

SWPWO



Southwest PA Woodland Owners

April 2018

First Events of 2018: Exploring Hunting Leases

Wed. Apr. 18 – **Hunting Lease for Income from Your Woodlot** Speaker, Doug Petro from [Base Camp Leasing](#)- The talk will be about leasing your land for hunting. This company organizes hunting leases on land from New York to Texas and includes all of PA. Woodland owners might consider using hunting leases as an income source, as well as to help control deer populations. Learn about how this can be done and get your questions answered. 7 PM at the Concord Presbyterian Church basement, 155 Old Concord Rd, Prosperity, PA

Wildflowers and Drone Tour

A follow up field trip will be held on Saturday, Apr. 21 at **John & Melissa Gregor Farm**. Join the Gregors in eastern Washington County for a wildflower walk in the woods near their house and along a small stretch of Ten Mile Creek. The Blue-Eyed Marys have been abundant in previous years and hopefully won't disappoint this spring! Will follow with a drone tour of other areas of our property and refreshments on the porch. Learn about this latest technology for land management. Walking conditions are likely to be somewhat wet so please wear appropriate footwear. 1-4 PM. Meet to carpool at 12:30 PM at the Greene County Fairgrounds, Building #10 parking lot.

First Hand Look at How Forests Preserve Water Ways

Most of our properties in SW Pennsylvania have seeps or small streams that originate on our land and flow on down the grade to larger water bodies. One such intermittent stream on my property flows through an oak hollow and into Ten Mile Creek. This stream has no name as it is fed by multiple springs and seeps that originate from an area on our property that we call the Bowl. As the name implies, it is a sloping, semicircle of a hill land formation. Over the 18 years we have been working on the property to change it from a livestock farm to a tree farm, we have witnessed many changes to this stream.

At the time of purchase, the Bowl was grassland and much of the hollow had been timbered (high graded) and used as pasture. While there were many trees in the lower bowl, it was an open forest. The stream did not flow year round. It certainly would not

be described as a babbling brook since there were no stones or rocks for the water to flow over. The bed of the stream was silted over. During heavy water times the stream ran milky with the suspended fine silt particles. During one especially heavy rainfall, the kids and I were called by the roaring stream and hiked up the hollow to the base of the Bowl where we witnessed a waterfall streaming over the land from all sides of the bowl. It was an amazing site to see.

Over the years, we have planted a few thousand hardwood trees in the bowl and on both sides of the hollow that was formed by this stream. After a few years, I noticed vernal ponds in a few areas near the headwaters of the stream. But this year has shown the most remarkable change-I now have a babbling brook! A few changes have occurred since the tree roots of the hardwoods we planted have stabilized the soil. There has been less slumping in the bowl, less water running overland when we have heavy rains and therefore less silt washing into the streambed. We have had five heavy rain events (flooding) over this year and these have served to wash away the accumulated silt in the stream. Now, as I walk along my well-worn path along this stream, I see a variety of rock types that are layered in the stream forming small waterfalls and pebble beds where clear water runs-my very own babbling brook.

I have read much about the ecological dangers of silt runoff but got to see firsthand a transformation of a sickly waterway to a clear stream. Our small forestland streams are the headwaters to the large waterways of our area-the Three Rivers which eventually flow into the Mississippi and then into the Gulf of Mexico. As a landowner, I feel I have a responsibility to maintain these streams that eventually provide fresh water and sustenance to many downstream. The goal of the tree planting was simply to transform a pasture to forest, but over the years, the goal has broadened to protect my section of a larger watershed. *Gay Thistle*

Words of Wisdom

Picked up the classic book "A Sand County Almanac and Sketches Here and There" by Aldo Leopold, at the 2018 PA Forestry Association Dinner's silent auction. Here is an excerpt that SWPWO members might relate to.

Good Oak

"There are two spiritual dangers in not owning a farm. One is the danger of supposing that breakfast comes from the grocery, and the other that heat comes from the furnace.

To avoid the first danger, one should plant a garden, preferably where there is not a grocer to confuse the issue.

To avoid the second, he should lay a split of good oak on the andirons, preferably where there is no furnace, and let it warm his shins while a February blizzard tosses the trees outside. If one has cut, split, hauled, and piled his own good oak, and let his mind work the while, he will remember much about where the heat comes from, and with a wealth of detail denied to those who spend the weekend in town astride a radiator."

SWPWO Calendar of Events for 2018

Wed. May 9 – **Invasive Species – Why bother? – Advantages of Early Identification** Speaker Cynthia Huebner, PhD, Research Botanist for the US Forest Service Northern Region Research Station- The talk will cover the use of strategic management to make invasions by exotic plants less likely to occur. Such management involves maintaining ecosystems that are relatively resilient to disturbance. Discussion will also include how land managers may restore invaded land such that it is less likely to be re-invaded. 7 PM at the Concord Presbyterian Church basement, 155 Old Concord Rd, Prosperity, PA

Sat. May 12 – **Perkey PA Tree Farm of the Year Field Day** Join SWPWO for a full day in the woods and visit a few or all of the eleven mini-tour/topics that will be covered. Topics include growing black walnuts, seedling protection, native vs invasive plants, benefits of frog ponds, uses of Norway spruce in your woodlot, crop tree management for pole size and saw timber size plots, managing oil and gas development, and road construction and maintenance. Lunch will be included and registration will be required. More information will be published in later newsletters. 9:30 AM-3:00 PM To register please contact the Pennsylvania Forestry Association at 1-800- 835-8065 or email thePFA@paforestry.org.

Sat. June 9 –**SWPWO Picnic**– Burnham farm in Washington County. Michael Pate with Penn State Extension will offer a program on tractor safety. The farm tractor is a useful tool for a tree farm. It helps with brush hogging to control invasives, road building and maintenance, and with lumbering. Michael will be bringing the Penn State tractor simulator so participants can get hands-on experience with a variety of tractor handling experiences. Learn from Michael the safest way to handle this important forestry tool. Stay and enjoy our pigroast. SWPWO members and certified tree farmers are free but there will a \$5 charge for all others. More information and registration can be found at <http://www.swpwopa.com/>. Tractor safety starts at 1 PM. Dinner served around 4:30 PM

Sat. July 14 – **Wayne & Rose Marie Kraeer Farm Tour** in the Avella area. We will be touring their efforts to raise beef cattle along with maintaining their quality hardwoods, their procedures to combat invasive plants, and maintain a small cherry stand. Tour is 1-4 PM. Meet at 12:30 PM to carpool in the parking lot in front of the garage doors of the Sears store in Washington, PA. Wear proper shoes for hiking.

Sat. Aug. 11 – **Bob Brown Farm Tour: One Year After the Harvest.** We toured Bob's farm in Greene County last year during a timber harvest. We will return to his farm to see what it looks like one year after the harvest. The Forest Consultant for this harvest, Jim Elze, along with owner, Bob Brown, will guide us through the area. 1-4 PM. Meet to carpool at 12:30 PM at the Greene County Fairgrounds, Building #10 parking lot. Wear proper shoes for hiking.

Wed. Sept. 5 – **New Tools for Tree Identification** – Tony Knaus, SWPWO member, will introduce the use of the app iNaturalist.org as a tool for tree and plant identification. iNaturalist.org is a citizens science project and social network of naturalists, citizen scientists, and biologists. iNaturalist is built on the concept of mapping and sharing observations. In the Wednesday meeting, he will give an overview of the iNaturalist project and how you can join the social network, share your observations and knowledge and learn from many of the others on the network. Bring your phone or wireless device that is connected to your cell data (you will be using your own data for this). 7 PM Location to be announced.

Sat. Sept. 8 – **On the Ground Tree ID** with Tony Knaus and Mark and Debbie Fajerski. This tour is a follow-up to the September 5th meeting. The iNaturalist app will be put to use at Maple Hills Tree Farm near Claysville, Washington County. We will tour the property and use the app and the more traditional way to identify the many types of trees. Tony will demonstrate the use of the iNaturalist smartphone app for taking and posting observations to iNaturalist.org for tree and plant identification. Tour is 1-4 PM. Meet

at 12:30 PM to carpool in the parking lot in front of the garage doors of the Sears store in Washington, PA. Wear proper shoes for hiking.

Sun. Oct. 7 – [Walk in Penn's Woods - Fajerski Farm](#) – Washington Co. This walk is part of a statewide event to get citizens out into the woods. This year, our group will offer a tour of Maple Hills Tree Farm near Claysville, Washington County. We'll visit plantings of maturing red oak and black walnut as well as new plantings of pitch x loblolly hybrid pines. We'll also view a small cemetery from the 1800's and one of the largest sugar maples in the state (Big Daddy) that's registered with the Champion Trees of Pennsylvania web site. This is a walking tour so be sure to wear appropriate footwear. Tour begins at 1 PM

Wed. Nov. 7 – **New Tools for Planning your Woodlot – My Land Plan** -Washington Public Library – Ryan Egidi and John Burnham, SWPWO members. This workshop will show landowners how to use [MyLandPlan.org](#) which is a free online tool used to map your land, establish goals and objectives, and plan for the future. MyLandPlan.org is a user friendly web site provided by the American Forest Foundation (AFF). This workshop will help landowners learn a new tool to explore different conservation and management opportunities. During the first class, we will meet in a computer lab where we work with all attendees to setup accounts, map your land and explore stewardship opportunities. Note different location: At the Washington County Citizens Library (55 S. College St, Washington, PA)

Sat. Nov. 10 – **Using GPS as a Planning Tool on your Woodlot**– Ryan & Sarah Egidi Farm in eastern Greene County. The follow-up meeting will occur in the field to discuss coordinate systems using GPS locations to more accurately map trails, property boundaries, roads, hunting stands, camps and other points for better integration into MyLandPlan.org. and for better management of your property. 1-4 PM. Meet to carpool at 12:30 PM at the Greene County Fairgrounds, Building #10 parking lot. Wear proper shoes for hiking.

Please visit our website, <http://www.swpwopa.com/> for more information and links to resources for woodland owners

SWPWO Purpose

Southwestern Pennsylvania Woodland Owners (SWPWO), a not for profit association, is an organization of individuals interested in sound woodland management practices to encourage the diverse use of forests for timber production, wildlife habitat, watershed protection and recreation, and to promote this multiple-use philosophy through education and technical assistance for the benefit of the membership and general public.

<p><u>Membership Information</u> Membership dues will be collected at meetings or can be sent to: SWPWO 2506 Hollywood Dr. Pittsburgh, PA 15235 If sending in dues, please include name, address, phone number and an e-mail address. Membership to the Southwestern Pennsylvania Woodland Owners Association is \$10 per year for an individual and \$15 per year for a household. Keep your membership up to date to continue to receive the newsletter and yearly calendar.</p>	<p><u>SWPWO Officers (year elected)</u> President – Mark Fajerski (2018) Vice President – John Gregor (2018) Secretary – Ryan Egidi (2018) Treasurer – Maria Piantanida (at large position) Director – Melissa Gregor (2018) Director – Tony Knaus (2015) Director – Wayne Kraeer (2018) Advisor-Bill Wentzel Advisor- Arlyn Perkey</p>
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Editors: Gay Thistle-Ideas for this newsletter are always welcome Please send it to gaythistle@gmail.com