

A photograph of a forest stream with water flowing over moss-covered rocks. The surrounding forest is dense with green foliage and trees. The scene is captured from a slightly elevated perspective, looking down the stream.

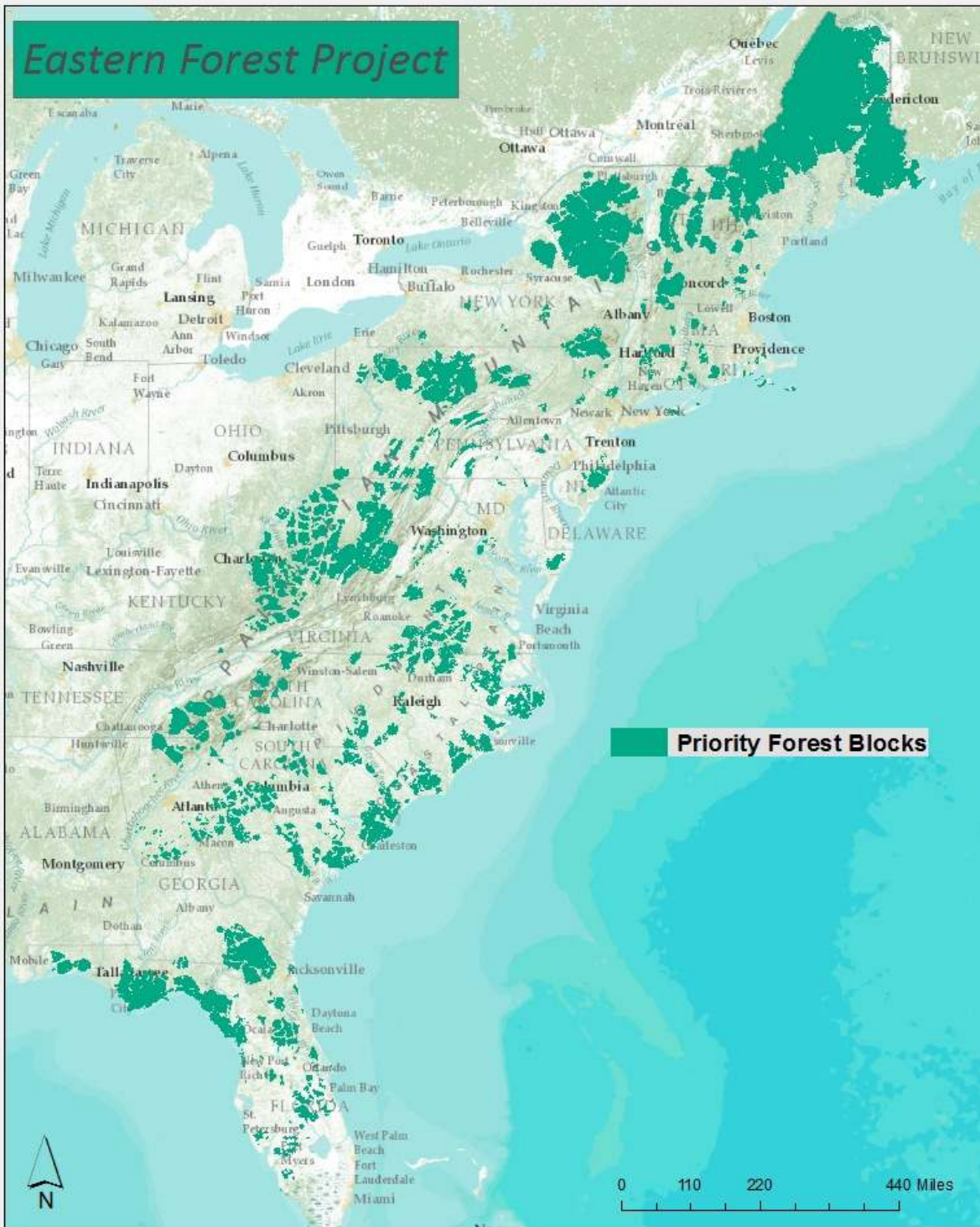
Ecological Values of the Old Logger's Path area of Loyalsock State Forest

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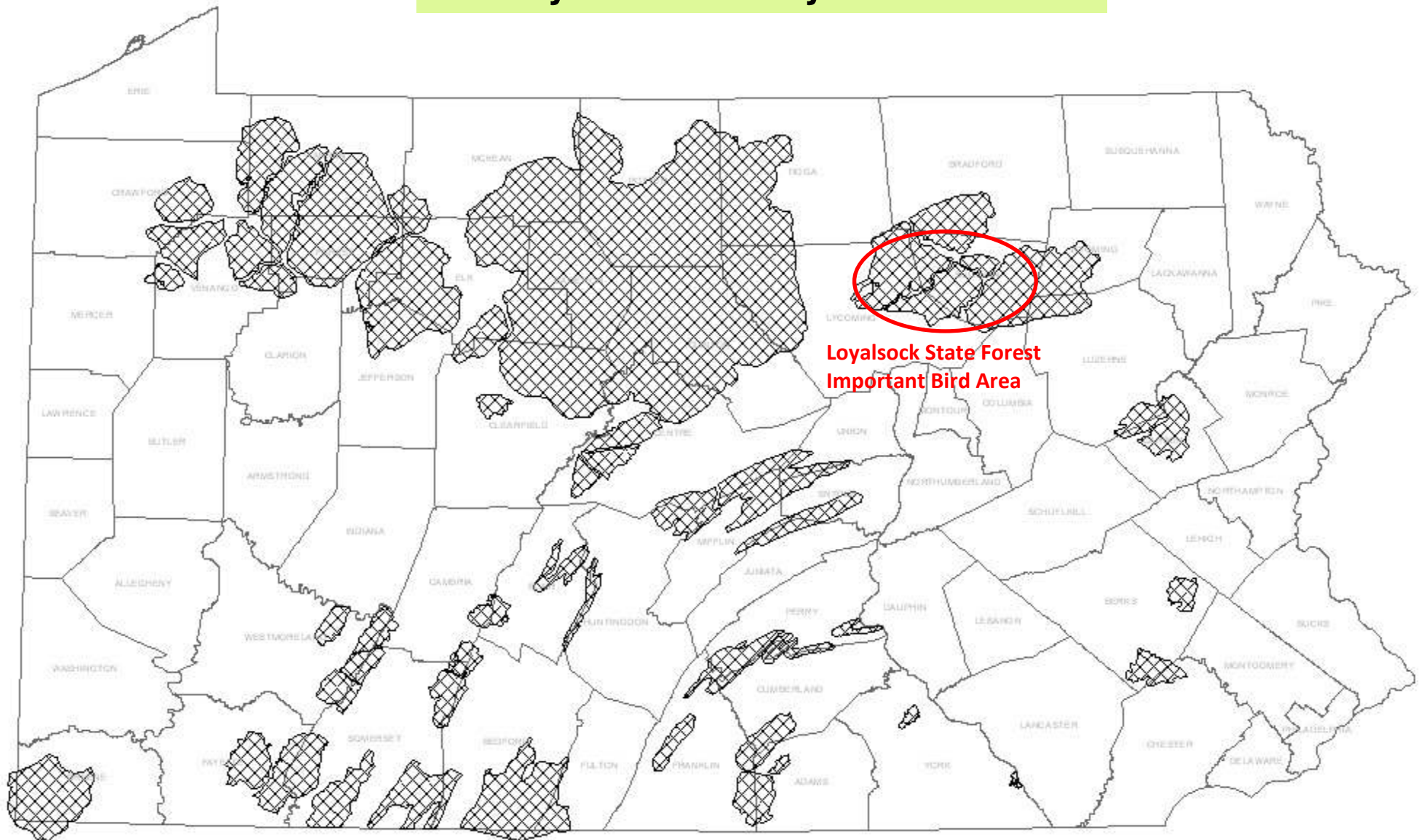
Eastern Forest Project



National Audubon Society recently completed a new analysis of eastern forests to determine the best blocks of intact forest for protection efforts.

These “priority forest blocks” are the best habitat areas for birds who require forests that have minimal fragmentation to successfully raise young.

Pennsylvania Priority Forest Blocks



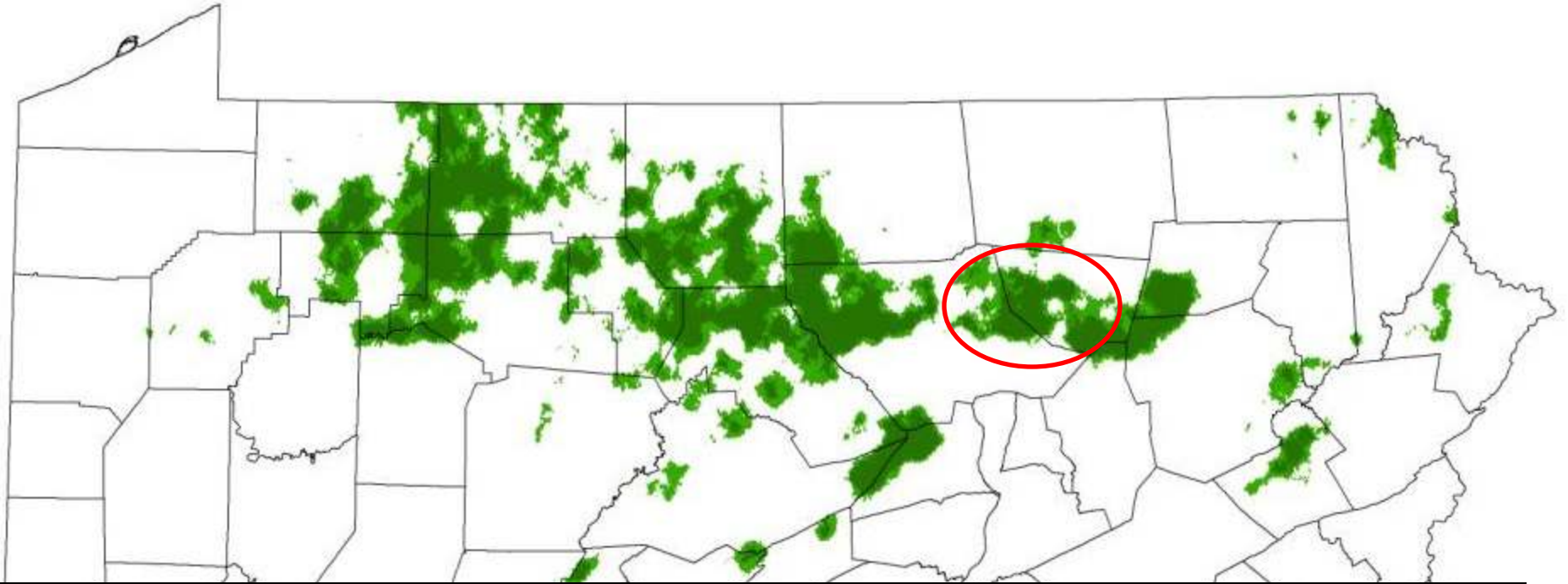
A statewide view of the highest value forest blocks shows the Loysock State Forest as extremely high quality.

Important Bird Areas of Pennsylvania



That reinforces what we already know, as we had previously designated the state forest in 1996 as an Audubon "Important Bird Area" based on years of breeding bird surveys. (BOF changed the name to Loyalsock SF)

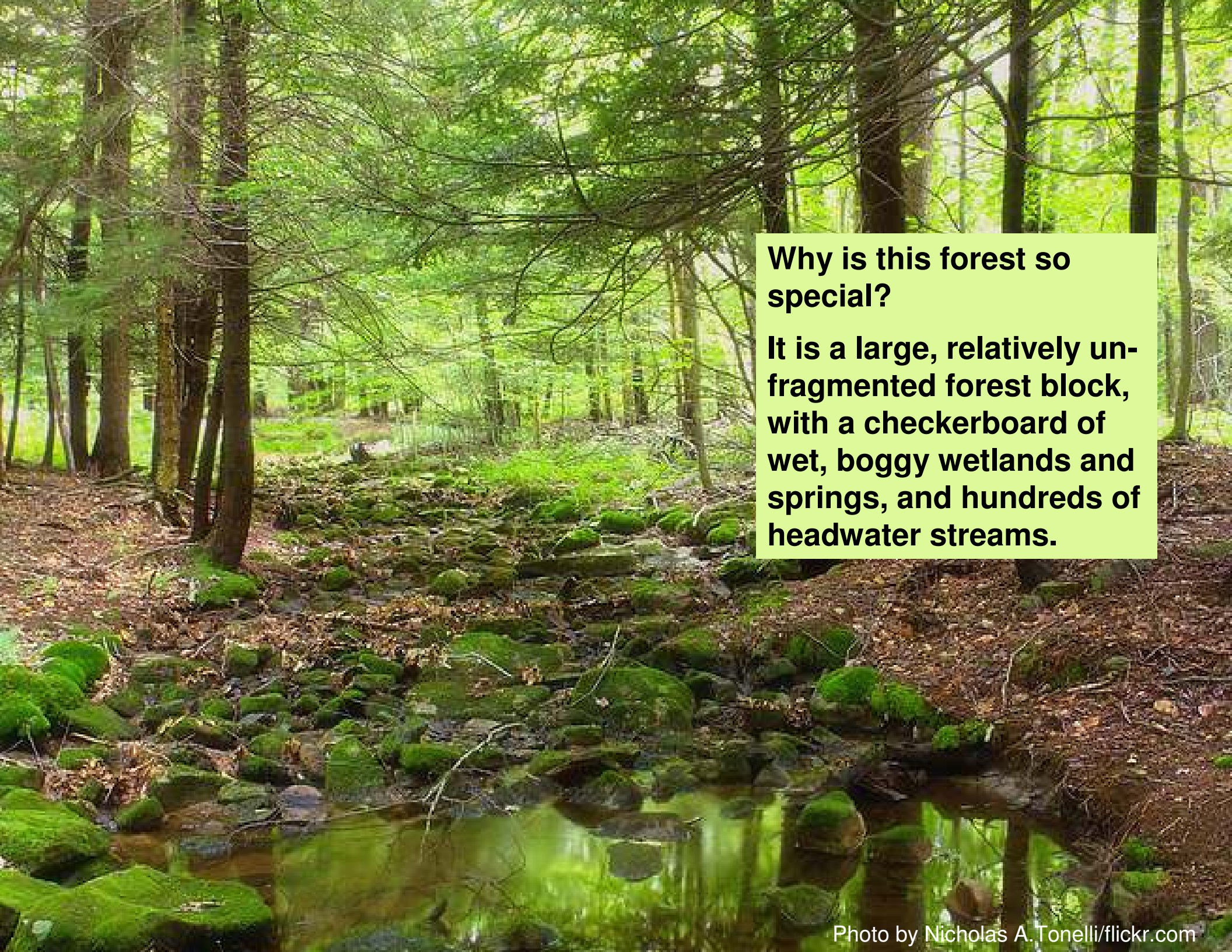
Core Forest Bird Habitat



In addition, Pennsylvania Game Commission ornithologists conducted an analysis of the data from the recently-completed statewide Breeding Bird Atlas, and determined that the Loyalsock State Forest contains a large quantity of “Critical Forest Bird Habitat.”

Source: 2nd PA Breeding Bird Atlas point count data, 2011.

Top 10% of 12 forest interior bird populations is Core Forest (light green), top 5% is Critical Forest Bird Habitat (dark green).

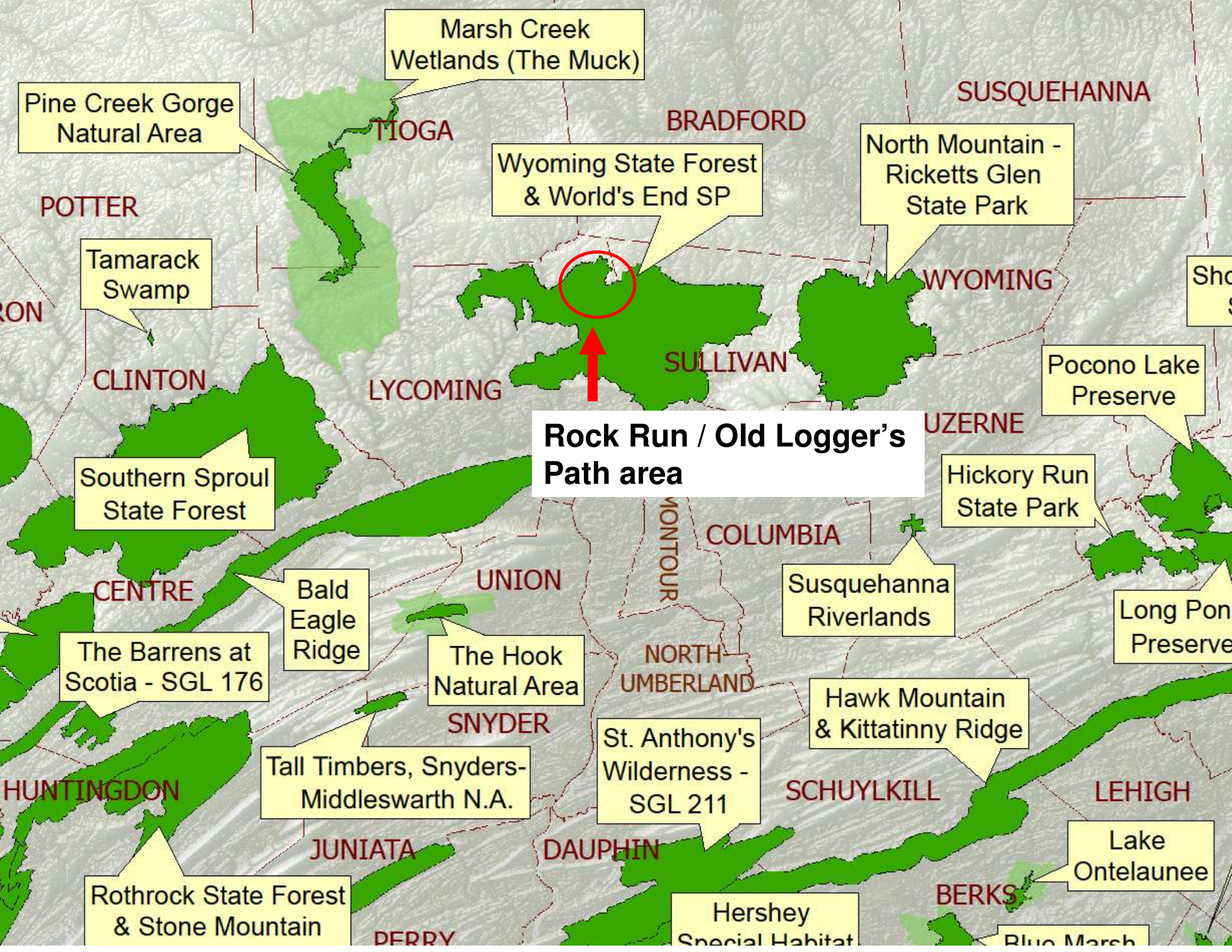


Why is this forest so special?

It is a large, relatively un-fragmented forest block, with a checkerboard of wet, boggy wetlands and springs, and hundreds of headwater streams.



The forest's size, water quantity and quality, and overall health make it an especially valuable woodland habitat.



Marsh Creek Wetlands (The Muck)

Pine Creek Gorge Natural Area

SUSQUEHANNA

BRADFORD

Wyoming State Forest & World's End SP

North Mountain - Ricketts Glen State Park

POTTER

Tamarack Swamp

WYOMING

CON

CLINTON

LYCOMING

SULLIVAN

Pocono Lake Preserve

Rock Run / Old Logger's Path area

UZERNE

Southern Sprout State Forest

Hickory Run State Park

CENTRE

Bald Eagle Ridge

UNION

MONTGOMERY

COLUMBIA

Susquehanna Riverlands

Long Pond Preserve

The Barrens at Scotia - SGL 176

The Hook Natural Area

NORTH UMBERLAND

Hawk Mountain & Kittatinny Ridge

HUNTINGDON

Tall Timbers, Snyders-Middleswarth N.A.

SNYDER

St. Anthony's Wilderness - SGL 211

SCHUYLKILL

LEHIGH

Lake Ontelaunee

Rothrock State Forest & Stone Mountain

JUNIATA

DAUPHIN

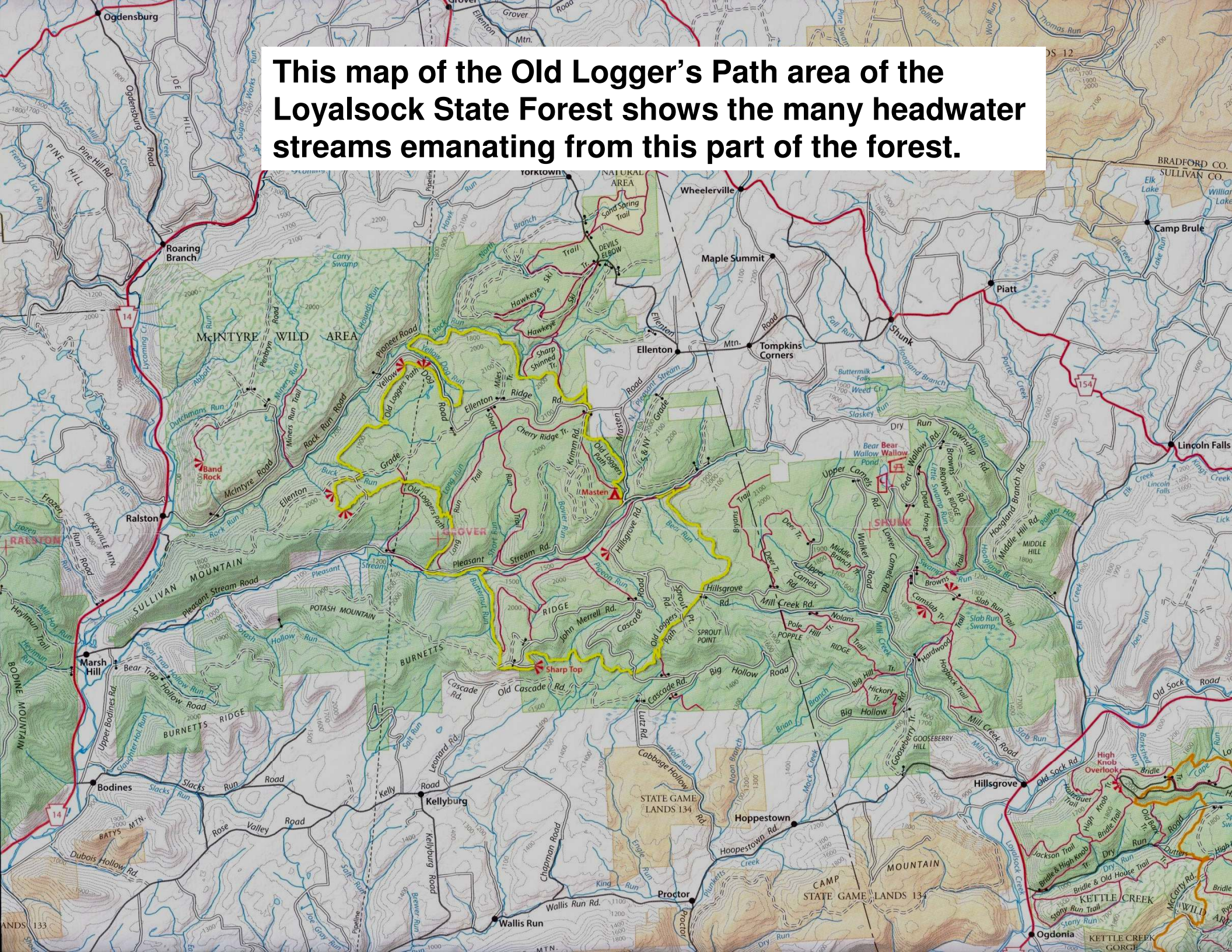
Hershey Special Habitat

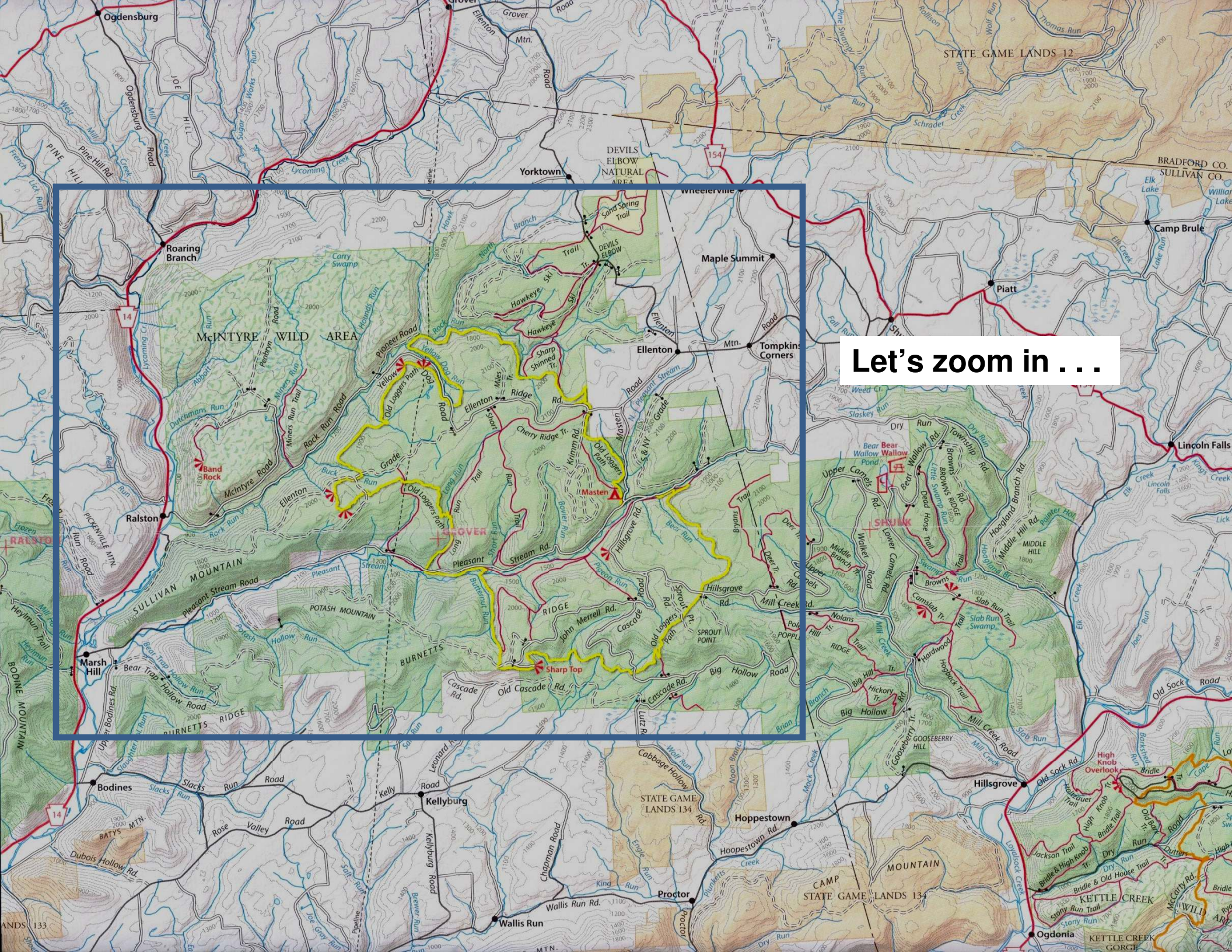
BERKS

Blue Marsh

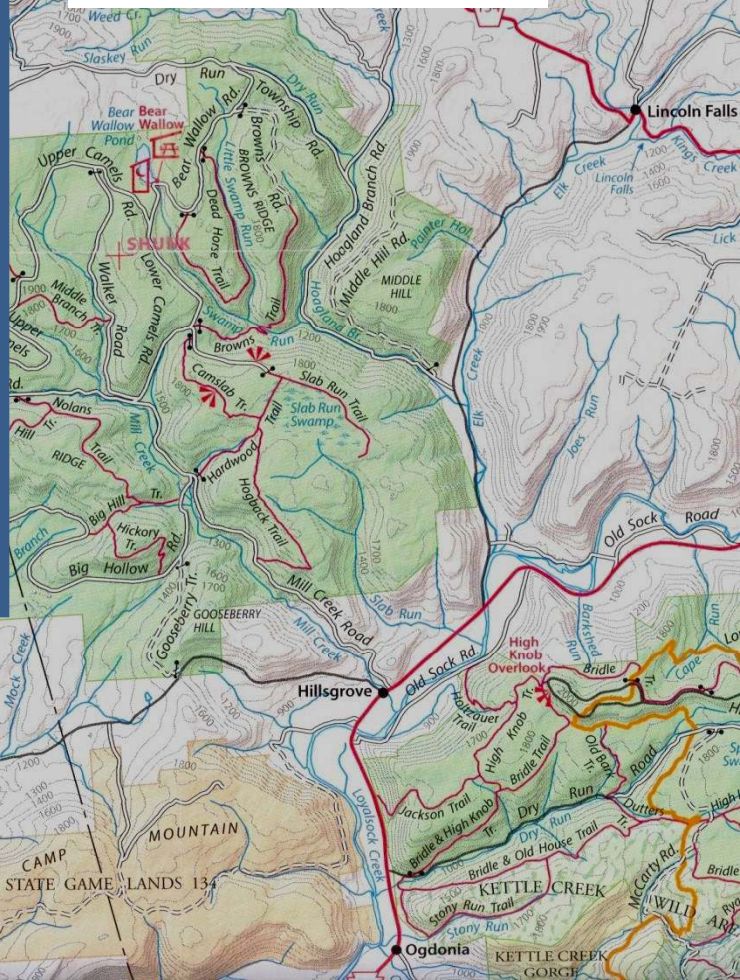
DERRY

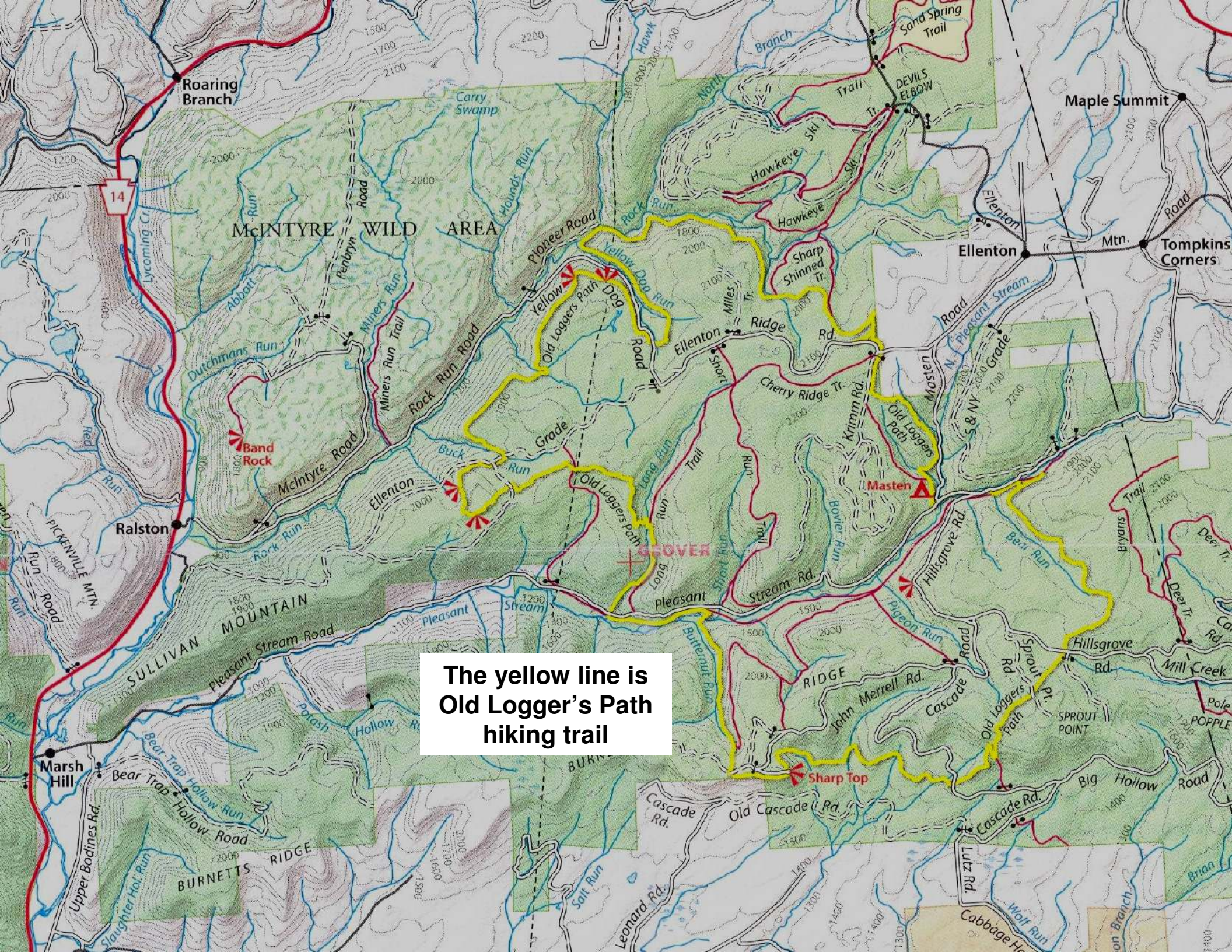
This map of the Old Logger's Path area of the Loyalsock State Forest shows the many headwater streams emanating from this part of the forest.





Let's zoom in . . .





The yellow line is
Old Logger's Path
hiking trail



The trail winds through the quiet forest with a number of beautiful vistas.



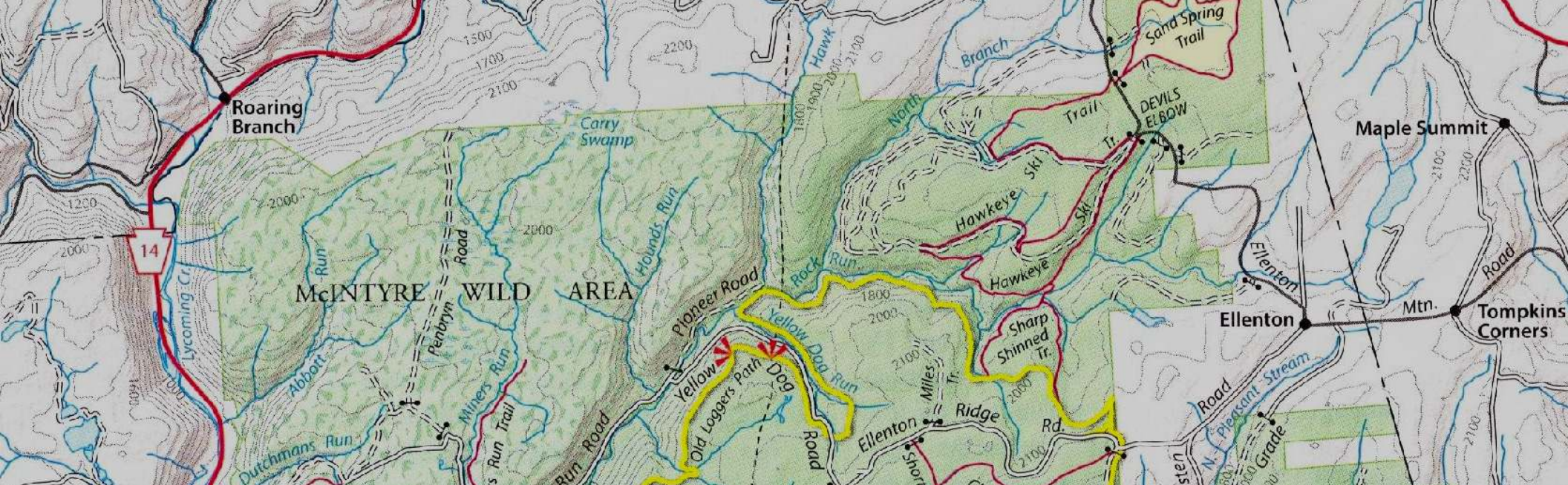
Rock Run is clear, cold and strewn with glacial boulders.



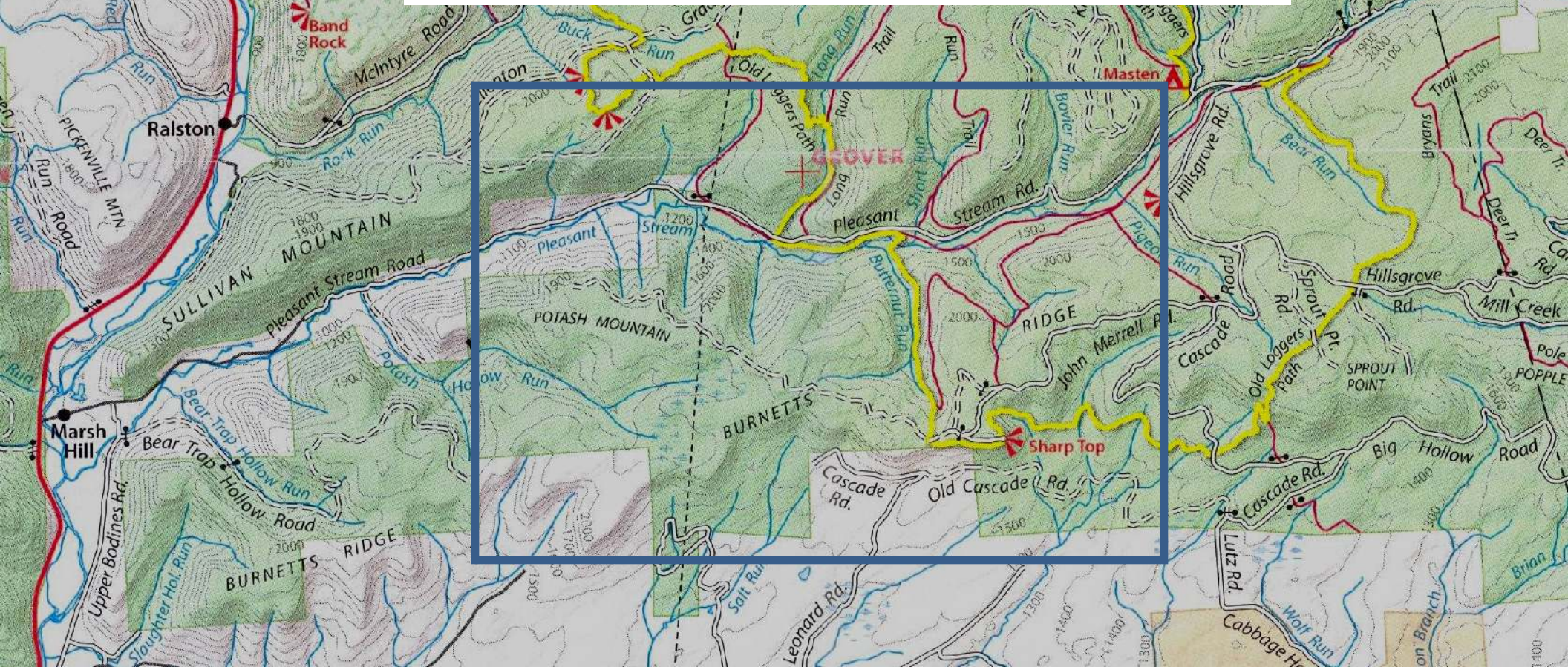
Small waterfalls abound that have carved numerous rock shutes and deep pools . . .



. . . creating a very special place for wildlife and people.



Let's zoom in to the lower part of this area . . .

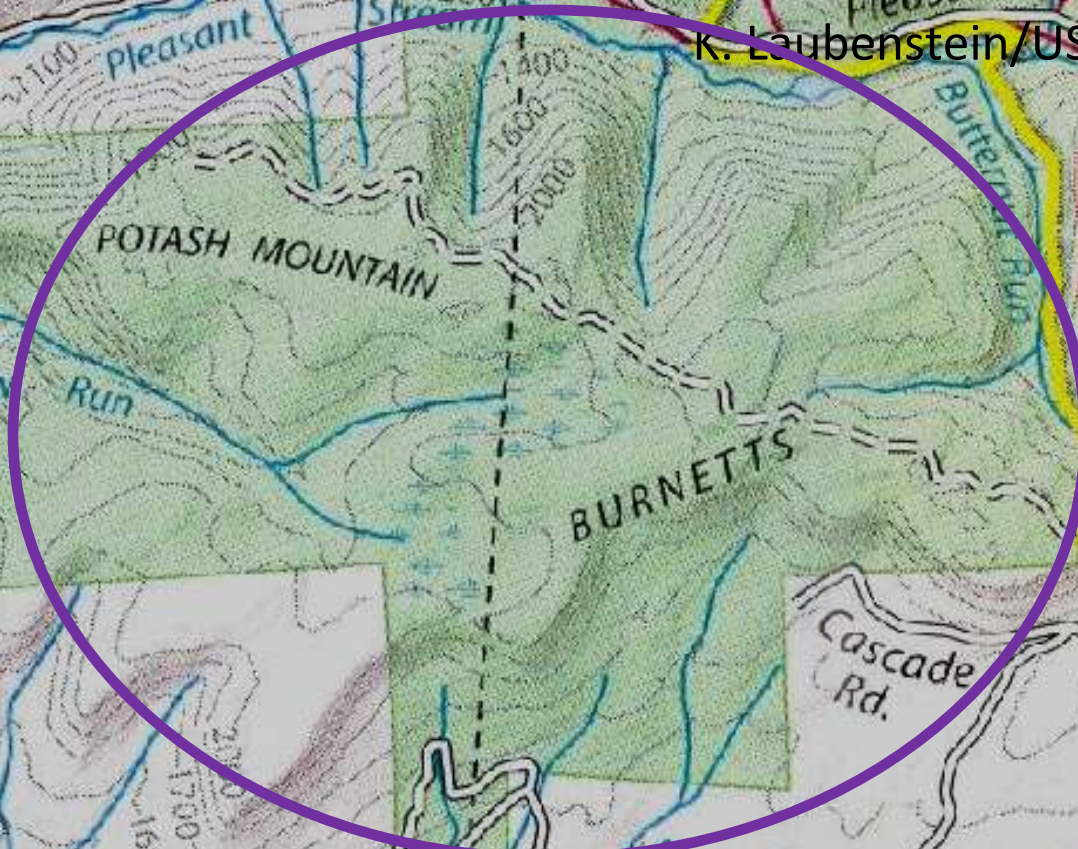




This area within the purple ellipse, just west of the Sharp Top Vista, was targeted by Anadarko Corporation last year with an initial proposal to DCNR to construct a network of wide roads, well pads and gathering lines.

Note the wetland symbols running north to south through the middle of this area.

K. Laubenstein/USFWS





Northern Water Shrew

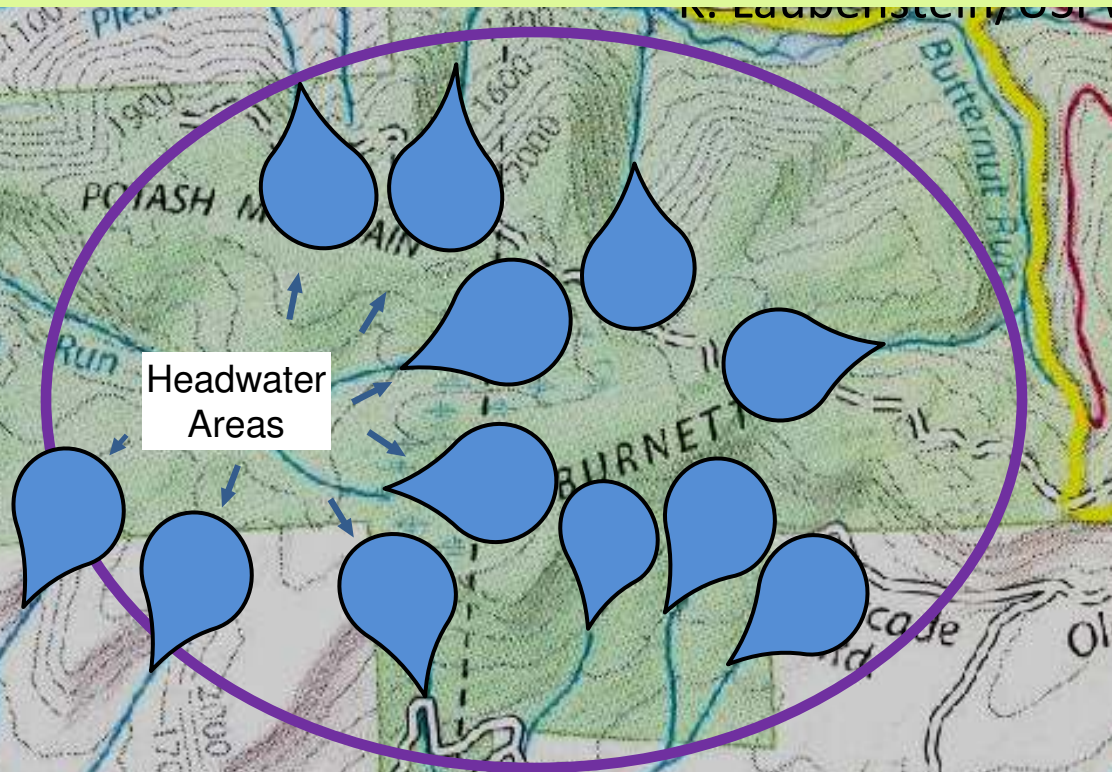
Charlie Eichelberger



Northern Goshawk

K. Laubenstein/USFWS

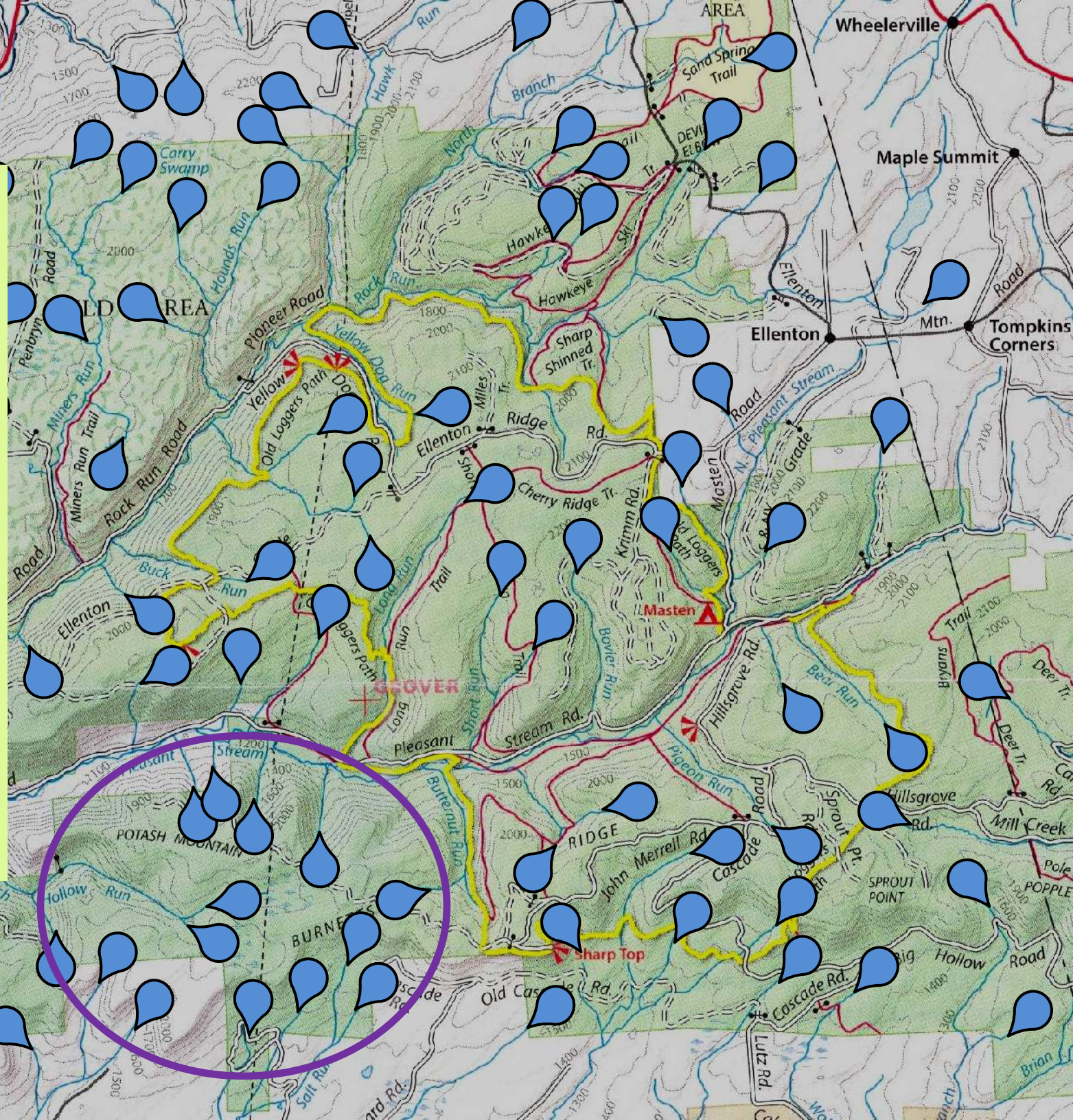
These unique, fragile, boggy wetland areas form the headwaters of countless pristine tributaries in the forest; and are home to numerous species of state concern, including mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians, and plants.



Pitcher Plants

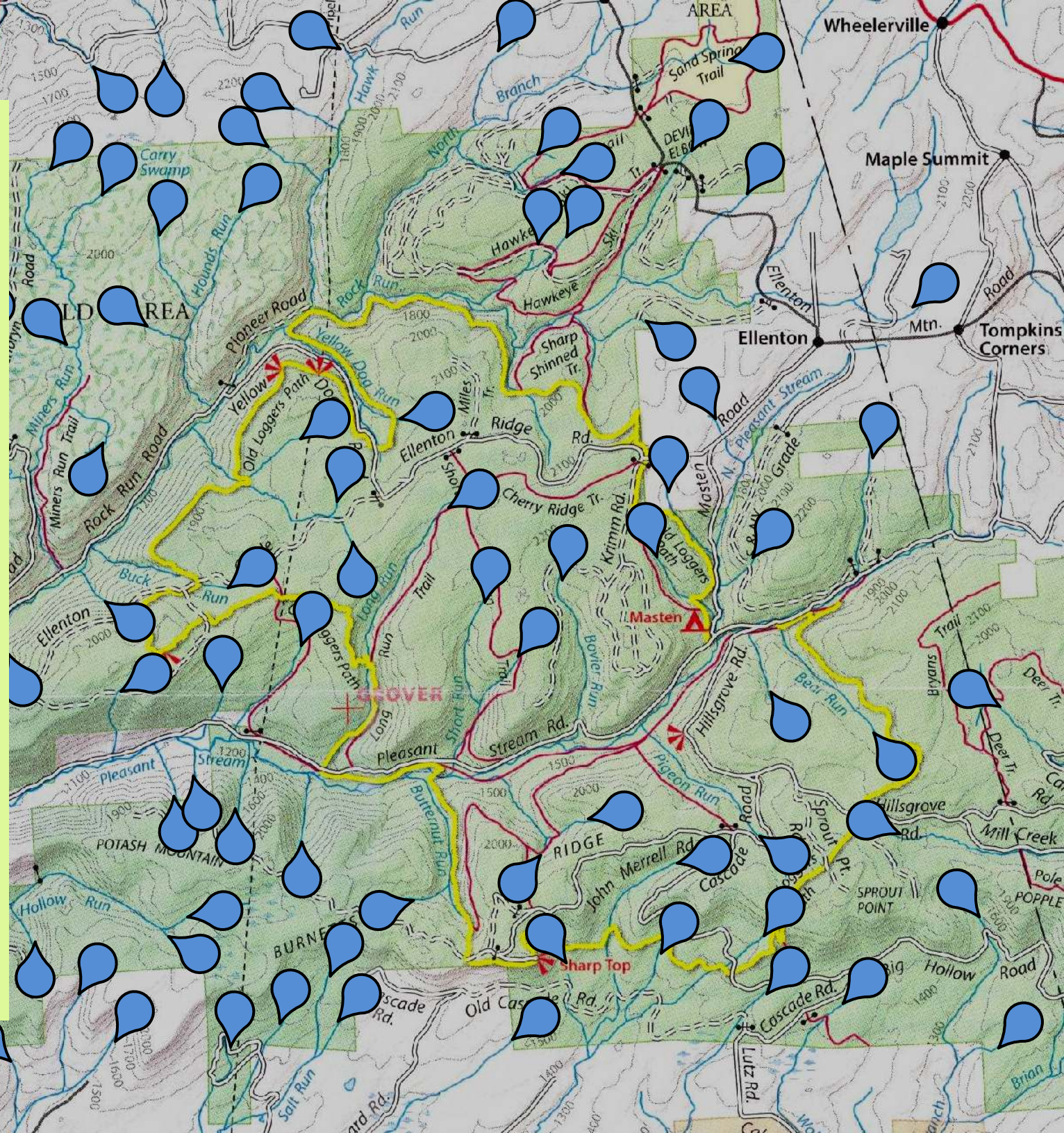
Nicholas A. Tonelli

In fact, much of this entire map had been targeted by Anadarko in their 2011 proposal to DCNR for well pads, new and much wider existing roads, wide pipeline corridors, compressor stations, and staging areas for equipment.



Marcellus Shale drilling in this state forest would devastate the wet forest ecology and eliminate many of the species from living here. You cannot just avoid a few areas and keep the ecology of this type of forest intact.

The species depending on this special place are here because it is quiet, wet, and unfragmented.



One particular bird of note found here:

From an Anadarko document obtained from DCNR via a right-to-know request :

Based on PNDI records, a Yellow-Bellied Flycatcher (*Empidonax flaviventris* /PA Endangered Species) also exists in this wetlands complex.

This is only one of two populations in all of PA's State Forests, with only nine populations existing statewide. This is one of the rarest nesting birds in Pennsylvania, and generally nests only in remote high elevation wetlands.



Yellow-bellied Flycatcher

More from an Anadarko document obtained from DCNR via a right-to-know request :

As reported by the PA Game Commission, Yellow-bellied Flycatcher can “only survive if forested wetlands and conifer stands in extensive upland forests are preserved,” and “sites need protection with generous buffers.”



Yellow-bellied Flycatcher

Scarlet Tanager



A number of other bird species nest in the Loyalsock State Forest that require intact, healthy forests to successfully raise young.

Due to the “wet forest” nature of the Loyalsock, many insects abound enabling these birds to nest in higher densities than many other drier forests.



Wood Thrush



Ornithologists consider the Loyalsock State Forest a critical “nursery” for Pennsylvania’s deep forest-nesting bird species.

Black-throated Blue Warbler

If Marcellus Shale gas drilling occurs in this forest, it will result in a “Silent Spring” in the Loyalsock for some of these species.



Blackburnian Warbler

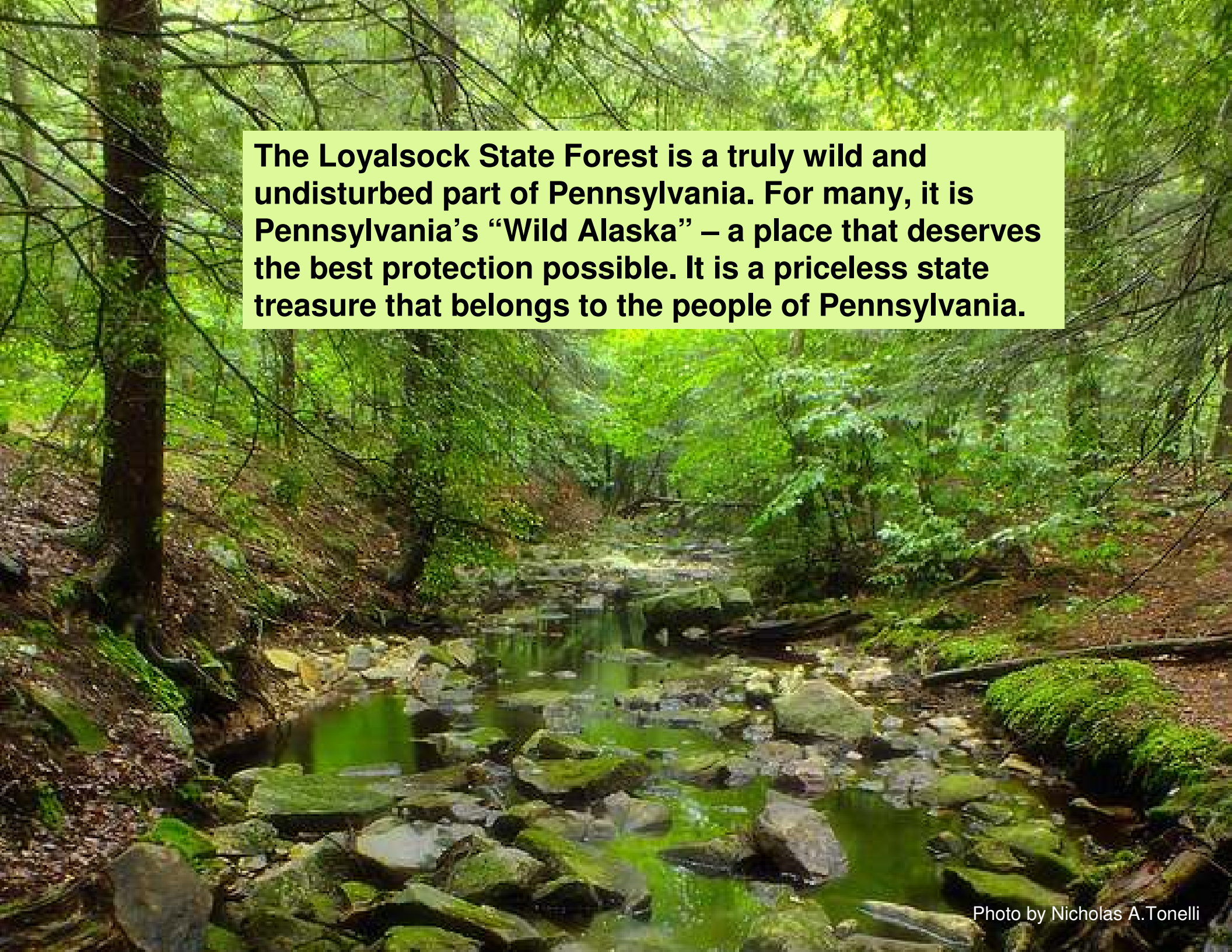
We have a “continental responsibility” to ensure that the habitat for these birds is protected.



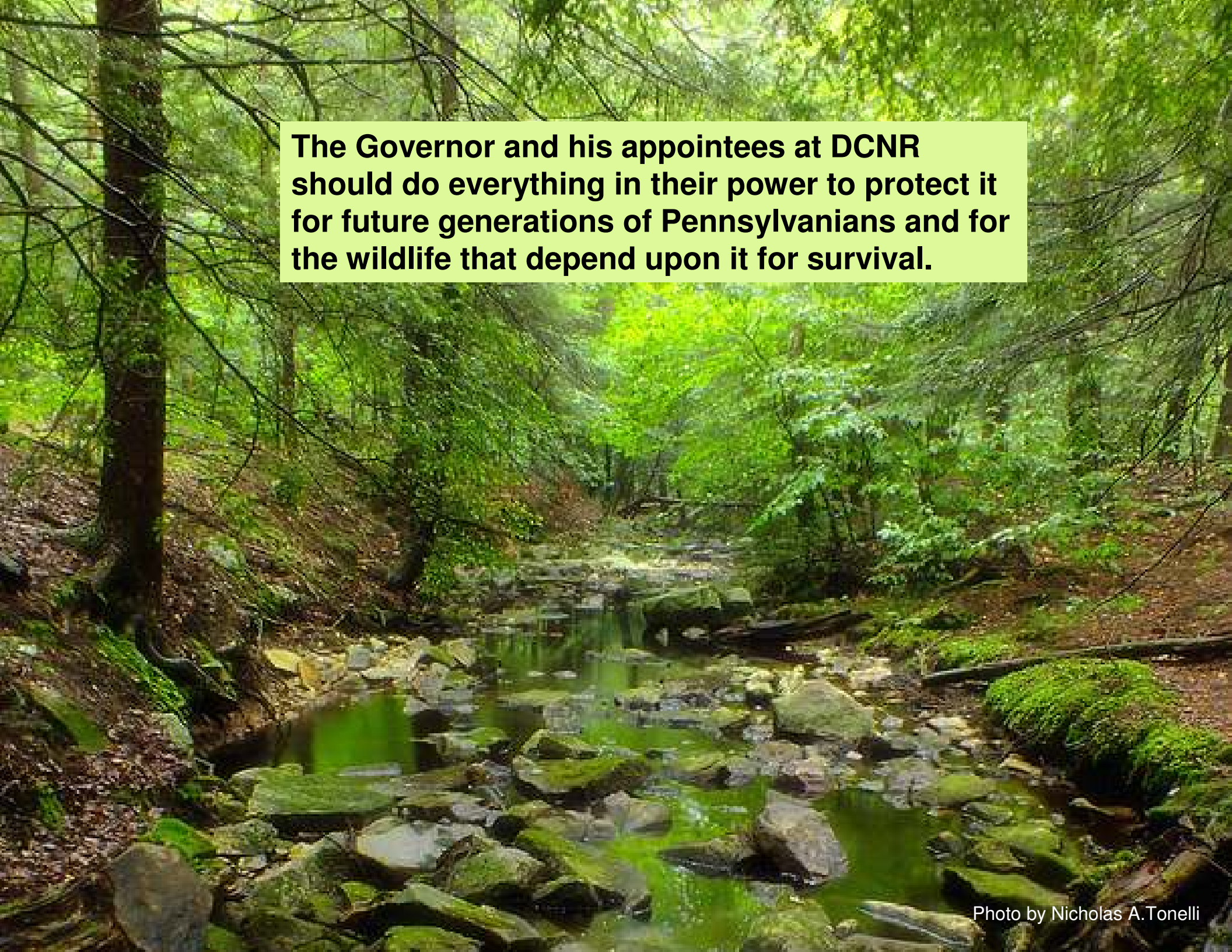
Black-throated Green Warbler



Is this the future we want for the Loyalsock State Forest?

A photograph of a dense forest with a rocky stream. The stream flows over numerous large, moss-covered rocks. The surrounding trees are lush green, and the ground is covered in fallen leaves and more moss. The scene is captured from a low angle, looking down the stream.

The Loyalsock State Forest is a truly wild and undisturbed part of Pennsylvania. For many, it is Pennsylvania's "Wild Alaska" – a place that deserves the best protection possible. It is a priceless state treasure that belongs to the people of Pennsylvania.

A photograph of a forest stream. The water flows over numerous large, flat, grey rocks that are heavily covered in bright green moss. The surrounding forest is dense with various types of trees, including tall, thin trunks and thick canopies of green leaves. Sunlight filters through the trees, creating a dappled light effect on the water and the forest floor. The overall scene is vibrant and natural.

The Governor and his appointees at DCNR should do everything in their power to protect it for future generations of Pennsylvanians and for the wildlife that depend upon it for survival.