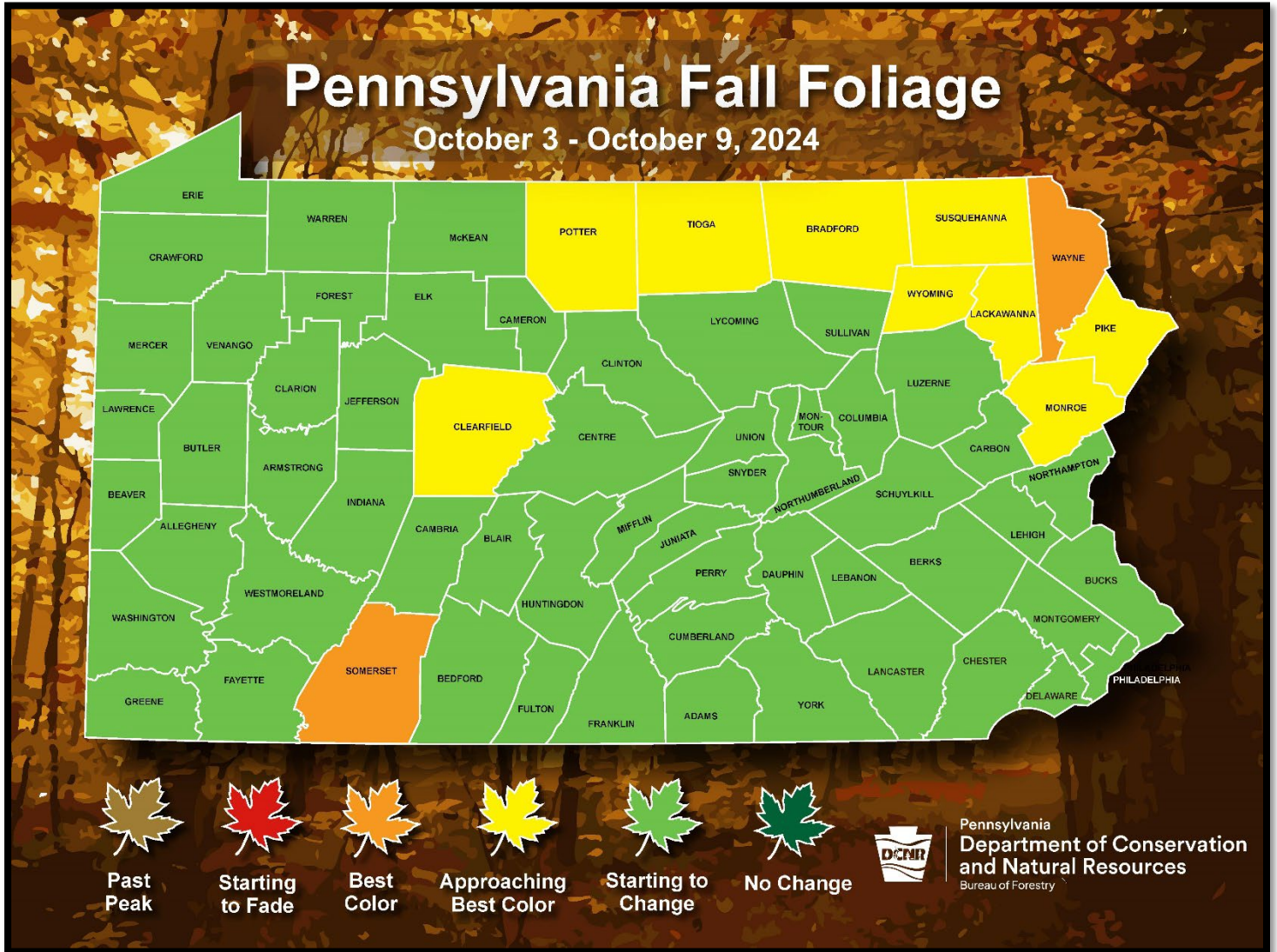


**Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources
Bureau of Forestry**

PENNSYLVANIA WEEKLY FALL FOLIAGE REPORT

October 3 – October 9, 2024



To predict peak season from the colors, use these guidelines:

- Dark Green/Little to No Change= peak is *three weeks to a month* away
- Light Green/Starting to Change= peak is *approximately two to three weeks* away
- Yellow/Approaching Best Color= peak is *approximately one week* away
- Orange/Best Color= foliage is *peaking this week*
- Red/Starting to Fade= still some nice color but won't last more than *a few more days*
- Brown/Past Peak= all or nearly all color *is gone*

Statewide Fall Foliage Overview

Colors in Pennsylvania forests are relatively unchanged from last week due to markedly stable day-to-day weather that included persistent mist, light rain, and clouds. It seems the acceleration of color change due to prevalent dryness entering the fall foliage season has been mostly offset by the recent wet and moderating temperature pattern. The best viewing opportunities are currently found in southwestern and northeastern Pennsylvania.

Northwestern Region

The district manager in Cornplanter State Forest (serving Erie, Warren, Crawford counties) said colors are continuing to develop. Sunny days are predicted for the upcoming weekend and into next week, which will provide some great early fall foliage viewing opportunities. Many oaks are still quite green, but red and sugar maples are beginning to pop. Aspen, hickory, and birch are continuing to color the landscape with their warm yellow hues. The area offers several fall festivals and activities to explore throughout the season in northwestern PA. A weekend trip to the region will offer the opportunity to observe the developing fall colors on the way.



L: Plumer Road, Oil Creek State Park. R: Ski Lodge Trails, Oil Creek State Park. (photos by T. Ryen)

Northcentral Region



Beaver Run, Moshannon State Forest District. (photo by C. Gulvas)

Foresters in Moshannon State Forest (serving Clearfield and parts of Elk and Centre counties) said the region's forests are approaching best color, with peak expected to arrive in northern hardwood species roughly around 10/11. Sweet birch, yellow poplar, sassafras, and maples are very close to peak color. American beech and oaks are still green, providing a nice contrast. A leisurely drive along Caledonia Pike, Lost Run Road, and Quehanna Highway provide excellent viewing opportunities. Be sure to stop at the Beaver Run viewing area for a great view!

Foresters in Tiadaghton State Forest (serving Lycoming County) reported more yellow foliage has appeared in the district. Most trees are just starting to change, with oaks still a dark shade of green. Peak is about two to three weeks away in the region.

Foresters in Elk State Forest (serving Elk and part of Cameron County) said the area continues to show early stages of foliage change. Many of the sugar maples have completely dropped their leaves after 12 straight days of rain and fog. Sassafras, black gum, and black birch are currently showing the best color. Some red maples are showing attractive shades as well. The East Branch and Clermont areas are dense with maple and birch and would make a nice drive to view the changing leaves. Peak color is expected by the middle of October, with oak forests to follow about two weeks later.



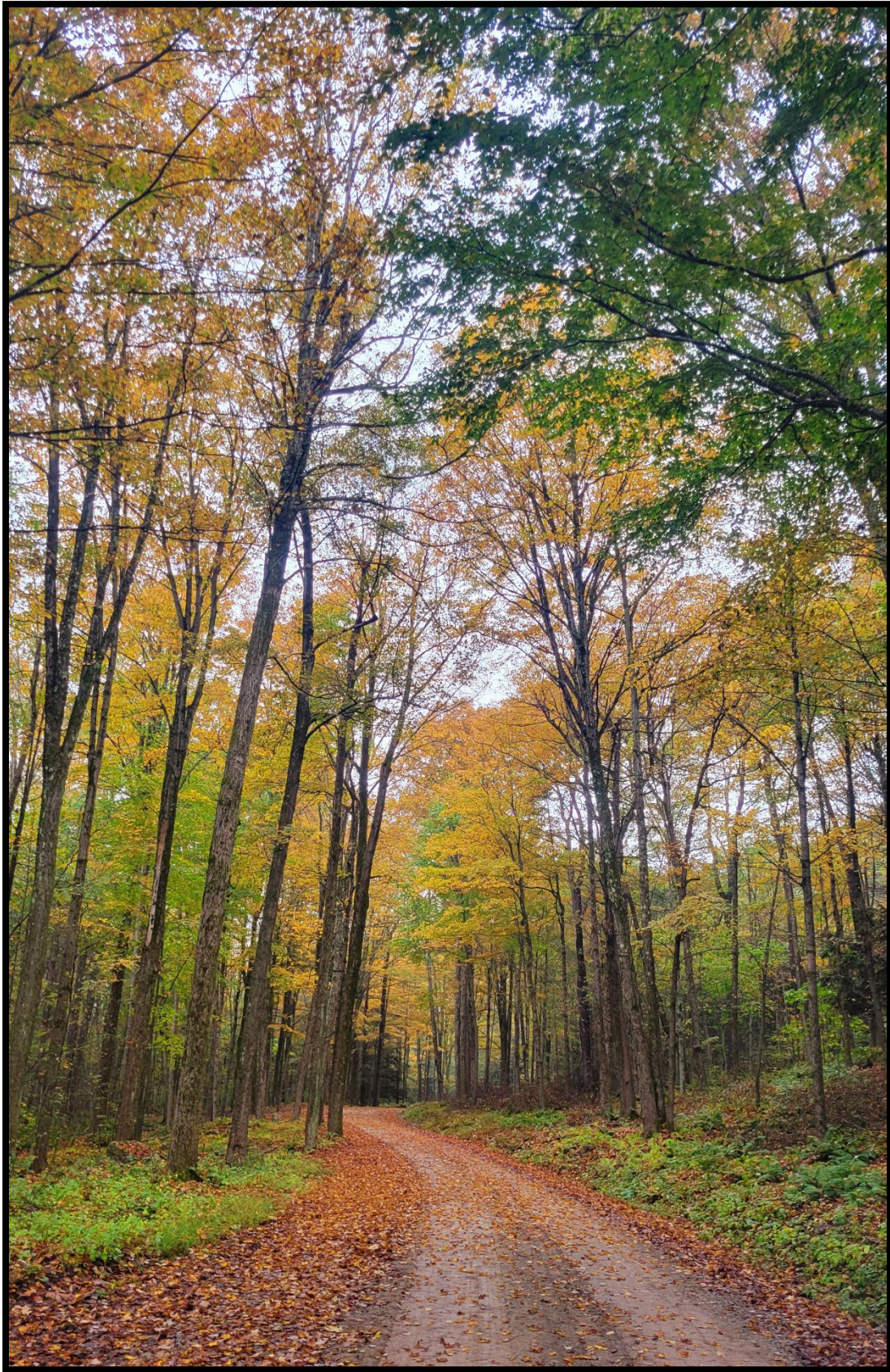
Colorful mountainside near the headwaters of McKinnon, Elk State Forest District. (photo by S. Johnson)

Foresters in Tioga State Forest said the area is approaching peak, with yellow the dominant bright color. Many maple leaves are already down. Sporadic color can be observed along the Pine Creek Rail Trail. Peak is expected in approximately one week.

The Loyalsock State Forest Recreation Forester (serving Lycoming, Sullivan, Bradford counties) said foliage in the northern part of the district is approaching best color. Bright shades are showing on maple, birch, tulip poplar, and beech, with oaks still green and providing good contrast. All state forest vistas in the district are beginning to show some nice colors. Peak foliage for most of the area is estimated to be within the next two weeks.

Foresters in Sproul State Forest (representing Clinton County) said area forests, which are dominated by oaks, are still in early stages of change. Peak is expected in two to three weeks.

Foresters in Susquehannock State Forest (serving Potter County) said northern hardwood forests are approaching peak in the northern two-thirds of the district. A drive on Route 6 will reveal some pleasant autumn colors, especially with the finally brightening skies.



Spectacular fall scenery on Millcreek Road, Loyalsock State Forest. (photo by J. Jordan)

West-central and Southwestern Regions



A maple stands out among green oak trees in the Callen Run Tract, Clear Creek State Forest. (photo by E. McDivitt)

Foresters in Forbes State Forest reported fall color development continues across southwestern Pennsylvania with a high degree of variability within this region, influenced by elevation and drought. While recent rain has helped, some less drought adapted trees have already shed their leaves and others continue dropping leaves. Don't delay visiting your favorite fall spot in the Laurel Highlands; the area is seeing more rapid leaf drop on some trees this year when compared to prior years. Visitors looking for the best fall color this week should focus on the higher elevations of the Laurel Highlands. Much of Somerset County will see peak fall color this week. Laurel Ridge has good fall color with red maple, sugar maple, yellow poplar, and black birch showing bright shades of yellow, orange, and red. Oaks remain green, with a few starting to turn golden brown or yellow. Splashes of color are also beginning across the lower elevations of southwestern Pennsylvania. The winding country roads and hillsides of Greene and Washington counties are dotted with brightly colored maple and hickory. Take a drive on Laurel Summit Road in Forbes State Forest, which leads to trailheads for Beam Rocks, a popular vista, and Spruce Flats Bog. Visit Linn Run State Park in eastern Westmoreland County for maples and yellow poplars at their best.

The Armstrong/Beaver/Butler County service forester reported all counties in the Clear Creek Forest District are still just beginning to change. Forest understories in Jefferson and Clarion counties are turning yellow thanks to sassafras, black birch, and hay-scented ferns. Some white oaks are showing flashes of scarlet, though most oaks in west-central PA are still green. Black gum trees are hanging on to their bright red leaves, while red maple colors vary from tree to tree, from green to orange to deep red. With sunshine and chilly evenings in the forecast, the area should begin approaching peak in the next week. Red maple trees along Lake Arthur in Moraine State Park in Butler County are quite showy now, so it's a nice time to take a boat out on the lake.

Foresters in Gallitzin State Forest (serving Blair, Indiana, Cambria counties) said there was minimal change since last week with forests still in the early stages of transition. Black gum, Virginia creeper, maples, and birch are changing color. Cherry and beech are beginning to lose some of their leaves. Peak condition in the region is expected in the third week of October or later.



Oaks are still completely green as seen at Snyder Vista, Rager Mountain Division. (photo by J. Vinglas)



Northern hardwoods near peak on 9/30/24 in Somerset County, Forbes State Forest. (photo by D. Planinsek)

Central and Southcentral Regions

The Perry County service forester said the fall color change has slowed with all the warm, wet weather. The best color in the region is attributed to sugar maple and tulip poplar which can be experienced in Blacklog Valley in Juniata and Huntingdon counties. Peak is still two to three weeks away.



Pleasant fall scenery along Bryner Road, Tuscarora State Forest. (photo by L. Book)

The Cumberland/Franklin County service forester serving Michaux State Forest district said the district is still in the early stages of change. Red hues from black gum and blueberry with shades of yellow emanating from birches, witch hazel, and poplar are the primary sources of color in the region. A drive on Route 233 through the state forest is recommended for some pleasant autumn views. Peak is expected in the area in late October.

Foresters representing Buchanan State Forest (serving Fulton, Franklin, Bedford counties) said area forests are still in the early change category. Spotty yellow color can be observed on maples and hickories. Peak is expected in the area in approximately two weeks.

District managers in Bald Eagle State Forest said Union, Snyder, and Mifflin counties are all in the starting to change category. Many trees are beginning to shift from their summer hues, hinting at the vibrant colors to come. Several species are showing autumn shades, including black gum with striking red and purple leaves and birches showing warm golds. Additionally, red maples are transforming into vibrant hues of orange and red. Watch for other species currently contributing to the fall color, including sassafras, dogwood, and Virginia creeper. With over 300 miles of state forest roads and more than 20 vistas, the district makes a great venue for a forest drive. Peak in the region is expected in mid- to late October.

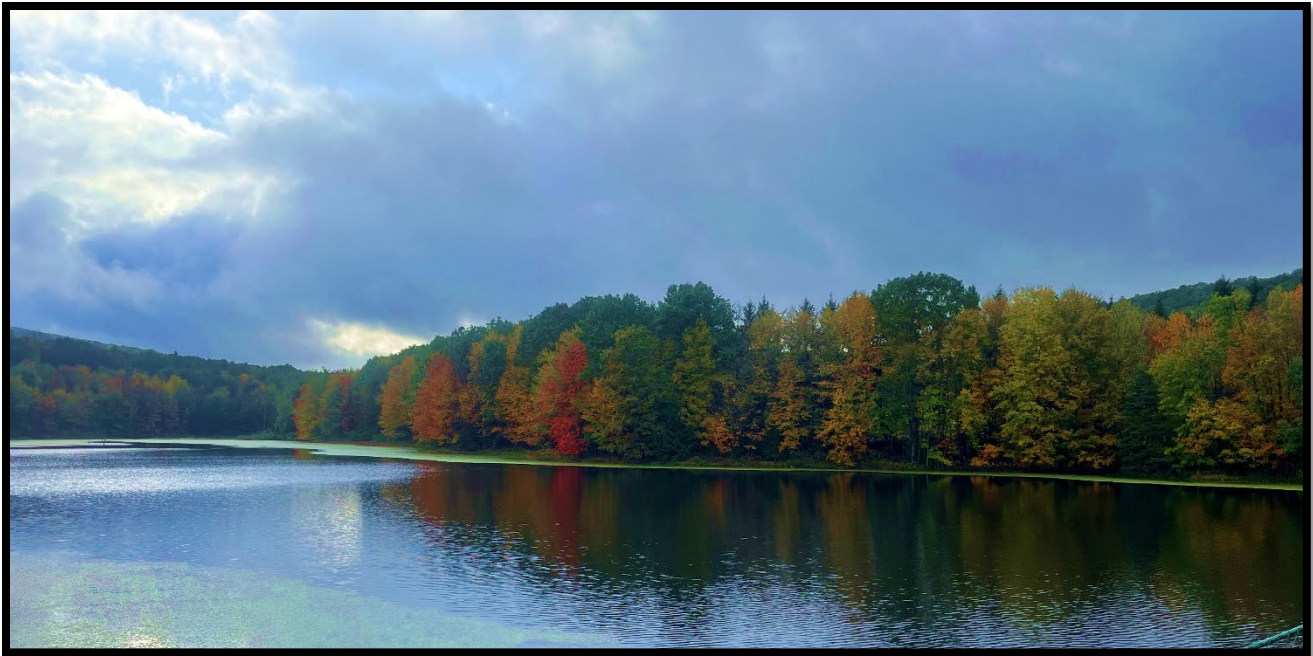


Foresters based at the Mira Lloyd Dock Resource Conservation Center (Penn Nursery) in Spring Mills said there has been little change since week one. Good color can be observed in areas heavy with maples and birches, along with some sassafras and hickory mixed in. Peak foliage is expected in about two weeks. The Seven Mountains area (northeastern part of Rothrock State Forest) is always a great place to take a drive or hike to find some pretty fall scenery.

Colorful sassafras along Ridge Road, Michaux State Forest. (photo by A. Shull)

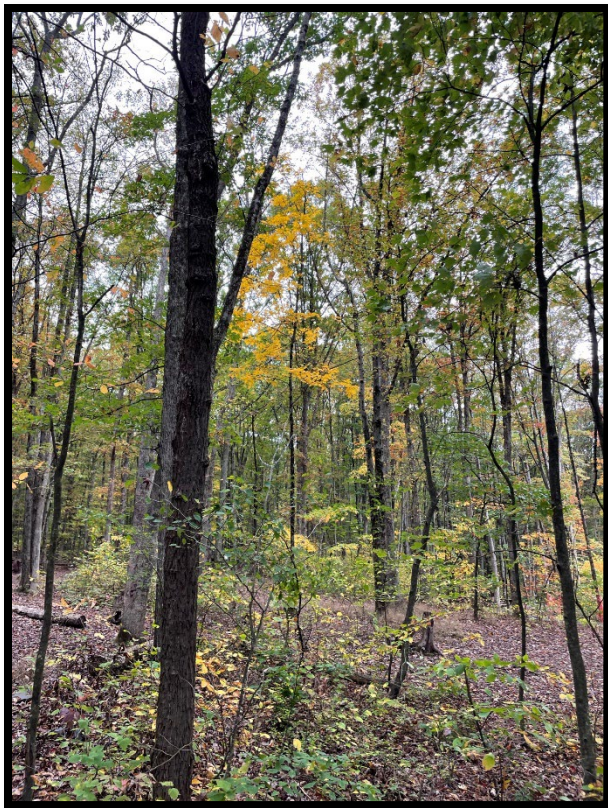


Early hints of color at Black Gap Vista on Engle Road in southeastern Centre County. (photo by D. Smith)



Pretty autumn color at the irrigation pond at the Mira Lloyd Dock Center in Spring Mills, PA. (photo by C. Neufer)

The Schuylkill/Carbon County service forester representing Weiser State Forest said the region's forests are still in the beginning stages of color change. Notable species contributing color include black gum, sweet birch, red maple, huckleberry, sassafras, and dogwood. Area visitors should target the Penn Forest and Roaring Creek tracts and Hickory Run State Park. The area is expected to peak during the third week of October. The Dauphin and Lebanon County service forester said the region has not advanced much in the last week in terms of color. Black gum, birch, maple, walnut, tulip poplar, sumac, and sassafras starting to display some yellow and red fall colors. A trip to the Haldeman Tract or Swatara State Park will show some warm, early season hues.

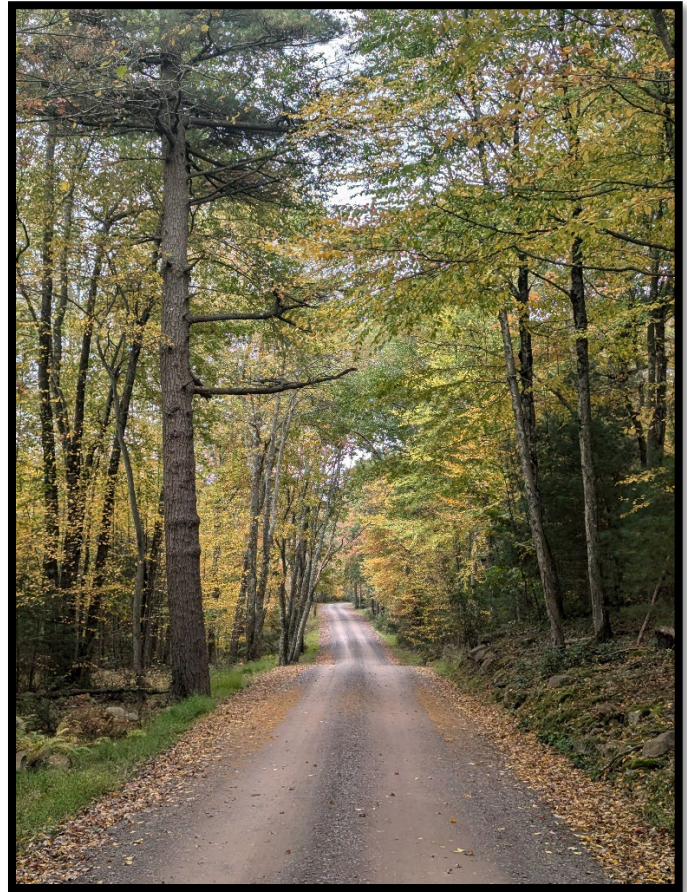


*Early color at Locust Lake State Park.
(photo by W. Thomas)*

Northeastern Region

Foresters in Pinchot State Forest said fall color continues to progress throughout the district. Colors of red and yellow are overtaking colors of green in Wayne and Susquehanna counties. Red maples are showing vibrant shades of red and yellow while birch, hickory, and sugar maples are bright yellow and deep orange. Surviving ash saplings are adding faint hues of purple along field edges. Virginia creeper and sumac also continue to show bright colors of red along roadsides and field edges. In the southern half of the district (Luzerne and southern Lackawanna counties), black gum, birch, sassafras, and red maple are the main species adding color to the landscape. Most of these will be in peak stage this week, showing an impressive mix of red, yellow, and bright orange. Most of the oak species continue to add green to the landscape. Some of the white oaks are in mid change, adding colors of dark red to mostly green overstories. Hawthorn trees are also currently loaded with bright red fruit, adding a hint of red to the understory. Peak color is expected in Susquehanna and Wayne counties in the second and third weeks of October, while Lackawanna, Luzerne, and Wyoming counties are expected to peak the third and fourth weeks of October. A

recommended area to view fall foliage in the northern part of the district is Salt Springs State Park. A suggested area to target in the southern portion of the district is the Thornhurst Tract. Natural Lands Trust offers numerous hiking trails in the Bear Creek area that would be a great spot to see best color in the area.



L: Bear Creek area color. R: Warm fall color at the Thornhurst Tract. (photos by J. Maza)

The Pike/Monroe County service forester representing Delaware State Forest said both counties are approaching best color. Species currently showing nice color include red maple, sweet birch, sassafras, and hickory. The best places to see fall color include Peck's Pond, Lake Wallenpaupack, Stairway Wilds, Tobyhanna State Park, Ron Flad Park, and generally exposed areas near water. The region is expected to peak in mid-October.

Southeastern Region

Foliage is relatively unchanged in the William Penn State Forest District due to the persistent rainy weather that kept temperatures stable. Although more color can be found in the northern part of the district that includes Northampton and Lehigh counties, the region is still classified in the "beginning to change" category. Species that typically change early in the fall foliage season are beginning to show bright colors. These include black walnut, flowering dogwood, red maple, staghorn sumac, black birch, sassafras, and spicebush. Area sightseers should consider a visit to Jacobsburg or Ralph Stover State Park. A visit to Nockamixon State Park to view some early fall color along the scenic Nockamixon Lake would also provide some relaxing views.