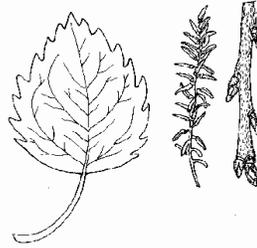


# SWPWO



*Bigtooth aspen*

**Southwest PENNA Woodland Owners Association**

**July 2012**

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

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## ***NEXT FIELD TRIP***

**July 14 Summer Tour**

**SAT, 1 to 4**

**W.A. Young & Sons Machine Shop & Foundry in Rice's Landing, PA**

This historical gem, which serviced the boating trades on the Monongahela River from 1900 to 1965, is a belt-driven facility featuring 25 fully operational machines, some dating to 1870. Wooden pulleys are mounted to the ceiling and were powered by a steam engine. The foundry section includes the original coke furnace and metal ladles. The site is now managed by Rivers of Steel National Heritage Area.

We are privileged indeed to receive a private tour, led by the very personable George "Bly" Blystone, of this well-preserved treasure.

**Meet at the Greene County Fairgrounds, Bldg. #10 by 12:30; or consult Internet mapping sources for directions to Rice's Landing.**

## ***HICKORY RIDGE FARM***

Proving there is more than one SWPWO couple who patrols their 55 acres with a brown dog named Riley, 14 of the faithful gathered on June 9 in the rolling farmland of Washington County to get a first hand look at the dream of Bob & Deb Hanes.

The great challenge of owning country property these days is blending the old with the new. Bob has an impressive collection of vintage Allis-Chambers tractors, while just across the property line looms the whirrr of the decidedly modern regional compressor station powering the gathering pipelines of the Marcellus Shale natural gas bonanza. Trees along an old fence line provide good cover, which Bob & Deb are augmenting by planting and maintaining a corridor of fast growing pines and hardwoods.

One of the benefits of the member tours is to see familiar things in new places. We got a look at mile a minute weed and oriental bittersweet, viney invasives that can overtake an edge habitat quickly. Load up the backpack sprayer and be quick on the draw, no questions asked. The sharp-eyed among us picked out black cohosh and musk mallow along the down sloping wooded edges of the open fields where some cool and damp was to be had. There is a pawpaw purchase in these parts as well, producing edible fruit. The Haneses will gladly provide seeds to interested parties, though Bob reports pawpaws are an "acquired taste". (Where to go for that – Craig's list?)

Next up in the catbird seat: Raul and Janet. August 11, save the date!

## ***THE WORLD ACCORDING TO FINLEY***

If you are a woodland owner or just enjoy woods for their many values, know that our forests are truly under stress. Clearly, some of this is human-caused. Consider how insects and diseases brought to our forests from other places have taken from us important tree species and threaten others. A hundred years ago, chestnut blight from China began extirpating American chestnut. Soon after, American elm was under attack. Then, in the 1930s, gypsy moth began to take its toll on our oaks. In recent years, Pennsylvania's state tree, the Eastern hemlock, has struggled with hemlock wooly adelgid and elongate scale, which will greatly reduce the presence of this important species that shades our streams and provides habitat. Similarly, emerald ash borer is rapidly extending itself across our forests and will likely eliminate all native ash species. The next major threat is the Asian long horned beetle, which will play havoc with oaks and maples.

The invasion of exotic competitive plants adds to the mix of issues affecting forests. It is difficult to remember or to imagine what our woodlands looked like without multiflora rose, bush and Japanese honeysuckle, autumn and Russian olive, barberry, and privet adding their touches of green. Canopies are filled with native grapes and Oriental bittersweet. Invasive tree of heaven, paulownia, mulberry, and buckthorn are not uncommon, especially along forest edges, roadsides, and in old fields. Consider how our Spring woods now take on displays of color that only a few years ago were uncommon. There is the white of garlic mustard flowers, the purples and lavenders of dames' rocket, and the soft greens of Japanese stilt grass. Increasingly Japanese knotweed and mile-a-minute, or tearthumb, fill in forest openings and provide little but aggravation.

In sum, the loss of native trees, competition from native and non-native plants, and changing weather conditions are affecting the composition of our forests and their health. The complexity of native plants is lessening, leading to a simplification of forests -- there are fewer native species. Simplicity may mean that some plants will move into voids left by the loss of a given species. Consider that in the early 1970s red oak was the most common tree in Pennsylvania; now, it is red maple. Over time, as fewer species dominate, resilience changes. An insect, for example Asian long horned beetle, comes to the forest; its opportunity to wreak havoc is high; and overall resilience declines as yet another species enters a spiral of decline and there are fewer species to fill-in the niche that has opened.

As we look at forests and seek to maintain their health, the challenge is to adapt to changing conditions. What can we do to help threatened species; how might we guide the replacement of one species with a native species that fits the change? If one of the variables is climate change, what species, maybe one on the edge of its range, might be introduced? Eastern hemlock's plight could provide such a mitigation scenario. To protect streams losing hemlock cover and threatened with increased water temperatures and detritus from non-native plants, which do not "feed" native stream insects, a mitigation step could be to increase native white pine regeneration while introducing another species such as rhododendron to provide cover and shading.

Stewardship, in its simplest form, is living in a way today that helps conserve resources and options for future generations.

**Jim Finley, Penn State Univ., is the founder of the PA Forest Stewards program**

**Tearing up the Pea Patch** (News & Notes).....**Bob Brown** sends along an article from *Farm and Dairy* pointing out Pennsylvania is ranked first in the U.S. for domestic animal rabies for 2008, 2009, 2010. PA has the raccoon strain of rabies. Make sure your dogs are vaccinated, as hounds are good at running off other animals that might be carriers....**Ken Dufalla**'s bi-weekly column in the *Greene County Messenger* is an excellent ongoing source of information on water issues. Ken's "just the facts, ma'am", science-based approach balances a conservationist's sensibility with an acceptance of heavy industry's essential place in our society. Check it out at: [www.heraldstandard.com/gcm/columns/natures\\_corner](http://www.heraldstandard.com/gcm/columns/natures_corner).....The May 3rd ruling denying a pipeline company's application for PA Public Utility status for purposes of asserting eminent domain powers was a relief for **landowners**. **Peregrine Keystone**, though claiming to be "on the right side of the law", has dropped plans to build a pipeline through Greene, Washington & Fayette Counties....**Judge Farley Toothman**'s curious sentencing of serial waterways polluter **Allan Shipman**, which did not include the recommended jail time, is the talk of the town. Among the oddities: as County Commissioner and in private practice, Mr. Toothman was a strong environmental advocate; on the other hand, the self-described pro-business and anti-regulatory Corbett Administration is arguing for stronger enforcement procedures.

## **2012 Remaining Calendar of Events**

**All meetings, field trips, and tours are free and open to the public**

**August 11 Summer Member Tour**      **SAT, 1 to 4**

### **Becket's Run Woodlands**

Janet Sredy's and Raul Chiesa's 110 acres near Monongahela PA is part of a biodiversity area recovering from the 1948 Donora smog incident and the fragmentation caused by three active gas pipelines and a State Highway. Raul & Janet will focus on their Forest Stewardship Plan and the opportunities they found to meet this forest's challenges.

**September 12 Meeting**      **WED, 7 PM: Waynesburg, PA**

### **Herbicide Use 101**

Christina Becker, Extension Specialist with the Pesticide Education Program at Penn State University, will speak about the safe use of herbicides on common woodland invasives. She will demonstrate proper techniques, tools, and best practices for herbicide use, and will touch on the benefits of becoming a certified pesticide applicator. **Location:** Building #10, Greene Country Fairgrounds, Waynesburg, PA

**September 15 Field Trip**      **SAT, 1 to 4**

### **War in the Woods: Controlling Invasives**

A field demonstration of spraying techniques, and a practical consideration of attendant issues, in the control of multiflora rose, honeysuckle, barberry, grapevine, olive, et.al. Site: [To Be Determined] Some lucky landowner's briar patch. Start making your case.

**October 6 Family Picnic** SAT, 1 to.....

Rain or shine, the annual SWPWO Pig in a Poke. With Field Events. Perhaps the potato gun competition will be revived. Suggestions for activities are welcomed.

**October 24 Meeting** WED, 7 PM: Washington, PA  
**Hobby Arboretums: Planting a Sampling of Trees on a Small Plot**

Guidance for the property owner of limited acreage who nevertheless is interested in tending and presenting a pleasing variety of trees and woody plants. **Location:** First Floor Meeting Room, Courthouse Sq. Building, 100 W. Beau St.

**October 27 Field Trip** SAT, 1 to 4  
**The Urban Wood-scape**

We will venture to the city of Pittsburgh to take in either Shenley or Frick Arboretums. Philip Gruska, Director of Park Management, Maintenance & Policy with the Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy, will lead the tour.

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| <p style="text-align: center;"><b><i>Our Purpose</i></b><br/><i>Southwestern Pennsylvania Woodland Owners (SWPWO), a not for profit association, is an organization of individuals interested in sound woodland management practices to 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.</i></p> | <p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>Membership Information</u></b><br/>Membership dues will be collected at meetings or can be sent to:<br/><b>SWPWO</b><br/>2506 Hollywood Dr.<br/>Pittsburgh, PA 15235</p> <p>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. Keep your membership up to date to continue to receive the newsletter and yearly calendar.</p> |
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**Executive Committee, Officers for 2012**

- Gay Thistle - President
- Mike Irvin -Vice President
- David Cressey- Secretary, Newsletter Editor
- Maria Piantanida - Treasurer

**Board of Directors**

- Mark Fajerski, Russell Orme, Raul Chiesa

**Advisors**

- Bill Wentzel, Arlyn Perkey, Russell Gibbs - Service Forester, PA Bureau of Forestry

**Past Presidents**

- John Burnham, Harold Thistle, Bob Daley