November 12 Meeting:
Forest Land Taxation Issues
7:00 PM at a new location in the Gander Mountain Meeting Room
Speaker Lloyd Casey, (retired) USDA Forest Service) will talk about strategies to use in filing your taxes as a tree farm. Lloyd Casey has spoken to us before on this subject and members found that the information was very useful. Many accountants are not familiar with "Form T" so this is an important meeting to attend. Please note the new location in Washington- at Gander Mountain, found in the Gander Mountain store at the Washington Crown Center Mall on Chestnut St. in Washington, PA. We thought we would try this out as a meeting spot. A field trip will follow on Saturday.

November 15 Field Trip: Creating an Inventory of Your Forest.
1:00 PM -4:00 PM Lloyd Casey's Tree Farm in NE Greene County. On this field trip Lloyd Casey will talk about the methods he uses to inventory his forestland in order to better maintain and manage his property. Wear proper clothing for the weather and good walking shoes. Meet to carpool or follow at 12:30 PM at the Greene County Fairgrounds Building

Winter Tree Identification Course Being Offered
Arlyn Perkey
A good first step to enjoying and managing your forest is learning to identify the trees that are growing in your woodland. To this end, SWPWO Advisor Arlyn Perkey is offering a course in identifying tree species using the bark, buds, and branches. Participants will learn to identify many of the most common trees in southwestern PA after leaf fall's. Those who sign up for this course need to commit to four Saturday afternoons this winter. The dates are December 6 and 13, 2008, and January 10 and 17, 2009.

Members who graduated from last winter's tree ID class have the option of investing another 2 days learning to identify less common trees found in this area. Those class dates are February 21 and 28, 2009.

Class size is limited so as soon as you know you can commit to these dates, please contact Arlyn at aperkey@comcast.net
CHAINSAW SHARPENING WORKSHOP BEING OFFERED

Maria Piantanida

Lee Stover, from Penn State University has offered to conduct a 3-hour chainsaw sharpening workshop if enough SWPWO members are interested. It would be a hands-on session where you would work on your own chainsaw. Lee will demonstrate the use of several new tools that are available to give more accurate results. Details of date, time, place, and registration fee must be worked out. However, the first step is determining how many SWPWO members would be interested in attending such a session. (Your chainsaw gets to attend for free.)

If you are interested, send an email to Maria Piantanida at mariap@pitt.edu. If you do not have email, send a note to 2506 Hollywood Drive, Pittsburgh, PA 15235. Or you can give a note to one of the SWPWO Board Members (along with your membership renewal form) at the November meeting. Please let us know of your interest no later than November 20 so that we can coordinate our schedule with Lee’s.

In Memorium: John Stephens

John Blunt Stephens, of Elkton, Ohio, passed away at 10:30 p.m. Sunday, Oct. 12, 2008. He was 68. Born in Palmyra, Ohio, on March 14, 1940, he was the son of the late Lois Blunt and Alexander Hamilton Stephens, and had spent most of his lifetime in this area. He regularly attended Northside Community Church in East Liverpool. A member of the Plumbers and Pipefitters Local 396, he had a 46-year career as a master craftsman in the piping industry, working both with the tools and in supervision, and in plant engineering with production facilities. He also, along with his wife, operated the Elkton Tree Farm, specializing in softwood timber and lumber production and responsible woodland management. He had 26 years of continuous sobriety in Alcoholics Anonymous. Surviving him at home is his wife, Susan Beede Stephens, whom he married on June 6, 1981. One daughter, Debra A. Stephens of Peoria, Ill., and one son, John B. Stephens Jr., and his wife, Debra, of Summerville, S.C., also survive, along with one grandson, Robert Stephens of Mumbai, India. Memorial contributions in John’s memory may be sent to Northside Community Church’s Building Fund, 702 Orchard Grove, East Liverpool, Ohio 43920.

2008 SWPWO Officers

Bob Daley - President
Maria Piantanida - Vice Pres.
Gay Thistle - Secretary
Earl Novendstern - Treasurer

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Dave Cressey
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Bill Wentzel Arlyn Perkey
Ralph Campbell

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John Burnham
Harold Thistle
On October 24-25, eight members of SWPWO attended a chainsaw safety class taught by Lee Stover and Mike Powell of Penn State and Ralph Campbell of DNR. Friday evening’s class began with a review of safety equipment—hard hats to protect the head from falling branches, ear muffs to minimize cumulative and permanent damage from chainsaw noise, gloves, boots, and chaps. Two numbers really brought home the importance of always wearing chaps when operating a chainsaw. First, a chain running at full speed rotates at the equivalent of 55 miles per hour. Second, the human brain takes 4/10 of a second to process information and respond. This means if a chainsaw kicks back and hits a leg, major—potentially fatal—damage will be done before the operator can make any response. Wearing safety chaps buys precious fractions of a second to prevent a life-threatening injury. The remainder of Friday’s class focused on the proper care of a chainsaw. A properly maintained chainsaw is safer and runs more smoothly, causing less stress on the operator.

On Saturday, the group met in Forbes State Forest for a session on safety measures in the woods. Consistently following a system of safety steps helps to ingrain a sense of vigilance for the safety of oneself and others. Check the canopy for snags. Make sure others are a safe distance from the chainsaw. Announce “starting up” each time the chainsaw is started. When the chainsaw is running, set the chain brake when clearing away underbrush or cut limbs, or when repositioning oneself. Allow 2 ½ trees lengths between the tree being cut and other people in the woodlot. Yell “tree falling” before and “clear” after felling a tree. These simple safety measures should be practiced until they become second nature.

Working in small groups, participants received individualized coaching on precautions to minimize kickbacks. Proper stance and positioning are crucial. Clearing around the tree to be cut or limbed avoids unpleasant surprises like strands of old wire. Participants had a chance to practice evaluating the direction in which to fell a tree, notching it properly, and using wedges to keep the tree aligned in the decided upon direction.

Everyone who attended the course agreed that it was worth the investment of time and modest registration fee. Bob Daley’s comment expresses the sentiments of several experienced chainsaw users—“Although I have had intensive chainsaw safety training previously and consider myself an experienced operator, the class was very useful for having someone there who could observe my practice and correct some bad habits that I had developed. I also learned some new things about advances in how to maintain my chainsaw.” The small class size allowed for individualized instruction geared to each person’s skill level regardless of whether they were seasoned operators or beginners.

If you were unable to attend this course, but would be interested
in taking it in the future, please send an email to me at mariap@pitt.edu. If enough members are interested, perhaps another session can be scheduled. In the meantime, check out the announcement about the chainsaw sharpening workshop.

**Time to Order Seedlings from the Penn Nursery**

Gay Thistle

Tree seedlings are available through DCNR for a limited time. Landowners can purchase locally grown tree seedlings for very reasonable prices. These are high quality, native species of softwoods and hardwood trees that are available in lots of 100 to 500 seedlings. Order your seedlings as soon as possible because there is a limited supply. The seedlings will arrive sometime in March depending on the date of thaw. A list of the trees available and the order forms for them can be found at: http://www.dcnr.state.pa.us/forestry/nursery/index.aspx. The Thistle Tree Farm has ordered and planted about 2800 seedlings from Penn Nurseries. Please see us if you have any questions. Tree tube recommendations can be found on our website and it is highly recommended that you use them in order to cut down on the damage from deer browse.

**MONITORING CROP TREE GROWTH**

Arlyn Perkey

Monitoring the rate of annual growth of crop trees provides landowners with a valuable means of assessing how their most important trees are progressing. It provides an indication of the health and vigor of the trees, the productivity of the site, and the adequacy of the degree of release of the tree from competitors (adjoining trees).

Trees grow in diameter during the spring and summer when the leaves are on deciduous trees. A baseline measurement is established during the dormant season by placing a horizontal paint line on the tree at diameter breast high (dbh – 4.5 feet above ground on the uphill side of the tree). Any time before growth begins in the spring, a measurement at that paint line will establish the beginning diameter. An identifying tree number is painted just above the dbh remeasurement line.

At the end of the growing season, after leaves have fallen, the trees diameter is remeasured at the same paint line. The difference between these two measurements is the amount of diameter growth that has occurred on that tree during that growing season. This can vary from tree to tree and from year to year. To obtain a good reflection of the average growth for a given area, it is advisable to select a group of 10 trees in that location of the same species, approximately the same age, of similar size and growing on a site of relatively consistent productivity. Number this group of 10 trees from 1 through 10 to facilitate keeping track of annual re-measurements so each individual tree performance can be compared to others in the group and the
average for the group can be compared to other groups.

**TIPS ON REMEASURING TREES**

Accurate annual re-measurement of crop trees depends on proper use of the diameter tape at the same height location on the tree every year. The diameter tape must be pulled snugly around the tree. The user must also be careful that the tape does not sag. In other words, when the tape is pulled tight, it must not have slack in it, and it must be perpendicular to the upright edge of the tree.

Another common error is reading the tape incorrectly. Diameter at breast height is rounded down to the nearest 1/10 inch. For example, if the taped measurement is more than 15.5 inches, but less than 15.6, the recorded measurement is 15.5 inches. This is true, even if it is almost 15.6.

Sometimes it can be difficult to remember where crop trees in a group are located. This is especially true if you have several groups of 10 trees. It can be very helpful to use a compass to record the bearing (direction) from one tree to another. It usually isn’t necessary to record distance unless there are big gaps between crop trees. When re-measuring, being pointed in the right direction by a compass may avoid wandering around looking for the next tree.

Forms have been designed to make recording these measurements easier. Blank copies can be found in *Crop Tree Management in Eastern Hardwoods* or *The Crop Tree Field Guide*.

As an example, the following trees in the table on the second to last page of the newsletter were established as a group of 10 in the spring of 2008 near Rutan, PA. They were remeasured at the end of the growing season. These sapling red oaks are growing on a lower north facing slope in an area that was once an old field. Some of them were artificially regenerated from the acorn in tree tubes. Others are natural regeneration from seed sources (larger trees) located upslope from the old field. They are all approximately the same age.

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**DBH Explained**

*By Gay Thistle*

Diameter at breast Height (DBH) is the standard method to measure how large a tree trunk is. A DBH tape is used for this measurement. As Arlyn instructs in the above text, the DBH tape is wrapped around the trunk in order to read the dbh. Some of you may ask how does measuring the circumference give you a diameter reading? Good question— as I would say in my best teacher voice. Luckily, the Egyptians and the Babylonians discovered a nifty relationship between the diameter of a circle and its circumference. The relationship is that the circumference of a circle is always \( \pi \approx 3.14 \) times the length of the diameter of a circle. So in the old days, to measure a tree, ancient foresters would take the measurement of the circumference and divide it by \( \pi \) to get the diameter measurement. Some smart forester decided to do all the math ahead of time and calibrate on a measuring tape so that when you took a
circumference measurement, you would read a diameter measurement and that is what a DBH tape does for us.

**Tree Paint Source**
By Gay Thistle

Arlyn Perkey recommends a tree paint that is easy to use and lasts a long time in the woods on the bark of a tree. The paint is made by Nelson and can be found at nelsonpaint.com. The type that he prefers is labeled as Nel-script. It comes in either blue or white and costs $5.99 a tube.

**Correction:**

**Cost Share Program Available:**
**Private Landowner Assistance Program (PLAP)**

In the September newsletter, the phone number for Tammy Colt was incorrect. Tammy Colt is our regions’ Game Commission’s Wildlife Diversity Biologist. She can be contacted at 724-238-4064 if you are interested in more information on this program.

**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.

**Membership Information For 2009**

This is officially the end of our SWPWO year. Membership dues for 2009 will be collected at the November meeting 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. Our first meeting of 2009 is scheduled for March 11. Keep your membership up to date to receive a calendar of the 2009 programs and to continue to receive the newsletter.

Happy Holidays to all
Crop Tree Measurement Tally Sheet

Perkey Tree Farm - Rutan Unit - Claylick Run Road, Center Township, Pennsylvania

Establishment Date: 4-25-08

Location: stand 9, from 4-H planting by Perkey#1 to opening near Rowlowski

Treatment history: old overnight pasture for dairy cows; grew up in apples, black cherry, multiflora rose; wildlife crop trees released 1992; RO & NS planted, some release 2007

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<th>Y2007 DBH</th>
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These 10 crop trees had an average annual growth of 0.5 inches during the 2008 growing season. Rutan, PA had very ample rainfall during the spring when diameter growth is most active. In August and September it was very dry. That dry weather would be expected to have minimal affect on 2008-annual growth since by that time of the year the tree has reduced growth and is putting food reserves into the roots to prepare for the following growing season.

If these trees were to continue to grow at this average rate, they would grow 5 inches in diameter in 10 years. It will be interesting to see if the 2009 growing season produces equally good results.

On the next page is a blank crop tree growth tally sheet for you to xerox and use to record the growth of your trees. It is also available on the SWPWO website.
Instructions for Using this Form to Monitor Crop Tree Growth

Trees grow during the spring and summer while they are in leaf. In autumn, when all the leaves have fallen, growth stops and does not begin again until new leaves appear the following spring. This form is designed so that the growth of crop trees is recorded during the growing season in which it occurred. It doesn’t matter exactly when during the dormant season the remeasurements are done, as long as it is sometime between October and April while there are no leaves on the trees. Remeasure once each year. Track the growth of crop trees one growing season at a time, and establish a valuable record of consecutive growth data that can be used to help make future management decisions.

1. Select ten (10) similar crop trees in relatively close proximity to each other that will be easy to relocate and remeasure. Choose trees of the same species with about the same free-to-grow rating. The trees should be similar in diameter (for example, from 10" to 14" DBH**).

   Note: The growth of several groups of crop trees can be monitored, depending on how many sets of 10 similar crop trees are available for selection. It is interesting to observe how factors like location, species, weather, and freedom to grow affect growth among various groups of trees.

2. Paint a horizontal line on each tree at DBH and number the trees consecutively from 1 to 10. Tube paint works well. See photo below.

   Note: If there are more than one group of 10 trees, do not renumber 1-10 for each group. Continue consecutive numbering so that each tree is uniquely identified and there is no duplication of numbers.

3. During the initial dormant season, measure the diameters of all 10 crop trees with a diameter tape at the established paint line and record it in the first DBH column (See Example below). Make sure the diameter tape is pulled snugly against the tree with no sagging. Loose fits and sags result in exaggerated measurements.

4. During the following dormant season, measure the diameters of the 10 trees again and record it in the next column. Repeat measurements once each year, and always be sure to measure at the paint line each time. Again, make sure the tape is wrapped snugly around the tree.

5. Calculate the growth for each growing season for every tree by subtracting the previous year’s recorded DBH from the current DBH. Sum the annual growth for the 10 trees to obtain yearly growth in inches for the 10 trees. Sum over 10 years and divide by 10 for the average growth per year in inches per decade.

   ** Free-to-grow information is contained in Crop Tree Management Quick Reference and Crop Tree Field Guide, both available from the USDA Forest Service, 180 Canfield Street, Morgantown, WV 26505.

   ** DBH (Diameter at Breast Height - 4.5 feet above the ground).
CROP TREE GROWTH
(See Instructions on Back)

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**Notes:**

USDA Forest Service, NA-SARES, Morgantown, WV