

# SWPWO



Birch Leaf

**Southwest PENNA Woodland Owners Assoc.**

**August 2014**

[busybeaver.cs.pitt.edu/swpwo/](http://busybeaver.cs.pitt.edu/swpwo/)

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*Special Issue*

## **BURNHAM WOODLOT BIDS TREE FARMERS ADIEU**

*On July 19, 2014 John and Maureen Burnham hosted a Field Day in East Finley Township that was the culmination of the final national convention of the American Tree Farm Association. It was a spectacular event, to be long remembered.*

*The Burnhams arranged 42 separate activities, demonstrating vividly the bounty of opportunities that are available to the engaged landowner. Tents and canopies had been placed throughout the 500-acre property, and a transportation system devised to ferry folks from point to point. The cream of Pennsylvania forestry was on hand, a reminder of the can-do spirit of our State. Some 300 people partook.*

*SWPWO was privileged to be part of this day. Below, some of our members, and a gate crusher, share their experiences.*

### **“AN ARRAY OF FOREST LANDOWNERS”**

As tour guides on the bus from the Pittsburgh Convention Center we saw people come alive with interest when the bus exited I-79 in Washington County. Comments abounded on the rolling hills and attractive countryside. As we made our turn onto Birch Road all were awed by the beautiful large trees and good condition of the road. Kudos to the East Finley Township road supervisors for their efforts. Throughout the day we noticed many enjoying the walk on Birch Road.

The Field Day events provided an excellent way to interact with a fascinating array of forest landowners from all over the country. At one of the Health Forest events I met a couple from California that manage redwood trees. I observed a fellow from New Hampshire seeking advice from our DCNR foresters on how to best implement his forestry NRCS practices. A couple from the Washington DC area gathered all types of information, from bees to chestnut trees to drones, for their family forest in Ohio. The list of people interactions goes on and on. A sense of community was apparent. It was just a wonderful day to meet new people, learn about their forestry interests, and see what SWPWO is a part of. John, Maureen and Gay, and their committee, did a superb job pulling the Field Day together.

And, our favorite volunteer of the day was SWPWO member and Kubota driver, Ryan Egidi. He quickly moved people along the route, always with a smile, full of helpful information, and just a delight to be with. And wow.... how he could handle that machine!

----Janet Sredy



pottery to popcorn and Klondike bars-- there was something for everyone. The other memory that will linger is the amazing turnout of volunteers. John and Maureen's family, friends, and neighbors--along with SWPWO members--pitched in to set up tents, move picnic tables, direct traffic, and serve as ambassadors for the woodland owners of SW Pennsylvania. I felt so proud (and humble) to be a part of this monumental undertaking and the group of people who made it such a success.

**Maria Piantanida**

### **FATE AND PRUNING IN EAST FINLEY**

My editor told me to be at a crossroads on the border of Washington and Greene Counties, in the hinterlands of SW Pennsylvania, damn near West Virginia, at the ungodly hour of 7 AM. Report on the Field Day proceedings, he said. I was only a little late. The morning was off to a soggy start as I parted an archway of trees on the country lane that led to Tree Farm Central. The coffee and donuts were awesome, plentiful, and free.

The price of admission was that I direct the buses arriving from Pittsburgh off the State highway and down that impossibly picturesque and narrow lane. It wasn't exactly air traffic control. I waited in vain for the 5<sup>th</sup> bus, and if it ever had arrived I fully expect it to have been day-glo orange, with Kesey, Cassidy and the Merry Pranksters on board, now tree farmers all, with select mushroom patches down in their "hollers".

Back at the Farm—more joe—I was designated an attaché to the President of SWPWO, which is a local cult obsessed with combating invaders. The President was disguised as a buoyant woman, neither young nor old, of pleasant appearance. Down the rabbit hole we sloshed, and what a wonderland we encountered. There was:

- ❖ The enthusiasms of the star Envirothon teacher from Carmichaels, and those of the nearby Girl Scout contingent.
- ❖ A 1700's frontier encampment that sighed authenticity.
- ❖ The 2,000 acre fellow from Maine who, leaving his wife behind in the muck, bounced merrily along to a keenly anticipated confab with A. Perkey
- ❖ The totally jazzed young jitney driver parachuted in from an alternative, much friendlier, universe.

As my 11<sup>th</sup> mug of salted four ply Nicaraguan ambrosia bean kicked in, I set out to find kite boy. I followed the path leading from the tantalizing "kite boy" sign, alone, coursing through a maturing woods, rounding the top of a gulch and into an open upland meadow. And there He was, a metallic figure at the summit, beckoning, seemingly with my soul on his string. I had gained such altitude that the bottles of water left so thoughtfully in a cooler at his feet were frozen solid.

The hills reverberated under the liquid sky. Band music wafted up from below, along with the revv of a tractor pulling vehicles out of the mire. Woodstock meets Martha Stewart, with a mud bog/ tractor pull thrown in for giggles. My head was exploding. (I swear I saw a drone cruising the rim of the valley. PU-TIN!)

I wouldn't get any closer to heaven, or a signal, than this. I un-holstered my "smart phone"—I was connected!—punched up my editor, and pressed SEND.

***Ghost written by Hunter S. Thompson, 1937-2005.***

***He begged for the assignment.***

## LIFE LESSONS

It was very nice weather the day before and quite nice the day after. Sandwiched in between was July 19, and yes, it rained during the time of greatest field tour activity. Did it discourage some from attending: yes, I would guess so. But, it didn't ruin my day. I was leading the tours on the crop tree management trail. Needless to say, I didn't compete well with those under the canopy of the nearby tent.

However, the folks that came with me were an absolute delight. They were dedicated to learning and got individual attention, with no rush to get back to the starting point. Participants seemed very appreciative, and I enjoyed sharing with them. Besides, I was able to see and talk with several old friends from my former "working days" life. That is always a joy.

Thank you John and Maureen and all who helped make this day possible. It was serious work, but it turned out well. Okay, some got stuck in the mud at the end, but isn't that part of life? They got help getting out didn't they? That part of the experience had to be memorable.

----Arlyn Perkey

## NEXT EVENT

**August 9 Field Trip  
SAT, 1- 4 PM**

**Hunting Hills Sporting Clays**

A guided vehicular tour of wildlife habitat development. Hunting Hills was founded in 1967 by Roy and Sally Sisler. They oversee 750 scenic acres—including ponds and streams, meadows and uplands--with a goal of wildlife conservation. Join us for a look at what it takes to manage land for wildlife.

**Hunting Hills/ 229 Hunting Hill Rd/ Greensboro PA 15338**  
<http://huntinghillspa.com> for directions and general information  
**Meet at the Hunting Hills Lodge**

**A Group will also be leaving at 12:30, from the Aldi's parking lot at the far end of Greene Plaza, near I-79. (our usual meeting spot at the Fairgrounds is unavailable because the Greene County Fair will be in full swing)**      *Car pool phone: 724-963-8575*

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