
SWPWO NEWSLETTER

Southwestern Pennsylvania Woodland Owners Association

May 12th 2004



2004 Calendar

May 12th Meeting: The next meeting of the association will be held on Wednesday, May 12th at 7 PM in Building #10 at the Greene County Fairgrounds in Waynesburg.

Our guest speaker will be Russ Richardson, Consulting Forester and President of WV Woodland Owners Association. His topic for discussion will be, "Earning Alternative Income via Special Forest Products". This promises to be a very interesting program.

A follow-up field trip will be taken to Bill Slagel's Walnut Meadows Tree Farm in West Virginia on May 29th. Bill will show us his "Unconventional Forest Products" grown on the tree farm. We will meet at Build #10 at the Greene County Fairgrounds at 10:30 AM and car pool to Bill's place. Some of you may remember that we visited this Tree Farm about 2 years ago. It was very interesting.

As always, the meeting and field trip are open to the public, free-of-charge.

June 12 Summer Tour - Dave Brady's Stewardship Forest in W. Greene County.

July 10 Summer Tour - George Marinchak's woodland in SW Washington County.

August 14 Summer Tour - Tour Pawlosky's Lumber and Milling plant in Washington County.

September 8 Meeting – "Visualizing Your Forest – Simulating Forest Management Decisions and their Impact." Dr. Jim Finley, Prof. at Penn State's School of Forest Resources.

September 11 Field Trip – "Applied Forest Management Decisions" Arlyn Perkey's Tree Farm and Stewardship Forest in W Greene County.

October 9 – Picnic "Pig Roast" get together (SWPWO members only) 3 PM at John Burnham's Tree Farm and Stewardship Forest in S Washington County.

November 10 Meeting – "Hunting, Posting and the Landowner" Dr. Coren Jagnow, specializing in Wildlife and Fisheries Science at Penn State University.

Marketing Specialty Forest Products

Which came first, the chicken or the egg?

The answer to this age-old adage often depends on the context of the question. With specialty forest products or "SFPs" (medicinals and botanicals, forest-based food products, or handcrafts and florals), the question becomes: which came first, production or marketing? Do you produce the product so you have something to market, or do you market the product so you have something to produce? To make money with specialty forest products, the answer is clear--marketing comes before production. This may seem backward, but focusing on marketing before and during production will help determine what and how much to produce--thus giving the producer more control in setting the final price of the product. That translates into profit!

Since marketing is so crucial to an SFP business, it follows that good marketing can make a business successful, and bad marketing will almost always result in failure. This fact sheet outlines successful strategies for marketing SFPs.

Markets for Specialty Forest Products

Markets for SFPs are often very different from markets for more common agricultural products. SFP markets can be:

Specialized Most markets for SFPs are "niche" markets--which means they are small, very specialized, and with only a few buyers.

Seasonal. This is true for production (nuts, berries, or mushrooms) and consumption (nuts or Christmas boughs). This means production labor is highly concentrated and that products may need to be stored for months.

Risky. Products such as mushrooms and berries are highly perishable. This increases costs and risks for storage and transportation between the producer and consumers.

Proprietary. Producers can be individualistic. They may be reluctant to share their sources of product, methods of

production, and potential markets. This can make it difficult for newcomers to enter the industry.

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Value-added Processing with Specialty Forest Products
Traditionally, most agricultural producers sold unprocessed products. However, during the past decade, we have witnessed a rapid expansion of further processing by producers to add value to the product. In North Dakota, farmers have started selling pasta rather than wheat. South Dakota farmers add value to soybeans at their solvent extraction plant in Volga. Corn farmers are profiting by turning corn into corn sweeteners and ethanol.

The first step in developing a value-added marketing campaign is to determine the feasibility of adding value. Certainly, there is little chance of adding significant value to products sold to pharmaceutical companies such as goldenseal, ginseng, or herbs. Mushrooms, nuts, and berries can be processed into candies, syrups, jellies, wines, etc. Even packaging can be a way of adding value. Mushrooms can be canned to prolong shelf life, and nuts can be attractively packaged so they are valued as a food and as a gift. This is adding value to your product.

The second step in deciding if you could profit by adding value to your product is to determine the volume of product you would need to produce. To determine the optimal volume, answer these questions:

Do you have the financial support for facilities, equipment, operations, and inventory? And do you have enough financial support to allow for a bad year during the first years of operation?

Can you produce or obtain enough product to have competitive costs? Building a very small plant in an industry served by large plants will result in failure. Further, can you produce enough product to fund your business near capacity?

Creating a Successful Marketing Campaign for Value-added Products
A key aspect of value-added marketing is developing an advertising campaign that informs customers about your products and the value you have added to the product. To do this, consider the following:

Who Is Your Customer?
To better serve customers and meet their needs, you need to know who they are. People can be divided into two groups: nonusers, light users, and heavy users. According to a rule of thumb, heavy users make up about 20% of the population but purchase 80% of our product.

To market effectively, you need to know the characteristics of the users of your product. For instance, what is their age, sex, income, marital status, occupation, family size, social class, and lifestyle? Different words and messages are used to sell to different people and markets. Older people respond differently than younger folks, and men respond differently than woman.

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What Benefits Are Your Customers Seeking?
People do not buy products! They buy solutions to their problems. They buy things to meet their needs. They buy benefits! Your marketing campaign should focus on the benefits your customers will receive from your SFPs. This is the old "sell the sizzle, not the steak" concept. Rather than stressing that a product is organic, stress the benefits provided by organically grown products (e.g., fewer chemicals results in better health and a cleaner environment). Rather than saying "made from woods-grown berries," on the package, say "made from the more flavorful woods-grown berries."

Role of Advertising and Packaging in Marketing Specialty Forest Products
Many customers get their first impression of the product from your packaging and marketing literature. That first impression is important. If your SFP is of high quality, your advertising needs to reflect that quality. Many marketers of SFT are tempted to make their own advertising and packaging material, but unless you are exceptionally talented or experienced in this area, you are probably better off hiring a professional. This can be expensive, but it is usually money well spent. Effective marketing materials and/or packaging for SFPs address the following criteria.

Good advertising and packaging has lots of white space. Focus on the key points and do not try to say everything. Generally, you want to share a few key benefits--the three to five that are the most important to your customer. Listing more may only confuse customers. Focus on what is really important to the customer and develop it fully.

Ideally, four-color printing with color separation should be used. However, this process can be very expensive. As an alternative, a high-quality paper with one or two color printing can also look great if properly designed (this publication is an example). Frequently marketers try to save money by using brightly colored paper, but this usually comes across as "cheap." Single color printing is very effective with quality paper. Light shades of grays, tans, and blues create a rich look. You can also use a heavier or slightly more expensive paper to enrich the look of a single color printing.

A picture is worth a thousand words-in advertising it is worth several thousand. The best pictures show products in use. Be creative! Photographs become more difficult in one-color printing, and sketches or black and white photos might work better.

While most of us write rather long sentences, good advertising uses newspaper-style writing, i.e, short sentences! Never use 20 or 30 words in a sentence. Use 5 to 15 words. Use action verbs. Action verbs are exciting and interesting to read. Passive verbs are boring.

A quick test for good advertising is to look at personal pronouns. Good advertising uses a lot of "you" and "yours." Bad advertising uses "we," "our," and the name of the company. Focus on the need of your customer and how you fill it.

If you are marketing directly from your home, you will want to put up a road sign identifying your location and the product you sell. When designing road signs, remember that fancy typeface cannot be read at 60 miles per hour. Secondly, choose your colors carefully. Don't use green if the sign is surrounded by foliage, even if green is your favorite color. Drive around and look at other signs. Which are easiest to read and which stand out from the greatest distance? Always consider the setting. Signs that stand out in a highly wooded area may not work on the prairie.

Although this information cannot guarantee that your SFP business will be a success, it will prevent many unnecessary mistakes and allow you to put your time, energy, and resources where they are needed most. This makes it easier to meet the challenges of an SFP business, and hopefully the rewards will be much greater as well.

by Clyde Vollmers and Erik Streed
University of Minnesota Extension Service
Minnesota Department of Natural Resources Division of
Forestry Forest Product Utilization and Marketing

Membership

Membership to the Southwestern Pennsylvania Woodland Owners Association is \$10 per year for an individual and \$15 per year for a household. To join, please send name, address and phone number to

SWPWO

195 E. High St.

Waynesburg, PA 15370

Periodical Cicada (17-Year Locust)

Several people have asked me recently if the 17-year locusts are due to arrive in our area this summer. The answer is no. Brood V emerged in Greene and Washington Counties in 1999 and will not return until the year 2016.

However, if you travel east during the period of late May to early July, you may encounter "Brood X- the Great Easter Brood" of 17-year cicadas.

They are scheduled to emerge this year in the eastern portion of Pennsylvania from Somerset County all the way to the New Jersey line. Brood X affects more counties than any other brood, and generally is higher in concentration than the other broods affecting Pennsylvania.

The periodical cicada is a native North American insect that emerges in large numbers after completing a 17-year lifecycle. Often periodical cicadas are referred to as "17-Year Locusts". This is a name that was used by early American colonists to describe the mass emergence of adult cicada, which reminded them of Biblical stories of swarms of locusts. The term "locusts" refers to certain types of grasshoppers that swarm in large numbers. There are other species of cicadas, which occur in Pennsylvania, that are different in color and in song, and do not take as long to develop. Many are familiar with the terms "dog days" or "annual" cicada, which are used to describe cicadas from the genus Tibicen. Cicadas in this genus do not emerge in mass, and do so late in the summer. Populations of periodical cicada emerge simultaneously in early summer every 17 years, depending on the species. Not all populations will emerge during the same year. For ease of reference, populations, or broods, were designated with Roman numerals in 1893. The broods with 17 year lifecycles were assigned the numerals I through XVII. In Pennsylvania, eight different broods emerge in varying locations of the state.

Bill Wentzel, Forester
PA Bureau of Forestry

FOREST TERMS

All-aged – Applied to a stand in which theoretically, trees of all ages, up to and including those of the felling age, are found.

Annual ring – The growth layer of one year, as viewed on the cross section of a stem, branch, or root.

Cutting cycle - The planned interval between major felling operations in the same stand. Also the planned period in which all portions of a working cycle are logged in orderly sequence.

Crop tree - A tree selected in a young stand, or plantation, because of rate of growth or position, to be carried through to maturity. Growth of such trees is made the object of frequent thinnings or other cuttings.

DBH – Diameter at breast height (4.5 feet above the ground).

Even-aged – Applied to a stand in which relatively small age differences exist between individual trees. The maximum difference in age permitted in an even-aged stand is usually 10 to 20 years. However, where the stand will not be harvested until it is 100 to 200 years old larger differences up to 25 percent of the rotation age may be allowed.

Forest Stand - An aggregation of trees, or other growth, occupying a specific area and sufficiently uniform in composition (species), age arrangement and condition, as to be distinguishable from the forest or other growth on adjoining areas.

Harvest Cutting - The removal (in forest management) of a crop or stand of financially or physically mature trees as a final cut, in even-aged management; or the removal of mature elements or a stand in uneven-aged management

Improvement cutting - A cutting made in a stand, past the sapling stage, for the purpose of improving its composition and character by removing trees of less desirable species, form, and condition in the main crown canopy.

Liberation cutting – The release of young trees not past the sapling stage, from competition with older trees that are over-topping them.

Overmaturity - That period In the life cycle of trees and stands when growth, or value, is declining.

Partial cutting system – A cutting by which only a part of the stand is removed, It usually implies a series of such cuttings.

Rotation – The period of years required to establish and grow timber crops to a specified condition of maturity.

Sapling – A young tree less than 4 inches in diameter breast-high. The minimum size of saplings is usually, thought not invariably placed at 2 inches In diameter breast-high.

Seedling – A tree grown from seed, usually the term is restricted to trees smaller than saplings. In nursery practice, a tree which has not been transplanted In the nursery.

Silviculture - The art of producing and tending a forest,; the application of the knowledge of silvics in the treatment of a forest; the theory and practice of controlling forest establishment composition and growth.

Stand, fully-stocked – A forest stand In which all growing space is effectively occupied but having ample room for development of the crop trees.

Thinning – Cutting in a immature stand to increase its rate of growth, to foster quality growth, to improve composition, to promote sanitation, to aid in litter decomposition, to obtain greater total yield, and so recover, and use, material that would be lost otherwise.

Tolerance – The capacity of a tree to develop and grow in the shade of, and in competition with other trees. A general term for the relative ability of a species to survive a deficiency of an essential growth requirement, such as light, moisture, or nutrient supply.

Uneven-aged – Applied to a stand in which there are considerable differences in age of trees and in which 3 or more age classes are represented.

Weed tree – A tree of a species with relatively little or no value.

Contributed by
Bill Wentzel, Forester
PA Bureau of Forestry

Smokey Bear Celebrates 60 Years

Who would have ever dreamed that after 60 years from its inception Smokey Bear's fire prevention message would still be so effective. The success of this campaign indicates what a great job we've done in promoting Smokey's cause. How did the Smokey campaign get started, you ask?

Well, back in 1933 many feared the destruction caused by forest fires and realized the need for a fire prevention campaign and symbol to alert the nation, It was at this time that Albert Staehle, a great animal illustrator, was called upon to come up with a mascot. What he came up with was a bear dressed in blue jeans wearing a forest ranger's hat, pouring a pail of water on a small fire- thus the first Smokey Bear fire prevention poster! Then in 1950, Smokey was the name given to a small cub that was rescued from a large forest fire in the Capitan Mountains of the Lincoln National Forest in New Mexico. Losing his mother in this devastating fire, the National Zoo became his home until his death in 1976. Smokey is buried at the Smokey Bear Historical Park, Capitan, New Mexico.

In 1961 another orphaned bear from New Mexico became Smokey's lifetime companion, her name was "Goldie". Smokey and Goldie received many visitors at the National Zoo. Smokey receives so much mail that they gave him his own zip code - 20252. One of my favorite books about Smokey was written in 1994 in commemoration of Smokey's 50th Anniversary, entitled SMOKEY BEAR - 20252. by William Clifford Lawter, Jr. You can also find more about Smokey on the web site: www.smokeybear.com

The USDA Forest Service in cooperation with the National Association of State Foresters and the Ad Council changed Smokey's famous slogan "ONLY YOU CAN PREVENT FOREST FIRES", to "ONLY YOU CAN PREVENT WILDFIRES." The slogan was changed in order to broaden the scope of the Smokey Bear fire prevention message to include wild areas other than in forests and to exclude fires lit for forest management purposes.

Young and old alike have long been collectors of Smokey Bear memorabilia. Many of these collectibles have been donated to the PA Forest Fire Museum Association and will soon be on display for everyone to enjoy. If you have any fire prevention or forestry-related collectibles you would like to donate to the museum, please let us know.

Although August 9th, 1944 is considered the birth of Smokey Bear plans are to devote the entire year of 2004 to celebrate this 60th milestone. I am part of a committee that was formed under the supervision of Glenn E. Bell, Wildlife Prevention Specialist from the Bureau of Forestry's Division of Forest Protection office

in Harrisburg. We will be working with forest fire wardens, forest fire crews, fire companies, teachers, students, scouts and other interested individuals and groups in keeping the message alive. The celebration kickoff will take place in the Capitol Rotunda in Harrisburg with displays and, of course, birthday cake! Throughout the year Smokey will be making appearances in parades, schools, sporting events and many other activities.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY SMOKEY

Contributed by Bill Wentzel

With permission of:

Mary F. Inzana, Vice President

PA Forest Fire Museum Association

Managing Oak Timber

I need to make some comments about an article by the same name, which appeared in our March 10th issue. The article was taken from the Internet and, as such, I'm not sure what part of the country it was aimed at. Although it did raise some pertinent points, I must disagree with many of its assertions.

In this area oak trees are a healthy, valuable, and important component of our "oak-hickory" forest. Although the oak wilt disease is present, it really is not a major problem here. And windstorms, which would damage oaks, are rare. In my travels through the woodlands of Greene and Washington counties over the years, I've come across many oak trees growing strong, 30 inches in diameter and larger.

Oak harvests, via clear cuts and shelterwood cuts (even-age management systems), if done properly, are not necessarily wasteful, messy, and visually distasteful. What does produce these things are the "diameter-limit, high grade, or select", tree harvests that are presently taking place, all too often, throughout our region. Red oak can be a good long-term investment and can produce a sustainable future timber crop. As a matter of fact, the Bureau of Forestry encourages landowners to plant this tree.

There is, at present, a problem in regenerating oaks, but that is a topic for another discussion.

In conclusion, the oak species are a vital part of our SW Pennsylvania forest and, as such, should be an important consideration in our management plans.

Bill Wentzel
Service Forester
PA Bureau of Forestry

Note: Reprint from April newsletter due to editorial errors.

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TO



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.

Executive Committee for the year 2004

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