

# SWPWO



May 2008

## *Southwestern Pennsylvania Woodland Owners*



### **May 14 Meeting: Managing Hardwood Forests for Value**

Speaker: Arlyn Perkey, US Forest Service (Retired). Arlyn Perkey will share his experience managing a 10-acre portion of his tree farm during the past 17 years. He will describe some of the characteristics of the woods that initially attracted him and how he has made decisions by selecting and managing crop trees that had the potential to accomplish his goals and objectives. He will use photos that show two silvicultural treatments and how they, two years of gypsy moth defoliation, and the assault of invasive vegetative species have affected the appearance and vitality of the forest. For people who love trees, the choices are often difficult to make, but to Arlyn, this stand of trees is a testimony to what can be gained by pursuing a planned course of action. The meeting starts at 7:00 PM and will be held at the Greene County Fairgrounds, Building #10.

### **May 17 Field Trip**

We will visit an oak and maple stand with Arlyn Perkey, US Forest Service (Ret). Arlyn will lead us on a tour of the managed forest described at the May 14th meeting. We will see

timber, wildlife, and aesthetic crop trees. We will discuss monitoring crop tree growth, invasive species, oak regeneration, and utilization of cut trees. There will be a detailed demonstration of how to properly take a dbh (diameter breast height) measurement of trees, along with some hands-on practice. There is a good walking trail through the area that will traverse topography typical of Greene County. Wear good walking shoes and clothing to accommodate the varying spring weather. The tour starts at 1:00 PM at Arlyn Perkey's Tree Farm in SW Greene County. To carpool or follow, meet at 12:30 PM at the Greene County Fairgrounds, building #10.

### **I'll Show you My DBH.....**

In order to highlight our purpose and involve more members in our mission to encourage sound woodland management practices a new feature will be coming soon to our newsletter. In general, members will volunteer to provide data on growth of selected trees in their woodlands. We will try to get a good sampling of timber trees common to our area planted in a variety of sites and situations in the data selection. This information will be published in our newsletter about twice a year. It is still in the working stages but if you have a tree that maybe you plan to

release or just have one that you are proud of, think about adding it to our collection of data.

You will be asked to take a dbh(diameter base height) reading of the same tree, twice a year for our records. If you do not know how to take a dbh reading then you may want to attend the May 17 field trip where Arlyn will show us how to properly mark and measure a tree. He will have **free dbh tapes** to give out to those who participate in the field trip. This is a win-win situation. We all want to manage our forests and grow trees that are going to reach their prime at the fastest rate (we are patient people). Learning the skills to do this is part of the plan. Please join us and stay tuned for more information about submitting your data. *By Gay Thistle*

## Know your Lumber

The first step for any new woodworker is to gain a solid knowledge of the different types of woods. Certain woods are best for specific uses. It's a good idea to have an overall understanding of the different classifications of woods and a discussion of different tree species and the woods they produce. Here are some of the tree species classified into hardwoods and softwoods, together with the description of the wood they produce.

1. **Hardwoods:** Hardwood lumber comes from deciduous trees, which have characteristics like broad sets of leaves, capability to bear fruits or nuts, and dormancy during winter. These trees can be seen growing in regions with a temperate climate.

-**Walnut:** Walnut refers to a small family of flowering trees that are well known for the nuts and the lumber they produce. They belong to the order Juglandaceae family of the Juglandales order. The walnut tree produces a fine-textured and strong lumber. It is capable of resisting warping and shrinking. That is why the lumber is used for making wall paneling, cabinets, gunstocks, as well as veneered and solid furniture.

-**Cherry:** This tree species is closely related to fruit bearing trees like plums, peaches, apricots and almonds. They belong to the Rosaceae family. Aside from the edible fruit that cherry trees produce, it is also known for the fine-textured, shrink and warp-resistant lumber that reddens when exposed to sunlight. Because of the lumber's capacity to age well, it is commonly used in making cabinets, furniture, handles, novelties and boat trims.

-**Maple:** This tree species can be commonly seen near streets and is used as an ornament because of its autumn color and leaf shape. It belongs to the family Aceraceae. The tree is native to Northern America and Europe. It also produces quality timber which is finely textured but is hard and strong. The lumber shrinks moderately, and the fact that it is durable makes it ideal for specialty flooring, such as bowling alleys.

2. **Softwoods:** Softwood lumber, on the other hand, is produced from coniferous trees with needle-like leaves. These trees are evergreen, and bear cones. Softwoods are often milled into structural lumber or chipped for pulp (paper). Some known softwood

lumpers include:

- Pine: Pines are evergreen trees. There are 210 species, all of which produce cones, timber and pulpwood. They belong to the Pinaceae family. The lumber it produces doesn't shrink, warp or swell after proper drying. It can be worked easily because of its uniform texture. Pines are used widely in building houses, panels, boxes, molds and furniture.

- Redwood: Redwoods, are huge evergreen trees that are known for their reddish brown trunks that can grow up to 100 ft. It has a buttressed base to support the conical tree. Redwoods belong to the Taxodiaceae family. Redwood lumbers are known to be durable, and naturally decay-resistant. That is why it is preferred in building outdoor furniture as well as fencing and house sidings. It can also be used indoors for your indoor finishing, paneling and veneering. Due to a finite number of remaining mature redwoods, many former uses are discouraged.

- Spruce: Spruce grows in the farther north, where it converges with the Arctic forest. It belongs to the Pinaceae family, together with cedar, pine and fir. It has woody leaf bases and pendulous cones. Spruce lumber is resistant to decaying. It shrinks moderately, has a nice finish and is lightweight. That is why it is used as spars, masts in boats, wooden parts in aircraft, boxes/crates, and ladders.

- Cedar: Cedar is closely related to spruce. However, there are unique features that distinguish cedar from spruce. The wood produced from this tree species is

naturally sweet in odor and reddish in color and repels certain insects. It is easily worked. It is the ideal wood in chest-making, Venetian blinds, dock planks, shingles, linings in closets, and novelties. *Information compiled by Gay Thistle (I did not document the reference when I downloaded it in Dec. 2007)*



### **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*

## July 19 Field Trip Update

A twenty bus has been reserved for the Field trip to the Slippery Rock area for July 19. Sixteen people have signed up for the trip so we still have a few seats available. Look at your calendars and reserve the date. It should be fun: a guided trip through a PA prairie ecosystem in full bloom and lunch at a green restaurant and brewery in the Slippery Rock area. The bus will leave the Greene County fairgrounds at 7:30 AM, stop in Washington (the Park and Ride off Beau Street?) and stop in Crafton (at the King's parking lot) to pick up participants. How much easier can it get? There will be a cost for a portion of the bus and your lunch. Call Gay Thistle if interested.

## Alternative SWPWO Newsletter

In the last couple of issues we have offered to make the delivery of your SWPWO newsletter available by email. Some members have already signed up for this cost-saving option. We realize that some of you may not be email capable and others will just prefer to receive it via the U.S. mail. We continue to provide this reminder just in case you haven't gotten around to notifying us yet. If you are interested in this option please send an e-mail to Bob Daley with a Subject title of "**Green SWPWO newsletter**" Bob's e-mail address is [daley@cs.pitt.edu](mailto:daley@cs.pitt.edu)

## Calendar of Events for 2008

### June 14 Field Trip Native Wildflower

#### Tour. Speaker:

Shane Miller. 1:00 PM at Raccoon Creek State Park. Meet at 11:30 AM at the Crown Center Mall Parking lot at Sears to carpool or follow.

### July 19 Summer Tour: Environmental Education and Green Businesses

Jennings Environmental Education Center near Slippery Rock, PA to tour a prairie ecosystem. We will continue on to North Country Brewing Company, a green business, and have lunch. Space is limited. Please let Gay Thistle know if you are interested.

### August Field Trip: Tour of Orchards.

Tour of the Gregor's Orchards in eastern Washington county. Meet at 12:30 PM at the Greene County Fairgrounds, building #10 to carpool or follow

### September 10 Meeting: Timber Harvest: Planning and Execution

Speakers to be determined. 7:00 PM at the Greene County Fairgrounds, Building #10

### September 13 Field Trip: Timber Harvest

**Site Visit.** Time and place to be determined  
October 18 **Picnic with Plant Identification Competition and Potato Gun Competition** (Members, Friends and Family) Time and place to be determined. Save the date.

**November 12 Meeting:** Forest Land Taxation Issues with speaker Lloyd Casey, retired USDA Forest Service. 7:00 PM at the Washington County Courthouse Square building.

### November 15 Field Trip: Creating an Inventory of Your Forest.

1:00 PM, Lloyd Casey's Tree Farm in NE Greene County. Meet to carpool or follow at 12:30 PM at the Greene County Fairgrounds Building #10

**Find most recent updates and links for directions on our website**

[www.cs.pitt.edu/~daley/swpwo](http://www.cs.pitt.edu/~daley/swpwo)

**Morels, Morels and More  
Morels**

Since the SWPWO talk on mushrooms and follow up field trip in September, I have been hankering to look for the most infamous fungi in our area-the morel. I am not a mushroom expert and the ambient wisdom regarding to mushrooms is to only eat it if you know for certain what the mushroom is. Luckily, with morels, there are not many similar looking mushrooms to get confused. The mushroom that looks most like a morel is called the false morel. False morel is considered poisonous, but a botanist told me you can easily tell the false morel because the cap is only attached at the center (or as she told me, you can reach under the skirt) whereas with an edible morel, the cap is fully attached to the stem (or you cannot reach under the skirt). Another hint provided in the fungi taxonomy guides is that false morels have solid flesh and edible morels are hollow when cut in half.

I still was not comfortable heading out in the woods and taking a chance, so I asked a friend to help me. I had heard of his stories of finding and eating morels (and he is still alive which is a good credential for this endeavor).

I had also heard that morels are difficult to spot. They are the color of the leaf litter where they grow, so another motive for seeking assistance was to get familiar with how to find them. The day we chose was clear and warm and as a bonus it had recently rained. Fungi are not plants and do not have a vascular system (phloem or xylem) to transport water, or roots to store water. They are very opportunistic producers- when it rains the fruiting

body, or mushroom will grow in a day. We set out for a place where morels had been found before. We spent about two hours wandering around in the woods. There is much advice about where morels are found. Some say look by dying elms, by ash trees or by poplar trees. I tended to edge closer to the creeks or deeper in the hollows, but the morels seemed to be more populated on the ridges above the creeks. I did seem to find most in patches of mayapple plants- but this was not always true, probably, like the other advice.

We did have a successful hunt, finding three kinds of morels; the yellow morel (which is more tan than yellow), the black morel and the half cap morel. All were equally good sautéed in butter and garlic with grilled meats or in a marinara sauce. I believed that I had a huge stash of these mushrooms and had grand plans for eating, drying, freezing and sharing. Alas, after only two meals and a stash of some to give away-all three pounds was gone. This was a great adventure in harvesting a seasonal, local food. What a treat! *By Gay Thistle*



## **New Information for Forestry Education**

Two new weblog (blog) sites are now available to provide timely information on forestry issues. The first one is posted by Dave Jackson, a Forestry Educator with Penn State Cooperative Extension in Centre County. This site is called *Central Pennsylvania Forestry* and can be found at

<http://centralpaforest.blogspot.com/>.

Dave will post current information on forestry practices, disease and more in regards to PA forests.

Another weblog has been started by Mike Jacobson of the Penn State School of Forest Resources. Many of us know Mike from the Forestry finance and tax issues meetings that our group has been attending. This site will include information on forest values, taxes, timber prices, and current economic and policy topics affecting PA forests. This site can be found at [http://www.personal.psu.edu/mqj2blogs/forest\\_finance\\_issues\\_in\\_pennsylvania\\_and\\_beyond/](http://www.personal.psu.edu/mqj2blogs/forest_finance_issues_in_pennsylvania_and_beyond/).

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## **2008 SWPWO**

### Officers

**Bob Daley - President**  
**Maria Piantanida - Vice Pres.**  
**Gay Thistle - Secretary**  
**Earl Novendstern - Treasurer**

### Board of Directors

**Joe McNaney**  
**Dave Cressey**  
**C. Michael Irvin**

### Advisors

**Bill Wentzel**      **Arlyn Perkey**

**Ralph Campbell**

### Past Presidents

**John Burnham**  
**Harold Thistle**

## **Summer Newsletter Deadlines**

The summer mini newsletters should be mailed the week before each scheduled tour. The editor is always looking for contributions of articles of interest or your stories of the time you spend in your woods. Please e-mail to [thistle@windstream.net](mailto:thistle@windstream.net). from Gay Thistle

## **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 2007, 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.

## **Membership Information**

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