

TRAIL DIFFICULTY: moderate
Chestnut Mt. trails are sometimes rocky and moderately steep and can be slippery. Wear sturdy shoes. Long pants will protect you from the brush.

SAVING A MOUNTAIN



In 2012, the Buck Hill Conservation Foundation celebrated its almost 20-year long quest to save these 479 wooded acres of Chestnut Mountain. In the 1990's the southern portion of the parcel was slated for the development of townhouses. With the failure of that plan and the subsequent bank sale of the property, the new owners immediately pursued an aggressive logging operation on the property. The BHCF was formed largely in reaction to the loss of this important land. It immediately mobilized a fundraising effort. More than \$1.3 million in community donations as well as Monroe County open space funds resulted in the purchase of Chestnut Mountain as public open space.

BATTLE FOR BEECH TREES



American beech trees, with their smooth, light gray bark, make up about 27% of Chestnut Mountain's overstory. Healthy trees can live for 300-400 years, and they produce beechnuts, an important source of food for turkey, grouse, small mammals, white-tailed deer and black bear. Look for bear claws on some crop-producing beech trees along the trails!

Bears love beechnuts



Beech bark disease lesions

Beech is succumbing to beech bark disease, which results as the bark is attacked by the beech scale insect and is then invaded and killed by fungi. Look on the beech bark on mature trees for the cankers and lesions, which indicate the disease.

The "beech brush" that lines long parts of the trails is tragic evidence of the dying trees' efforts to survive. Unable to grow beechnuts, the sick tree desperately sends out sprouts from its root system as a last ditch effort to clone itself. The beech brush saplings create a formidable barrier in the understory.

FOREST REGENERATION



Pennsylvania is the nation's largest producer of hardwood lumber, and prudent timber harvesting can promote a healthy forest. The judicious production of quality forest products is vital to Pennsylvania's economy and to the sustainability of its forests. Irresponsible logging, however, can cripple or even destroy those forests.

From the mid 1800s to as recently as the late 1990s, loggers indiscriminately lumbered this forest. In fact, much of the main blue trail of Chestnut Mountain traces logging roads. The natural restoration and reforestation of this area is key mission of the BHCF.

In the early 1800s, Pennsylvania was not only the nation's greatest source of all lumber, but also a leading producer of leather. Chestnut Mountain trails transported hemlock

and oak bark out of the woods to be used in the area's thriving tanning industry. A few remains of a trapper's cabin still exist on the property.

In the last 50 years, loggers repeatedly harvested timber on Chestnut Mountain. Look for the many stumps as evidence of the harvests. The removal of all quality trees near the golf course is typical of "real estate cuts"—harvesting done prior to selling the land. The open area at the beginning of the Blue Trail was once the staging area for logging. The heavily compacted soil, resulting from heavy equipment and tree harvest, inhibits the growth of seedlings; however, such species as grasshoppers, turkey, and birds thrive in this open grassy area.

As a result of intensive cutting, this mountain bears large gaps in its overstory; invasive and exotic species thrive in the sun-drenched understory and choke out seedlings of desirable trees. But Chestnut Mountain is staging its comeback.

FIGHTING THE COMPETITION

When indiscriminate logging wipes out the forest canopy, invasive plants choke out the forest floor. The saplings that give rise to a healthy, sustainable forest struggle to survive in the fierce competition of hay-scented fern, American beech, Japanese barberry, phragmites, oriental bittersweet, Japanese stitgrass, multiflora rose and striped maple. Forest wildlife also struggle to survive in this habitat. Desirable trees and plants cannot establish.

According to the Forester Josh Flad, author of the Buck Hill Forest Management Plan, "The native fern and exotic invasive species are creating vegetative 'deserts' in the understory, delaying forest stand development and lowering the carrying capacity for many indigenous species."



HIGH & LOW!

You'll be snapping photos for sure at Chestnut Mt.'s Overlook, where you can see the Delaware Water Gap. But look down, too. Picture-perfect fungi thrive on rotting logs, and wildflowers peek out all along sun-soaked trails.



SUSTAINABLE FORESTRY

It may take over 50 years for Chestnut Mountain to enjoy the once dominant overstory species of its past, with towering sugar maple, red maple, American beech, black cherry, white ash and red oak. A healthy forest can be judged by its varied species, tree quality, and regeneration trends. Patches of growing stocks of sugar maples, red maples, white ash and red oak give hope for the mountain's successful succession.

Chestnut Mountain Nature Trails



THE BUCK HILL CONSERVATION FOUNDATION
BUCK HILL FALLS, PA

Mission: "To preserve and protect land in and around Buck Hill Falls, to promote the health of the local forest and watershed, and to foster appreciation of the area's natural beauty."

Support the Buck Hill Conservation Foundation
www.buckhillconservation.org

November 2016

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pennsylvania environmental council



Chestnut Mountain Preserve Trails

BARRETT TOWNSHIP
MONROE COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA
LEGEND

- Blue Trail 2.8 mi.
- Yellow Trail .25 mi.
- Red Trail 1.2 mi.
- Orange Trail .25 mi.

- Parking Area
- Chestnut Mt. Preserve
- Road Centerlines
- Streams

0 200 400 600 800
Feet

1:10,000



www.monroecountypa.gov

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PREPARED BY

Monroe County
Planning Commission

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Rt. 191
Chestnut Mt.
Trailhead:
4.3 mi. from
intersection of 191/390
3.1 mi. from
Buck Hill Road

**Chestnut Mt.
Overlook**



BUCK HILL FOREST MANAGEMENT PLAN

In 2014, the Buck Hill Conservation Foundation and the Buck Hill Falls Company jointly hired a forester to prepare a forest management plan for 4,330 acres of Buck Hill Falls, including Chestnut Mountain. The study by Green Leaf Consulting provides a comprehensive assessment of the property and lists recommendations for the conservation and restoration of the forest. The Plan suggests such strategies as adopting an aggressive herbicide control plan for invasive exotic species and the planting of such seedlings as red spruce, white spruce or other conifers on treated sites. The aim is allow seedlings to grow and shade out invasive hay-scented ferns and other unwanted vegetation.

As you ascend northwards along the lower half of the Blue Trail, look for wildflowers that are now competing with the invasive plants. The plan suggests that open, sunny areas could be converted to wildflower species, fruit bearing shrubs or saplings—all to attract wildlife species.

The degree to which we step in to shape the regeneration of this land is a decision that lies ahead. Meanwhile, nature is working to reclaim Chestnut Mountain with the native species that once thrived there.

The Buck Hill Forest Management Plan can be found at buckhillconservation.org.