partners
- Grant matching
- Planning
- Contractors





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**PENNSYLVANIA**



NFWF



# Continental Divide Contributors

- NFWF Central Appalachia Habitat Stewardship Program Grant (2022)
  - Site prep, invasive control, labor funds
- TNC
  - Site prep funds
- One Tree Planted
  - Tree seedling acquisition and planting labor funds
- GFW
  - Match (staff and tech guidance)
- A.M. Logging
  - In kind match (mowing of invasives)

# Continental Divide Contributors

- TACF: 1200 blight resistant bare root chestnuts.
- CASRI: Delivered the 13,300 red spruce plugs
- OSMRE: Staff time and technical assistance
- CBF: Staff time and landowner engagement
- Arbor Day Foundation: Planning and support



# Challenges

- Grant timing
  - Can take awhile to finalize
- Cost increases
  - Time from quotes to starting work
- County conservation district
  - NPDES permit (~\$30k+) vs silviculture/agriculture exemption



# What's next?

- Site prep and planting in the Fall of 2024 and Spring of 2025
- Post planting monitoring, to begin this year
  - Tree establishment success
  - Bat/bird/and other inhabitants
- Continued support to ensure invasives don't regenerate



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Wes Miller, AM Logging

Natividad Perez, Napieralski Forestry

# Thank You!

## Questions?



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