

WWIA News

Spring 2021



President's Message

By John Hilewick, WWIA President

Hello everyone,

I write this message as an attempt to keep you all informed of actions taken by the board of directors on behalf of you, the members. The BOD met via Zoom on February 11 at 3:00 p.m. There were enough participants for a quorum, with three officers (me, secretary Terry Gates, and treasurer Tony Quadro), one voting director (publicity director Judith Gallagher), and an associate director (Celine Colbert).

In addition, Christie Sebek was on board as the system administrator and Mimi Brooker listened in as our volunteer webmaster. Other directors were unavailable for various personal circumstances.

The electronic encounter went quite well, and we were able to conduct business. Tony provided the treasurer's report. As of the January bank statement, our balance was \$4,227.61. Tony reported that \$50 in membership renewals for 2021 had been received so far.

Everyone, 2021 membership dues are now due. Send your checks in care of Tony Quadro to

The Westmoreland Conservation District
J. Roy Houston Conservation Center
218 Donohoe Road
Greensburg, PA 15601-9217

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Celine Colbert

President's Message (cont'd)

I reported that the membership roster showed 61 paid-up members as of December 31, 2020, with a total of 228 individual or family members on the roster back to 2013.

I also mentioned that the proposed operating annual plan for 2021 needed to be prepared and disseminated to the membership. It follows this message. I will request that R R & K Accountants again be used to file our 501(c)(3) nonprofit form for 2020 with the IRS. It will cost \$50, invoiced to Tony as the treasurer of WWIA.

The board discussed 2021 programming. Not knowing when we could do a tour or meet safely in person, we decided to try an online general meeting.

Celine offered to convert one of the DCNR programs she has in her bag of tricks on the subject of Managing Your Backyard Woods. The program will take place on Thursday, April 22 (**Earth Day**).

One other item was discussed. We'd like to offer members a way to pay their dues online instead of via check and USPS. Tony, Christie, and Mimi are going to do some research, and Tony will check with the Westmoreland Conservation District administration to see if they might be able to help us set it up.

President's Operating Plan

April 22, 2021. WWIA will mark Earth Day with a membership-wide online program by Celine Colbert, DCNR Bureau of Forestry service forester. For details, see page 4.

If this meeting goes smoothly, we will discuss offering future Zoom-type programs until it becomes safe to hold in-person meetings again. If you participate, please give us your feedback and tell us if you would be interested in attending more virtual meetings. We'll just have to see how this first experience goes.

We will continue to follow the CDC and PA State Dept. of Health recommendations for gatherings. We hope to be able to schedule some in-person meetings and maybe even a field trip in June 2021.

The board respectfully requests patience and participation from the membership. We intend to do everything in our power to hold this group together for the short and the long haul.

The New Bad Bug in Your Backyard

Michael Doucette, Forbes Forest District Service Forester
DCNR Bureau of Forestry

Spotted lanternfly (*Lycorma delicatula*) is a bug we have been hearing about for years, but it has recently spread to south-western PA, and Westmoreland County is now SLF quarantined. Extremely adept at hitchhiking, it will lay eggs on any surface including vehicles and goods. Each egg mass contains 30 to 50 eggs, and each SLF can lay up to three egg masses.

This bug is a voracious feeder with its piercing-sucking mouthparts. Its appetite is never satiated, and its taste in tree species is vast. Currently it is known to feed on more than 180 species. Almost assuredly there are more that we don't know about yet.

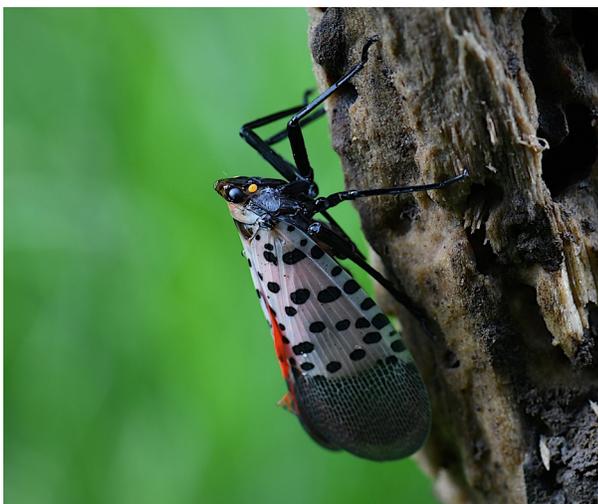
SLF decimates grapevines and hop vines very quickly, but the effect can be mitigated with the extensive use of contact insecticides. SLF's effect on trees other than its preferred host, tree of heaven (*Ailanthus altissima*) is still hard to determine. I have seen SLF feed on trees of heaven (TOH) to the point of killing them. But for other trees I have seen it act primarily as a stressor. This is still a concern, since a multitude of stressors can substantially weaken and even kill a tree.

The presence of SLF will lead to restrictions on the transport of goods and the requirement of a permit for your business if it operates in a quarantined county. (The permit process is explained in a free online course through Penn State.)

SLF also causes issues for landowners with its excrement, colloquially called "honeydew." This substance has a relatively high sugar content and is quite sweet. If you're in a heavily infested area and look up, you will find that out the hard way.

Over time the dropping of honeydew will lead to the formation of a black sooty mold. This buildup can damage vegetation below and even prevent photosynthesis. In some heavily infested areas, landowners power-spray these coatings of mold off the leaves.

The effects of SLF on the landscape are immense and costly. Preventing SLF from making your property its habitat is cheaper, easier, and more effective than trying to



Bad Bug (cont'd)

eradicate it. The first order of business, before you ever notice the bug on your property, should be eradicating its preferred host, tree of heaven, from your property.

It has been found that when SLFs have TOH to feed on, they will complete the process to their adult stage two weeks faster than if they do not.

TOH is hard to kill and quite persistent. It is easiest to eradicate it between late summer and early fall with an herbicide.

The key to killing TOH is destroying the root system. If you simply cut the tree down, it will come back with a vengeance. I have found that a 1-to-1 mix of glyphosate with water will produce the required effect. There are two main application types for treatment: hack and squirt or foliar.

For hack and squirt, the objective is to cut into the tree at an angle on a downward stroke, creating a level pocket into which you squirt the herbicide. It is imperative that you do not girdle the tree. You must leave at least one to two inches of live tissue between cuts in order for the tree to stay alive long enough to transport the herbicide to the roots.

For foliar it is simple: Just spray that same 1-to-1 mix onto the leaves.

For both of these herbicide applications, be mindful of past and future weather conditions. Ensure that at time of application the leaves are dry and rain is not expected. As always, read the label and wear the required personal protective equipment.

Monitor for seedlings and treat as needed. TOH management is a multiyear process.

Zoom in to Our Next WWIA Program on Managing Your Backyard Woods

Westmoreland Woodlands Improvement Association will host a live webinar on Managing Your Backyard Woods this Earth Day, Thursday, April 22, from 6:30-8:00 p.m.

This event is free and open to the public. To join, follow <https://zoom.us/j/93809635704?pwd=UFVmbHRrUVgwd2FLdWZxQVBMWTVLdz09> or visit www.westmorelandwoodlands.org for call-in info.

Celine Colbert, a forester with the Pennsylvania Bureau of Forestry, will provide practical tips to create a refuge for native birds, wildlife, and pollinators, no matter what size property you have. Learn the advantages of incorporating native plants and what resources are available to assist in planning, plant selection, and caring for your garden.

Celebrate Earth Day by getting inspired to increase your plot's biodiversity, support species with declining populations, and build a more resilient ecosystem right in your backyard.

Woods and Poetry

By Rus Davies, WWIA Director

Poets, never lacking for subject matter, have often sung the praises of trees, woods and forests. Often quoted is Joyce Kilmer, who writes, "I think that I shall never see / a poem lovely as a tree." He ends this famous poem with these words: "Poems are made by fools like me / But only God can make a tree."

My favorite poet, Robert Frost, uses trees and woods often in his poetry. Here are some of my favorite lines from Frost's poems.

From "Mending Wall"

There where it is we do not need the wall:
He is all pine and I am apple orchard.
My apple trees will never get across
And eat the cones under his pines, I tell
him.

. . .

He moves in darkness as it seems to me,
Not of woods only and the shade of trees.



Rus Davies's view along the Robert Frost Trail

From "In the Clearing"

In winter in the woods alone
Against the trees I go.
I mark a maple for my own
And lay the maple low.

At four o'clock I shoulder ax
And in the afterglow
I link a line of shadowy tracks
Across the tinted snow.

I see for nature no defeat
In one tree's overthrow
Or for myself in my retreat
For yet another blow.

From "Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening"

Whose woods these are I think I know.
His house is in the village though;
He will not see me stopping here
To watch his woods fill up with snow.

My little horse must think it queer
To stop without a farmhouse near
Between the woods and frozen lake
The darkest evening of the year.

The woods are lovely, dark and deep.



Captured by Rus Davies along the Robert Frost Trail in Vermont.

Woods and Poetry (cont'd)

Dust of Snow

The way a crow
Shook down on me
The dust of snow
From a hemlock tree

Has given my heart
A change of mood
And saved some part
Of a day I had rued.

And perhaps Frost's most famous lines mentioning woods:

From "The Road Not Taken"

Two roads diverged in a wood, and I –
I took the one less travelled by,
And that has made all the difference.

You can capture the mood of Robert Frost and his appreciation for trees and woods by visiting Robert Frost Wayside Area and Trail in Vermont. It is located between Middlebury and Middlebury Gap on Vermont Highway 125, close by Ripton, where Robert Frost lived, and Bread Loaf. There is a famous writers' conference held annually at Bread Loaf. <http://www.middlebury.edu/breadloaf>

The Robert Frost Trail has beautiful views as it winds through the woods and meadow, each with an interpretive panel with the words from one of Frost's poems.

The Frost Place is a museum and nonprofit center for poetry and the arts at

Frost's other homestead in Franconia, New Hampshire. It holds an annual poetry conference and features a one-mile loop in the woods with Frost poems posted at suitable spots ("Birches" near birch trees, "After Apple-Picking" near an apple tree).

Editor's Note:

Another poem about woods you may enjoy is "The Tables Turned" by William Wordsworth.

From "The Tables Turned"

One impulse from a vernal wood
May teach you more of man,
Of moral evil and of good,
Than all the sages can.

Sweet is the lore which Nature brings;
Our meddling intellect
Misshapes the beauteous forms of things:
We murder to dissect.

Enough of Science and of Art;
Close up those barren leaves.
Come forth, and bring with you a heart
That watches and receives.

If you have a favorite poem about trees or woods, send it in. Email the poem to Celine at cecobert@pa.gov. We'll publish a list of favorites in a future issue.

Rus's essay was inspired in part by an email Terry Gates, WWIA secretary, sent to the board members quoting a Frost poem about trees.

Showcase a Resource: New Service Forester

Michael Doucette, Forbes Forest District Service Forester, midoucette@pa.gov
DCNR Bureau of Forestry

Greetings, all! My name is Michael Doucette. I recently began employment with the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources as a rural service forester for Westmoreland, Allegheny, and Somerset Counties. I look forward to working with all of you to meet our combined goal of leaving our world in a better state than we found it.

I came to DCNR from the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture, in which I worked on the spotted lanternfly management program. Prior to that I was at the New York Department of Environmental Conservation, working in aquatic invasive species.

I have a Bachelor of Science in forest resources management from the State University of New York College of Environmental Science and Forestry and an Associate of Applied Science in forest technology from the SUNY ESF Ranger School.



Species Spotlight: Cucumber Magnolia

Magnolia acuminata

Celine Colbert, Forester, Pennsylvania DCNR Bureau of Forestry

Finding a huge (up to 10-inch!) oblong leaf on the forest floor is a good sign that you may have a cucumber magnolia nearby. This relative of ornamental magnolias is a full-size tree native to Pennsylvania's woods.



The cucumber magnolia gets its name from its unripe seed pod, which resembles a cucumber. Once the pod ripens and falls to the forest floor in October, the pinkish orange seeds spill out. They look like Tic Tac mints on the forest floor.

The flowers of cucumber magnolia aren't as showy as its smaller relatives'. They're greenish yellow and born high in the canopy, where leaves tend to hide them.

Despite its shy flowers, an elegant form can make this magnolia a perfect shade tree for an open site. The tree will thrive in well-drained, slightly acidic soils. It grows relatively quickly into a pyramidal shade tree that spreads wider into maturity, with very few pest or disease concerns.

Westmoreland Woodlands Improvement Association
Membership Application and Renewal – Dues \$10 per year

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Address: _____

New Member () or Renewal () Date: _____ Email Address: _____

If you own property, how many acres do you own? _____ Approximately how many of them are wooded? _____

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

Westmoreland Woodlands
Improvement Association

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

PLEASE
PLACE
STAMP
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