



# TOWNSHIP OF WASHINGTON WARREN COUNTY, NEW JERSEY



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## Update from the Township Committee Forest Management Plan Roaring Rock Park

To promote clarity upon misinformation and misconceptions referenced in many comments received regarding the Forest Management Plan for Roaring Rock Park. Some of the criticisms are based on misunderstandings or misinformation about activities that may or may not take place throughout the ten-year plan.

Knowing the answers can make the difference between a successful, productive Forest Management Plan and an ineffective, derailed one.

### What we know:

- This management plan was approved by the NJ Forest Service, a Division of the DEP.
- This plan follows the NJ Forestry and Wetlands best practices manual (see page 44ff)
- All the foresters at Gracie and Harrigan Consulting Foresters, Inc. are on the New Jersey DEP approved Forester's list. Through this process we will rely on their experience, knowledge, and expertise as we do with all our hired professionals.
- As this project progresses, the Township will closely monitor and approve any of the recommendations and suggestions (additions/changes) by utilizing board members, in-house staff, and outside professionals.

### What we want to clarify:

- Mentioned throughout the Forest Management Plan are things that should be *considered* or *recommendations* which are just that . . . things to consider and things that are recommended and not necessarily prescribed. In other words they are not mandated rather we would evaluate and decide to do or not to do over the ten-year plan period.
- The plan is **not** a plan to clear cut trees, nor does it include taking down 11,000 trees. The actual Management Plan estimates 145 trees per acre which the amount to be removed would be an estimated 10% which equates to 14 trees per acre.
- Trails throughout the park will **not be used** as a skid trail, however, there could be areas in which a trail may be used to cross from one side to the other. Should any damage to any trail occur it is the logger's responsibility to restore the area.
- There **will not** be tractor trailers on the trails or in the park as loading areas will be on the perimeter of the park.

- Not all areas specified on the map will be harvested (Areas 3, 6, 7, 8, & 10 are not planned to be harvested due to potential wetlands, difficult access, or a variety of other factors).
- After further discussion with Gracie Harrigan, Stream and/or waterway access throughout the project will be highly unlikely but in the event there is a need it would require Township Committee approval in consultation with regulatory entities as needed.
- During the process of the ten-year plan, adjoining property owners will be contacted accordingly to include addressing their concerns and the maintaining of proper timber harvesting and the buffering of woodlands along property lines.
- Considerations mentioned in the plan **that will not be done** are as follows:
  1. **No** replanting of trees.
  2. **No** installing of deer fencing (deer hunting is currently permitted).
  3. **No** chemicals will be used.

## **Benefits of a Forest Management Plan and an actively managed forest:**

- **Improved knowledge of the forest, allowing one to make decisions of management.**
- **Improved forest health, tree stocking, growth and biodiversity**
- **Increased carbon dioxide uptake**
- **Improved and diversified wildlife habitat**
- **Trees are often more resilient, and able to withstand more stress (drought, floods, insects, disease)**
- **Often improves access and recreational opportunities**

## **In Conclusion:**

This property now known as Roaring Rock Park was purchased through thoughtful consideration by the governing body, other municipal boards and committees of the Township of Washington from the New Jersey American Water Company in 1999. After the purchase of this property and since the inception of Roaring Rock Park, it has been and continues to be the goal of the Township Committee to promote the preservation of land for open space and recreation. Since this property includes various historical and environmental aspects, it was decided to develop hiking trails throughout the property. Over the years these trails were expanded to approximately 4.5 miles and was accomplished largely through the Washington Township Recreation Committee and volunteerism along with the assistance of the Department of Public Works. As mentioned in the plan “the generation of periodic income” is normally mentioned in all such Forest Management Plans. It is not the reason or the objective goal of implementing the plan. Since 2014 the Township Committee has considered moving forward with maintaining and enhancing the original goal of enhancing the recreational and environmental value of this beautiful and important property. These are long term goals intended to benefit us now and for generations to come.