

February 2011

The SWPWO Leaflet



Upcoming

Events:

- SWPWO March Meetings (see right)
- Tuesday, March 8: PA Forests Webinar: Forest Insects and Diseases
(Go to <http://mnext.cas.psu.edu/PAForestWeb/> to sign up or get more information, including upcoming webinars)

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Our Purpose: *Southwestern Pennsylvania Woodland Owners (SWPWO), a not for profit association, is an organization of individuals interested in sound woodland management practices which 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.*

SWPWO March Meetings

March 9, Wednesday Considerations of Climate and Terrain for Tree Planting

Dr. Harold Thistle of the USDA Forest Service will discuss principles of microclimate and implications to woodland sites in SW Pennsylvania. Emphasis will be placed on moisture and temperature relationships and how they vary with slope aspect, elevation and situation in the local terrain. This

information will be used to discuss the optimum sites for successfully growing the important hardwood species in our local area.

March 12 Saturday Field Tour to Observe the Relationship between Species and Microsite in SW Pennsylvania

Arlyn Perkey will lead a tour to observe species dependence on microsite at his Greene County tree farm. The

tour will look at differences between south and north facing slopes, valley bottoms and ridge tops. Arlyn will review selection criteria for different microsites as well as review some of the basics of tree farming including monitoring growth and record keeping.

See the 2011 SWPWO Calendar (enclosed) for a full listing of all the events planned for this year.

What are your newsletter ideas?...

As members of SWPWO, this is your newsletter. Dave Cressey and I, both having newly taken on the task of editing/composing the SWPWO Leaflet, would love to hear your suggestions about what topics you'd like to see covered in the newsletter. Or, do you have articles that you've written, or perhaps photos that you've snapped, that

relate to experiences in your woodlot? Send them in! We'll be happy to make space for them in ensuing issues! If you know of any upcoming local woodland/nature events, we'd love to hear about those, too, so that we may share the information with everyone else.

Also, your opinions are more than welcome, i.e.

"the font is too small; the pages are too busy; it's terrific!"...especially that last one 😊

Any suggestions, articles, pictures, upcoming event information, or comments can be submitted using contact information on the left panel of the back page.

Thank you!
Jesse Wise

Walking in the Woods

By Carl R. Douglas



“Had someone’s horse gotten loose? A llama on the lam?”

Photo credit:
<http://www.cccfeeds-farmsupplies.com/images/llama.jpg>

The wooded hills, as well as the clearings, of Washington & Greene Counties have been especially pristine this winter, covered in white nearly continuously from early December to Valentine’s Day. The snow cover has generally been from a few inches deep to little more than half a foot, making for easy walking and revealing of numerous animal tracks. As always, the mongrels are an integral part of the patrol, the youngster in her prime scouring the coves in sweeping exuberance, the stately hound assuming a rear guard ready to sprint off to join in any impending excitement.

The excitement of note this season falls into H. Thistle’s “charismatic macro-fauna” file. Loppers in hand, I was rooting out the odd invasive when it became apparent the barking of the hounds--let’s call them Nell and Riley--was above and beyond the usual. Perhaps this was more than a treed squirrel. Through the trees from a distance I saw the dogs in a standoff with a large animal. A moose? Didn’t seem possible. Had someone’s horse gotten

loose? A llama on the lam? The beast lowered its head--it must have horns--to keep the canines at bay, but it did not bolt. It was so much bigger than the combined 140 pounds of dog! Soon it did notice me and bounded off through the woods and into the cleared ridge-top field, presently outdistancing the tail-waggers who returned with loopy quizzical expressions. I was kicking myself. With more care I could have maneuvered to a clear look, counted the points on the rack and had something particularly noteworthy to share with the local deerslayers. Surely this was the glorious stag we all love to brag we’ve seen.

Intrigued, I searched out its tracks. The cloven impressions were about 6 inches long and the running stride close to 8 feet. Compared to the largest nearby imprints of other deer they were three times as large. The tracking snow was ideal, about 2 inches deep and neither too slushy nor crusty, and the prints so unique I was compelled to follow, curious to learn what sanctuary this giant would seek. After

a few miles, across open ground and into farm fields, the tracks led to a wooded, somewhat narrow pocket hollow off Herod’s Run. Nell, Riley, and I were spent but exhilarated still.

It turns out there is a gentleman in Western Greene who raises elk. He wasn’t missing any but reported he recently had sold four--three cows and a bull--to a man nearby who had left a gate ajar.

 Mark Fajerski and Dave Cressey tell me they greatly enjoyed their two weekends this past Fall as part of Penn State’s Forest Stewardship program. The lecturers were top notch and the presentations comprehensive, encompassing “Forestry 101”, water, tax and wildlife issues, the art of silviculture and much more. The group of about 30 also spent time in the woods in Forbes State Forest. Mark notes that one of the most stimulating aspects was meeting woodland owners from all over the State and learning what they are accomplishing on their properties. (continued on page 3)

Walking in the Woods (continued from page 2)

There are now at least six SWPWO members who are PA Forest Stewards: John Burnham, Bob Daley, John Gregor, and Jesse Wise in addition to Mark and Dave. If you are interested in participating--the 2011 program takes place in October near Reading--contact one of the above for details.

Dave, who moonlights as a librarian--as well as an amateur humorist--passes along the following book recommendations. *Snowshoe Country* (Univ. of Minnesota

Press, 1944, 110 pgs.) is an often poetical journal of activities in the forests and lakes along the Minnesota and Canadian border as deep winter takes hold. Written during the war year of 1942 by Florence Page Jaques and illustrated by her husband Lee, it details a vanished time of dog sled teams, trapping lines, snow picnics, ice harvesting, and pickup truck excursions on the lakes. Dave will loan out his copy and also touts the current bestseller *Freedom* by Jonathan Franzen. Despite being tagged

“literary fiction”, this sometimes ribald romp through the first decade of the 21st century is a page turner. Part of it is set in West Virginia and involves Mountain Top Removal and how such practice, controversial though it is, might be turned to the benefit of the regenerating woods and threatened migratory bird species. Thought provoking stuff, and you will recognize some of the characters.



A picture, pilfered from the PAFS website, of the 2006 “Class” of PA Forest Stewards. Squint and look towards the back of the photo to see if you can spot a familiar SWPWO face, or more appropriately, beard.

Emerald Ash Borer Update

According to a recent news release from the PA Department of Agriculture, Pennsylvania’s intrastate Emerald Ash Borer quarantines will be lifted as of April 15th, 2011. This decision has been made due to the rapid spread of Emerald Ash Borers (EAB) across Pennsylvania, making the productivity and necessity of current intrastate quarantines negligible.

Emerald Ash Borers are wood-boring beetles,

native to China and Eastern Asia, and have been devastating the ash tree populations in many states, including PA, since their discovery in Michigan in 2002.

In an effort to slow or stop the spread of the insect, EAB quarantines have been put in place county- to-county, state-to-state, and internationally, beginning in 2002. These quarantines restrict the sale and/or movement of hardwood firewood and any

component of ash trees, including logs, stumps, slash, roots, branches, green lumber and nursery stock, from the infected and/or quarantined adjacent areas.

Though the federal (state-to-state) and international quarantines will remain in effect, the lifting of the county-to-county quarantines this April may help the market for ash material and products within Pennsylvania.

“EAB...have been devastating the ash tree populations in many states, including PA, since their discovery in Michigan in 2002.”

Why You Should Use a Consulting Forester When Planning a Timber Sale by Jesse Wise

“..paying someone to sell your timber is less stressful and more profitable than selling it yourself.”

When considering a timber sale, there are many reasons you should hire a consulting forester, the most prominent being: less stress during the timber sale process (and after) and more profit from the sale. Many of you may be a bit skeptical about the latter; it seems convoluted that paying someone to sell your timber is less stressful and more profitable than selling it yourself, but studies and landowner experiences prove that, generally, it is, and we'll talk about why.

First, though, let's visit the idea of less stress during your timber sale and a healthier residual stand. How stressful could a timber sale possibly be? Someone pays you money, and then they cut the trees and leave, right? Sure. However, they may also cut trees that you didn't want cut, accidentally extend the harvest to your neighbor's land (which may not go over too well with your neighbor), take all of your valuable trees and leave you an unhealthy residual stand, tear up your road, contaminate your stream, and pay you much too little for your timber (which we'll talk about later). Is it a guarantee that all of

these negative events happen on your property if you don't hire a consulting forester? No, but they very well could, and it is much less likely that they will occur if you have a consulting forester in your corner.

Why? For starters, a good consulting forester will talk to you about your objectives for your land and timber sale, and mark your timber accordingly. Additionally, they can help you to develop a contract between yourself and the purchaser, as well as oversee the timber sale while it is going on, thus minimizing the chance that unwanted timber will be cut or extreme environmental damage will occur and leaving you with a healthier residual stand. A good consulting forester, though generally not a licensed surveyor, can produce tentative property and sale boundary maps and clear up access issues to help ensure that the timber sale stays on your property, and, consequently, keeps your neighbors happy! A less obvious service that a good consulting forester will provide to you is to keep you informed of what to expect during the

timber sale. A timber sale can be a “messy” endeavor, but a consulting forester can tell you what's normal on a timber sale site, what best management practices will be utilized during and after the sale to remediate the logging roads and site, and what your forest will likely look like in succeeding years and stages. In essence, in the words of Stuart Moss, a professor at WVU, “much like car insurance companies get paid to worry about possible car accidents, consulting foresters get paid to worry about the timber sale for their clients. If the landowner is worrying, the consulting forester is probably not doing their job”.

Many landowners who've hired consulting foresters have received a tremendously higher profit on their timber sale in comparison to landowners who have not. This is because consulting foresters can help increase your stumpage price (the price paid for timber as it sits “on the stump”, as compared to a log in a mill yard), which is one of the only values that can be negotiated during the tree-to-lumber process. A general estimate of stumpage price can be (continued on back page)

“Get out your rouge and mascara, because we are taking the belle to the ball, and we want people to ask her to dance!”

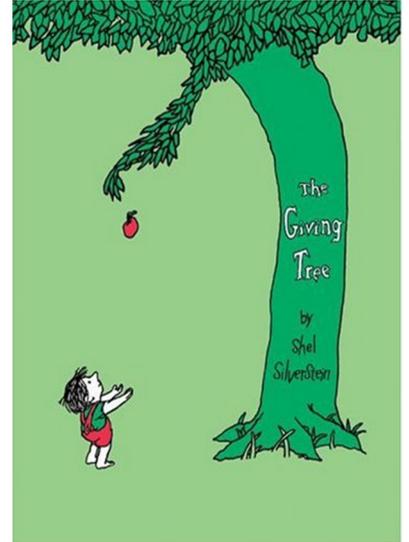
Sharing Forest Stewardship with Youth

By Jesse Wise

A vital part of continuing the legacy of forest stewardship is to share our knowledge and love of our forests with the youth in our lives and in our communities, as they will be the next generation of forest stewards. There are many ways to go about this, including simply taking children for walks in the woods, or taking them camping, fishing, hunting, canoeing, etc.; signing them up for environmental youth activities, such as Scout groups or Youth Field Days; utilizing the great resource of Youth Environmental Education publications located on Penn State's School of Forest Resources Youth page; telling them your stories of adventures in the woods, and letting them know what your hopes are for the future of your land; bringing them to SWPWO's "Mysteries of the Forest Tour" on June 11th, 2001 (see SWPWO calendar)...and the list goes on.

In each issue of the SWPWO Leaflet, we'll include a suggestion or two, in addition to those listed above, that you may want to participate in with the youth in your life. As for this issue, I recommend reading the book "A Giving Tree", by Shel Silverstein, with children. If you're not familiar with this book, which just happens to be a favorite from my childhood, it is the story of a boy and a tree that keeps on giving. After reading the book, perhaps discuss with children the importance of trees in our lives, and how they "give" us many things: not only trunks and branches from which to hang tire swings or make lumber, but also shade in the summertime, fruits and nuts, homes and food for wildlife, soil stabilization, aesthetic beauty, and clean water and air. Additionally, talk to children about how we can "give" back to the trees by taking care of our forests, which sometimes

means removing "bad" invasive plants or cutting down mature or diseased trees so that new and healthy trees can grow in their places. Additionally, share with children that forests are more than just trees; that they are a combination of many plants, animals, soils, insects and water systems, all of which also "give" to us in many ways and need to be cared for and respected. Lastly, to help children to "see the forest for the trees", maybe end this "lesson" with a walk in the woods, and see how many different birds, mushrooms, furry critters, trees and the like that the children can spot. Repeat this walk in the woods at a minimum with the change of every season, and challenge the children to identify new "forest dwellers" that weren't present in the previous seasons. Enjoy!



Cover of the book, "The Giving Tree", first published in 1964 by Harper and Row.



My nephew and niece, Seth and Saraina, in the midst of one of our walks in the woods. Don't let Seth's disgruntled look fool you—he loved the hike; he just didn't like being photographed! He may have also been frustrated because, although they learned to properly identify about ten plants during our walk, he could not pronounce 'multiflora rose', instead calling it 'Florida rose', and, after many failed attempts, insisted to me that it was "close enough, Aunt Jess!".

Visit Penn State's School of Forest Resources Youth Page for fantastic environmental youth publications:

<http://sfr.psu.edu/youth/sftrc>

Why You Should Use a Consulting Forester... (cont.)

Submit newsletter comments, topic suggestions, events, and articles to:

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274 Sugar Run Road
Waynesburg, PA 15370

VIA PHONE:
(724) 833-3765

VIA E-MAIL:
jesserenee@hotmail.com

*(please include SWPWO
in e-mail subject line)*

Executive Committee for the year 2011

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We're on the Web (and very thankful to Bob Daley for managing our website)!

See us at:

www.cs.pitt.edu/~daley/swpwo

for the most up to date information about our organization and connections to other resources to help you manage your woodlot!

deduced by subtracting market driven costs from the final value of lumber produced from the tree. For the purposes of this article, we'll use an arbitrary value, \$170 per MBF (million board feet), to further explore this. If a stack of lumber is worth \$700/MBF (another arbitrary number), after taking into consideration the costs of paying someone to go through the process of buying your timber (procurement), harvesting it, transporting it to the mill, and putting it through the sawmill, \$170/MBF is what someone can afford to pay you for your timber which will be used to make the stack of lumber. Now, if that someone knocks on your door and offers to buy your timber, without you contacting them first, do you think they will say, "Hello. I would like to minimize my personal profit and pay you the top value for your timber that I can afford: \$170/MBF". Sure... and then you wake up. Professor Moss tells the story from his consulting experience of a pastor of a church who received a knock on his door and an offer of \$20,000 for timber belonging to the church. Although \$20,000 sounded wonderful, the pastor wisely contacted Professor Moss and asked him to estimate the value, and consequently handle the sale, of the church's timber. In the end, the

timber sold for approximately \$105,000! Did the church have to pay for Professor Moss's services? Yes, but they also made an additional \$80,000 or so in profit.

A good consulting forester knows that the main factors, other than market, driving your stumpage price are *competition/need* (the more buyers there are who want/need your timber, the higher price they will be willing to pay) and *risk* (the higher the risk of something going wrong on the timber sale, the less a buyer is willing to pay for your timber). Not only will a good consulting forester be aware of these factors, but he/she will use these factors to increase your timber stumpage price. The consulting forester will increase the competition for your sale by making it attractive to potential buyers. Professor Moss humorously explains this subject to his students by saying "Get out your rouge and mascara, because we are taking the belle to the ball and we want people to ask her to dance!" This can be done by some of the aforementioned activities, like creating maps and clearly marking/flagging timber sale boundary lines, as well as by thoroughly inventorying your timber, creating a clear and concise announcement and summary of what you

have for sale (a prospectus), sending the prospectus to as many potential buyers as possible, holding tours of your sale, and conducting a sealed bid (a silent auction, of sorts) for your timber. These activities also minimize the risk associated with your timber sale. If all your timber sale ducks are in a row, there is less of a chance that the timber harvest will be delayed or a buyer will be threatened or sued by an angry adjacent landowner, thus, the buyer will be willing to pay more for your timber. Additionally, buyers will view your sale as less risky (and more valuable) if your consulting forester has a reputation for advertising accurate timber volumes and hassle-free timber sales.

In short, hire your consulting forester, sit back and relax while he/she worries for you, pay him/her for his/her services, and collect your maximum profit!

For more information, read Penn State's publication, "Pennsylvania Woodlands Number 11: Managing your woodlot with the help of a consulting forester" and associated referenced publications. Also, stay tuned for "How to Choose the Right Consulting Forester" in our next issue of the SWPWO leaflet, or contact me (see left panel of this page) for a copy of the latter article.

STEWARDSHIP TALKING POINTS **(from the PA Forest Stewardship Program)**

Pennsylvania's forests and woodlands are an amazing resource that provides untold economic, ecological, and social value to the state's citizens and beyond. While the average citizen believes the state owns most of the forest, in reality seven of ten acres is privately owned. The decisions these owners make today do and will greatly affect all the values we receive as benefits from our forests now and in the future.

Pennsylvania Land Cover:

- Total acreage 28,991,096 acres (45,299 square miles)
 - 92.9% Rural land cover (forests, fields, and water)
 - 7.1% Suburban and urban (cities, towns, roads)
- Unique Forest Related Land Uses or Conditions
 - 83,184 miles of river and streams
 - 30,000+ acres of true Old-Growth forest
 - 42% (7.4 million forested acres) considered interior forest habitat, 300 feet from a road or edge

PA Forest Facts:

- Forest History:
 - Penn's charter called for the reservation of 1 acre of forest for every 5 cleared
 - Highest historic percent forest cover 90% (1630, pre-settlement)
 - Lowest historic percent forest cover 32% (9.2 million acres, 1907)
 - Forest cover relatively constant since 1965, slight decrease starting 2004
 - First sawmill, 1662
- Forests cover 59% of Pennsylvania (16.58 million acres)
 - 29% Public Forests (Federal, state and local) 4.58 million acres
 - 71% Private forest owners 12.00 million acres
- Forest Composition
 - Mixed oaks and Northern hardwoods the most common forest types
 - Stocking, density of trees, is declining (disease, insects, weather, cutting)
 - Statewide, seedling and sapling stage (<5 inches) forest areas are declining
 - Statewide, forest areas with large trees (>11 inch, hardwoods) are increasing
 - 10 most common tree species in order by total numbers (all size classes):
red maple, black birch, black cherry, beech, sugar maple, hemlock, white ash, red oak, chestnut oak, black gum
- Private Forest Landowners (PFLs):
 - Population 12.5 million people, 4,770,000 households
 - PFLs Estimated at more than 600,000 private forest owners (~ 1 in 8 households)
 - Average ownership size: estimated at 17 to 21 acres
 - Average tenure: estimated at 7 to 13 years
 - Average age: 57 years old
 - Principle objectives (Most to Least Important): Solitude, Came with the Property, Enjoyment of Owning, Enjoying Wildlife, Estate to Pass On, Hunting, Land Investment, Recreation, Personal Use of Wood (firewood), Timber
 - Written Management Planning
 - 3.6% of PFLs have a written management plan
 - 9% of PFLs who have harvested trees commercially have a management plan

Challenges:

- Urban sprawl (i.e., forest and farm loss, current estimates 300 acres daily)
- Invasive plants (e.g., garlic mustard, tree of heaven, Japanese stilt-grass)
- Invasive insects (e.g., gypsy moth, emerald ash borer, hemlock wooly adelgid)
- Invasive diseases (e.g., chestnut blight, Dutch elm disease, sudden oak death)
- Forest regeneration (i.e., competitive plants, white-tailed deer)
- Energy development (i.e., natural gas, biomass)
- Harvesting practices (i.e., select cutting, high-grading, diameter cutting)
- Parcelization (e.g., estate planning, subdividing forests)

Penn State Natural Resources Extension – Forestry and wildlife information and educational programs

Phone: 800-235-9473

Web site: RNRExt.cas.psu.edu

Pennsylvania Bureau of Forestry – Offers a range of information and technical assistance to woodland owners

Phone: 717-787-2106

Web site: www.dcnr.state.pa.us/forestry/privatelands.aspx

Pennsylvania Game Commission – Wildlife Diversity Biologists provide guidance to landowners to manage their property for wildlife.

Phone: 717-783-7507

Web site: www.pgc.state.pa.us

Pennsylvania Tree Farm Program – Tree Farm inspectors voluntarily inspect private woodlands providing management advice and recommendations. Landowners meeting the minimum standards become “certified” as sustainably managed forests.

Phone: 201-463-2462

Web site: patreefarm.cas.psu.edu

Pennsylvania Forestry Association – The nation's oldest grass roots organization encourages management of the Commonwealth's forests.

Phone: 717-766-5371

Web site: pfa.cas.psu.edu

Sustainable Forestry Initiative of Pennsylvania – Voluntary, industry-driven program to enhance forest management decisions through logger, forester, landowner, and industry outreach.

Phone: 888-734-9366

Web site: www.sfiopa.org

Pennsylvania Forest Stewards – Trained volunteers share forest resource understanding through peer-to-peer education and outreach.

Phone: 800-235-9473

Web site: paforeststewards.cas.psu.edu

Woodland Owner Associations – 27 independent associations across Pennsylvania provide educational opportunities for members and people in the local communities on forest related topics

Phone: 800-235-9473

Web site: paforeststewards.cas.psu.edu/Associations.html

USDA, Farm Services Agency (FSA) and Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) – These two agencies administer USDA Farm Bill programs for woodland owners interested in technical and financial assistance for conservation practices in their woodlands.

Phone: 717-237-2117

Web site: www.fsa.usda.gov

Phone: 717-237-2100

Web site: www.pa.nrcs.usda.gov

Pennsylvania Land Trust Alliance – Provides basic and in-depth guidance and resources on conservation topics and tools including model conservation easements and is the umbrella group for land trusts and conservancies in Pennsylvania.

Phone: 717-230-8560

Web site: conserveland.org/