

# SWPWO



November 2006

## Southwestern Pennsylvania Woodland Owners

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### November 9th (Thursday) Meeting

Our next meeting will be held on Thursday, November 9th, at 7:00 PM at the Courthouse Square Building directly behind the courthouse. The speaker is Greg Miller, President of the Empire Chestnut Company, located in Carrollton, Ohio. He is a well-known individual in his field. He will give a very informative presentation on growing chestnut trees, handling of nuts for propagation, grafting, recent research on the American chestnut tree, and on other nut trees as well. Greg will be traveling a long way to meet with us, so let's make an extra effort to attend this meeting. I told him we hope to have thirty to forty people attend. We will also hold elections at the meeting and since this is our last meeting of this membership year, we will collect dues for next year.

Free parking is available in the garage under the building at level "B" entrance. We will meet on the first floor. As always the meeting is free and open to the public.

A follow up field trip is planned for Saturday, November 11th at Arlyn Perkey's tree farm in western Greene county. There will be a demonstration of how to

propagate trees from nuts. Arlyn, of course, has some of his latest projects to show us and we will swap tree nuts. To car pool, meet at Building #10 at the Greene County Fairgrounds in Waynesburg at 12:30 PM. Don't forget to bring your tree nut collections. Dress for the weather and wear walking shoes. *Written and submitted by Bill Wentzel, retired Service Forester for PA Bureau of Forestry*

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### Thank You from Bill Wentzel

At the pig roast at John Burnham's house on October 21st, the association presented me with a beautiful painting of a ruffed grouse by local artist, Steve Leonardi, for my support of the association these past six years.

Needles to say, I was surprised and speechless. I do better expressing myself in writing so please let me share some thoughts with you.

During the 1990's I wanted to form a woodland owners group but I could not get it off the ground. Then in 1998 along came John Burnham. He had a vision for starting up such a group and was a driving force behind the formation

of the Southwest Pennsylvania Woodland Owners Association in December of 1999. John was our first president and has helped guide the group since then.

The success of the group has been the result of the dedicated work of a committed group of volunteers. I have been privileged to be just a part of that team.

Thanks goes to John Burnham, founder and first president, and generous host of our annual pig roast; to Gay Thistle and George Marinchak, editors of the newsletter; to Harold Thistle, second president; to Bob Daley, computer wizard and developer of the associations web page; Arlyn Perkey, giver of many excellent programs and field trips to his tree farm; and last but not least, to all those who have served as officers and board directors. I hope that I did not forget anyone. All of these folks have freely given their time and talents to help make a great organization.

I want to say thank you to all of the members for the gift. I was humbled by your gesture. The painting will hang on the wall of the new addition to my log house.

I have enjoyed working with you and serving the people of the association. You are a great bunch! I have become friends with many of you.

I will remain active and help the new forester to become assimilated into the association. Incidentally, interviews for the new forester will take place on November 14th and hopefully someone will be on board by the beginning of the new year. God Bless.

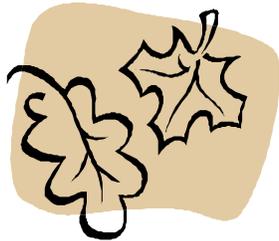
## Update from our last Meeting

Bill Wentzel, our recently retired Service Forester from the PA Bureau of Forestry, spoke about Forest Stewardship plans. A panel of members who have Stewardship plans spoke and answered questions about the process and the maintenance of the plans. Arlyn Perkey gave some tips on preparing oneself with the right equipment before beginning this venture and gave a reality check about the amount of time it takes to actually work the plan. Bob Daley complimented our SWPWO group on how much they have helped him get a handle on the work that has to be done for his plan and had slides of his property and how it was being developed for forestry. Gay Thistle reiterated the amount of time and energy the work takes. All members of the panel talked about participating in the cost share benefits of the program. In addition, member and PA Game Commissioner, Roxane Palone updated us on the 2006 Pennsylvania deer management program. Thank you, Roxanne for sharing this information with us.

The follow-up field trip was at Bob Daley's tree farm in Washington County. We had a beautiful day for a walk in the woods on Bob's well-maintained woodland road system. We viewed his walnut and cedar plantations and toured a crop tree release site. We also collected nuts from a beautiful old scarlet oak tree and witnessed Bob's treatment method for Tree of Heaven (*Alanthus*) which he is controlling on his property. Joan and Bob treated us to grilled hotdogs, drinks and cookies afterwards on the porch.

There was a question about the tall white wildflowers that were growing profusely throughout the woods. Bill Wentzel identified them as White Snakeroot. This flower is a member of the largest family of flowering plant,

ASTERCEAE. This native perennial blooms from July through October in rich woods and thickets of Pennsylvania. It is poisonous and in earlier times poisoned cattle and the humans that drank their milk.



## **Committee for the year 2006**

### ***Officers***

**Harold Thistle- President**

**Bob Daley - Vice Pres.**

**Nadine Obermiller- Secretary**

**Earl Novendstern- Treasurer**

### ***Board of Directors***

**Joe McNaney**

**Max Loughman**

**Maria Piantanida**

### ***Advisors***

**Bill Wentzel**

**Arlyn Perkey**

## **Cutting Live Christmas Trees**

Soon it will again be time to "put up" the Christmas tree. Some will erect an "artificial tree"; others will buy a living "potted" tree; and still others will purchase a "real" tree which has been cut from a plantation.

The practice of cutting live trees has come under criticism in recent years. Some people feel that it is an environmentally unsound thing to do. This concern is often times based on a misunderstanding and a lack of information. Following are A few ideas in defense of the practice of cutting live Christmas trees which shall give us a balanced and informed view concerning this matter.

First, probably the biggest objection is that the trees, if left to grow, would furnish future wood products. Now, if you look around Greene and

Washington Counties, we'll see many, many acres of idle land which are "growing up" into undesirable "brush". Much of the idle land could be planted with valuable timber trees. In most instances this is not being done. So instead of being too concerned about the few acres devoted to the growing of Christmas trees, maybe we could be helping the future cause by planting forest trees on the idle lands we may own. As a matter of fact, less than 1% of the total acreage of the U.S. and less than one tenth of one percent of the acreage in Greene and Washington Counties has Christmas trees growing on it. In the entire nation, only 450,00 acres are in Christmas tree plantations. This is an area slightly larger than Greene County. Far more land is being bull dozed for the construction of highways, shopping centers, and apartment complexes each year!

Second, many of the special varieties of evergreens used for Christmas trees would not develop into good timber trees even if left to grow. Scotch pine is an example.

Third, many of the largest and most prosperous Christmas tree plantations in the United States are located in areas where the soil is shallow and thus unsuitable for growing good quality timber trees.

Fourth, even though a live Christmas tree is cut in six to twelve years, during its lifetime, it has benefited the environment in many ways (watershed protection, wildlife habitat, and production of oxygen). In addition, the tree has provided for the gainful employment of many people in the planting, management, harvesting, and transportation processes.

And lastly, when plantation grown Christmas trees are harvested, new trees are immediately planted. Trees are a renewable resource; the petroleum products used to make artificial trees are not!

So I don't think we really need to worry about the practice of cutting live plantation grown Christmas trees as being detrimental to our environment. If you are interested in learning more about the growing of Christmas trees, write the Bureau of Forestry at 195 E. High St, Waynesburg, PA 15370 or call 724-627-6624. In the nation, Pennsylvania ranks second only to Michigan in the production of plantation grown Christmas trees. *Written and submitted by Bill Wentzel, retired Service Forester for PA Bureau of Forestry*

### **SWPWO Website**

The SWPWO official website can be accessed at the following address [www.cs.pitt.edu/~daley/swpwo](http://www.cs.pitt.edu/~daley/swpwo).

This website is available to us because of the talents and time of webmaster and officer, Bob Daley. The SWPWO website has the calendar of events for 2006, current information about our group, and photos from our outings. If you find a website that may interest others in our group e-mail Bob Daley at [daley@cs.pitt.edu](mailto:daley@cs.pitt.edu) and give him the web address. He is looking for interesting links and photos to post on our site.

### ***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*

*This newsletter is produced about 8 times per year. It is published about two weeks prior to the meetings. Articles and/or ideas are welcome. Contact the editors John Burnham at 724-223-8781 or e-mail at [burnhamjc@msn.com](mailto:burnhamjc@msn.com) or Gay Thistle at 724-499-5190 [thistle@windstream.net](mailto:thistle@windstream.net)*

## **Pig Roast a Success (not for the pig)**

Our annual pig roast was held at John Burnham's Stewardship tree farm in Washington County. We had a beautiful day to enjoy the woods and the company of fellow SWPWO members. The afternoon festivities began with a contest between the Thistles- oh, I mean, two teams of members which were led by Harold and Gay Thistle, respectively. Each team was given forty woody plants to identify. They were the same forty plants- one team started at the end and one team started at the beginning- and we mingled and threw off odd hints to each other in the middle. The leaves were off most of the trees so this task was a bit easier for the members that attended the summer tours where we talked a lot about identifying trees by their bark and buds.

The victorious team led by Gay Thistle actually completed the task before the other team. I have to say that the score was close and that both teams had fun and learned a lot at the same time. The meal was great with all the different dishes brought by our members and we ended the day by the fire.

## **Time for Dues Once Again!**

### **Membership**

Membership to the Southwestern Pennsylvania Woodland Owners Association is \$10 per year for an individual and \$15 per year for a household. Dues are expected to be paid by January in order to ensure a timely receipt of the newsletter and notice of the next meeting. To join, please send name, address and phone number to:

SWPWO  
195 E., High St  
Waynesburg, PA 15370

