

Project Narrative, 'Sasquatch' #267-13-01-n
129 acre Ridgetop Acidic Barren Habitat Project

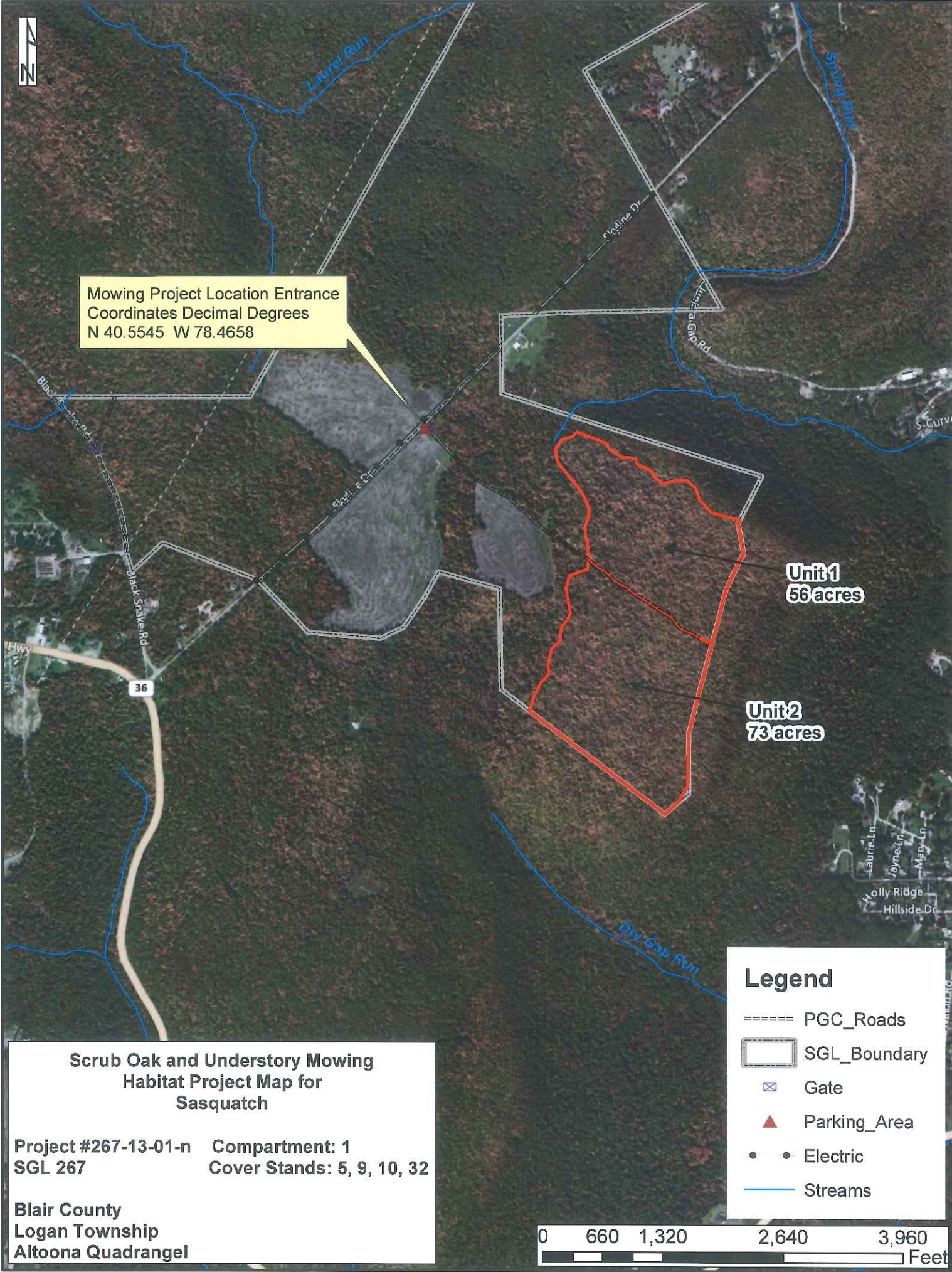
The game land encompasses 1,044 acres and lies on the edge of the Allegheny Front in Logan Township, Blair County. The topography is relatively level to rolling with high elevation, ranging from 2,300 to 2,580 feet. The game land is largely forested, and adjacent surrounding land is primarily terrestrial forest (80%) with a mixture of other habitats including agricultural, urban, emergent and forested wetlands, and open water.

The game land is within the focal area for golden-winged warblers. According to the PA Wildlife Action Plan (PA-WAP), golden-winged warblers are a species of greatest conservation need and were given a rank of "high-level of concern, rare". Particular emphasis will focus the development of young forest habitat to enhance habitat conditions for the golden-winged warbler, in addition to other wildlife species that benefit from early successional habitat. The gameland is also within the Allegheny Front Important Bird Area and is part of an important flyway along the Allegheny Front for migrating songbirds and birds of prey.

The overall goal for this game land is to manage for mixed successional habitat. The creation of additional early successional habitat will focus on maintaining and restoring the scrub oak habitat through a combination of overstory removal of encroaching hardwoods, mechanical mowing, and prescribed fire. Approximately 930 acres of forest on this game land is scrub oak barrens habitat. The barren forest community of scrub oak-pitch pine in central Pennsylvania once covered more than 325,000 acres, but today far less supports scrub oak barren habitat and is now considered a critical and unique habitat type. Generally, these habitats are primarily restricted to the highest, most exposed portions of the ridge and are surrounded by slopes and drainages with mixed hardwood forest. Scrub oaks produce consistent yields of acorns that are food for a variety of wildlife species, both game and non-game. Barren habitat has a historical relationship with periodic wildfires; and habitat maintenance in this habitat type on game land will include prescribed burns to preserve this habitat component.

This habitat project is part of a comprehensive project designed to maintain and restore critical and unique ridgetop acidic barren habitat that was historically widespread in Pennsylvania. During the past two years, 183 acres of encroaching hardwoods were removed in two separate projects to restore and maintain the scrub oak component in early successional stage. The strategy for this current project is the similar; the use of mechanical mowing with residual tree retention, in conjunction with prescribed fire to manage the ridgetop acidic barren complex on this gameland. A mechanical mowing treatment will be used to treat 129 acres of scrub oak and other understory vegetation and small trees up to eight inches in diameter. Once mowing is completed, prescribed fire will be utilized to begin removing organic material and maintaining these units in early succession barrens habitat.

Similar habitat projects are currently underway or in the planning phase on other game lands, not only in the Southwest but across the State. These habitat projects are crucial to maintaining and restoring unique and critical habitat diversity that provides benefit to a variety of wildlife species.



Mowing Project Location Entrance
 Coordinates Decimal Degrees
 N 40.5545 W 78.4658

Unit 1
 56 acres

Unit 2
 73 acres

**Scrub Oak and Understory Mowing
 Habitat Project Map for
 Sasquatch**

Project #267-13-01-n Compartment: 1
 SGL 267 Cover Stands: 5, 9, 10, 32

Blair County
 Logan Township
 Altoona Quadrangel

Legend

- ===== PGC_Roads
- SGL_Boundary
- ⊠ Gate
- ▲ Parking_Area
- Electric
- Streams

