

## Summary of Forest Goal Selection Process

Both short- and long-term goals for public forests owned by Lebanon Township will be incorporated into the Plan which will determine action-oriented objectives and stewardship recommendations. The forest goals will be the basis of the Plan and it is the responsibility of the landowners to determine those goals prior to the Plan being drafted.

An initial list of forest-related goals were determined based on forest inventory data, recommendations from NJ Audubon (forester), peer-reviewed scientific literature, and municipal plans and reports (2001 Lebanon Township Master Plan, 2003 Lebanon Township Natural Resource Inventory, 2017 Lebanon Township Open Space and Recreation Plan, 2012 Highlands Environmental Resource Inventory for Lebanon Township, 2021 Biennial Monitoring Report by NJ Water Supply Authority for co-owned lands with Lebanon Township).

This initial list included 22 goals separated into fourteen forest-related services and eight concerns:

### Forest-related Services

- Passive outdoor recreation (hiking, wildlife viewing, etc.)
- Hunting
- Water quality (Erosion control, filtration/buffers)
- Water availability (groundwater recharge)
- Carbon storage
- Carbon sequestration
- Temperature regulation (shade)
- Wood production (timber, firewood, etc.)
- Wildlife diversity
- Plant diversity
- Endangered and threatened (E&T) species habitat
- Aesthetics (viewshed)
- Nutrient cycling
- Edible plant

### Forest-related Concerns

- Overabundant deer
- Exotic invasive plants
- Forest pests/diseases
- Illegal use (ATVs/ORVs, etc.)
- Lack of plant diversity
- Climate resiliency
- Lack of wildlife diversity
- Lack of age class diversity

These services and concerns were then incorporated into an anonymous survey provided to members of the Lebanon Township Environmental and Open Space Commission (EOSC). In this survey, members were asked to select the four most important services forests provide for Lebanon Township and four of the biggest concerns about the forests in Lebanon Township.

Six members of the EOSC completed the anonymous survey. Forest-related services that contained 50% or more selections include:

- 1) Water quality (erosion/buffers) - 100%
- 2) Passive outdoor recreation (hiking/wildlife viewing) - 67%
- 3) Water availability (groundwater recharge) – 50%
- 4) Wildlife diversity – 50%

Forest-related concerns that contained 50% or more selections include:

- 1) Exotic invasive plants – 100%

- 2) Overabundant deer – 83%
- 3) Forests pests/diseases – 67%
- 4) Climate resiliency – 50%
- 5) Lack of structural diversity – 50%

The EOSC compared their survey results with the recommendations from NJ Audubon, the forester hired to collect forest data and draft the Plan.

<b>NJ Audubon Recommendations</b>	<b>EOSC Recommendations from Survey</b>
Forest health	Forests pests/diseases
Forest resiliency	Climate resiliency
Forest biodiversity	Lack of structural diversity
Exotic invasive plants	Exotic invasive plants
Overabundant deer	Overabundant deer
Public recreation	Passive outdoor recreation (hiking/wildlife viewing)
Wildlife habitat	Wildlife diversity
	Water quality (erosion/buffers)
	Water availability (groundwater recharge)

Seeing overlap between structural diversity, biodiversity, and wildlife diversity, the EOSC unanimously voted to recommend the following forest-related services and concerns to develop eight draft goals for the Plan:

- 1) Water quality (erosion/buffers)
- 2) Exotic invasive plants
- 3) Overabundant deer
- 4) Passive outdoor recreation (hiking/wildlife viewing)
- 5) Water availability (groundwater recharge)
- 6) Wildlife habitat diversity
- 7) Forest pests/diseases
- 8) Climate resiliency