

SWPWO



September 2004

Southwestern Pennsylvania Woodland Owners

September Meeting: Timber Sales Issues

Our next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, **September 14, 2005**. It will begin at 7:00 PM at the Greene County fairgrounds in Waynesburg in building #10. We welcome you and your friends to join us in welcoming Robert McColly and Tony Quadro who are professional private consulting foresters. Mr. McColly and Mr. Quadro will present a program addressing the many issues dealing with harvesting and selling trees from our privately owned forests. Subjects covered will include; correctly marking the trees to be sold, selecting the best logger through a competitive bid system, drafting a good timber sale contract, coming up with a value for trees, and controlling soil erosion and sedimentation of waterways during and after the harvesting operation. This is information that you need if you are contemplating a timber sale. The stewardship decisions you make now will affect the future well-being of your forest for generations to come. This is a great opportunity for our members and the general public to learn about the best practices of a good timber harvest. Mr. McColly

and Mr. Quadro will be available to answer any questions you may have.

On Saturday, September 17, a SWPWO field trip will take us to a site where timber was recently harvested. Participants will be able to see the results of the good and the bad practices at this site and again, ask questions. Directions to the site will be available at the Wednesday meeting or interested participants can meet at the Greene County fairgrounds, building #10 at 12:30 PM to caravan or carpool to the site. Please join us for our second to the last meeting of our year. For additional information call 724-627-6624.

State Tree Farm Committee Opposes High Grading

The American Tree Farm System is a nationwide community of more than 70,000 individuals and families joined by their desire for excellence in forest stewardship. The American Tree Farm System guidelines specifically instruct each Tree Farmer to manage his forest land to "enhance the health and productivity of the woodland while protecting the soil, water, range, aesthetic, recreation, wood, fish and wildlife resources." In addition, "cutting practices must be such that they maintain or improve the forest

productivity, health and growth while protecting the associated resources.

The Pennsylvania State Tree Farm Committee is responsible for implementing the American Tree Farm system guidelines in the Commonwealth. The Committee will not accept high grading as a forest management practice. Tree Farmers who engage in high grading will be decertified and removed from the Tree Farm program.

High grading is a harvesting practice in which those trees that have current high-dollar value are removed. Both diameter-limit cutting and selective cutting are forms of high grading. Diameter-limit cutting removes all trees above a given diameter- usually 12" or 14" at stump height. Selective cutting is a practice of only removing those large diameter trees that have current high-market value. Both practices devalue residual forest. The quality and market value of the trees that remain tend to be inferior to the trees that were harvested. For these reasons, some foresters have likened high grading to shooting the winner of the Kentucky Derby as it crosses the finish line.

Many timber stands in Pennsylvania are currently being high graded. The Pennsylvania Tree Farm Committee recommends that tree farmers seek professional advice before they harvest timber.

Submitted by Bill Wentzel, PA Bureau of Forestry

Venison, It's What's for Dinner in SW Pennsylvania (or should be)

A new hunting season is looming around the corner and like me, some of you may still have some venison in the freezer. I have eaten venison all of my life, and have collected a few recipes that even non- venison eaters like. This is a recipe that Lisa Cress of Preston County, WV, had adapted for venison, and it has become a favorite in our household. It is also an easy meal to prepare in the crock pot while away for the day.

Tangy Venison Barbecue Sandwiches

3 cups celery, chopped
1 cup onion, chopped
1 cup ketchup
1 cup barbecue sauce
1 cup water
2 Tablespoons vinegar
(I sometimes add 2 more Tablespoons of vinegar)
4 Tablespoons worcestershire sauce
1 Tablespoon brown sugar
1 teaspoon chili powder
1 teaspoon salt
1 teaspoon black pepper
1 teaspoon hot pepper flakes (optional)
3 - 4 pounds of venison (roast)
14-18 rolls, split

In slow cooker, combine all ingredients except the rolls; mix well. Add meat. Cover and cook on high for 7-8 hours until meat is tender. With two forks, shred meat by pulling it apart. This will thicken up the stew. Serve it on sausage rolls or hamburger buns. *Submitted by Gay Thistle*

In Defense of Dead Trees

There's no denying they don't seem to offer much that property owners find appealing. They're messy and leafless, insect-infested, and, in some instances, even constitute a hazard, but foresters and Pennsylvania Game Commission officials want landowners to know that the benefits dead trees or snags provide wildlife are immense. In fact, in Pennsylvania today, dead trees are in higher demand for certain wildlife species than living ones, mostly because there are so few of them.

Prior to European colonization, much of the state was covered by dense forestland that had a substantial number of dead and dying trees. It was perfect habitat for cavity-nesting birds and squirrels. The settlement of the state and the Industrial Revolution changed the state of our forests. And to this day, development continues to swallow more wild lands and often forestlands or woodlots. Dead and dying trees typically are the first to be cleared.

The main problems developers and some property owners have with dead trees and snags are their unattractiveness and their propensity to drop branches or fall causing an overhead hazard. But wildlife managers familiar with the important habitat dead and dying trees provide forest ecosystems believe these trees deserve more respect than they are getting. They can- and should- be managed with the same considerations that live trees receive.

"Dozens of wild birds and mammals use cavities for shelter, resting, or nesting," explained Cal DuBrock, Game Commission, Bureau of Wildlife Management director. "Some excavate their own cavities in the decaying wood of dead and dying trees. Others wait for a woodpecker to do the work and then occupy and enlarge the cavity." DuBrock continues to say that "these cavities in dead and dying trees-- as well as some living trees-- are invaluable to bluebirds, American kestrels, wood ducks, flickers, pileated woodpeckers, chickadees and many other species. Their limited availability makes each snag a precious commodity in any forest, woodlot, or backyard."

The natural benefits provided by dead and dying trees extend beyond the cavities in the trunk. The separating or peeling bark can shelter resting bats during daylight hours, or provide habitat for insects that many wild birds consume. The bare, weather worn branches are favored hunting perches for hawks and owls. After the tree falls, it provides shelter for amphibians, reptiles, birds, mammals and insects. The tree's decaying debris also returns nutrients to the soil, ultimately strengthening the forest's ability to support life.

"It doesn't matter whether a dead tree is standing and serving as an insect smorgasbord for woodpeckers, or laying on the forest floor and providing a silent passageway through the noisy leaf litter for hunting red foxes and habitat for amphibians, every woodland needs and benefits from them," DuBrock said. "They not

only provide unique habitat and habitat diversity, they also are part of the natural order that all successful forest stewardship programs thrive to promote." We need private landowners to understand the importance of dead and dying trees and the need to conserve as many as possible.

"Since the Game Commission's State Game Lands system represents less than five percent of all Pennsylvania lands, Pennsylvania landowners obviously play a critical role in the managing of the state's forests and the extremely limited number of dead trees found on this land. Their influence on cavity nesters and habitat diversity can be very profound. That's why it is so important that more Pennsylvanians understand wildlife's dependency on their actions." It has been estimated that dead trees and trees that contain decaying wood provide important habitat for 25 percent of the forest wildlife species in the northeastern United States.

A dead tree can stand for decades providing critical shelter and food to a myriad of species. It's a habitat high-rise that attracts considerable attention in any wildlife community or ecosystem. What determines how long these trees will stand includes factors such as whether they are surrounded by other trees that will reduce wind and incident sunlight, the species of the tree (hardwoods such as oak, typically last longer), and the type of terrain or area in which they grew. Trees near streams seem to take more abuse from the elements than other places because they have

greater exposure to water and shade.

"If a dead or dying tree isn't threatening your residence, picnic pavilion or roadway, the Game Commission recommends leaving it to nature and the benefit of wildlife," emphasized DuBrock. "It won't be long before you'll see its worthiness to wildlife and begin to appreciate the additional character it affords your backyard or woodlot. If you're into wildlife, you should be into dead trees."

*Submitted by Bill Wentzel, PA
Bureau of Forestry. Taken from a July 27
news release by the PA Game Commission.*

2005 SWPWO Schedule of Events October 15 SWPWO Picnic

Current SWPWO members only, at a time and place to be determined.

Nov. 9 Meeting: "The Microclimate of the Forest" with Dr. Harold Thistle, Program Manager with the U.S. Forest Service and Arlyn Perkey, retired forester from the U.S. Forest Service. 7:00 PM at the Courthouse Square building in Washington, PA.

Nov. 12 Field Trip: Investigating the Forest Microclimate" at Arlyn Perkey's tree farm and Stewardship forest in western Greene county. Meet at the Greene County fairgrounds at 12 noon at Building #10 in Waynesburg or pick up directions at the Nov 9 meeting.

SWPWO field trips usually run from 1:00 to 4:00 PM. For further information call 724-627-6624.

Meetings and Field trips are open and free to the public- everyone is invited to attend



Remarkable Trees: The Oldest White Oak (*Quercus alba*) East of the Mississippi

Studies of a 373-year-old white oak found near Athens, Ohio in an old-growth forest suggest it is the oldest recorded hardwood east of the Mississippi. But while this ranking is exciting to the researchers studying the forest, they are more interested in what the tree can tell them about the climate and ecology in the region over nearly four centuries. The region's oldest oak, felled during a 1998 storm, is one of 10 under scrutiny by environmental and plant biologists at Ohio University who do research in Dysart Woods, a university land laboratory in Belmont County in southeastern Ohio. Scientists use this information to track how climate and drought conditions affect tree growth. The undisturbed old-growth forest provides a clear picture of what a forest would look like without human intervention.

"Any one of us has maybe a 10- or 20- or 30-year frame of reference, but that may represent less than 10 percent of a life span of a tree," said Brian McCarthy, an associate professor of environmental and plant biology in the College of Arts and Sciences. "Studying the tree allows us to reconstruct fairly clearly what's been happening over the past 400 years."

The studies also have allowed the researchers to fill in gaps in the climate history of the region, which only has been accurately recorded since 1950. Researchers identified which years reported droughts during the last 50

years and found the corresponding rings in the tree samples. They used these as a guide to identify other rings associated with drought years throughout history.

Because climate data for the past 400 years is limited nationwide, McCarthy said researchers use information from studies of old oaks to track global warming trends. Bristlecone pine trees in the west are used to determine climate patterns for thousands of years and serve as primary data in the study of global warming global warming.

The study also suggests that human misuse of the environment might affect the health of trees. During a period that lasted from the early 1800s to about 1950, there was a continual increase in the size of the rings, suggesting healthy tree growth. But after 1950, the growth rate began to decline, possibly due to human impact on the environment, McCarthy said.

While the discovery of a 373-year-old oak tree is important, McCarthy said he believes there are many trees in Dysart Woods that may be even older. Studies of this old-growth forest are continuing, work that McCarthy said could lead to an even clearer picture of past and future climate conditions.

Submitted by Gay Thistle. Information gotten from website www.sciencedaily.com

SWPWO Website

The SWPWO official website can be accessed at the following address www.cs.pitt.edu/~daley/swpwo. This website is available to us because of the talents and time of webmaster and officer, Bob Daley.

Fate of Duke Lake at Ryerson Station State Park in Western Greene County

Many of you have been following the news reports about the draining of Duke Lake, formerly located in Ryerson Station State Park in western Greene County. You may have visited the lake during SWPWO's summer tours. Two of these tours took place at Ryerson Station State Park - in May, for a look at invasive plants and to do some birding (Remember the Baltimore Oriole we sited!!) and in June, to view a stream improvement project. The lake was a centerpiece of the Park. I personally have used the lake to watch birds and wildlife, to fish, and to ice skate amongst the ice fishermen. The powers that be in Pennsylvania have not yet determined what the fate of the lake may be. Many residents of the state want the lake restored. A petition is being circulated to Governor Rendell to allocate funds to restore Duke Lake. This petition will be available at our next SWPWP meeting on Sept. 14. *submitted by Gay Thistle and John Burnham*

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.

Executive Committee for the year 2005

Officers

Harold Thistle- President
Bob Daley - Vice Pres.
Nadine Obermiller- Secretary
Ed Hartman- Treasurer

Board of Directors

George Marichek
Max Loughman
Maria Piantanida

Advisors

Bill Wentzel' Arlyn Perkey

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

