



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

Lebanon County Commissioners
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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 logging at the Clarence Schock Park at Governor Dick. The age at which a forest canopy fully regrows to its pre-harvest state can range from 20 to 100 years or more, depending on various factors. For example, in some temperate forests, where tree species with faster growth rates dominate, it may take several decades for the canopy to close again. In contrast, in old-growth or slow-growing forests, the process can take considerably longer. The majority of forest in the area encompassing Governor Dick is composed of slow-growth trees.

Regrowth typically begins with the establishment of new tree seedlings, either naturally through the dispersal of seeds by wind, water, or animals, or through active reforestation efforts such as planting new trees. In the case of the latest cut at Governor Dick, the new growth is majority invasive species, such as the Tree of Heaven, the preferred host for the Spotted Lantern Fly and the quick growing native Tulip Poplar. In older logging sites, you can find a Poplar monoculture. This tree, while native, hosts far fewer species than do the oaks and other trees that were removed from that area by the logging effort. The more recent the cuts, the higher the invasive to native ratio becomes.

The aim of sustainable forest management practices is to minimize the impact of harvesting on the overall health and productivity of the forest. By carefully planning and implementing selective cutting methods, and by allowing for natural regeneration processes, it is possible to maintain the integrity of the forest ecosystem while still obtaining timber or other forest products.

The initial stage of regrowth is often marked by the growth of fast-growing pioneer species, which quickly occupy the available space and capture sunlight. Over time, slower-growing, shade-tolerant species gradually establish themselves and form the mature forest canopy.

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,
