

# SWPWO



March 2008

## *Southwestern Pennsylvania Woodland Owners*



### **March 12 Meeting Tree Identification by Bark, Branch and Bud**

Would you like to walk through your woods and recognize each species you encounter by glancing at the bark and in some cases looking at the branch and bud characteristics? Eight determined fellow SWPWO members have been pursuing that goal since mid-January 2008. They invite you to share their learning experience by hearing a portion of what they learned while attending 4 Saturday classes in the woods during January and February. There will be many photos of the branch, bark and bud characteristics of the 18 species of trees that were the focus of the classes.

Fellow member and President of the PA Game Commission, Roxanne Palone will give us an update on the deer populations.

**A field trip will follow on Saturday, March 15.** We will be walking around the Core Arboretum in Morgantown, WV to look at bark, branches and buds of the many species that grow in the arboretum. Arlyn Perkey, retired, US Forest Service will lead us on this hike.

This natural learning lab has a wide variety of species that are labeled with aluminum name tags to welcome the novice tree identifier to the woods. Of course the students will be shunning those labeled trees to show they can correctly identify 18 species that have been the focus of their course work. Directions can be found on the SWPWO website or we will meet at 12:30 PM at the Greene County fairgrounds, building #10, to carpool.

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### **Alternative SWPWO Newsletter**

In May 2008, the cost to mail this newsletter will increase again. In the interest of not raising our membership dues and in conserving paper, we would like to offer our members an option to be notified when the newsletter is posted on the website in lieu of receiving a hard copy of the newsletter via the U.S. postal service. 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)

## July 19 Summer Tour Reservation

On Saturday, July 19, 2008, we are going to try something a little different as far as a summer tour goes. We will be taking a trip to the Slippery Rock area to take a guided tour of Jennings Environmental Education Center. A unique attraction at the center is its relict prairie, which includes the spectacular and well-known prairie flower, the blazing star. The relict prairie ecosystem is rare in Pennsylvania. It will be peak prairie wildflower season and we will hear about the preservation tactics for a rare and endangered rattlesnake habitat. From the center we will move to downtown Slippery Rock for lunch at a Brewery which is what we consider today- a green business. The energy, hops and artwork are all from local vendors. For transportation, we plan to rent a van or bus. The van will stop in Greene County, Washington County and in Allegheny County to pick up members on the way. An estimated cost for transportation will be between \$20.-\$40. depending on the number of interested persons. If you would like to go on this trip, please e-mail me (Gay Thistle) at [thistle@windstream.net](mailto:thistle@windstream.net) and I will put your name down. Money is not due at this time. I will let you know what it will cost as we approach the date. Please give me your reservation **by the April 2, 2008** meeting so that I can reserve the size van/bus that we will need.



## Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI)

We hear the term sustainable forestry in many of our educational programs at SWPWO. There is a program to certify wood products that have been harvested using sustainable forestry methods. As consumers and members of an organization that teaches people how to manage their forests, we should be aware of what exactly this certification means so that we can educate ourselves and others. The SFI is a forest products certification program developed by the American Forest & Paper Association (AF&PA). It establishes principles and guidelines, based on sustainable forestry principles that its numerous members must comply with. Further, it requires member companies to also address broader forest policy goals.

### Sustainable Forestry Criteria

- Maintain the structural and functional integrity of the forest as an ecosystem.
- Meet the diverse needs of the human community.
- Commit the technological, financial, and human resources needed for implementation.

While these are broad terms, it is a start to actively supporting sustainable forestry methods when consumers purchase only wood products with the SFI certification. *From Temperate Forest Foundation and edited by Gay Thistle*

## The Summer That Wasn't

1816 is considered the year that had no summer in the northern hemisphere. In southern Quebec, Canada, between 1"-2" of snow fell on June 6 to 10. This was only one of a series of cold spells that affected the area and killed crops. In northern New England, U.S., a widespread frost hit the low-lying areas on July 8-9th and on August 22nd a frost was recorded from New England to North Carolina, damaging crops. In Connecticut and New York, frosts were recorded during every month of the year of 1816. As a result of these poor crop conditions, many northeastern farmers gave up their farms and migrated to the midwestern United States. Europe was experiencing similar devastating weather conditions which compounded the economic problems that were resulting from the Napoleonic Wars. Famine was widespread as farmers lost their crops to continuous frosts. Food riots were reported in France and Switzerland and many Europeans lost their lives to starvation related diseases (typhus) and famine. This bad weather in Europe is said to have inspired Mary Shelley to write her novel "Frankenstein". At the time, sunspots were blamed for this unusual weather. It wasn't until the 1980's that scientists related this cooler summer in the northern hemisphere to the largest volcanic eruption ever recorded.

The biggest volcanic eruption ever recorded in human history took place on April 1815 on an island called Sunbawa in Indonesia. The volcano is named Tambora and its

explosion was ten times bigger than Krakatoa and more than a hundred times bigger than Vesuvius or Mt. St. Helens. Volcanologists study the effects of past volcanoes by looking at soil layers as well as the layers in ice cores from the arctic regions of the Earth. Evidence from these sources confirms this unusually large explosion. The eruption went into the atmosphere 30 miles and dumped 150 million tons of ash and pumice into the air. This debris along with the gases released were distributed around the globe by stratospheric winds. The ash actually blocked sunlight from reaching the surface of the Earth. The volcanic gases react with water vapor in the atmosphere and create a veil over the Earth. This veil acts as a mirror, bouncing light from the sun back into space. The reduction of sunlight during the growing season in the northern hemisphere caused an average temperature drop of 3-5 °F during the summer of 1816. This sort of thing has happened from time to time in history. In 1991, the eruption of Mount Pinatuba in the Philippines cooled global temperatures by around one half of a degree in 1992. As time went on, ash particulates fell to the ground and the gases dissipated, as weather conditions normalized.

Written by Gay Thistle with sources submitted by Nadine Obermiller, npr.org, Oct. 22, 2007 *Morning Edition* article, and from [www.dandantheweatherman/Bereklauw/yearnosummer.html](http://www.dandantheweatherman/Bereklauw/yearnosummer.html), 1/16/2008.



## **SWPWO Calendar of Events for 2008**

### **March 12 Meeting: Tree Identification by Bark, Branch and Bud**

Speaker(s): Arlyn Perkey and Students  
7:00 PM at the Washington County Courthouse Square building. Parking for the Wednesday evening meeting is free: enter through the Beau Street B-Level entrance at the base of the Courthouse Square Building.

### **March 15 Field Trip: Tree Identification by Bark, Branch and Bud**

1:00 PM at the Core Arboretum in Morgantown, West Virginia To carpool meet at 12:30 PM at the Greene County Fairgrounds, building #10

**April 2 Meeting: Invasive Species of SW Pennsylvania** Speaker: Andrew Liebold, US Forest Service. 7:00 PM at the Greene County Fairgrounds, Building #10.

**April 5 Field Trip: Tree Planting Tools and Techniques.** Time will be 1:00 PM. Place to be determined. Members and friends of SWPWO are encouraged to bring tools of the trade (of tree planting and care) to share and demonstrate with others. The trip will include demonstrations of the proper technique to plant trees for successful growth and also provide hands-on opportunities for members to practice the art of tree planting.

### **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. 7:00 PM at the Greene County Fairgrounds, Building #10

**May 17 Field Trip: Visit to an Oak and Maple Stand** with Arlyn Perkey, US Forest Service (Ret). Arlyn will lead us on a tour of the managed forest described on May 14 in Greene County. 1:00 PM at Arlyn Perkey's Tree Farm in SW Greene County.

### **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. We will have the van or bus meet at three different places; 7:30 AM at the Greene County Fairgrounds, Building #10, At 8:00 AM in Washington, PA and 8:45 near Pittsburgh. More details will be printed in upcoming newsletters.

### **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)

**Educational Opportunities:  
Western PA Woodlands and  
Wildlife Conference**

On Saturday, March 29, 2008, a conference will be held that may interest some of our members. It will take place at the Four Points Sheraton Hotel in Greensburg, PA. The cost is \$35.00. Topics vary from managing your woodlot for timber and wildlife to oil, gas and mineral leases. Brochures for this conference will be available at the March 12 meeting or you can contact the Westmorland County Cooperative Extension at 724-837-1402. Registration is due by March 24. submitted by Ralph Campbell

**Tax Tips for Forest  
Landowners**

There is a tax tip sheet published by the USDA Forest Service, especially for the year 2007. The website link is;

**<http://rnrext.cas.psu.edu/PDFs/TaxTips07.pdf>**

It has been a while since SWPWO has had a program on forest taxation. We do have one planned for November of 2008 but it will not help for this tax season. So check it out.

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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*



**Officers**

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

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**Advisors**

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- Ralph Campbell**
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**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).

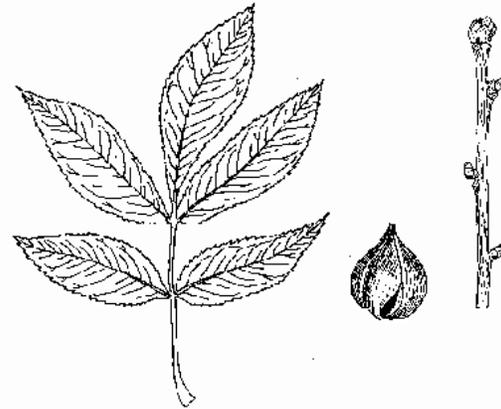
This website is available to us because of the talents and time of webmaster and officer, Bob Daley. The SWPWO website has the calendar of events for 2007, current information about our group, and photos from our outings. If you find a website that may interest others in our group e-mail Bob Daley at [daley@cs.pitt.edu](mailto:daley@cs.pitt.edu) and give him the web address.

## **Pignut Hickory (*Carya glabra*)**

Pignut hickory is a common tree of eastern North America. It is an upland slope species in dry woods, primarily on hillsides and along dry ridges in the North. In the South, it will grow on low ground with other bottomland hardwoods in deep, moist, well-drained soils. It ranges from Ontario to central Florida, and from the east coast to the Mississippi River from southern Michigan to Mississippi. Pignut hickory reaches 50'-60' high growing on dry ridgetops and slopes throughout the southern half of Pennsylvania.

The wood is a valued lumber as are other hickories. It has hard and heavy wood. It is used to manufacture handles for different tools, floorings, cabinets, and veneer for furniture. Historically, the wood was made into wooden wheels because it is dense, has bending qualities, and can withstand compression and shock better than most other woods. Early settlers were able to boil the bark in vinegar to extract a black dye.

Although the nuts are too bitter for human use, they are an important food for wildlife. The pignut hickory nuts are important in the diets of squirrels, chipmunks, raccoons, black bears, foxes, rabbits, birds, smaller rodents, and whitetail deer. Its relatives include the pecan tree (*Carya illinoensis*) and black walnut (*Juglans nigra*), two of the most important native nut trees in North America.



**pignut hickory**

### **April Newsletter**

The next newsletter should be mailed the week of March 24, 2008. The editor is always looking for contributions of articles of interest or your stories of the time you spend in your woods. Deadline to submit is March 20, 2008. Please e-mail to [thistle@windstream.net](mailto:thistle@windstream.net). from Gay Thistle

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### **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