



*2023 Letter-writing Campaign to raise awareness of shortcomings of the Governor Dick Park Forest Management Plan*

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Lebanon County Commissioners  
Michael Kuhn, Jo Ellen Litz, Robert Phillips  
Room 207, Municipal Building  
400 South 8th Street  
Lebanon, PA 17042-6794

Dear Commissioners,

I want to reach out to you prior to the fall 2023 election to let you know I am unhappy with the use of the heavy logging equipment as part of the management plan at the Clarence Schock Park at Governor Dick. This concerns me because the weight and repeated passage of heavy logging equipment compacts the soil, particularly in areas where the ground is wet, which is the case in a heavily forested area.

Soil compaction limits air and water movement within the soil, negatively impacting root growth, nutrient availability, and soil microorganism activity, all of which are vital to growth of new plants. In addition, the passage of heavy machinery can disrupt the natural structure of the soil. This can lead to decreased soil porosity and drainage, affecting the ability of the soil to retain water and nutrients, inhibiting root penetration, soil aeration, and the health of soil organisms, such as the mycorrhizal fungi so vital to forest health.

Disturbances and changes in environmental conditions within the soil can alter the composition and activity of microbial communities, which can have cascading effects on soil fertility and ecosystem functioning. Use of heavy logging equipment removes vegetation and organic matter that helps to stabilize the soil, increasing the risk of soil erosion, particularly on steep slopes or in areas prone to heavy rainfall, such as the ground at Governor Dick Park. Soil erosion can lead to the loss of topsoil, which contains vital nutrients and organic material necessary for plant growth.

The removal of trees and organic matter disrupts the natural balance of nutrient inputs and outputs. This can result in imbalances in nutrient availability, affecting the growth and health of remaining vegetation and potentially leading to nutrient depletion in the soil.

You as commissioners have the power to make a positive change. I urge you to engage an independent authority who considers the forest in its entirety rather than as timber alone, and thus can propose more sustainable ways of managing this park.

Sincerely,

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