May 2010

Southwestern Pennsylvania Woodland Owners

Next Meeting:
Wednesday, May 12
Sustainable Forestry: How do you know when you see it?

Dr. Jim Finley, Professor of Forest Resources, Penn State University will be our visiting speaker. Dr. Finley will instruct us sustainable forestry techniques. Many of us have wondered if the timber harvesting decisions we make (or others make for us) are likely to lead to a sustainable outcome? Learn about the critical variables to consider as you plan a timber harvest to create a productive forest with future management options.

Time: 7:00 PM
Place: Building #10, Greene Country Fairgrounds, Waynesburg, PA

May 15 Field Trip
Sustainability Assessment: Practical Application

We will be visiting Arlyn Perkey’s 60 acre WV tree farm. Arlyn describes it as follows. “The property was "timbered," just before I bought it. It had been in the hands of short-term speculators, so it was done without mercy. I have done rehabilitation work on much of it, but there is more work needed. They pretty well exhausted my red oak seed source on the best sites. At that time (2000) the market for red oak was still good. The area also has a very high deer population and several invasive plant species. Emerald ash borer is also on the way.”

We will apply Dr. Finley’s criteria to assess this property for sustainability and discuss outcomes of different forestry decisions that are or could be made on this property. Please wear proper clothing for the weather and shoes for hiking in these woods. This tour is free and open to the public. Directions will be given at the Wednesday meeting or meet at the Greene County fairgrounds parking lot to arrange carpools or to follow. These tours generally last until 4:00 PM.

Time: 1:00 PM
Place: Arlyn Perkey’s Tree Farm in Monongalia County, WV
Meet at 12:30 PM at Building #10, Greene Country Fairgrounds, Waynesburg, PA

American Chestnut Revival in SW PA

Gary Micsky of Penn State University and the Pennsylvania chapter of the American chestnut foundation showed his enthusiasm for the revival of chestnuts in our forests. He had an interesting slide show which displayed successful chestnut plantings around the state. An American chestnut stock that is resistant to the blight is still not available, however Gary encouraged forest owners to plant American chestnuts so we can continue to have native germplasm (collection of genetic resources), can accustom ourselves to the care and maintenance of growing chestnuts, produce
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.

Mushroom Season Again
For those of you who received shitake mushroom inoculums in September 2008 and actually inoculated an oak log—check it out. Our logs produced last Fall and again this Spring. I think the recent frost may slow it down a bit. Fresh shitake mushrooms are great. It's also morel season, although it has been a dry and cold spring. As with other morel seasons, I hear of some who have many and some who have few. Take a hike in your woods and don't forget a basket!

Auto Tour Promotes Pennsylvania Old Growth Forests for Eco-Tourism
A new tourist guide to Pennsylvania's old-growth forests is now available from the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) and on the DCNR Web site. Dr. Donald L. Gibbon, consulting naturalist, and Dr. Walter Carson, forest ecologist at the University of Pittsburgh,
first conceived the Auto Tour of Old-Growth Forests four years ago. Gibbon describes the idea as "a tour for people who are interested in the forest, to see how it looked originally, and to see the best of what's left." Some remaining parcels of old growth include the Alan Seeger Natural Area, the Anders Run Natural Area, Cranberry Swamp, Cooks Forest State Park, and more. According to the DCNR, less than one percent of Pennsylvania forestland (30,000 acres) can be defined as "old growth." Old growth forests occur when man or nature leaves the forest undisturbed and the forest succession cycle is not reset. It takes many years for the different forest types to attain such advanced maturity - at least 100 years for scrub-oak barrens to 350 years for hemlock forests.

"These small fragments represent the best picture we have of what forests might have looked like prior to European settlement," says Carson. "When you walk into a section of old-growth, you get the sense that you're seeing a very different kind of forest. One of the different features is a large amount of big downed, woody debris, and standing dead trees with fallen crowns and very large, slowly decaying trunks." Visitors may also expect to get a glimpse of towering giants like Cooks Forest's record setting 181-foot white pine, or of 300-year-old black cherry trees in the Tionesta Scenic Area. Cooks Forest's white pine and hemlock trees are between 350 and 450 years old.

The nineteen natural areas chosen for the tour lie in the Lumber Heritage Region, a fifteen-county area in the northwest, north-central part of the state that contains many of our state and national forests. The region owes its name to a history of heavy logging in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The inaccessibility of some parcels spared them from the widespread clearcutting. Even today, the forests along these muddy bogs and rocky inclines have never been harvested; however, individual trees might have been removed from the area.

Although Pennsylvania's old-growth fragments are too small to provide significant wildlife habitat, Carson says there are some animals that require old growth. Auto-Tour sites frequently overlap the Audubon Society's designated Important Birds Areas and the Pennsylvania Game Commission's Pennsylvania Important Mammals Areas. Mammals like black bear, pine marten and flying squirrel, and birds like blue-headed vireo, brown creeper, and barred owl find refuge in old-growth forests.

The Auto Tour of Old-Growth Forest brochure, available from the DCNR and on the DCNR Web site, contains detailed directions, photos, and a brief description of each area. Gibbon says, "It would probably take six or seven days to visit all the sites. It's especially interesting to visit them in all seasons, not only summer.

Many of the sites are located off Route 120 or Route 322, and some can be accessed by car. Cooks Forest and the Alan Seeger Natural Area, for example, have roads running through them. Other sites are located a couple of miles off the road, and travelers will need to walk to see the old growth. "This is not set up for the armchair tourist," Gibbon explains. "It's for people interested in experiencing woods as woods." Many of the areas do not provide amenities. As
Pennsylvania's second largest industry, tourism is vital to our state's economy. The "Pennsylvania Wild" campaign, one of four new state initiatives to promote Pennsylvania tourism, will encompass portions of the old-growth areas outlined in the auto tour. Contact your local Bureau of Forestry district office for a brochure. Printed from the Forest Stewardship website http://paforeststewards.cas.psu.edu/NewsArchive/2004/04Sep16.html

SWPWO 2010 Calendar of Events

June 11 (Friday) Summer Tour: Visit to Keystone Cooperage Barrel Manufacturing Plant
Brian and Mike Wilson
Description: Roll out the barrel. We're going to have some fun! Come see, from beginning to end, how white oak logs are cut into staves (narrow strips of wood) and then made into wine barrels. The Wilson Forest Products Company has been making barrel parts (the staves) in Greene County since 1931. But in 2001 the owners Brian and Mike Wilson, grandsons of the company's founder, decided to get into the actual barrel-making side of the business, which they named Keystone Cooperage. The white oak tree grows well in SW PA and it is the wood of choice for barrels, since its individual cells are impervious to liquids. Once cut, the staves go through a process of assembly, a hot water bath, application of steel bands, toasting of the inside of the barrel, and sanding the outside to an even surface. The company sells over 5,000 52-gallon barrels each year and hopes to increase this number in the near future. Note Unusual Day Friday
Time: 1:00 PM
Place: Keystone Cooperage Barrel Manufacturing Plant
Meet at 12:30 PM at Building #10, Greene Country Fairgrounds, Waynesburg, PA

August 7 Field Trip
Tour of Maple Hills Tree Farm
Time: 1:00 PM
Place: Home and woodlot of Mark and Debi Fajerski, outside of Claysville, Washington County

September 8 Meeting
Game Commission Update
Rodney Burns, PA Wildlife Conservation Officer
Emerald Ash Borer Update
Rick Turcotte, Ph.D., US Forest Service Entomologist
Time: 7:00 PM
Place: Building #10, Greene Country Fairgrounds, Waynesburg, PA

September 11 Field Trip Collecting Ash Seeds
To be determined
Description: They say the emerald ash borer will eliminate ash trees from our forest populations. The thought is that the emerald ash borer will go through the ash trees and then be out of this source and die off. After this threat is gone, scientists would like to have a native seed source ready to be planted once again in our forests. There is a national effort to collect these seeds now. In this tour you will...
learn how to collect ash seeds, how to preserve them, and where we can donate our seeds.

Time: 1:00 PM
Place: To be determined
Meet at 12:30 PM at Building #10, Greene
Country Fairgrounds, Waynesburg, PA

October 23 Picnic with Plant Identification
Competition and Potato Gun Competition
(Members, Friends and Family)
Time: To be determined
Place: To be determined

November 10 Meeting
Non-Timber Forest Products
More information will be forthcoming
Time: 7:00 PM
Place: First Floor Meeting Room, Courthouse
Square Building, 100 W. Beau Street,
Washington, PA. Free Parking: enter through
the Beau Street B-Level entrance at the base of
the Courthouse Square Building

November 13 Field Trip Winter Tree
Identification: the Basics
Arlyn Perkey, US Forest Service (Ret.)
This field trip will cover the basics of tree
identification in the winter. The discussion will
focus on trees common in our woods of SW PA
and that have a particular value for hardwood.
Be prepared to take notes and wear
appropriate clothing for the weather and proper
shoes for the walking.
Time: 1:00 PM
Place: To be determined
Meet at 12:30 PM at Building #10, Greene
Country Fairgrounds, Waynesburg, PA

Membership Information
For 2010
Membership dues for 2010 will be collected at
meetings or can be sent to:
SWPWO
2506 Hollywood Dr
Pittsburgh, PA 15235
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.

Executive Committee for the year
2009
Officers
Bob Daley- President
Mike Irvin -Vice Pres.
Gay Thistle- Secretary
Maria Piantanida - Treasurer

Board of Directors
Dave Cressey
Mark Fajerski
Jessica Wise

Advisors
Bill Wentzel Arlyn Perkey
Ralph Campbell

Past Presidents
John Burnham
Harold Thistle

Our SWPWO Website
www.cs.pitt.edu/~daley/swpwo for
the most up to date information about
our organization and connections to
other resources to help you manage
your woodlot

Newsletter Info.
This newsletter is published
about eight times each year. The
editors are Gay Thistle and John
Burnham. Articles written by our
members are welcome. Please submit
them to Gay at thistle@windstream.net.
Next mini newsletter June 1,2010.
Join Our Science Team

NEW! Help test our latest line of potentially blight-resistant seeds in your own backyard! Members who join as a Chestnut Annual Sponsor or above are eligible to receive our latest line of potentially blight-resistant seeds.

Become part of our science team by helping us evaluate the blight resistance of these latest trees. Your feedback on seedling performance will be critical in helping TACF researchers improve resistance. All of this for the cost of shipping and handling.

Annual Sponsor Levels (Seeds Will Be Shipped in Spring 2011)
- Silver Leaf Sponsor ($1,000-$9,999) -- 4 Restoration Chestnut seeds
- Bronze Sponsor ($500 and up) -- 3 Restoration Chestnut seeds
- Chestnut Sponsor ($300 and up) -- 2 Restoration Chestnut seeds

Regular Membership Levels
- Three-year ($120)
- Regular ($40)
- Student ($15)

(All TACF memberships include all TACF publications, membership in one of our state chapters, and a car decal. Sponsor members will receive a separate seed order form.)

Additional gift to my state chapter $_____

Enclosed Amount: $

Membership Application

Name: ____________________________

Address: __________________________

City/State/Zip: _____________________

Telephone: ( ) __________ E-Mail: __________________________

This is a gift membership from:

☐ Check Enclosed (Make payable to The American Chestnut Foundation)

Credit Card please check: ☐ VISA ☐ MC #: __________ Exp. Date: __________

Billing Address for Credit Card if different from above:

Name on Card (print): __________________________

Signature: __________________________ Date: __________________________

Please make check payable to: The American Chestnut Foundation, and mail to:
TACF 160 Zillicoa Street, Suite D, Asheville, NC 28801

TACF is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. The member services portion of your contribution is valued at $15. The American Chestnut Foundation is an equal opportunity provider.