THOMPSON WOODS PRESERVE GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE
MEETING AGENDA
Wednesday, March 11, 2026
2:00 PM
Hybrid Meeting (In-Person or via Zoom)

General Meeting Information

College Township offers both in-person and virtual meeting attendance for all public meetings. To attend in-person, this meeting will be held at **1481 E. College Avenue, State College PA, 16801, 1st Floor Conference Room**. To attend virtually, please see the information below.

To Attend the LIVE Meeting Via Zoom on Computer or Smart Phone:

- **Click HERE to REGISTER for the meeting via Zoom.** Once registered, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting.

*** Click here for detailed instructions on how to participate via zoom.**

VIRTUAL PUBLIC COMMENTS: Please use the raised hand feature to participate. The moderator will recognize those with their hands raised (either by name or phone number).

WRITTEN PUBLIC COMMENTS: For specific agenda items and for items not on the agenda, written public comments may be submitted until 12:00 noon the day of the meeting by emailing mbloom@collegetownship.org.

THOMPSON WOODS PRESERVE GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

CALL TO ORDER:

OPEN DISCUSSION: - For any item not on this agenda, please:
- Limit comments to five minutes
- Ask to add your topic to this or a future agenda, if needed

MINUTES: **February 11th Meeting Minutes**

OLD BUSINESS: **OB-1 Signage (Type and Content)**

OB-2 Forest Restoration Plan Update – Recommendation to Councils

OB-3 Committee Structure Proposal – Recommendations to Councils

NEW BUSINESS: **None**

NEXT MEETING: **Wednesday, April 8th at 2:00 PM**

ADJOURNMENT:

THOMPSON WOODS PRESERVE GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES
Wednesday, February 11, 2026
2:00 PM
1481 E. College Avenue, State College PA 16801
1st Floor Meeting Room

ATTENDED BY:
Bill Keough, Chair
Mark Bergstrom
Deb Hilands
William Ray (at 2:25)

STAFF/OTHERS:
Lance King, State College Borough
Suzy Yetter, Clearwater Conservancy
Keri Kenepp, College Township
Mike Bloom, College Township

CALL TO ORDER:

Mr. Keough called to order the March 11, 2026, Regular Meeting of the Thompson Woods Preserve – Governance Committee at 2:00 PM.

OPEN DISCUSSION:
Ms. Hilands noted that there were several deer carcasses in the Preserve. It was noted that staff would touch base with Jim Carpenter and Amy Kerner about this and determine what protocol exists.

Mr. King noted that the US Fish and Wildlife Service will be back in the Walnut Springs Park in March to finish work on the acreage that was not addressed last year.

Mr. Bloom formally introduced Keri Kenepp, College Township's Community and Economic Development Director. Mrs. Kenepp will be a resource to assist the Committee in the future with strategic planning and grant initiatives.

MINUTES:
Mr. Bergstrom made a motion to accept the meeting minutes from the January 14, 2026, meeting, Ms. Hilands seconded. Approved unanimously.

OLD BUSINESS: Forest Restoration Plan Update
The Governance Committee reviewed the Draft Forest Restoration Plan as prepared by Mike Wolf. The following comments were shared:

- Only option that is not acceptable is Option 4 (Do nothing)
- Members felt Option 1 was most effective, but recognized it may be cost prohibitive and cause significant public concern over Preserve closure and initial impacts.
- Members generally preferred Option 2 for its ability to have a measurable impact on forest health and for community educational purposes.
- Members liked the idea of a demonstration project as a first step, potentially in the upper section of the Preserve.

- Some concern over sustainability of long-term maintenance.
- Potential exists for a hybrid option that takes elements from each option presented.
- Investigations into grants would be beneficial, as this work may require multiple.
- Sequencing of work will be important, as it's a balance between restoring understory and removing overstory.
- Technical advice from the Advisory Committee would be appreciated. DCNR will need to be onboard as well.

Mr. Bergstrom made a motion to remand the Forest Restoration Plan Update to the Advisory Committee for their review and comment. Ms. Hilands seconded the motion and it was approved unanimously.

OLD BUSINESS: Signage
In the interest of time, Chair Keough deferred this item but asked the Committee to be thinking of signage content.

OLD BUSINESS: Committee Structure
Mr. Bergstrom felt the proposal as presented represented the Committee's previous discussions well. Discussion about Clearwater Conservancy being an ex-officio or voting member was discussed, Ms. Yetter will discuss with leadership. Some consideration should be given to inviting West Penn Power to serve as an ex-officio member as well.

Mr. Bergstrom made a motion to remand the Committee Structure Proposal to the Advisory Committee for their review and comment. Ms. Hilands seconded the motion and it was approved unanimously.

ADJOURNMENT:
Mr. Keough accepted a motion from Mr. Bergstrom to adjourn the February 11, 2026 meeting of the Thompson Woods Preserve – Governance Committee, which was seconded by Ms Hilands. The meeting was adjourned at 3:20 PM.

Respectfully Submitted By,
Mike Bloom
College Township Assistant Manager

COLLEGE TOWNSHIP

MEMORANDUM

To: Thompson Woods Preserve Governance Committee

From: Mike Bloom, Assistant Township Manager

Re: OB-1 Signage – Types and Content

Date: March 9, 2026

Next Steps:

To advance a signage project proposal for the Preserve, the Committee should discuss the following:

1) Type(s) of signs to pursue at this time:
   - Entrance
   - Wayfinding
   - Interpretative/Educational
2) Content/Messaging to be included on the signage

COLLEGE TOWNSHIP

MEMORANDUM

To: Thompson Woods Preserve Governance Committee

From: Mike Bloom, Assistant Township Manager

Re: OB-2 Forest Restoration Plan Update

Date: March 9, 2026

The Advisory Committee met on February 26th to review the Draft Forest Restoration Plan Update, as prepared by Mike Wolf.

Advisory Committee's discussion was very similar to that of the Governance Committee. Overall, they felt that the plan was well done and should be forwarded to the State College Borough and College Township Councils for their review and acceptance.

As for a recommendation on Options, the members present from the Advisory Committee recognized Option 1 as the most effective overall, but recognized that cost and public concern may make Option 2 or 3 more readily acceptable.

The Advisory Committee did suggest a conversation with Mike Wolf to get his take on keeping vs. retaining the Norway Maple stock that is prevalent in the Preserve.

Action Requested:

The Governance Committee should provide a recommendation to the Councils that the Forest Restoration Plan Update be accepted.

Further, the Governance Committee should also provide a recommendation on an Option that both municipalities can incorporate into the Capital Improvement Programs and Operational Budgets for 2027.

Forest Restoration Plan (2026 Update)

Thompson Woods Preserve

www.thompsonwoodspreserve.org

State College, PA
43.36 acres

January 1, 2026

By:
Appalachian Forest Consultants, LLC
Mike Wolf
(814) 659-1280
mike.wolf.afc@gmail.com

In cooperation with:
ClearWater Conservancy
College Township
State College Borough
Thompson Woods Preserve Advisory and Governance Committee

Table of Contents:

Introduction

About Thompson Woods Preserve:

Thompson Woods Preserve (TWP) is a 43.36-acre natural area, located south of East College Avenue (Rt 26), and is bordered on 3 sides by either high density residential lots or businesses along Rt 26. TWP is jointly owned by College Township and the Borough of State College. In 2000, ClearWater Conservancy acquired the TWP property from a developer, with a PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources Land Trust grant, and subsequently transferred the property to College Township and the Borough of State College. TWP now provides a beautiful green space and natural area that is cherished by its users, neighbors, and surrounding community. TWP offers its users approximately 1.3 miles of walking trails, a parking area (off Walnut Springs Lane), a diversity of wildlife habitats, and approximately 900 feet of Thompson Run which is a tributary to Slab Cabin Run and Spring Creek. Additionally, TWP provides neighbors and the local community a safeguarded natural forest area dedicated to nurturing and rejuvenating the intrinsic ecological harmony within an evolving urban landscape. TWP protects local water resources, provides green space in an urbanized area, enhances outdoor recreation opportunities, and protects fish and wildlife habitat.

Previous Forest Management Planning:

It is not the intent of this Forest Restoration Plan (2026 Update) to disregard previous documents that were written to guide the management of TWP. In fact, reviewing the previous management planning documents is advisable to fully understand TWP and the management advice discussed herein.

Previous Planning Documents:

- Thompson Woods Preserve Management Plan prepared by ClearWater Conservancy of Central Pennsylvania, Inc.
    - October 29, 2003
    - Updated June 1, 2013
- Forest Restoration Plan (Thompson Woods Preserve and Walnut Springs Park) prepared by Appalachian Forest Consultants
    - January 30, 2018

Purpose of this Forest Restoration Plan (2026 Update):

In 2022, College Township and the Borough of State College recognized that a new governance structure was required for Thompson Woods Preserve to ensure proper adherence to the property covenants and the Thompson Woods Preserve Management Plan. To that end, the municipalities entered into a Intermunicipal Cooperation Agreement establishing a new governance structure for the Thompson Woods Preserve consisting of two distant committees and further outlining the purpose, objective(s), structure, duration, power and scope of authority being delegated under the newly established governance structure and the manner and extent of any necessary financial obligations pursuant to the agreement. The Thompson Woods Preserve Advisory and Governance Committees membership was fully appointed and began their work in the Spring of 2023.

Along with this new governance structure, the new Committees created the current **Mission Statement** for Thompson Woods Preserve:

> "The Thompson Woods Preserve Committees were established through an intermunicipal cooperation agreement between College Township and State College Borough with the mission to provide dedicated stewardship of the Thompson Woods Nature Preserve by restoring and protecting its ecological integrity, fostering biodiversity, and offering a peaceful space for passive recreation and connectivity between the municipalities. The Committees are committed to education, conservation, and collaboration with community stakeholders to ensure the Preserve remains a thriving natural resource that encourages visitations from current and future generations."

There are some important points to make regarding the carefully chosen wording in the Mission Statement above…

- ✓ "dedicated stewardship"
  - This implies playing an active role in ensuring a healthy forest system for today and tomorrow
- ✓ "restoring ecological integrity"
  - This implies a need for fixing a broken forest system
- ✓ "thriving natural resource"
  - This implies a lofty goal of totally committing to a restorative forest management strategy

A healthy forest provides many benefits. A healthy forest cleans our air, provides a place for enjoying nature, cleans our water, provides abundant habitat for wildlife, and adds value to our communities. A simple and useful definition of a healthy forest is…**a healthy forest can sustain itself**. In other words, as trees within a forest die (age, insects, disease, wind, ice, etc) they are naturally replaced by young trees. Using a sports analogy, a good team not only has quality "starters," but it also has a quality "bench" that is ready to come in the game when a starter is hurt or tired. The large trees are the starters, but there needs to be an abundant and productive bench ready to get in the game and fill a void when necessary. In a forest, species are important as well. Therefore, a forest that is dominated by large oak trees must have an abundant number of small oak seedlings and saplings that are ready to fill gaps. A forest that is dominated by large sugar maple must have an abundant number of small sugar maple seedlings and saplings that are ready to fill gaps. In a healthy forest system, there is very little, if any, management (or manipulation) necessary for young oak trees to fill a gap created by a dying oak tree…the system takes care of it on its own through annual seed production, seedling germination, and seedling growth. Sunlight is not a factor in whether a seed can germinate or whether a seedling can grow for a short time. If a gap (sunlight) is not created, that seedling will likely die over time, but the system is creating more seedlings on an almost annual basis.

Sadly, most forests today are not able to sustain themselves and are therefore not healthy. In fact, it is rare to find a forest that has a layer of abundant seedlings of preferred species that are in place and ready to fill a gap when necessary. The primary reasons our forests are not healthy are:

1. Historically high deer numbers
2. Abundance of plants that deer don't eat

During the non-growing season months (primarily November through March) deer heavily rely on the buds of woody plants for food. Deer are selective feeders and therefore have taste preferences that determine what they will and will not eat. Deer like to eat the buds of native hardwood seedlings like oak, maple, hickory, aspen, tulip poplar, basswood, cucumber, and others. Deer also like to eat the buds of dogwood, viburnum, elderberry, hawthorn, winterberry, sassafras, blackberry, black raspberry, and others. These are the same species that can be most beneficial to other wildlife. Eating the buds of these species will stunt growth and can even kill the plant. And, once they eat all the buds on these preferred species, they can start to eat less-preferred species such as black cherry, American beech, striped maple, and others.

The long-term result of this selective and continuous feeding is very typically an obvious absence of these species in the forest. Further, an additional result is the growth, even abundant growth, of plants deer won't eat. Many of the plants deer won't eat are non-native and invasive. These non-native invasive species (NNIS) thrive in the absence of native/preferred plants. Over time (think decades), the forest's ability to sustain itself goes away. An understory that is heavily impacted by deer can be very open (no plants) or it can become filled with NNIS. In either case, the forest system is broken, the forest cannot sustain itself, and only non-preferred plants (often NNIS) can exist on the forest floor.

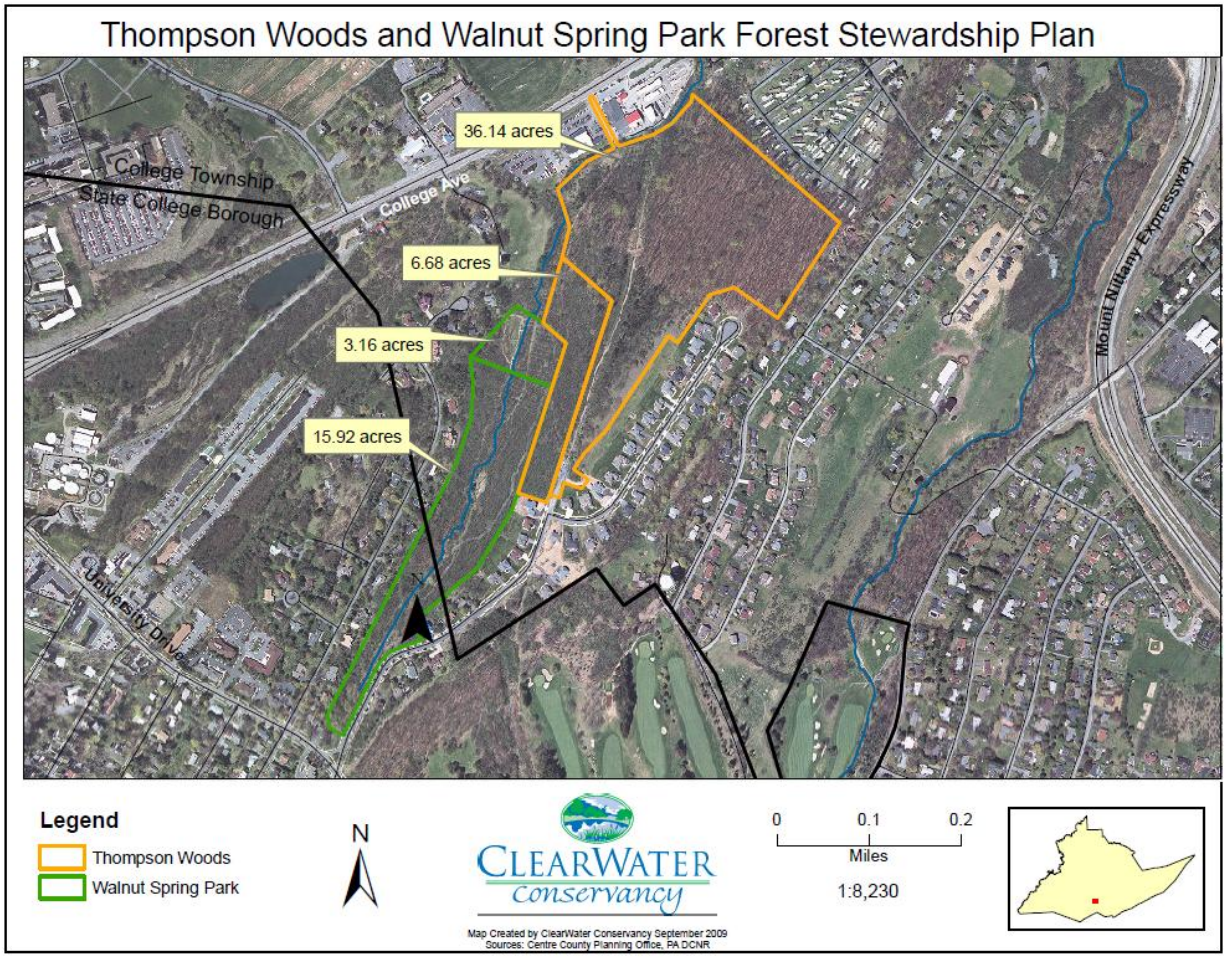
The reality in TWP is there are no quality bench players. The forest's understory is either bare or filled with undesirable plants, many of which are NNIS. There are no desirable seedlings on the forest floor – no desirable seedlings or saplings at the ready to fill potential gaps. Decades of heavy deer impact is quite evident. Looking at TWP's Mission Statement through the lens of reality, the big question is…how can our *dedicated stewardship restore ecological integrity and create a thriving natural resource*? This question will be answered through the forest management strategies presented in this Forest Restoration Plan (2026 Update). The presented strategies will not only be geared toward meeting the TWP Mission Statement, but will also be based on the following **Landowner Objectives** that have been presented by the TWP Advisory and Governance Committees…

Current Landowner Objectives:

1. Eliminate the non-native/invasive shrub understory
2. Promote growth of native/desirable seedlings and saplings
3. Promote a robust, healthy understory capable of replacing overstory trees
4. Conserve and protect TWP for the enjoyment by future generations

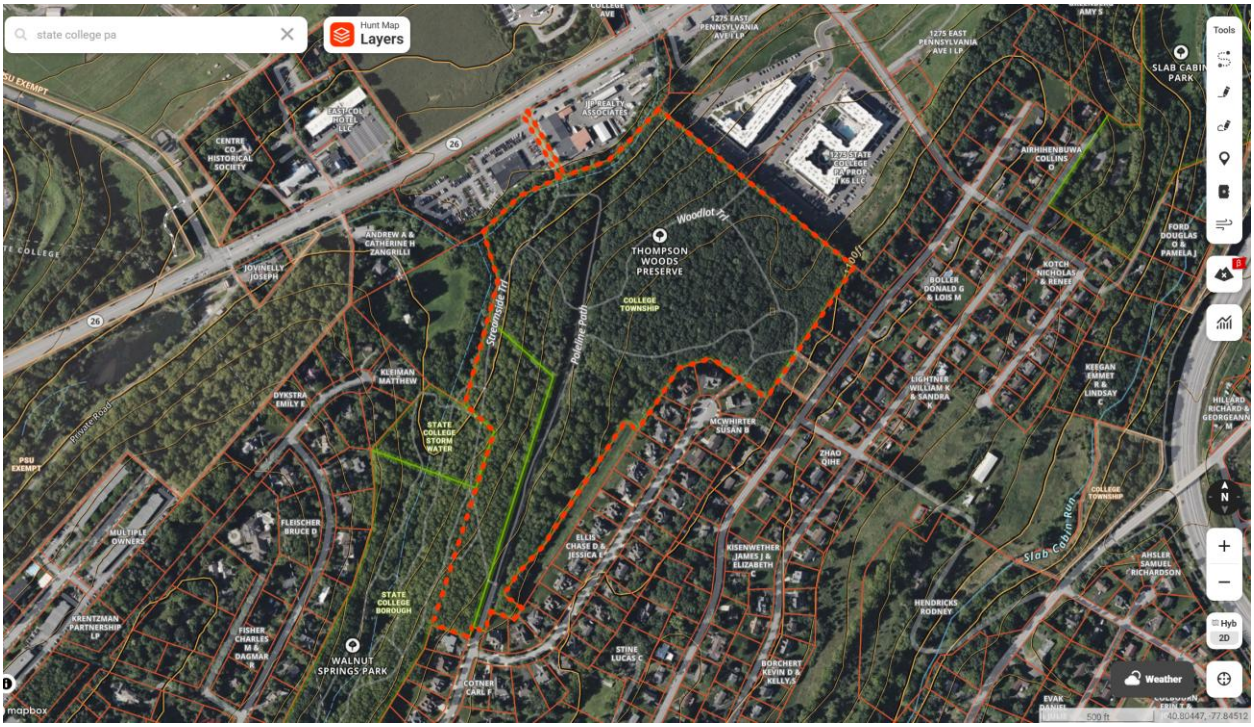
Mapping

Map 1: ClearWater Conservancy Forest Stewardship Map, showing TWP (yellow outline) in relation to Walnut Springs Park, businesses along East College Avenue, and local residential neighborhoods

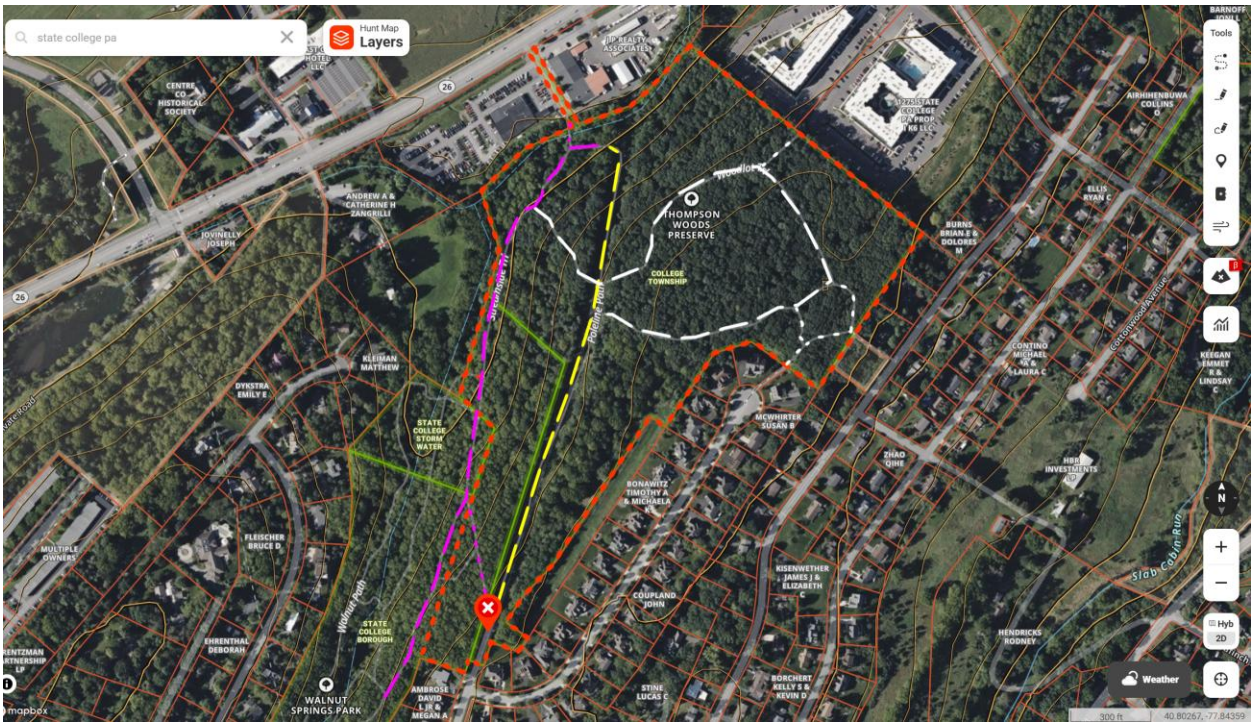


Map 2: Centre Regional Planning Agency Map listed as the "2013 official map of Thompson Woods Preserve and Walnut Springs Park" in the Thompson Woods Preserve Management Plan (updated June 1, 2013), prepared by ClearWater Conservancy of Central Pennsylvania, Inc

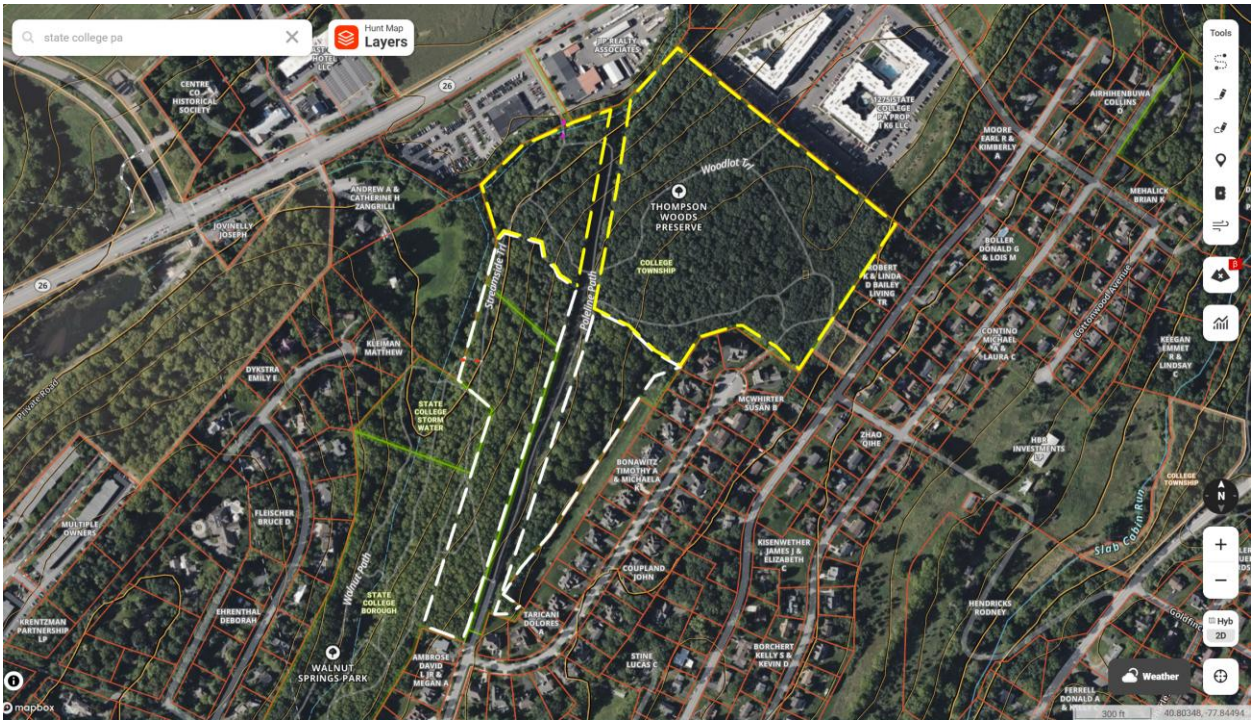
Map 3: TWP property map with property line highlighted in red



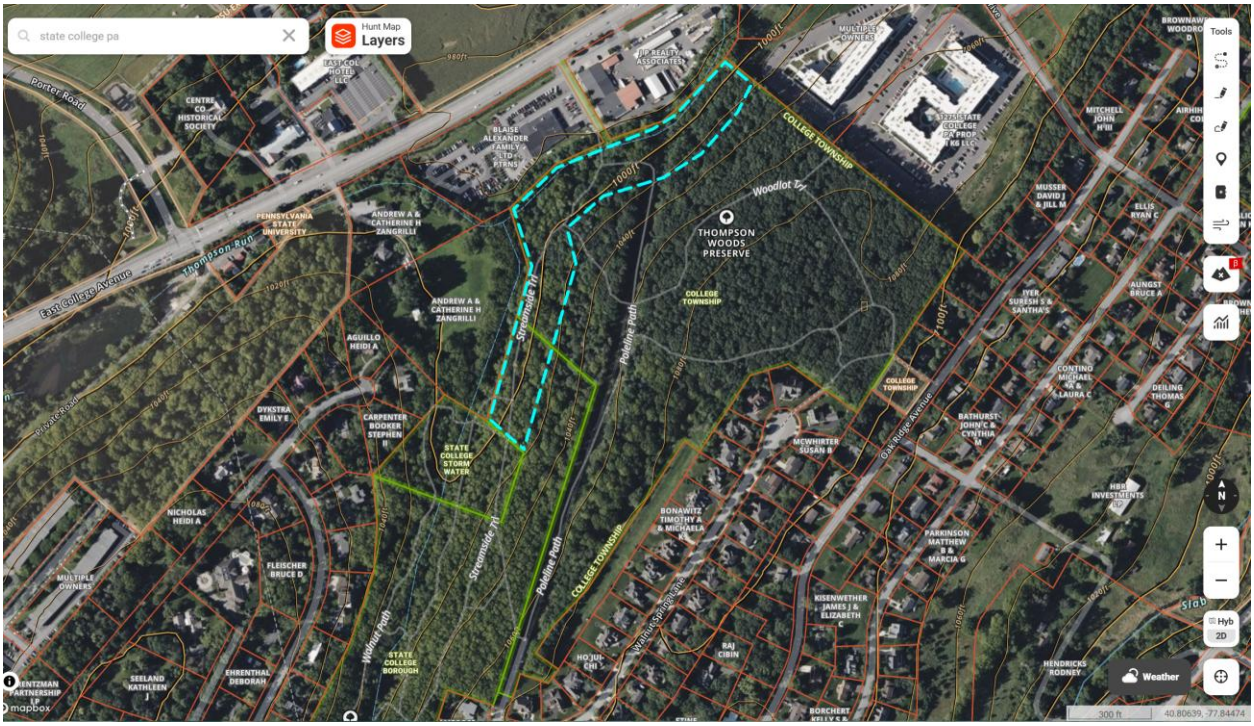
Map 4: TWP trail map showing Parking Area (orange waypoint), Poleline Path (yellow dash line), Woodlot Trail (white dash line), and Streamside Trail (pink dash line). Some small extension paths are also shown with dotted lines



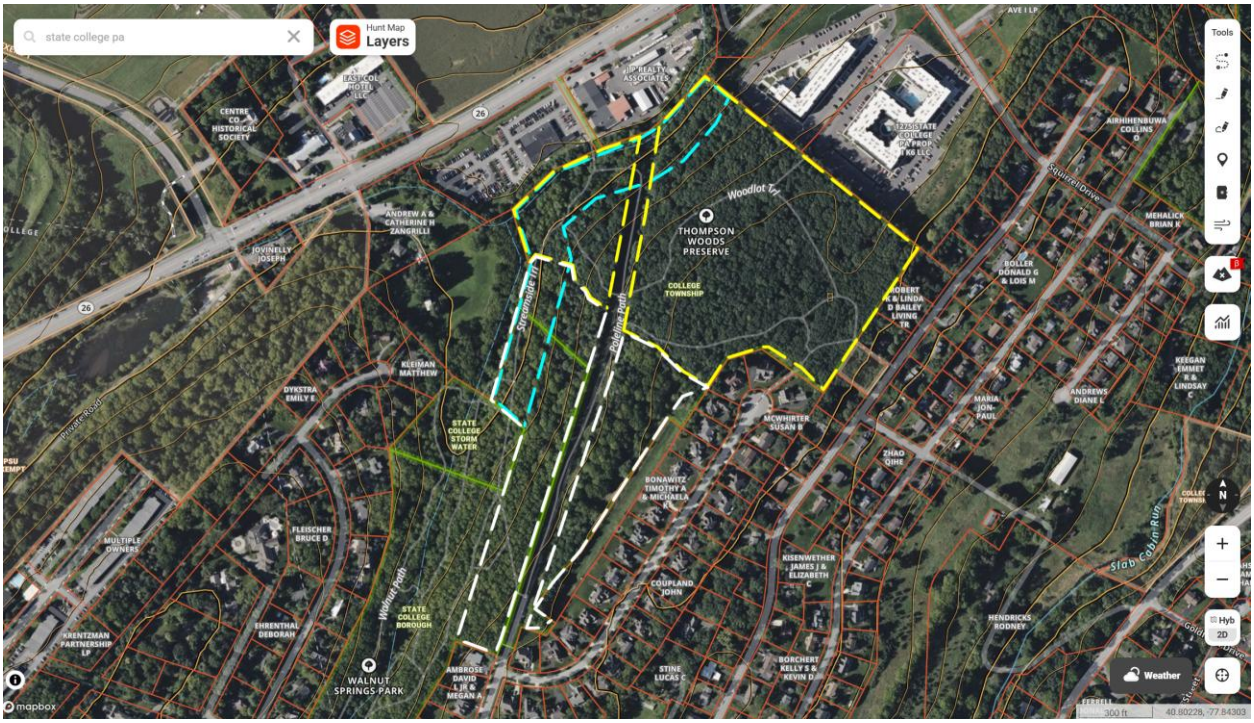
Map 5: TWP Management Units (MU's), related to the restorative strategies presented in this Forest Restoration Plan (2026 Update), showing Management Unit 1 (MU 1) in white and Management Unit 2 (MU 2) in yellow



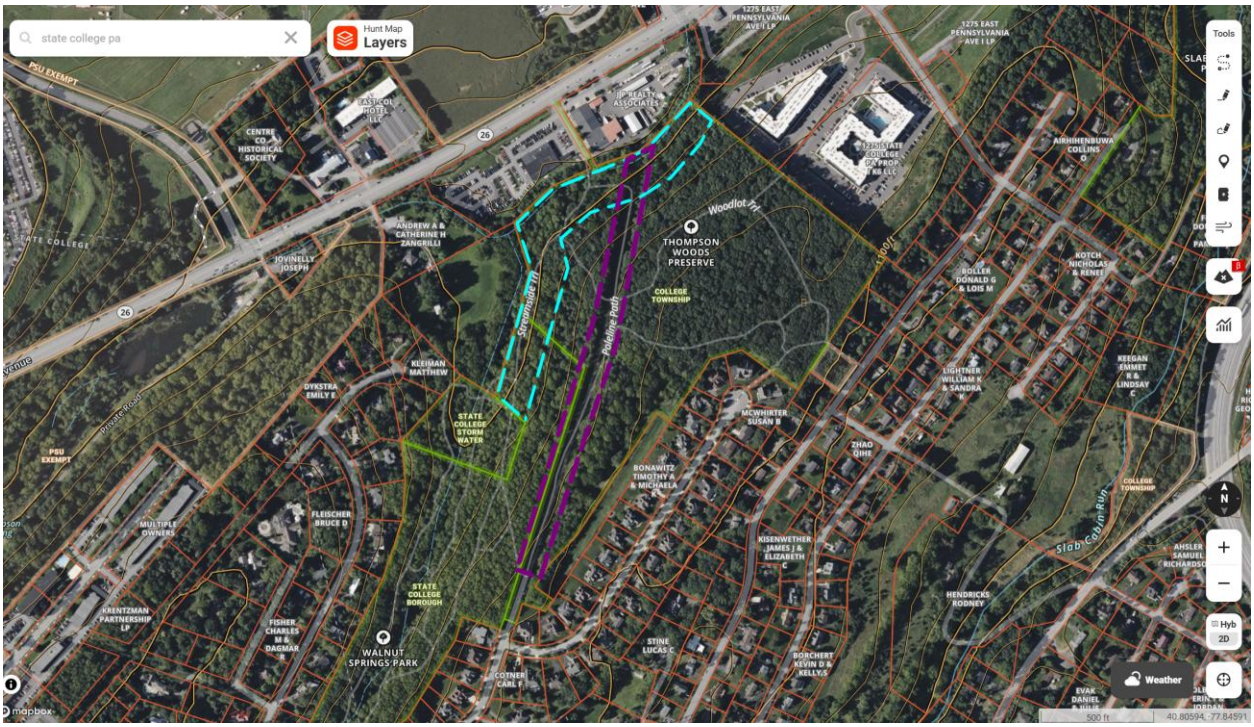
Map 6: Streamside Management Zone (blue dash area) represents TWP property within 150 feet of Walnut Run and Thompson Run



Map 7: Showing how the Streamside Management Zone (blue dash area) interacts with both MU 1 and MU 2



Map 8: Showing Powerline Management Zone (purple dash area) in relation to Streamside Management Zone (blue dash area)



Current Forest Conditions

General Conditions:

In general, the conditions of the TWP forest have not changed substantially since the 2018 Forest Restoration Plan was written. A main section of that plan discussed 8 questions (developed through decades of research by Penn State University and the U.S. Forest Service) that should be considered when a sustainable forest outcome is the goal. It would be worth your time to review pages 4-7 of the 2018 Forest Restoration Plan. However, for now, the following paragraph highlights some important factors that have not changed in TWP since 2018.

Deer impacts are still considered high and are still having a negative effect on species composition in TWP. There are still very few, if any, native/desirable seedlings present. When trees in TWP die or fall over, the additional light that reaches the forest floor is primarily benefiting NNIS. Plants that can easily displace and outcompete native plants are still abundant. The future of the forest is still at risk due to the absence of desirable plants in the understory. Native species diversity is declining and the potential success of native species regrowth is hampered by NNIS growth and hungry deer.

The 2018 Forest Restoration Plan included some images from the property to show the dire forest understory situation. A picture is worth a thousand words, so it is worth sticking with that strategy. The following pictures were taken onsite at TWP in October 2025.

Image 1: A consistent view from any location along a trail in MU 1 or in the Streamside Management Zone of MU 1 or MU 2. Note that all of the plants below 12 foot tall are NNIS and that they fully dominate the forest floor

Image 2: A consistent view from any location in the upper sections of MU 2. Note that the forest floor is quite bare and if there is a plant, it is a NNIS

Image 3: Occasionally, a desirable plant was found in a spot that was almost completely protected from deer. In the case of the blackberry pictured here, it was growing in a mess of limbs from a recently broken tree top that created a “safe” place to grow

Inventory and Analysis (based on filed inventory adjusted for current use):

MU 1 (12.5 acres)

Important Understory (from 0 to 6 feet) Information:

- Zero desirable seedlings found in sample plots
- 100% of sample plots contained an abundance of NNIS
- NNIS found in sample plots were
    - Tatarian honeysuckle
    - Norway maple
    - buckthorn
    - privet
    - oriental bittersweet
    - autumn olive
    - multiflora rose

Important Midstory (from 6 to 20 feet) information:

- Zero desirable saplings found in sample plots
- 100% of sample plots contained "tall woody interference"
- NNIS found in the sample plots were
    - privet
    - Tatarian honeysuckle
    - buckthorn

Important Overstory (tall trees) information:

- Norway maple (a NNIS) was present in the overstory
- Average tree diameter = 13" dbh
- Average basal area = 90 sq ft
- Average number of trees per acre by species
    - black walnut – 40
    - Norway spruce – 32
    - Norway maple - 18
    - Scotch pine – 15
    - white pine – 13
    - black cherry – 2
    - red pine – 2
    - sugar maple – 1.5
    - burr oak – 1

MU 2 (26.5 acres)

Important Understory (from 0 to 6 feet) Information:

- Zero desirable seedlings found in sample plots
- 100% of sample plots contained NNIS
- NNIS found in sample plots were
    - Tatarian honeysuckle
    - Norway maple
    - buckthorn
    - privet
    - oriental bittersweet
    - ailanthus

Important Midstory (from 6 to 20 feet) information:

- Almost zero desirable saplings found in sample plots
- 77% of sample plots contained “tall woody interference”
- NNIS found in the sample plots were
    - Norway maple
    - Tatarian honeysuckle

Important Overstory (tall trees) information:

- Norway maple (a NNIS) was present in the overstory
- Average tree diameter = 15” dbh
- Average basal area = 125 sq ft
- Average number of trees per acre by species
    - Norway maple – 140
    - sugar maple - 44
    - red oak – 35
    - hickory – 32
    - white oak – 24
    - red maple – 11
    - white pine – 10
    - black cherry – 10
    - black walnut – 2
    - black locust – 1
    - black oak – 1
    - aspen – 1
    - elm – 1
    - Scotch pine - 1

Impediments to Sustainability:

As stated in ClearWater Conservancy's original Thompson Woods Preserve Management Plan from 2003 (and updated 2013), the original intent of creating TWP was to preserve and protect its conservation values. Additionally, TWP's Mission Statement says, in part, that the Thompson Woods Preserve Committees:

1. have the mission to provide dedicated stewardship of the TWP by restoring and protecting its ecological integrity and fostering biodiversity
2. are committed to ensuring TWP remains a thriving natural resource for current and future generations

Preserving and protecting TWP's conservation values, providing dedicated stewardship, and committing to a thriving future for TWP are all honorable objectives. These objectives are likely exactly what neighbors and users of TWP would want to drive the Committees' work. There is no doubt that the Committees, the neighbors, the users, and the community want the great benefits of TWP to last for many generations to come.

When a forest has a dedicated steward (or in this case a team of dedicated stewards), no matter what its current condition, there is great hope for positive and lasting outcomes. A dedicated forest steward can succeed and overcome any impediment to sustainability, regardless of degree of effort, investment, and/or challenge. One thing is for sure, TWP has its share of challenges and it will take both effort and investment to overcome them.

- ✓ Challenge #1: Ensuring that everyone understands the issues at hand and the dire outcomes of an unsustainable forest system

  It's very easy for a person with an untrained eye to walk through TWP and "miss the forest for the trees." Aldo Leopold once wrote, "One of the penalties of an ecological education is that one lives alone in a world of wounds." Its true. Many can walk through TWP and not see a broken forest system and not see a forest filled with large native trees being replaced by invasive shrubs. To meet this challenge, TWP stewards will have to seek understanding and spread the word appropriately.

- ✓ Challenge #2: Eliminating the NNIS (understory and overstory) from TWP

  The only plants growing in the understory of TWP are NNIS. If they are not eliminated, the problem will continue to get worse. As the NNIS grow in number and size, they create additional NNIS seeds. Some of these seeds will germinate and grow and others will lie dormant for years in expectation of another tree dying and allowing a gap to occur. At this point, a full attack should be planned. This will not be a casual or quick event. The elimination of NNIS from TWP is a daunting task that will take years to complete and even more years to ensure success.

- ✓ Challenge #3: Protecting the forest floor enough to allow native seeds to germinate

  There are many desirable, large native trees in TWP and in all, they produce tens of thousands of seeds each year. When a desirable seed hits the ground but is fully surrounded by thick NNIS, it

won't germinate. When a desirable seed hits the ground that is void of plants, it is highly susceptible to predation from chipmunks, squirrels, turkey, and deer. When a desirable seed hits the ground and miraculously germinates, it is quickly eaten by deer and disappears. Protecting the forest floor must go hand in hand with eliminating the competing plants, but even in the absence of any competing plants, the ground must be protected to ensure desirable plant germination and survival.

- ✓ Challenge #4: Determining the best path toward protecting the forest floor and growing native plants

  The correct strategy, or mix of strategies, used to protect the forest floor cannot be implemented without a fairly high degree of change and interruption. For example, a wide-scale use of an 8' tall deer fence, which is typically used in cases like this, may not be practical for TWP. Also, a wide-scale cutting of trees (chop and drop) could protect some of the area, but the necessary intensity to protect every acre may not be practical for TWP. Additionally, planting hundreds of trees per acre (each with a tree tube or wire cage protector) may not be practical for TWP. However, with these as the available options for filling the void after eliminating the invasive plants, some or all of these strategies must be employed.

The following articles may be helpful to your team of forest stewards in dealing with these challenges:

- Regenerating Hardwood Forests: Managing Competition, Deer, and Light
  - https://www.appalachianforestconsultants.com/files/Regenerating_Penns_Woods_CDL_1-05.pdf
- Talkin' Bout Regeneration
  - https://www.appalachianforestconsultants.com/files/Talkin_20Bout_20Regeneration.pdf
- Over the Limit?
  - https://www.appalachianforestconsultants.com/files/Over_the_Limit_handout.pdf

Desired Future Forest Condition

The desired future condition of TWP would be a healthy forest that has the ability to **sustain itself**. Ideally, the next forest will be comprised of desirable, native trees that are similar to or better than its current overstory makeup.

The reality is, overstory trees do not last forever and someday they will be replaced. The answer to the question, "what will replace them someday?" can be answered very easily. The easiest way to answer the question is to take a walk and see what is currently growing on the forest floor. The answer is simply, "whatever is currently growing on the forest floor will someday replace the overstory trees."

This is a harsh realization for the future of a forest in the condition of TWP.

In the case of TWP, there will never be a timber harvest, but still, TWP cannot escape the reality that at some point down the road, the overstory will be replaced. We must focus today's efforts on ensuring a viable and productive native understory that is ready for someday.

The following images have been taken in PA and please notice that the overstory is still intact in almost every photo. Some will say, "there are no seedlings in TWP because there is not enough light." This is a fallacy. Seedlings may need a gap to become a tall tree, but they do not need much light or any gap to germinate and grow for many years. A healthy forest has a constant cycle of varying ages of seedlings in the understory that are growing in the shade of an enclosed canopy.

This is a collection of what the desired future forest condition should look like:

Forest Management Options

While normally, a forest management plan cuts right to the chase and presents a "prescription" to take a forest from its current condition to the desired future condition, the TWP property cannot be treated like a "normal" forest. Afterall, TWP is in fact a preserve that has been designated for a special purpose, is situated in a special place, and also has a special use. All of this must be factored in to any strategy that aims to move the forest in the direction of its desired future condition.

The following **Forest Restoration Strategy** presents multiple options and includes varying levels of intensity. The idea here is to allow for:

1. A full understanding of all that is entailed with each Forest Management Option presented, to include degree of effort, investment, challenge, and maintenance
2. A continuum of treatment options (from major changes to minor changes) for the Committees' discussion and use with management decisions
3. A continuum of time spans for treatment options (from all-at-once to a lengthy/extended timeframe) for the Committees' discussion and use with management decisions

NOTES:

- The strategy options presented have already factored-in the "specialness" of TWP
- The strategy options presented are in order from highest effort/investment to lowest effort/investment. They are also presented in order from fastest positive impact to slowest positive impact

Option I:

Option I includes a property-wide control of invasive plants (with multiple methods over multiple years), a chop and drop (of all Norway maple, all suppressed & intermediate stems, all non-productive stems) to add protective debris to the forest floor, and an optional addition of tree planting (only in protective debris).

Initial herbicide work would be a foliar spray on all NNIS. The next step would be a stem treatment on all NNIS that did not die from the foliar spray. The next steps would be two years of "mop up" herbicide work to ensure adequate control of NNIS. Then, after NNIS are adequately controlled, target trees would be cut (just felled) to add a protective layer of debris to the forest floor. Finally, if desired, trees can be planted in the protective debris.

Option I will positively impact all of TWP within 4 to 6 years. However, it is the most change in the shortest timeframe. While trails can be left open, park closures will be necessary during many parts of the operation. Additionally, Option I will create a high degree of visible change in TWP.

The following worksheet lays out the timing, acreage, and approximate costs of implementing Option I. Timing will be subject to vegetative responses of each activity.

Worksheet for Option I:

Thompson Woods Preserve							
Forest Management Option I							
Year	MU	Season	Activity	Acres	Activity Notes	Est Cost/ac	Est Cost
1	1	summer	foliar herbicide	12.5	aquatic label only in SMZ (1.4 ac)	$300.00	$3,750.00
	2	summer	foliar herbicide	26.5	aquatic label only in SMZ (5 ac)	$300.00	$7,950.00
	P/L	summer	foliar herbicide	5	selective - target plants only	$300.00	$1,500.00
			sub-total	44			$13,200.00
1 or 2	1	any	stem treatment	12.5	aquatic label only in SMZ (1.4 ac)	$250.00	$3,125.00
	2	any	stem treatment	14.5	aquatic label only in SMZ (5 ac)	$250.00	$3,625.00
	P/L	any	stem treatment	5	selective - target plants only	$250.00	$1,250.00
			sub-total	32			$8,000.00
2 or 3	1	summer	mop up herbicide	12.5	follow-up/mop up herbicide work	150	$1,875.00
	2	summer	mop up herbicide	26.5	follow-up/mop up herbicide work	150	$3,975.00
	P/L	summer	mop up herbicide	5	follow-up/mop up herbicide work	150	$750.00
			sub-total	44			$6,600.00
3 or 4	1	summer	mop up herbicide	12.5	follow-up/mop up herbicide work	100	$1,250.00
	2	summer	mop up herbicide	26.5	follow-up/mop up herbicide work	100	$2,650.00
	P/L	summer	mop up herbicide	5	follow-up/mop up herbicide work	100	$500.00
			sub-total	44			$4,400.00
3, 4, or 5	1	any	chop & drop	12.5	all Norway maple, all suppressed & intermediate,	$550.00	$6,875.00
					all non-productive stems		
					includes cut-stump treatment on any living Norway maple		
	2	any	chop & drop	26.5	all Norway maple, all suppressed & intermediate,	$550.00	$14,575.00
					all non-productive stems		
					includes cut-stump treatment on any living Norway maple		
			sub-total	39			$21,450.00
			Total				**$53,650.00**
Possible Addition to Option I							
4, 5, or 6		spring or fall	tree planting	39	100 desirable seedlings/acre	$520.00	$20,280.00
					planted only in tops - where protected by debris		
					(no tubes or cages)		
			sub-total				$20,280.00
			New Total				**$73,930.00**

Approximate Yearly Cost for Option I (fast-paced):

Approx Yearly Cost for Option I (fast-paced)		
Year 1	$13,200.00	
	$8,000.00	
Year 2	$6,600.00	
Year 3	$4,400.00	
Year 3	$21,450.00	
Year 4	$20,280.00	(with tree planting option)
	$73,930.00	

Approximate Yearly Cost for Option I (slower-paced):

Approx Yearly Cost for Option I (slower-paced)		
Year 1	$13,200.00	
Year 2	$8,000.00	
Year 3	$6,600.00	
Year 4	$4,400.00	
Year 5	$21,450.00	
Year 6	$20,280.00	(with tree planting option)
	$73,930.00	

Note 1: Cost estimates are based on current information and are subject to change. Costs do not include professional fees related to set up and oversight of each activity. Also, professional fees for marking trees for chop and drop are not included. Therefore, it would be wise to use a TOTAL COST of approximately $80,000.00 for budgeting purposes.

Note 2: The cost of educational/informational signage was not factored into the costs presented.

Option II:

Option II includes a property-wide control of invasive plants (with multiple methods over multiple years), a 3-acre deer exclosure, and a 2 acre tree planting (with protection).

Initial herbicide work would be a foliar spray on all NNIS. The next step would be a stem treatment on all NNIS that did not die from the foliar spray. The next herbicide steps would be two years of "mop up" herbicide work to ensure adequate control of NNIS. Simultaneous with NNIS control, a 3-acre deer fence would be constructed in MU 2. The position of the deer fence would not interfere with any trails. Additionally, a 2-acre tree planting project would be implemented. The tree planting area would be outside but adjacent to the deer fence area. All planted trees would be fully protected with wire cages.

The 3-acre deer fence and the 2-acre tree planting would be useful, over time, to the TWP Committees in communicating important aspects of what is needed to restore TWP. The combined 5-acre area would also provide valuable educational insight to any user of TWP who observes these areas over time and compares them to the surrounding forest.

While Option II will still require some park shutdowns and will create some visual changes, the changes will not be as intense as Option I. While a less intense option may be desirable to some, keep in mind that Option II does not have as much positive effect or as much lasting positive effect on TWP.

The following map shows the approximate locations of the deer fence and tree planting area.

Map 9: Showing TWP boundary (red dashed area), 3-acre deer fence (green dashed area), and 2-acre tree planting (yellow dashed area):

The following worksheet lays out the timing, acreage, and approximate costs of implementing Option II. Timing will be subject to vegetative responses of each activity.

Worksheet for Option II:

Thompson Woods Preserve							
Forest Management Option II							
Year	MU	Season	Activity	Acres	Activity Notes	Est Cost/ac	Est Cost
1	1	summer	foliar herbicide	12.5	aquatic label only in SMZ (1.4 ac)	$300.00	$3,750.00
	2	summer	foliar herbicide	26.5	aquatic label only in SMZ (5 ac)	$300.00	$7,950.00
	P/L	summer	foliar herbicide	5	selective - target plants only	$300.00	$1,500.00
			sub-total	44			$13,200.00
1 or 2	2	any	deer fence	3	construct 8' high, woven wire deer exclosure	$4,000.00	$12,000.00
					include human access gates for internal observation		
					includes elimination of hazard trees near fence		
			sub-total				$12,000.00
1 or 2	1	any	stem treatment	12.5	aquatic label only in SMZ (1.4 ac)	$250.00	$3,125.00
	2	any	stem treatment	14.5	aquatic label only in SMZ (5 ac)	$250.00	$3,625.00
	P/L	any	stem treatment	5	selective - target plants only	$250.00	$1,250.00
			sub-total	32			$8,000.00
2 or 3	1	summer	mop up herbicide	12.5	follow-up/mop up herbicide work	150	$1,875.00
	2	summer	mop up herbicide	26.5	follow-up/mop up herbicide work	150	$3,975.00
	P/L	summer	mop up herbicide	5	follow-up/mop up herbicide work	150	$750.00
			sub-total	44			$6,600.00
3 or 4	1	summer	mop up herbicide	12.5	follow-up/mop up herbicide work	100	$1,250.00
	2	summer	mop up herbicide	26.5	follow-up/mop up herbicide work	100	$2,650.00
	P/L	summer	mop up herbicide	5	follow-up/mop up herbicide work	100	$500.00
			sub-total	44			$4,400.00
3, 4, or 5		spring or fall	tree planting	2	350 desirable seedlings/acre	$5,000.00	$10,000.00
					planted with cage protectors		
			sub-total				$10,000.00
			Total				**$54,200.00**

Approximate Yearly Cost for Option II (fast-paced):

Approx Yearly Cost for Option II (fast-paced)		
Year 1	$13,200.00	
	$12,000.00	
	$8,000.00	
Year 2	$6,600.00	
Year 3	$4,400.00	
	$10,000.00	
	$54,200.00	

Approximate Yearly Cost for Option II (slower-paced):

Approx Yearly Cost for Option II (slower-paced)		
Year 1	$13,200.00	
Year 2	$12,000.00	
	$8,000.00	
Year 3	$6,600.00	
Year 4	$4,400.00	
Year 4 or 5	$10,000.00	
	$54,200.00	

Note 1: Cost estimates are based on current information and are subject to change. Costs do not include professional fees related to set up and oversight of each activity. Also, professional fees for marking trees for chop and drop are not included. Therefore, it would be wise to use a TOTAL COST of approximately $60,000.00 for budgeting purposes.

Note 2: While hazard trees near the deer fence will be mitigated, the deer fence will still occasionally be damaged by falling limbs/trees. When this occurs, the damage should be repaired quickly. Sometimes the damage may require professional repair. It would be wise to add $1,000.00 annual deer fence repair, just in case.

Note 3: The TWP Committees should designate someone to inspect the fence for damage at least 2 times a month.

Note 4: The cost of educational/informational signage was not factored into the costs presented.

Option III:

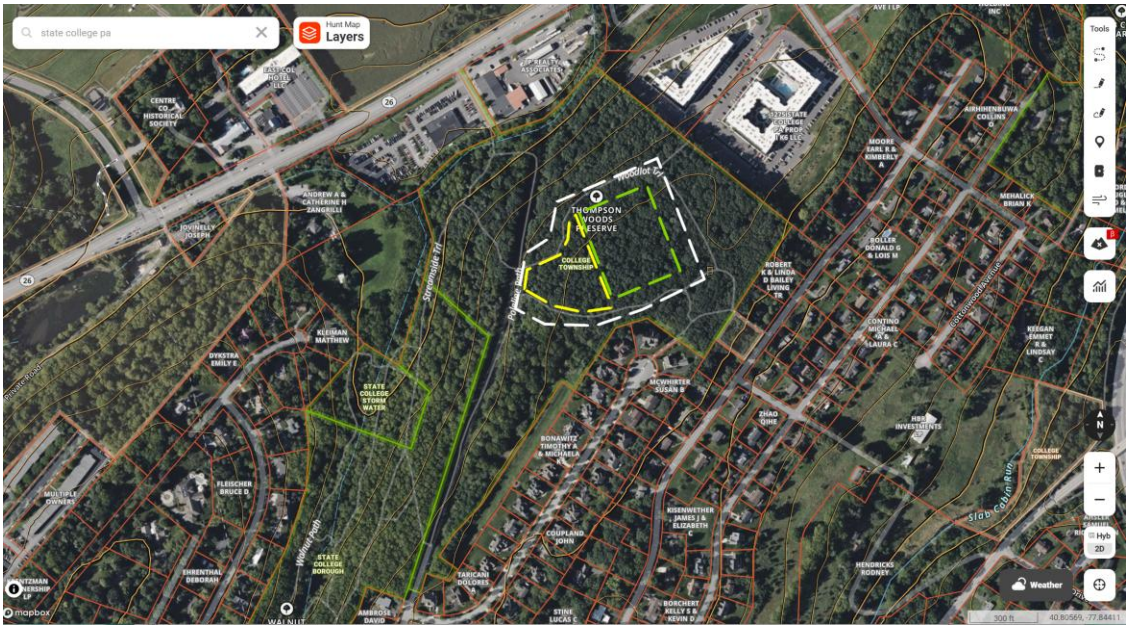
While a property-wide attack on NNIS would be advisable as soon as possible, the TWP Committees may need to PROVE the necessity of higher investment costs. Instead of a property-wide plan, Option III designates only approximately 9 acres of TWP for treatment. This 9-acre area can be considered a Pilot Project and would be very useful, over time, in garnering increased support for a larger-scale project in the future. The Pilot Project area would certainly have a positive impact on 9 acres, but it could also be used by TWP Committees to provide valuable educational insight to any user of TWP who observes this area over time and compares it to the surrounding forest.

The 9-acre Pilot Project would include 9 acres of NNIS control, a 3-acre deer fence, and a 2-acre tree planting. The location would be a very visible section of TWP that would be easily accessible for educational purposes. This 9-acre Pilot Project would highlight, over time, the many challenges that TWP faces that have been discussed in this Forest Restoration Plan (2026 Update). The goal of the Pilot Project would be to:

- Encourage a high level of observation through field tours, signage, and other educational communication
- Show members of the TWP Committees, users of TWP, and other stakeholders that the TWP forest system is broken and why
- Show members of the TWP Committees, users of TWP, and other stakeholders how investments in TWP can turn an unsustainable situation into a success story
- Positively impact approximately 9 acres of TWP and restore sustainability and forest health to the Pilot Project area
- Use the Pilot Project as an on-ramp toward a broader plan (similar to Option I) in the future

The following map shows the approximate location of the Pilot Project area.

Map 10: Showing Pilot Project area (white dashed area), 3-acre deer fence (green dashed area), and 2-acre tree planting (yellow dashed area):



The following worksheet lays out the timing, acreage, and approximate costs of implementing Option III. Timing will be subject to vegetative responses of each activity.

Worksheet for Option III:

Thompson Woods Preserve Forest Management Option III							
Year	MU	Season	Activity	Acres	Activity Notes	Est Cost/ac	Est Cost
1	2	summer	foliar herbicide	9	aquatic label only in SMZ (5 ac)	$300.00	$2,700.00
			sub-total	9			$2,700.00
1 or 2	2	any	deer fence	3	construct 8' high, woven wire deer exclosure	$4,000.00	$12,000.00
					include human access gates for internal observation		
					includes elimination of hazard trees near fence		
			sub-total				$12,000.00
1 or 2	2	any	stem treatment	9	aquatic label only in SMZ (5 ac)	$250.00	$2,250.00
			sub-total	9			$2,250.00
2 or 3	2	summer	mop up herbicide	9	follow-up/mop up herbicide work	150	$1,350.00
			sub-total	9			$1,350.00
3 or 4	2	summer	mop up herbicide	26.5	follow-up/mop up herbicide work	100	$2,650.00
			sub-total	26.5			$2,650.00
3, 4, or 5		spring or fall	tree planting	2	350 desirable seedlings/acre	$5,000.00	$10,000.00
					planted with cage protectors		
			sub-total				$10,000.00
			Total				**$30,950.00**

Approximate Yearly Cost for Option III:

Approx Yearly Cost for Option III		
Year 1	$2,700.00	
	$12,000.00	
Year 2	$2,250.00	
	$1,350.00	
Year 3	$2,650.00	
	$10,000.00	
	$30,950.00	

Note 1: Cost estimates are based on current information and are subject to change. Costs do not include professional fees related to set up and oversight of each activity. Also, professional fees for marking trees for chop and drop are not included. Therefore, it would be wise to use a TOTAL COST of approximately $35,000.00 for budgeting purposes.

Note 2: While hazard trees near the deer fence will be mitigated, the deer fence will still occasionally be damaged by falling limbs/trees. When this occurs, the damage should be repaired quickly. Sometimes the damage may require professional repair. It would be wise to add $1,000.00 annual deer fence repair, just in case.

Note 3: The TWP Committees should designate someone to inspect the fence for damage at least 2 times a month.

Note 4: The costs of educational/informational signage, field tours, etc were not factored into the costs presented.

Option IV:

A good forest plan should always include a "do nothing" option. In other words, doing nothing is always an option. However, if you've carefully read the previous pages of this document as well as the past TWP plans, you should realize that continuing to do nothing will have repercussions. Arguments for doing nothing may include:

- Saving the expense associated with forest management and forest health restoration
- Avoidance of the potential public outcry related to major visual changes of TWP
- Doing nothing is often the easiest path to take

There is no doubt that the short-term cost (none) of choosing to do nothing is enticing. It is likely equally enticing to avoid "rocking the boat" with regard to potential public outcry. And, yes, doing nothing would be the easiest path to take. However, as with most everything in life, doing the right thing is likely not the cheapest or easiest option.

The following are the potential repercussions related to a hands-off approach in TWP:

- NNIS will continue to proliferate
- NNIS will continue to outgrow and displace native plants
- The plants currently growing in the understory will someday become the majority plants in TWP
- A forest that currently includes tall, beautiful, native trees will someday become primarily a shrubland that is filled with NNIS

"The best way out is always through."	Robert Frost
"Don't be afraid to give up the good to go for the great."	Steve Prefontaine

COLLEGE TOWNSHIP

MEMORANDUM

To: Thompson Woods Preserve Governance Committee

From: Mike Bloom, Assistant Township Manager

Re: OB-3 Committee Structure Proposal

Date: March 9, 2016

The Thompson Woods Advisory Committee met on February 26th and discussed the proposal to merge the committees. Those present agreed with the approach to merge the committees and to retain the Advisory Committee members in a non-voting, ex-officio capacity.

Action Requested:

The Governance Committee should take one more opportunity to review the attached proposal and provide staff with any additional feedback.

If there are no substantial revisions required, the Committee should consider a motion to authorize staff to forward a recommendation on this proposal to the State College Borough and College Township Councils.

Consolidated Governance Committee Structure

Overview

This proposal requests consolidation of the existing Governance Committee and Advisory Committee into a single **Thompson Woods Preserve Governance Committee** that:

- **Maintains the existing five (5) voting members** currently assigned to the Governance Committee; and
- **Incorporates Advisory Committee representatives as ex-officio, non-voting members** to provide technical and stakeholder input without formal voting authority.
- **Continues functioning as a designated Authority, Board or Commission,** including adherence to public advertising requirements and holding regularly scheduled, open public meetings.
- **Preserves clear decision-making authority** while ensuring consistent, integrated advisory participation.
- **Improves efficiency,** in terms of project development and utilization of limited staff capacity.

ARTICLE I: PURPOSE & OBJECTIVES (Revised)

The purpose of this Intermunicipal Cooperation Agreement is to establish a consolidated governance structure for the jointly owned Thompson Woods Preserve.

The governance structure shall consist of a single **Governance Committee** responsible for:

- Providing purpose-focused oversight of all Preserve matters;
- Ensuring compliance with the prevailing Thompson Woods Preserve Management Plan and property covenants;
- Making requests for maintenance, repairs, and operational support to the appropriate party(s);
- Coordinating stewardship initiatives and projects;
- Providing a forum for public input on matters related to the Preserve.

The objective of this structure is to provide efficient, consistent, and proactive stewardship of the Preserve while maintaining meaningful input from key stakeholder organizations.

ARTICLE II: STRUCTURE OF THE GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE (Revised)

A. Voting Members

The Governance Committee shall be comprised of **five (5) voting members**, appointed as follows:

- Two (2) College Township appointees;
- Two (2) State College Borough appointees;

- One (1) Centre Region Parks and Recreation Authority (CRPRA) appointee, who shall be either a member of the CRPRA Board or a designee approved by the CRPRA Board and who does not represent or reside in either the Township or Borough.

Each appointing body may designate an alternate for its appointee, if so required.

Each appointing body retains sole discretion to remove its own appointee at any time for any reason. A request for removal of another party's appointee must be made in writing and shall require a majority vote of both the Township and Borough Councils.

B. Ex-Officio, Non-Voting Members

The following representatives shall serve as **ex-officio, non-voting members** of the Governance Committee:

- One (1) representative from the Clearwater Conservancy;
- One (1) representative from Centre Region Parks and Recreation;
- One (1) representative from the Vallimont Home Owner Association;
- One (1) representative from the Thompson Woods Property Owners' Association;
- Up to three (3) total representatives, with no more than one (1) from each, of the following:
    - Centre County Conservation District;
    - Penn State Department of Ecosystem Science and Management;
    - Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR).

Ex-officio members:

- Shall participate fully in discussions and deliberations;
- May provide technical expertise, recommendations, and stakeholder perspectives;
- Shall not have voting authority on committee actions.

Each stakeholder organization is solely responsible for the appointment and removal of its representative and may designate an alternate, if so required. Removal of an ex-officio member at the request of another party shall require a majority vote of both the Township and Borough Councils.

ARTICLE III: TERMS OF APPOINTMENT (Revised)

The term of office for both voting and ex-officio members shall be two (2) years, with no limitation on the number of consecutive terms.

Members appointed to fill a vacancy shall serve for the remainder of the unexpired term.

ARTICLE IV: AUTHORITY AND POWERS (Revised)

A. Governance Committee

The Governance Committee, acting through its voting members, is assigned responsibility for:

- Oversight of all Preserve matters;
- Review and approval of stewardship initiatives, priorities, and recommendations;
- Making requests for maintenance, repairs, or improvements to the appropriate party(s);
- Ensuring coordination among municipal, regional, and stakeholder partners;
- Providing a public forum for discussion of Preserve-related issues.

B. Role of Ex-Officio Members

Ex-officio members shall serve in an advisory capacity to aid in:

- Identifying issues, opportunities, or potential projects within the Preserve;
- Providing technical guidance and subject-matter expertise;
- Offering stakeholder perspectives to inform decision-making by the voting members.

C. Retained Municipal Authority

The Township and Borough retain all authority related to:

- Appointment and removal of their respective voting members;
- Financial responsibilities, including budgeting, contracting, purchasing, and staffing;
- Execution of contracts and expenditure of funds related to the Preserve.