

# WWIA News– Summer 2017



## *President's Letter*

### *A mid-year report on WWIA business and happenings*

As we arrive at the mid-year point for WWIA, I am happy to report that we are doing well. The Board of Directors has met on two occasions. On January 26 we worked on program planning, adopted the president's proposed operational annual plan as required by the bylaws, and took care of other general business.

Our June 15 board meeting covered a broad range of business and organization items. Reports were received regarding the renewal of our website domain name and service with our ISP, GoDaddy. A review was provided of the work accomplished by the newsletter staff: Celine Colbert, Judith Gallagher, Neva Shields, Bob McBride and John Hilewick. We are always looking for help with the newsletter. If you have an article or a letter to the editor you would like to submit, please do so. All submissions will be given serious consideration for publication.

This issue, Neva Shields wrote a fascinating recap of Adam Haritan's program on May 18. More than 50 members and guests enjoyed his advice on spring foraging.

At our February and April programs, we had a total attendance of 83 folks. Our Forbes State Forest field trip drew 14 members. I'd say our program offerings are popular and relevant to our audiences.

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## President's Letter cont'd

### **Mailings**

We continue to mail annually about six postcard announcements of upcoming events to 42 members for whom we do not have e-mail addresses. Those members also get the quarterly newsletters via U.S. Postal Service. Our USPS mailing expenses hover around \$175 per year for just these mailings, and we would really like to reduce those costs. **So if you use e-mail, please send your address to [andrea@wcdpa.com](mailto:andrea@wcdpa.com) so we can send you newsletters and meeting notices.** You'll be helping both your nonprofit's bottom line and the environment.

We have also begun using a method to keep members current about their membership status. The number after your name on the To line in emails you receive from us is the year for which your dues are paid up.

## Westmoreland Woodlands Improvement Association 2017 Calendar

*Please check [westmorelandwoodlands.org](http://westmorelandwoodlands.org),  
for the most up-to-date information about program times and places.*

### **September 30, 9:00 a.m. to about 2:00 p.m.**

Rus Davies will host WWIA for a field trip to High Horizons Tree Farm on Chestnut Ridge. Rus will give a brief history of the property, which had been willed to the Western PA Conservancy and had a conservation easement on it. There will also be some exhibits for guests to peruse, as well as a walk to see various aspects of his forest management.

### **October 14, 9:00 a.m.**

Forbes State Forest is hosting *Managing Your Woodlands: A Forum for Landowners in Southwest PA* at the Penn State Fayette campus. The Forum will offer a day of presentations focused around forest management, given by professionals from around the state. Registration is \$15 and includes a catered lunch. For more information or to register, please call (724)-238-1200 or visit [Eventbrite](https://www.eventbrite.com).

### **October 19, 6:00 p.m.**

The annual WWIA potluck dinner and business meeting will be followed by a presentation by Bob McBride, a retired DCNR Bureau of Forestry service forester and an associate director of WWIA. Bob's talk will include the video *A History of Pennsylvania Forests*, which features Jim Nelson, who was born and raised in the Allegheny National Forest, received his forestry degree from Penn State, and was director of the Pennsylvania Bureau from 1989 to 1994.

# Forbes State Forest Field Trip Inspires Praise

*By John Hilewick, WWIA President*

For the seventh consecutive year, the professional forestry staff of the Forbes State Forestry District hosted WWIA for a field trip and tour of selected sites within the forest landscape. The day's experience was planned and directed by service forester Jessica Salter and resource management forester Dave Planinsek.

Activities involved visits to several sites that have received treatments to create or maintain early successional (young forest) habitat. These actions will support targeted species such as woodcock and ruffed grouse. Both of these game birds have suffered population declines due to reductions of their preferred habitats due to forest maturation (less young forest). Many other wildlife species also benefit from these relatively newly established habitat areas.

The particular habitat forest landscape that we visited is the Forbes Mountain Streams Division, Woodcock Habitat Management Area. Most of it lies along upper portions of the Indian Creek watershed area.

Dr. Bill Courtney wrote after the event, *"Once again a great field trip. I have a tree farm and am always doing projects for timber stand improvement and to improve wildlife habitat. This study tour for woodcock habitat was invaluable. Thank you for the opportunity to share in these projects!"*

WWIA member Michelle Sredy wrote, *"A wonderfully informative program about successional habitats. Provided inspiration for property owners inclined to plant riparian borders and use applicable watershed areas for woodcock habitat. Highly engaging presentation!"*

The reaction of WWIA member Dan Funk was this: *"On time, informative, friendly. Gave us many ideas on what we can do with our property. Looking forward to attending future events!"*

Long-time WWIA member and perennial Forbes event attendee Bob Phillips wrote, *"Year after year I've enjoyed the beauty of nature in the Forbes State Forest, as well as the educational and relaxing conversation with everyone involved. A large thank-you to the WWIA leadership. Accolades also to Jessica Salter, Dave Planinsek, and former guides of our trips Mike DiRinaldo, Tammy Colt, and others. I always look forward to the annual field trip."*

The foresters provided supplemental literature, including a color-coded photographic site map of the work area; information sheets on woodcock and ruffed grouse; and advice on the creation and use of woodcock habitat.



# Fun Facts about Forests

*By Bob McBride, retired Service Forester*

*“The wood products industry contributes more than \$5.5 billion to Pennsylvania’s economy each year and employs more than 100,000 people.”*



Do you know the facts about our incredible forests?

Do you know that forest management is big business in Pennsylvania? Our state is recognized as the nation’s leading producer of hardwood. The wood products industry contributes more than \$5.5 billion to Pennsylvania’s economy each year and employs more than 100,000 people. In addition, the outdoor tourism and recreation businesses that the forest supports (such as hunting, fishing, hiking, camping, bird and wildlife watching, cross-country skiing, and snowmobiling) add billions more to the state’s economy.

Do you know that most of the forests in Pennsylvania are a bit more than 100 years old and regenerated after much of the state was clear-cut in the late 1800s and early 1900s? Forests are renewable resources and will continue to provide benefits to our citizens as long as they are managed in a sustainable way.

Do you know that most wood products come from privately owned lands? Only 26 percent of our forests are publicly owned by state, federal, and municipal governments. There are about 528,000 private forest landowners in Pennsylvania, and they control about 70 percent of forestland. In fact, 80 to 90 percent of the wood products that support the timber industry come from these private lands.

Do you want to learn more about the incredible forests of Pennsylvania? Well, in these days of online access, information about forests is only a few keystrokes away.

Here are some websites you can enjoy visiting to learn more about forests and related subjects:

## **The Bureau of Forestry**

[www.dcnr.state.pa.us/forestry](http://www.dcnr.state.pa.us/forestry)

You will find the latest news and events of statewide interest. This website is packed with helpful information about forest recreation, forest health, rural and community forestry, forest fire protection, State Forests, and other

contacts and website links to help you. There is also detailed information on topics such as ATVs, snowmobile, & hiking trails, State Forest rules and regulations, plus our legendary tree identification guide: “Common Trees of Pennsylvania.”

## **Penn State Extension**

[ecosystems.psu.edu/extension](http://ecosystems.psu.edu/extension)

You will find lots of information on forest stewardship, wildlife and habitats, wood production, community shade trees, youth education and water resources. Many publications are available for free downloading on this site. Publication topics include timber marketing, controlling wildlife pests, using herbicides, and controlling invasive plants. A schedule of workshops, events, and short courses is updated regularly.

## **US Forest Service-Northeastern Area**

[www.na.fs.fed.us](http://www.na.fs.fed.us)

You will find detailed information about the national Forest Stewardship program, urban and community forestry, watersheds, forest health issues, and the Forest Legacy program. Many publications are available, such as forest pest alerts on many common insect and disease problems, guidelines on protecting your forest and property from wildfires, updates on the federal income tax for timber, guidelines on building forest roads, and listings of threatened and endangered species of concern.

These websites provide a wealth of knowledge available to you for free. Each has links to other sites that will lead you to additional sources of information and help. Good luck in your Internet surfing, and enjoy learning about our incredible forests.

*Originally prepared by Frank P. Snyder, former Service Forester for Schuylkill & Carbon Counties.*



# Recap of Adam Haritan's Field Trip on Spring Foraging

By Neva Shields, WWIA Member

Adam Haritan, a wild-foods enthusiast, researcher, and forager who runs [ForagingPittsburgh.com](http://ForagingPittsburgh.com) and is the founder of [LearnYourLand.com](http://LearnYourLand.com), showed WWIA members and friends the basics of wild food foraging on May 18. After a PowerPoint presentation, Adam took us on a guided walk through the Ann Rudd Saxman Nature Park next to the Westmoreland Conservation District Barn.

He showed us the difference between dogbane, aka Indian hemp (*Apocynum cannabinum*), which is poisonous, and common milkweed (*Asclepias syriaca*). In spring these two plants look similar. Common milkweed is medicinal and edible. The white sap is effective for treating warts. The flower buds and shoots are edible. Adam encouraged planting milkweed because the widespread use of herbicides and destruction of habitat have put milkweed in a steep decline. It is the sole food source of monarch butterfly larvae.

Burdock (*Arctium*) has an edible taproot. Eastern white pine (*Pinus strobus* L.) is both edible and medicinal. Pollen from the male cone is used in China as an aphrodisiac and for energy and beauty. The buds are edible, and tea made from the inner bark of newly fallen branches is a good source of vitamin C.

Japanese knotweed (*Polygonum cuspidatum*) is a very invasive plant but is edible and medicinal. It is eaten in the spring in much of Asia. Medicinally, it enhances immune function and has antibacterial and anti-inflammatory properties. It has been found to be an effective treatment for chronic Lyme disease. Adam recommended Stephen Harrod Buhner's book *Healing Lyme: Natural Healing and Prevention of Lyme Borreliosis and Its Coinfections*.

The flowers and buds of dames' rocket (*Hesperis matronalis*) are edible. This plant has antibacterial properties against salmonella and can rid your body of xenobiotics. Pokeweed (*Phytolacca americana*) shoots and leaves are edible, but the root is toxic and the red stem is inedible. Adam cautioned foragers to verify the difference between Queen Ann's lace (*Daucus carota*, also called wild carrot), which is edible, and its lookalike, poison hemlock (*Conium maculatum*), which is deadly poisonous. Both are commonly found in this region.

Adam identified various edible mushrooms, including the wine cap, with its reddish tan cap and purplish gills. Honey mushrooms are edible, but you should know about the deadly Galerina mushroom, because they look alike. He recommended learning about the Amanita mushroom group before collecting them: Many are not good to eat, and some are deadly.

Adam pointed out that although some plants and mushrooms are dangerous if consumed, the vast majority are safe and beneficial. Taking the time to learn more about our wild plants and mushrooms can provide many health benefits not found on our grocery store shelves.



# Westmoreland Woodlands Improvement Association

Membership Application and Renewal – Dues \$10 per year

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

New Member ( ) or Renewal ( ) Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

## **Make check payable to**

Westmoreland Woodlands Improvement Association

## **Mail to**

Westmoreland Woodlands Improvement Association

c/o Westmoreland Conservation District

218 Donohoe Road, Greensburg, PA 15601

Attention: Tony Quadro

[www.westmorelandwoodlands.org](http://www.westmorelandwoodlands.org)

Westmoreland Woodlands  
Improvement Association

c/o Westmoreland Conservation District  
218 Donohoe Road,  
Greensburg, PA 15601

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