

SWPWO



March 2007

Southwestern Pennsylvania Woodland Owners

New Service Forester

Ralph Campbell

There is no place like home. This statement has never been more meaningful to me. I am finally settling back into the area after being away for almost 5 years. Born and raised in Latrobe, it is exciting to be residing in Southwestern PA once again. I came here from the Valley Forge Forest District where I was a service forester in Bucks and Montgomery Counties. Being the newest service forester on staff in the Forbes District, I will be working in Greene and Washington Counties. As most of you know, Bill Wentzel, who was the forester for these two counties for over 30 years, retired last summer.

A little bit of background on myself, I went to school at Penn State where I majored in Forest Science. While in college, I spent a summer as a forest technician with the state of Maryland working on the Chesapeake Forest. Working on the Eastern Shore was a great experience and gave me a little taste of southern pine management. When I returned to school that fall, I was hired by Penn State's Forestland Management Office as a forestry intern. That fall and following spring, I learned a great deal while working on Penn State's

Upcoming Meeting:
Wednesday, March 14, 2007
Conservation Reserve
Enhancement Program (CREP) with Shawn Cunningham of the Western PA Conservancy at 7:00 PM in the first floor meeting room of the Courthouse Square Bldg. in Washington. Field trip to follow on Saturday March 17 (Read on for more details).

Experimental Forest. In May of 2005, I graduated from Penn State with a B.S. in Forest Science. Upon graduation, I acquired a job in Maryland once again but this time it was in the central portion of the State. I was hired as a service forester to work in the Howard and Montgomery County area. I spent 8 months there before accepting a position with the Bureau of Forestry last April.

It is good to be back in the area close to my family and friends. I am finally settled into my office on 195 East High Street in Waynesburg. You can reach me either by phone at (724) 627-6624 or by email at ralcampbel@state.pa.us. I look forward to meeting and working with everyone throughout the Washington and Greene County area.

Deer Proof Landscape Plants

This has been a tough winter on my trees and shrubs, as far as deer grazing goes. Yearly, I cover my magnolias, azaleas and dogwoods with burlap to protect them from deer browsing over the winter. This is certainly unsightly, however it appears to ward off the deer and the plants continue to produce beautiful blooms in the spring. With the late winter this year, the deer were struggling. I know I almost hit one with my car, as I was gunning it up my snowy driveway one evening. This year the deer were grazing right up against the house and I now have interesting arborvitae topiaries. This time of year I start to plan my gardening projects. I plan out some additions that I want to add to my landscape as I look through catalogs and gardening magazines. My sites this year are set on deer proof plants. Searching the internet, I came up with a top deer proof plants list that was published in a journal called "Fine Gardening". Here is the list with my comments on the particular plant that will grow in the southwest Pennsylvania zone.

Trees and shrubs

1. Beautybush (*Kolkwitzia amabilis*) This is a deciduous shrub that grows to about 5' tall fairly slowly. Its redeeming feature is a distinct purple berry in the fall that persists into the winter after the leaves have fallen.
2. Daphnes (*Daphne X Burkwoodii*) This is a really beautiful broadleaf evergreen that looks a little like an azalea without the flowers. The leaves are variegated white and

green and look nice in a mixed shrub border.

3. Shadbush (*Amelanchier*) These tall, deciduous, multi-stemmed shrubs have an all season appeal. In spring there is an early white flower that appears before it leafs. In summer it has a nice deep green leaf against its light grey, muscular stems. In Fall the leaves turn a brilliant red-orange-scarlet and in winter, the light grey muscular branches appear interesting in the landscape. These shrubs grow to be about the same size as lilac but do not spread. They look nice against the background of a house or in a mixed shrub planting.

4. Spireas (*Spireas*) There are many varieties of this deciduous flowering shrub. There are small mound like habits as well as tall vase like habits. Flowers appear as small round "bouquets" or long spikes. Flower colors vary from pinks to white. Fall foliage in spireas has appeal also.

Our First Meeting of the Year

March 14 Meeting Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP)

The speaker this month is Shawn Cunningham, an Agriculture Conservation scientist from the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy. The meeting will start at 7:00 PM in the first floor meeting room, Courthouse

Square Building, 100 W. Beau Street, Washington, PA (Free Parking: enter through the Beau Street B-Level entrance at the base of the Courthouse Square Building). If you attended any of our programs last year you may have heard about the CREP program from one of our officers, Joe McNaney. If you have traveled around Greene and Washington counties you may have seen the workings of the CREP program. Sites that I have seen include one along Rt. 18 in southern Washington county, Arlyn Perkey's Greene County tree farm, and one in the Enlow Forks area of Greene County (I missed a turn on my way to last year's Wildflower walk). At our meeting, a representative from the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy will talk on the benefits of this program. The official name of the program in our area is Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program for the Ohio River Watershed. It is a cost share program for implementing conservation practices that prevent erosion of soil into streambeds. This erosion can be caused by livestock or even by the steep terrain that all of us have on our properties. Conservation practices supported by this

program include planting native grasses on steep hay fields, stream bank fencing, installing stock tanks, and native tree and shrub planting along streambeds. If you are interested in finding out the details of the program, please attend this meeting. It will be a good chance to interact with representatives from the CREP program as well as other landowners and to have an informative discussion on CREP. A field trip will be held on Saturday, March 17, to visit a CREP site. It will be held at Joe McNaney's Tree Farm in NE Greene County, PA. Directions will be available at the Wednesday meeting or you may car pool by meeting at Building #10, Greene County Fairgrounds, Waynesburg, PA at 12:30 PM. This trip will begin at 1:00 PM at Joe's farm. They usually last until about 4:00 PM. Please dress appropriately for the weather and wear good walking shoes.

Calendar of Meetings for the 2007 Year

Below is the tentative schedule of meetings for our new year. Mark your calendars.

- **April 11 Meeting**
Coalbed Methane Extraction:
Landowner Rights
Law Student (to be determined), U.

- Pittsburgh School of Law, and
Dr. Tom Buchele, U. Pittsburgh School
of Law
Time: 7:00 PM
Place: First Floor Meeting Room,
Courthouse Square Building, 100 W.
Beau Street, Washington, PA
Free Parking: enter through the Beau
Street **B-Level** entrance at the base of
the Courthouse Square Building
- **May 9 Meeting
Birdhouses, Bathouses and Wildlife
Management**
To be determined
Time: 7:00 PM
Place: Building #10, Greene County
Fairgrounds, Waynesburg, PA
 - **May 12 Field Trip
Washington County Bird Sanctuary
(??)**
To be determined
Time: 12:30 PM
Meet at: Building #10, Greene County
Fairgrounds, Waynesburg, PA
 - **June 9 Field Trip
Observing Bats and Exploring Wood
Art**
Burnham's Tree Farm
Time: 12:00 PM
Meet at: Building #10, Greene County
Fairgrounds, Waynesburg, PA
 - **July 14 Summer Tour
Diamonds in the Brush and Cubic
Zirconium: Young Tree Plantations**
Time: 12:30 PM
Thistle's Tree Farm
Meet at: Building #10, Greene County
Fairgrounds, Waynesburg, PA
 - **August 18 Summer Tour
Woodland Plant Identification**
Raccoon Creek State Park
Time: 12:00 PM
Meet at: Building #10, Greene County
Fairgrounds, Waynesburg, PA
 - **September 12 Meeting
Mushrooms and Decomposers**
Speaker to be determined
Time: 7:00 PM
Place: Building #10, Greene County
Fairgrounds, Waynesburg, PA
 - **September 15 Field Trip
Identifying Mushrooms in Your
Woodlands**
Place to be determined
Time: 12:00 PM
Meet at: Building #10, Greene County
Fairgrounds, Waynesburg, PA
 - **October 20 Picnic with Plant
Identification Competition and
Potato Gun Competition
(Members Only)**
Time and Place to be determined
 - **November 14 Meeting
Successful Management of
Woodlands Through Low Impact
Logging**

- Jim Finley (??)
Time: 7:00 PM
Place: Courthouse Square Building
Washington, PA
- **November 17 Field Trip
Tree Felling, Horse Logging, and
Timber Sawing**
John Burnham's Tree Farm

Local Wildflower Identification Book Available

Copies of "Wildflowers of Pennsylvania" by Mary Jo Haywood and Phyllis Testal Monk will be available for purchase at our next meeting. Mary Jo Haywood gives wildflower tours during the Enlow Forks Wildflower walk. She is a retired Botanist from Carlow College in Pittsburgh and has property in Greene County. This book is a nice companion book to easier guides, like Peterson's guide to wildflowers. I like this guide because it is focused on flowers found in Pennsylvania so it gives more detail on each plant. The photos are good, however it is not a sturdy enough book to bring out in the field with you since it is spiral bound. I bring Peterson's in the field and then I'll look in this guide when I get home and note time and place that I saw the particular flower. The guides are available for about \$21.40 I will have about 25 books and will available to handle the sales before and after the March meeting.

ENLOW FORKS Wildflower Walk

A great Greene County tradition to welcome spring is the annual Enlow Forks Wildflower Walk. It will be held on April 29th this year so mark your calendars. This event is held at a beautiful spot called Enlow Forks near Wind Ridge, PA. The day starts early in the morning with a birding walk lead by Ralph Bell and wildflower tours are given all day. The featured wildflower is the Blue Eyed Mary (*Collinsia verna*) which is listed as a plant of special concern because it has become rare to find. You will not get that impression at Enlow however because this flower blankets the forest floor along with the many colored Trilliums and the wide variety of early spring flowering plants.

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. 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 and give him the web address. He is looking for interesting links and photos to post on our site.

Committee for the year 2007

Officers

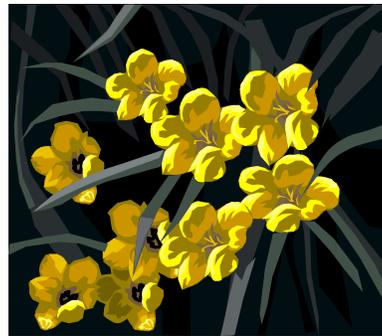
Harold Thistle- President
Bob Daley - Vice Pres.
Nadine Obermiller- Secretary
Earl Novendstern- Treasurer

Board of Directors

Joe McNaney
Max Loughman
Maria Piantanida

Advisors

Bill Wentzel` Arlyn Perkey
John Burnham- Past President



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

SWPWO

Plight of the Chestnuts

We had an interesting speaker at our last meeting in November of 2006. Gregory Miller of the Empire Chestnut Company of Carrollton, OH, gave an informative presentation on the American Chestnut tree which was once the "heart of the eastern forests". In the early 1900's, a blight was brought to the United States and by 1950, the chestnut populations were reduced by over 99% by this fungal disease. In 1983, the American Chestnut Tree Foundation was established to work at developing a resistant chestnut so that our forests could be populated with the abundant tree once again. Greg Miller runs a chestnut tree farm where he sells nuts and blight resistant tree seedlings. He has worked on developing a blight resistant chestnut that more closely resembles the American Chestnut tree. The Chinese chestnut has been our substitute but the flavor of the nuts is not as good as the American. His current hybrid has the best tasting nuts so far. Greg did bring nuts for us to sample and they were good. View his website at www.empirechestnut.com. Join the American Chestnut Society to support this effort at www.acf.org. The talk was enjoyable and interesting.

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 or Gay Thistle at 724-499-5190 thistle@windstream.net