



November 2015

UPCOMING

**November 11, Wednesday: 7 PM; Greene County
Tax Filing Strategies for Woodland Owners**

Mike Jacobson, professor of Forest Resources at Penn State, will be providing a general guide and forest tax tips for private woodland owners on current tax policies. He will go over what records are important to keep, which activities provide taxation benefits, current forest tax policies, and what forms to use for what forest management activity. There will be time for questions.

Greene County Fairgrounds, Building #10, downstairs.

November 14, Saturday: 1 PM

Tree and Invasive Species ID

We visit the woods at and beyond the covered bridge owned and maintained by Maria Piantanida and Earl Novendstern. If you haven't seen this little gem across the Aunt Clara Fork, it will make the trip worthwhile, even if you don't learn how to identify any trees or invasive species.

We will start the tour around Earl and Maria's country quarters where we can easily stroll by planted conifers and naturally regenerated hickories. When we know we are assembled, we will wander down the road to the bridge, identifying trees as we go. Immediately beyond the bridge we will look at some invasive shrubs (multi-flora rose, honeysuckle, & Japanese barberry) invading an old field. Earl and I sprayed them in August of this year. We want you to see that we know how to treat an invasive when we see it. Of course, we missed some on purpose so you can see what a live one looks like. Beyond the brushy old field is a jewel of a woods that survived the agricultural era, with much of its diverse herbaceous understory intact. I love it. Since it will be November, many of these plants will not be visible, but the trees will be there and waiting for leaf-off identification. Why do we identify trees without leaves? Because, from November to April, our deciduous trees don't have leaves, but we want to be in the woods and recognize what we are looking at.

Yes, you too can learn to identify trees without leaves. Try it; you will like it.

-----*Arlyn Perkey*

Earl & Maria's Place is in the far NW corner of Wash County, west of Rte #18. A carpool will meet at the Sears parking lot in Washington's Crown Center by 12:15.

For directions or clarification: 724-447-2323 or 724-499-5190

Tick Check: Why Lyme Disease is on the Rise in Pennsylvania

Since 2011, Pennsylvania has reported the most cases of Lyme disease in the country. And it's only going up. According to the Pennsylvania Department of Health, there were 6,000 cases in 2013. A year later, it jumped to 7,500 cases.

IUP's Tom Simmons and his students have been studying the culprit, blacklegged ticks, since 2001. In his office, Simmons pulls out vials of ticks he's collected. He looks at ticks in three stages of development under a microscope—an adult, a nymph and a larva. "You'll see on all of these, the front legs are a little bit longer," Simmons says. The legs help them to latch onto unsuspecting hosts, and the ticks feed on blood through their long, pointy mouths. Adult ticks can give you Lyme disease, but it's the nymph ticks that are the biggest concern. They're as small as a poppy seed, so you might not even notice they've climbed up a pant leg and latched on. They suck your blood, and within four days, they drop off. You may be none the wiser. Not every tick that carries Lyme bacteria will give its host the disease. Still, Simmons says the number of ticks with Lyme has grown—about half of the adult ticks collected in their statewide study tested positive for the bacteria.

One theory is that there used to be plenty of ticks in Pennsylvania. But when early settlers cleared the forests to make way for farmland, and hunted the deer to near extinction, the ticks retreated. "And they survived in pockets along the East Coast," Simmons says. Now that forests have regenerated, and deer are plentiful again—giving ticks a host to mate on and a vehicle to get around on—ticks are moving back to their old stomping grounds. Simmons says western Pennsylvania is the western edge of this new tick re-colonization—and the huge growth of Lyme disease. But the incidences of Lyme disease in the southwestern part of the state have tripled, which has been a surprise. "The original dogma was that they need mild conditions," Simmons says. "But now as they've moved into areas like western Pennsylvania and higher elevations, that dogma's changed. It's not just that the ticks are here, and the populations are increasing. It's that they are moving—they're migrating." Ticks don't die off in colder weather, and they don't hibernate. They just become inactive.

Climate change may also play a role in the spread of Lyme. Ecologist Taal Levi of Oregon State University says warmer springs and summers, like the ones we're experiencing and expecting to continue due to global warming, [can cause tick feeding cycles to become more asynchronous](#) in colder places like western Pennsylvania. That means the nymphs wake up from winter first, feed on small mammals like mice and chipmunks—and can pass Lyme bacteria to them. "Then the larvae come out later, and everything they feed on, every mouse they feed on, has already been infected," Levi says. Those larvae become infected nymphs, and then the nymphs become a danger to humans and pets. "So if you live Maine, or New Hampshire, or even more inland systems like Pennsylvania that are colder, you might expect Lyme disease to get worse," says Levi.

WALKING in the WOODS

Firewood....An' At

Through the grapevine--invasives have their uses--I heard tell of once and future SWPWO President John Burnham's search for a trigger to inspire the casual woodland owner. His idea is to identify the entry-level activity that will lead to engaged, and prolonged, forest management by the owner/practitioner.

This got me thinking of how I became active in the woods. My grandfather Freddy showed the way. From an ocean state, he was a crusty old salt, in the US Navy for both 20th Century World Wars, who snared a seaside-raised No. Carolina belle during a posting in port. When it came time to retreat to their dream home, however, they eschewed the coast and the lakefront, clearing a home site in the piney woods. He kept a sizable patch of those woods neat and ordered, its floor a mat of soft pine needles, the branches pruned to above head height. Off to the side, a sizable moss covered granite table rock served as everything from a fort to a setting to entertain the farm girls from across the road. Nearby, a reed-choked pond sang of bullfrogs and pollywogs. We were young kids; an afternoon in those woods could seem like a lifetime.

Into young adulthood, the big woods called, for extended hikes lasting days and weeks. This required firewood, and the task of collecting and organizing firewood. It is a short pivot from the wilderness campfire--light and heat, expansive talk, smoke keeping the mosquitos at bay--to the woodstove fueling a rural home.

Now one walks the woodlot with purpose: there's a good looking split of firewood! That's hickory and will throw some nice heat. A mess of misshapen trees; I'll cut them to burn and leave that nice straight one--might be a sugar maple--to flourish. I can arrange an access lane along that shelf, a lot of good firewood in there. The sassafrass--note the orangey bark and wine red foliage in autumn--is marginal firewood, but the woodpeckers sure love to hammer them. Those oaks are wet when you open them up, take a year to season--no wonder the mushrooms flourish on them.

You start to eye up the firewood--to glean--and the rest follows: tree ID, timber tree release, trail and road making, insight into flora and fauna habitat, microclimate, successional patterns.

There's the formula, Captain Burnham: a need to burn, and a Freddy to giftwrap the great outdoors.

-----*Carl Douglas*

News & Notes Elections will be held at the Nov 11 Meeting. The nominees: President **John Burnham**; for Veep, **Mark Fajerski**; Secretary **Maureen Burnham**, and Board members **Ryan Egidi** (a second 2-year term), **Bob Brown** and **Tony Knauss**...Had a nice note from **Ed & Nadine Obermiller**, enjoying life--if not the ticks--in NH...Award winners: the **Thistles, PA Tree Farm of the Year**, while **Beckets Run Woodlands** (Janet Sredy, Raul Chiesa) nabs National honors!...The Oct 24 Chainsaw Class at the Thistles, 9 takers including Hall of Famer **Greg Hopkins** (Ryan was seeing stars), was a huge success...new Service Forester **Jessica Salter** took over Oct 19 in Allegheny, Westmoreland & Somerset Co's, **Celine Colbert** assuming the mantle of District-wide Urban Forester...The money donated in memory of Bob Daley will be forwarded to the **McGuffey School Dist. in Claysville**, near the Daley Tree Farm, to support their existing apiary. A sign will be placed: *"Donation from SWPWO in honor of Bob Daley"*

SWPWO EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE HISTORY

PRESIDENT

John Burnham	2000-2003
Harold Thistle	2004-2007
Bob Daley	2008-2010
Gay Thistle	2011-2015

VICE PRESIDENT

Larry Deemer	2000
Dave Brady	2001-2004
Bob Daley	2005-2007
Maria Piantanida	2008-2009
Mike Irvin	2010-2013
John Burnham	2014-2015

SECRETARY

Gay Thistle	2000-2003
Nadine Obermiller	2004-2007
Gay Thistle	2008-2010
Jessica Wise	2011
David Cressey	2012-2015

TREASURER

Robert Evans	2000-2002
Ed Hartman	2003-2005
Earl Novendstern	2006-2009
Maria Piantanida	2010-2013
Earl Novendstern	2014
Maria Piantanida	2015

BOARD MEMBERS

Ed Cesa	2000-2003
Dave Dersham	2000
Russell Greis	2000-2002
Bob Brown	2001-2004
George Marinchak	2003-2005
Bob Daley	2004
Max Loughman	2005-2007
Maria Piantanida	2005-2007
Joe McNaney	2006-2009
David Cressey	2008-2011
Mike Irvin	2008-2009
Mark Fajerski	2010-2013
Jessica Wise	2010
Russ Orme	2011-2015
Raul Chiesa	2012-2015
Ryan Egidi	2014-2015

ADVISORS

Bill Wentzel	2000-2015
Arlyn Perkey	2000-2015
Ralph Campbell	2007-2010
Bob McBride	2011-2012
Mike DiRinaldo	2011-2013
Russell Gibbs	2013-2015
Celine Colbert	2015

NEWSLETTER EDITOR

Gay Thistle	2000-01, 2005-11
George Marinchak	2002-2004
Jessica Wise	2011 (Feb, May)
David Cressey	2012-2015

ASST. EDITOR

John Burnham	2004-2010
Maria Piantanida	2012-2015

You are welcome to contact the Editor at ddcressey23@gmail.com / 724-447-2323

Membership information: SWPWO / 2506 Hollywood Dr. / Pittsburgh PA 15235

DIRECTIONS TO PIANTANIDA/NOVENDSTERN FARM

108 Ralston Road
Burgettstown, PA 15021
724-947-3139 (House Phone)
412-337-0341 (Earl's Cell Phone)

FROM PITTSBURGH OR DRIVING from NORTH OR from SOUTH ON US 79

From Pittsburgh take Parkway West towards airport and exit onto US 22/30 West.
From US 79 take exit toward airport and exit onto US 22/30 West

Stay on US 22/30 (4 lane highway) until you reach exit for Route 18 (Burgettstown & Florence, PA).

Take Route 18 North; proceed through intersection with old Route 22 (traffic light, Grab-n- Go on near left corner).

Take second left (Purdy Road)

Go ~ 2.5 miles on Purdy Road

Make a left onto Meadow Road. (Slow down when you pass a split rail fence of left. Meadow is just beyond that.).

Go ~ 1.9 miles on Meadow Road.

Veer right on Ralston Road, which is really a country lane.

You can tell you're getting to this last turn off when you pass a red brick house with a nicely kept yard on the right. There will be a fenced in pasture and elaborate barn on left.

Come to the very end of Ralston Road. There is a turn around at the end with a driveway veering off to the right. Come into the driveway and park where convenient. (You'll see a grey house)

FROM WASHINGTON, PA (on Rt 18)

Take Route 18 North through Burgettstown

Continue to Florence where you will proceed through intersection with old Route 22

FOLLOW DIRECTIONS ABOVE from turn onto Purdy Road

CAUTION: If you use a GPS, it may send you in a longer, more convoluted route. Often it will direct you to turn on Kings Creek Road. Do NOT follow that direction. (Road is longer, in worse shape and hair pin turn onto Ralston.)