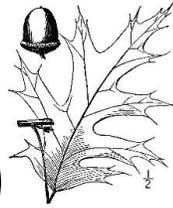


# SWPWO



August 2009

## ***Southwestern Pennsylvania Woodland Owners***

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### **Next Meeting: Friday, August 14 Visit a Commercial Sawmill Operation**

SWPWO members and friends will have an opportunity to visit a commercial sawmill and all of the up-to-date machinery involved in a modern lumber operation. Member Mike Irvin had visited this sawmill previously and has arranged this visit.

The tour of Summit Forest Resources, Inc will begin at 1:00 PM on Friday August 14. Directions to the sawmill are available on the SWPWO website

([www.cs.pitt.edu/~daley/swpwo](http://www.cs.pitt.edu/~daley/swpwo)) or meet at the Foundation Coal Aquatics Center parking lot (across the street on Rt 21 from the fairgrounds) at 11:30 AM to carpool or follow (The Greene County Fair is taking place at the fairgrounds).



*Please note changes to  
calendar printed on the last  
page*

### **Review of Forest Management Concepts: Highlights of the July 18 Summer Tour**

It was an unusually cool summer day on Saturday July 18, when SWPWO members met for a tour of Dave and Bobbi Cressey's remote woodland near New Freeport, PA. This weather was perfect for our hike around the Cressey's hills and hollows. Dave prepared us for the tour with a written history of the property. The land had been used as a self-sustaining family farm until the 1940's. In the 1920's the coal and gas boom came to Greene County and the use of wood for heat was lessened because of "free gas" allowing some of the land to begin reforestation. The land stopped providing for the family in the 1940's upon the death of the head of the household.

This tour was meant to be a review of forestry management practices and there was much to learn. Arlyn Perkey and Dave led us through the tour and included a review of forestry concepts that will help us all manage our own properties.

Our first stop on the tour was in a woodlot located on a moderate slope between an open field on a ridge and an old fence line that was also a property line. Dave pointed out the remnant old trees which had defined the border between landowners and their different land use activities. Dave's land had been pastureland until the 1940's. His neighbor's land appeared to have a somewhat different history. After agricultural use on Dave's land stopped, vegetation transitioned from grass to a nice stand of mostly sugar maples (*Acer saccharinum*) with Black oaks (*Quercus velutina*) White ash (*Fraxinus american*) and Tulip poplar (*Liriodendron tulipifera*) interspersed. Even though most of the trees that occupy the former pasture are over 50 years old, they are not all the same size. We humans have an inclination to equate tree size with tree age. That is a common misconception.

Are you taller than your siblings? Does this mean you are older? This same variability exists in trees. Do you know families of people that are tall? If you always cut down the tallest oaks, eventually you are left with genetic stock that produces shorter oaks. This is the negative effect of 'high grading' in logging practices. In other cases, trees are smaller simply because they are the individuals that are losing in the competitive race for resources (light, water, nutrients, and space). Some may be smaller because their species is less well adapted to growing on that site than competitive species. Others may be smaller because their species has a different growth pattern, that is, they grow slower when young, but more rapidly in later life. The bottom line is, small trees are often not

younger than the larger trees growing around them.

We spent time looking for the seed sources for this mix. This helped us understand the history of current tree establishment on this site. We found large sugar maples along the fence line, a larger black oak and remnants of some felled black oaks a little removed from the fence line. An unusually large yellow-poplar (approximately 40" dbh (diameter at breast height)) with a widespread crown is the presumed parent for many of the 12 to 18 inch even-aged siblings. This open-grown remnant in the heart of the old pasture was a clear representative of the older generation, contrasting with the more typical tall, straight, single-stemmed form of the more densely grown second generation.

The understory was not too crowded since Dave has been busy cutting out the invasive plants. Present on the floor were native plants such as greenbriar, sugar and red maples, and a few hickory seedlings. Arlyn pointed out that remnants of many heritage plant populations can be found near old fence lines where their presence was maintained during the agricultural era. Now, after agricultural use has been abandoned, their population is slowly expanding into the adjoining area. He made the point that we should be cautious when we are making foliar applications of herbicides near old fence lines. These fence-line locations can harbor native plants are valuable to our woodlands and important to many landowners. Controlling invasive species can greatly help desirable native species re-occupy former agricultural land. However, we need to avoid spraying desirable plants when

targeting the undesirable invasives. One such native heritage plant we found on Dave's property was Sweet Cicely (*Osmorhiza claytoni*). Another one that Arlyn has found in his own woods along fence lines is Black cohosh (*Cimicifuga racemosa*).

The tour continued and species composition shifted with seed source availability, aspect (direction of slope), and position-on-the-slope. Aspects with northeast facing slopes are cool and moist in contrast to southwest facing slopes that are hot and dry. Other slopes have temperature/moisture conditions between these two extremes. Locations that are high on a slope (on and near ridges) are generally dryer than locations that are low on a slope. Water drains down hill.

In many areas the understory was generally open due to Dave's invasive species work. Many smaller maples were growing in the midstory because they are a shade tolerant species that can "hang out" until an opportunity for light and space opens up. American beech (*Fagus grandifolia*) is another shade tolerant species (like sugar maple) that can grow very slowly and often remain relatively small in diameter under the canopy of larger trees, waiting for an opportunity to access additional light and space.

Unlike sugar maple and American beech, tulip poplar (*Liriodendron tulipifera*) is not shade tolerant and will not do well in the understory of larger trees. The tour continued into a stand of young yellow-poplars standing within a field with plenty of light. Dave said that this stand began in 1994 when the field was not bush hogged due to technical problems. Yellow-poplars do best in

cooler, well drained sites. This northeast facing slope is on the cool side and probably has well-drained, loamy soil.

From the top of the Dave's hill we glimpsed the highest point in Greene County just one hill over. We walked over the peak of the hill and down the other side where the aspect was south. South facing slopes are relatively warm, dry sites. We were walking along a fence line where the hay had not been cut in a few years. Many ash, hickory, and oak seedlings were establishing in the field. Unfortunately, autumn olive was also encroaching. The plants were still small and Arlyn recommended that Dave apply a foliar spray of glyphosate (brand names: Round-up, Ranger Pro, etc.) to control these very aggressive invasive species. Summer is a good time to spray glyphosate to kill weeds like autumn olive, multiflora-rose, bush honeysuckle, and Japanese barberry. Again, Dave will need to be careful and avoid getting the spray on the desirable tree seedlings.

Continuing our walk downhill deeper into the hollow on this south slope we came upon Sassafras (*Sassafras albidum*), white ash (*Fraxinus americana*), Black walnut (*Juglans nigra*), and a good amount of Butternut (*Juglans cinerea*). The unusual sightings were a clump of very large Sassafras trees of about 13" dbh and the presence of American linden (*Tilia Americana*) also known as basswood. The presence of basswood in this cove (drainage) is an indication of a richer soil and more abundant moisture than found higher on this south facing slope.

The bottom of the hollow brought us back to the Cressey residence

where Bobbi had been busy cooking hotdogs and laying out a table of food. We watched the many varieties of birds at the feeders while we enjoyed a meal and each others company. Thanks to Bobbi, Dave and Arlyn for another great summer tour. Written by Arlyn Perkey and Gay Thistle

## PA Forest Stewards 2009 Annual Meeting and Picnic

One hundred and forty Forest Stewards gathered last month in Tionesta, Forest County, PA. With rain gear at hand and huddled under a tent to avoid the rain, we savored hot coffee and doughnuts. After attending two of the twelve offered sessions and relishing a well-prepared picnic lunch, a third and final session was offered. Several useful ideas came to mind while driving home through the PA mountains along the Clarion River.

**Session One-** “Cultivating the Next Generation” ~ How can you interest the kids in the natural world of the forest? Most people develop a love of the forest early in life and were mentored by an adult—usually a parent, grandparent, or relative being this influential mentor.

- Plant a family tree plot~ Kids can plant and take ownership of a tree, which is “their tree”.
- Host an annual family picnic.
- Have the kids help name and mark your forest paths.
- Make leaf collections.
- What role could/should our woodland group plays to interest young people?

**Session Two-** “Chestnut Orchard Management”~ The American chestnut program is making progress in developing a blight resistant chestnut.

- Back crossing through controlled pollination is an important tool.

- Growing trees in the program is a rigorously controlled and monitored process. Planting, fertilization schedules, weed control procedures, and detailed record keeping are required.
- Landowners may be able to participate in the program if they can meet the requirements. If interested, contact John Burnham at burnhamjc@msn.com.

**Session Three-** “Recovering from High Grading”~ Take the best and leave the rest forestry.

- You have to grow what you have or undertake a planting program.
- Residual seed trees regardless of form may be your best source of the next forest.
- The sun must strike the forest floor for some seeds to germinate, and therefore the overstory must be removed.
- Recovery may take more than one generation but you have to start.

The PA Forest Stewards are a group of people who have been through stewardship training for two weekends and have committed to spend a minimum of 40 hours working to support spreading the word and advocating responsible forest management.

*Written by John Burnham*

### New Resource for Woodland Owners

Bob Daley also attended the PA Forest Stewards meeting. A list of websites was provided to him that was compiled by other Forest Stewards of PA. Bob has put this extensive list on the SWPWO website with links so that you can find information and vendors that may help answer some of your inquiries. There are links about timber values, timber tax issues, tools and supplies, soils information, etc. Check

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

## Fruits of the Forest

With the dog days of summer comes the harvest of the fruits of the forest. Right now the blackberries are ripening. The recent rains have helped plump them up. I pick a bucket of newly ripened berries on my morning walks with the dogs. They entertain me as I watch them pick and eat the berries on the lower branches, carefully, with their "lips". The recipe below does not take many berries- so a short session of picking will give you a great dessert (if you don't eat too many in the process) and is fairly easy to assemble and is one of my favorites with raspberries but works well with blackberries. Enjoy!

### Blackberry Tart

One 9" pie crust, precooked and cooled

1-1.5 cups cleaned and drained blackberries

Hint: don't put too much water on them or the tart will be soggy

One recipe of pastry cream, cooled. Pastry cream is like a home made vanilla pudding. Look in your cookbooks for a recipe. In a pinch you could use a small box of vanilla pudding if you can stand the artificial flavorings. Homemade pastry cream is worth the little extra effort.

2 T jam or jelly, warmed

When the crust and the pastry cream are cooled and the berries dried, assemble as follows:

Spread a layer of pastry cream about an inch thick onto the bottom of the cooked and cooled pie crust. Arrange individual berries on top the pasty cream one layer thick. Pour warm jelly or jam on top of berries. Cool

entire tart. Serve that day with whipped cream. This tart does best when it is served the day it is assembled. There has never been a problem getting rid of this tart in my experience. *Written by Gay Thistle adopted from Glorious Food by Christopher Idone*



### Our SWPWO Website

[www.cs.pitt.edu/~daley/swpwo](http://www.cs.pitt.edu/~daley/swpwo) for the most up to date information about our organization and connections to other resources to help you manage your woodlot

### Executive Committee for the year 2009

#### 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

### 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*

## **2009 SWPWO Schedule of Events**

### **September 9 Meeting Owls of SW PA**

Rodney Burns, PA Wildlife Conservation Officer will speak to us about owls that are commonly found in our area . We will learn about their habits and habitats. Time: 7:00 PM Place: Building #10, Greene Country Fairgrounds, Waynesburg, PA

### **September 12 Field Trip Owl Spotting Tour**

Note Unusual Time

Time: 6:30 PM. Place to be determined.

### **October 17 Picnic with Plant Identification Competition and Potato Gun Competition**

(Members, Friends and Family)

Time: To be determined

Place: To be determined

### **NEW DATE!!**

### **November 4 Meeting**

#### **Managing Your Forests: Where to Begin**

Arlyn Perkey, US Forest Service (Ret.), and John Burnham, Past President SWPWO .Do you have a Stewardship Plan, but still find yourself struggling with the questions of what should I do, where should I do it, and how should I do it? Maybe starting to manage a few acres with good access will help you build your confidence. 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

### **NEW DATE!!**

### **November 7 Field Trip**

### **Visit to a Recently Treated and Untreated Portion of John Burnham's Forest Land**

This field trip will visit the woods discussed at the previous meeting. We will look at a similar untreated portion of the woods. We will discuss observations about the site and alternatives for landowners to consider. We will look at what John decided to do and talk about how he did it. You can decide how it looks to you. We will discuss how it is likely to change in the next 20 years. Time: 1:00 PM. Place: John Burnham's Woodlot in SW Washington County

Meet at 12:30 PM at Building #10, Greene Country Fairgrounds, Waynesburg, PA.

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### **Membership Information For 2009**

**Membership dues for 2009 will be collected at the meetings or can be sent to:**

**SWPWO  
2506 Hollywood Dr  
Pittsburgh, PA 15235**

**If sending in dues, please include name, address, phone number and an e-mail address. Membership to the Southwestern Pennsylvania Woodland Owners Association is \$10 per year for an individual and \$15 per year for a household.**

### **Newsletter Info.**

This newsletter is published about eight times each year. The editors are Gay Thistle and John Burnham. Articles written by our members are welcome. Please submit them to Gay at [thistle@windstream.net](mailto:thistle@windstream.net). Next newsletter- around September 2, 2009