

Accomplishments Through June 30, 2015



PA WOODLAND

Stewardship

Working Forests for today and tomorrow

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Purpose of this Publication

This publication provides an overview of the Woodland Stewardship Program, its partners, and activities. Through this publication we hope to inform readers about the work our dedicated staff and partners do to make this program successful. Servicing the owners of our state's private forests—and everyone who benefits from this resource—is a huge challenge and can only be successful through the shared commitment of many stakeholders. It is impossible to describe all the work and efforts, but we hope that this publication will provide useful insights into the benefits accrued from our collaborative work for the forests of the Commonwealth.

The goals of this publication are to:

- Provide an overview of the breadth and depth of the program.
- Showcase the partners and the great work they have accomplished.
- Share success stories written by constituents that describe what this program has meant to them and to their communities.



We sincerely thank all the partners and constituents who contributed to this publication.

What is ?

PA WOODLAND
Stewardship
Working Forests for today and tomorrow

The Woodland Stewardship Program is a partnership striving to conserve and sustain working forests on the PA Landscape. This effort focuses on forestland that is not owned by the Commonwealth, such as woodlots owned by private citizens (which equal over 70% of Pennsylvania’s forests), municipal/quasi-municipal woodlands, and school-owned woodlands. These woodlands are vital to the health and well-being of every citizen. The program promotes the wise management and use of our forest resources to ensure the health, productivity, and perpetuation of the wide range of benefits that forests provide to society for generations to come— it challenges us to look beyond our own current personal needs so we can leave a healthy and productive working forest legacy. Services provided to local landowners through this program have been in existence since at least the 1950s through the Department of Forests and Waters (a predecessor of the DCNR Bureau of Forestry). The program gained additional strength through the financial and technical support of the US Forest Service after the passage of the 1990 Farm Bill and continues to be successful today through its strong, broad-based partnerships.



The Woodland Stewardship Program focuses on four main goals in sequence to sustain a working forest landscape:

- Education: Informing decisions on the land, now and in the future, through various forms of facilitated learning.
- Activities Planning: Envisioning the future of the land through effective planning tools, programs, and professionals.
- Activities Implementation: Doing the most good on the land by facilitating proper implementation of management practices.
- Conservation: Ensuring the future of the land by helping to protect and sustain working woodlands on the landscape.

The Woodland Stewardship Program accomplishes its work through:

- Partnering on statewide, regional, and local conferences and workshops.
- Sharing of knowledge among local, regional, and statewide landowner associations and organizations.
- Creating and marketing professional partner websites and webinars
- Providing technical assistance and information to woodland owners.
- Conducting conservation education for diverse audiences including owners, youth, and the public.
- Working with financial assistance programs for forest owners to implement woodland stewardship activities.
- Facilitating peer networks, who communicate regularly at the local, regional, and even national levels.
- Working with municipal governments on planning tools, such as zoning and ordinances.
- Providing Forest Conservation Education and career development programs to school groups, youth camps, and future leaders.
- Connecting woodland owners with private consulting foresters and forest industry options.

Benefits of Healthy Working Woodlands

The benefits provided by working woodlands are diverse and powerful, reaching far beyond the borders of the properties. Good stewardship of the Commonwealth's woodlands benefits far more than just the landowners involved—they are vital resources to their local communities.



Mayapples on the forest floor

ECONOMIC BENEFITS:

- Jobs: Pennsylvania's forest industry supports nearly 60,000 jobs (2015 data from the PA Forest Products Association (PFPA)).
- Timber Value: Pennsylvania's private woodlands provide 90 percent of the trees used by the state's forest industry, adding 16 billion dollars to the economy annually (2015 data from PFPA).
- Cost Savings: Heating homes, businesses, and schools with wood is an expanding market in Pennsylvania. It is cheaper than heating with fossil fuels and has the added benefit of being renewable. Forestland also costs less in public services than developed areas.
- Reduction in Water Treatment Costs: Forests reduce water treatment costs to municipalities by providing natural recharge of aquifers and protection of surface water.
- Other Economic Generators: Healthy woodlands support other activities that can generate revenue, such as recreational activities and the collection and cultivation of native plants such as ginseng, goldenseal, cohosh, and mushrooms.

Benefits of Healthy Working Woodlands

SOCIAL BENEFITS:

- A Space to Recreate: Woodlands provide places for outdoor recreation and education by enhancing hunting, fishing, wildlife watching, hiking, and opportunities for families and communities to enjoy outdoor experiences.
- Human Health and Wellbeing: There is increasing evidence that forested landscapes benefit society by contributing to mental and physical well-being.
- Better Quality of Life: Privately owned forests provide the backdrop for many communities and add to the quality of life. This is especially true in the urban and suburban landscapes of the state where individual small parcels create a welcoming sylvan landscape and provide wildlife habitat, stormwater mitigation, and energy savings as they cool summer days and divert winter winds.



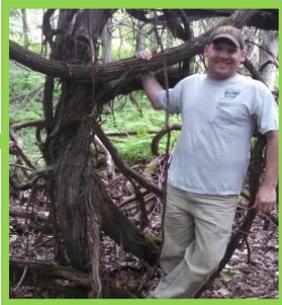
Foresters and landowners learning together in the woods

ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS:

- Water Quality and Quantity: Forested watersheds provide clean water by helping to recharge aquifers. Forested stream banks capture and filter water. They act as sponges that collect and slow stormwater, reducing flooding threats and ensuring stream base flow.
- Resilience in the Face of Challenges and Change: Well-managed private woodlands are more resilient and resistant to insects, pathogens, and diseases. Strong, vigorous trees in young and older forests have more ability to withstand disturbance and change.
- Wildlife Habitat: Forests provide shelter and habitat for diverse plant and animal species, including those that are common, rare, and threatened. Forested stream banks cool streams and supply important nutrients to support stream health, creating better habitat for species like trout that need cool water.
- Carbon Storage and Pollution Reduction: Forests assist with ameliorating the effects of climate change by sequestering carbon. They also help reduce air and water pollution.

Staff

The Pennsylvania Woodland Stewardship Program is directed and administered through excellent, dedicated staff members in the DCNR Bureau of Forestry Rural and Community Forestry Section:



Andy Duncan,
Woodland Stewardship
Coordinator



Tracey Coulter,
Agroforestry Coordinator



Su Ann Shupp,
Land Conservation Coordinator

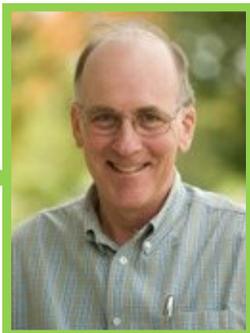


**Rachel Reyna, Section
Chief, Rural & Community
Forestry**



Matt Keefer,
Assistant State Forester

The DCNR staff work closely with exceptional staff at **Penn State Cooperative Extension** to successfully administer the program:



Dr. James C. Finley,
Ibberson Professor of
Forest Resources &
Director of the Center
for Private Forests



Dr. Allyson Muth,
Forest Stewardship
Program Associate



Leslie Horner,
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Forest Resources
Educator



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Forest Resources
Educator



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Senior Lecturer,
Forest Resources



**Dr. Michael
Jacobson,**
Professor, Forest
Resources

Staff

The Woodland Stewardship Program receives grants and program assistance from staff at the **USDA Forest Service**:



Mike Huneke,
Forest Stewardship
Program Manager



Karen Sykes,
Forest Management
Group Leader



Jada Jackson,
Program Manager,
Forest Legacy Program

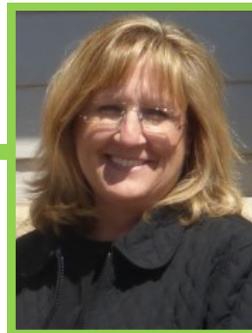


Neal Bungard,
Program Specialist,
Forest Legacy Program

The Woodland Stewardship Program receives assistance with communication/education efforts from staff in the **DCNR Bureau of Forestry Communications and Interpretation Section**:



Jeff Woelsgle,
Section Chief



Jean Devlin,
Program Specialist



Dave Schmit,
Program Specialist



Ed Dix,
Program Specialist

The DCNR staff receive advice and feedback from the **Statewide Forest Stewardship Committee** comprised of representatives from federal, state, and local government agencies, non-governmental organizations, private woodland owners, forest industry, and forest consultants.

Field Staff

DCNR also supplies the program with technical support from 35 Foresters that work in field offices across the state.



Garrett Beers
District 19



Lucas Book
District 3



William Bow
District 5



Andy Brought
District 18



Ryan Brown
District 11



John Brundege
District 8



Celine Colbert
District 4



Dave Cole
District 8



Tim Cole
District 5



Tom Erdman
District 14



Chad Gadsby
District 20



Russell Gibbs
District 4



Gary Gilmore
District 8



Lynn Greenaway
District 10



Ben Hardy
District 11



Toby Herzing
District 13



Steve Hoover
District 16



Gerald Hoy
District 7

Field Staff (continued)



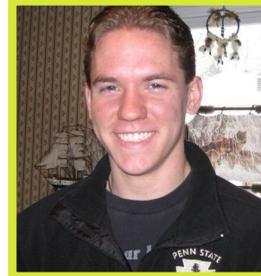
Christopher Jones
District 6



Rich Johnson
District 9



Matt Kern
District 1



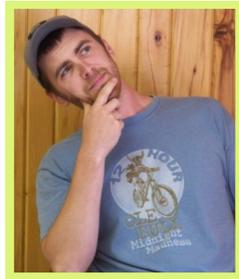
Tim Latz
District 17



Mark Lewis
District 14



Robert Martynowych
District 18



Eric Monger
District 15



Michael Nelson
District 6



John Nissen
District 17



John Nobles
District 14



Ty Ryen
District 14



Jessica Salter
District 17



Dave Scamardella
District 2



Jake Scheib
District 8



John Schwartzer
District 1

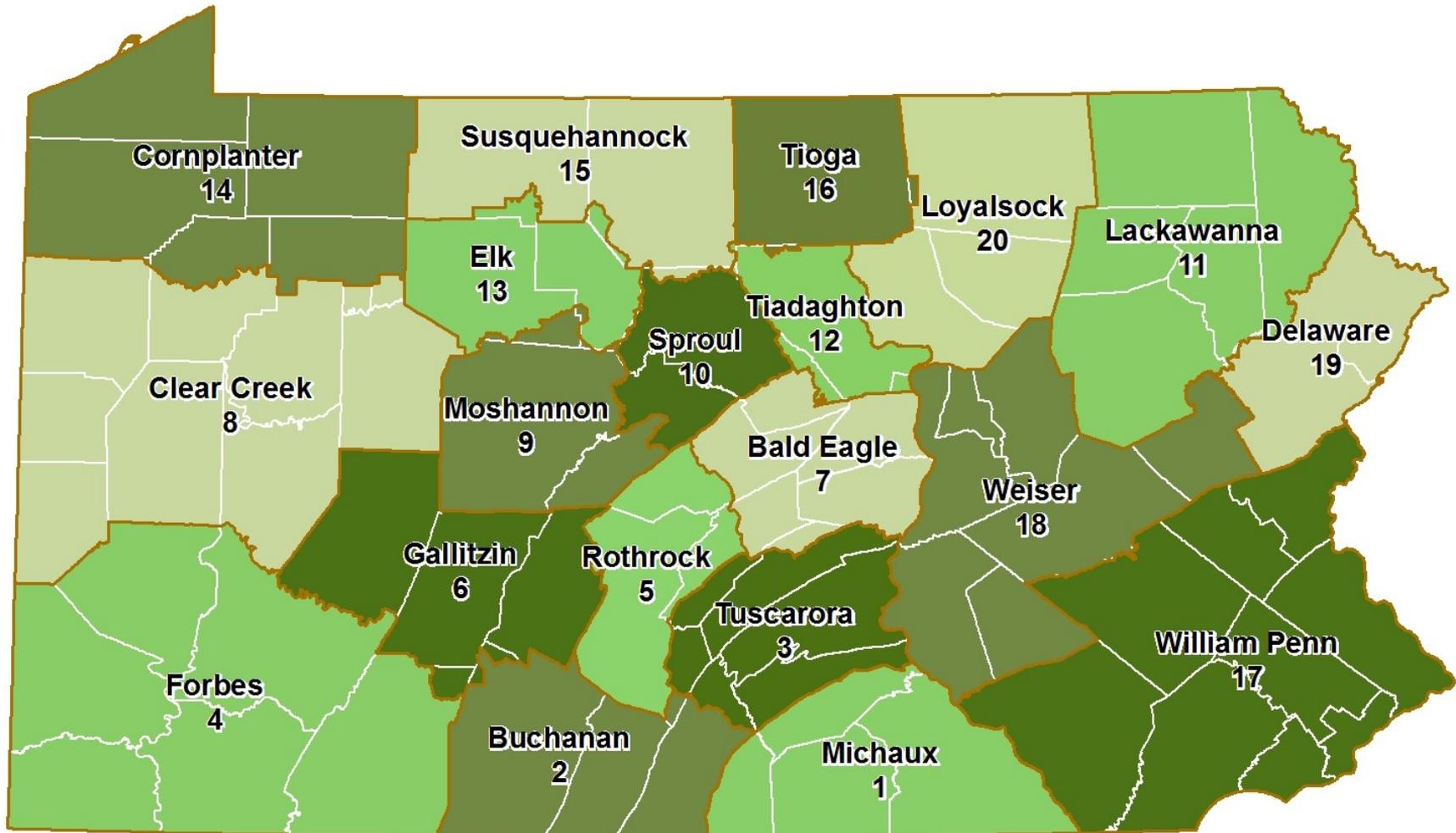


Jason Smith
District 12



Frank Snyder
District 18

State Forest Districts



DCNR field staff work out of 20 forest districts in the state.

Partners

Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay	PA Association of Conservation Districts	Pheasants Forever
American Forest Foundation	PA Association of Township Supervisors	Pinchot Institute
Association of Consulting Foresters	PA Council of Professional Foresters	Project Learning Tree
Berks County Conservancy	PA DCNR Bureau of Rec and Con	Quality Deer Management Association
Central PA Conservancy	PA DCNR Bureau of State Parks	Ruffed Grouse Society
Chesapeake Bay Foundation	PA Department of Agriculture	Stroud Water Research Center
Clearwater Conservancy	PA Dept. of Environmental Protection	Sustainable Forestry Initiative
Common Waters Program	PA Envirothon	The Conservation Fund
Delaware Highlands Conservancy	PA Forest Products Association	The Nature Conservancy
Foundation for Sustainable Forests	PA Forest Stewards	USDA Farm Services Agency
Indiana University of Pennsylvania	PA Forest Stewardship Committee	USDA Forest Service
National Audubon Society, PA Chapter	PA Forestry Association	USDA NRCS
National Association of State Foresters	PA Game Commission	US Department of the Interior
National Wild Turkey Federation	PA Hardwood Development Council	Western PA Conservancy
National Woodland Owners Association	PA Land Trust Association	Women and Their Woods
Natural Lands Trust	PA Tree Farm Committee	Wildlands Conservancy
NE Area Assoc. of State Foresters	PA Woodland Owner Associations	And Many More...
Northcentral PA Conservancy	Penn State Extension	

Woodland Stewardship Education

Informing Decisions on the Land

Educational efforts are paramount to the Woodland Stewardship Program. Education, of both adults and youth, is the foundation of the program. Through these efforts, woodland owners are learning more about their land and how to properly care for the woods they love. Children and youth are learning about their environment and are becoming the stewards of tomorrow.



A class of PA Forest Stewards in training

Reaching nearly 740,000 landowners that hold 11.5 million woodland acres demands collaborative partnerships and out-of-the-box approaches. To curb threats to forest sustainability — such as ownership parcelization, fragmentation, lack of woodland planning, and insect and disease prevention — partners in the Woodland Stewardship Program have created many pathways to effectively communicate with these owners.

The partners support youth education and work to give young people outdoor experiences and an appreciation for the forest. Through these efforts, we seek to mentor the next generation of people who care about the health and proper management of our woodlands.

It is important to understand that successful education is a process—not an event. Knowledge accumulates over time and each exposure increases opportunities to find success and to engage new participants. By planting the seeds, we know from experience it fosters a stewardship ethic that transcends generations and there is hope that forests—and good stewards of those forests—will be sustained into the future.

Collaborative Partnerships in Woodland Stewardship Education



PA Forest Stewards Workshop

The Penn State Center for Private Forests



The Center for Private Forests at Penn State was created in 2011 to ensure a continued focus on education, research, and outreach to private woodland owners around the state, region, and beyond well into the future. At the core of its mission is the effort to use applied research to better understand woodland owners motivations, activities, needs, and to help move them in the direction of better forest stewardship through the creation of materials, tools, resources, educational opportunities, and by engaging the natural resources professional community. The 2010 Bureau of Forestry sponsored study by Alex Metcalf (PSU Ph.D. 2010) found that Pennsylvania has nearly 740,000 private forest landowners who together control about 11.5 million acres of the states nearly 17 million acres of forests. This represents a large and diverse clientele who are looking for resources to care for their woodlands and all its values.

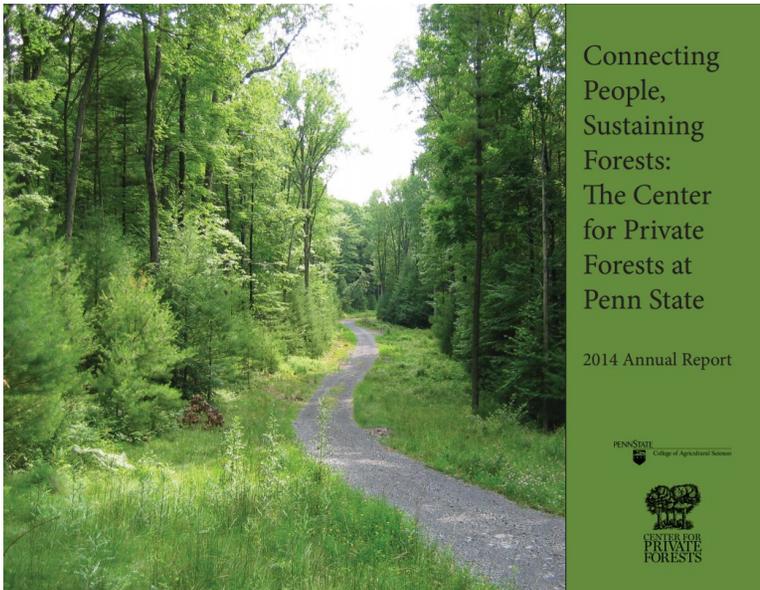
In the past, federal and state funding has supported education, outreach, and forest stewardship management actions; however, these resources are increasingly difficult to secure. The Center has benefited from public support but is also working to create a user-supported endowment at Penn State, funding its work in education and outreach on private forests. In a sense, the Center is leveraging past public support to fashion a sustainable privately funded education model. It will do this by accepting donations, estate gifts, land, and other forms of support.

Comprised of educators and researchers, the Center recognizes our responsibility to share knowledge with the current and future generations of resource owners and managers. In Pennsylvania today, with vast acreages of land held by private individuals, natural resources

management is less about managing the resource, and more about assisting the individuals who own the resource in making sound decisions for their forestland. The Center for Private Forests provides a focus on, not only the resources held by private individuals, but also the unique traits and values they possess, which are conduits for promoting a broader message of forestland conservation.

To learn more about the Center and its work, please visit and bookmark the website ecosystems.psu.edu/private-forests. The website has information about the Center's faculty, outreach programs, educational opportunities, the 2014 annual report, and ways to support the Center's work.

The creation of the Center for Private Forests at Penn State is a triumph for all Woodland Stewardship Program partners. The staff are great supporters of the Center and look forward to continued partnership and shared accomplishments in our collective work.



The Penn State Center for Private Forests—SUCCESS STORY

The Second Annual Statewide Private Forest Landowner Conference

In March 2015, in Altoona, the Center sponsored its second Forest Landowners Conference to promote fellowship and learning among those who care for the forest. The initial conference was held in 2013 and the third is already in planning for March 24 and 25, 2017. The 2015 Conference hosted 450 landowners and others for two-days of learning about forests and forest issues during ninety-nine presentations, keynote addresses, a tradeshow, and tours. The enthusiasm among the participants was palpable. The Conference was conceived as a way to bring together Pennsylvania's private forest landowners so that they understand and engage with the extent and diversity of their community and to help them develop a shared relationship to the land. Additionally, it provided a forum for them to understand the resources of the support network available to help them to sustain their forests.



2015 Conference attendees browsing the exhibit hall

Pennsylvania Forest Stewards



Pennsylvania Forest Stewards Volunteers (PAFS) are Pennsylvania community citizens, teachers, and woodland owners trained in the principles of stewardship, silviculture (the growing of forest trees), forest and wildlife management, tree identification and measurement, forest ecology, financial and legal issues, and outreach resources. Participants tour demonstration areas to see examples of forest management practices.

Following the Master Gardener example, participants receive a 40-hour training, which is at no cost to them— however, each PAFS volunteer must then commit to provide at least 40 hours of volunteer service related to woodland stewardship. The specific nature of PAFS volunteer service is up to the individual volunteer. Some examples of outreach activities include talking to neighbors about forest stewardship, leading woodland tours, making presentations to adults and children, being active in woodland owners associations, and providing information to the media. After volunteers complete training, they receive periodic newsletters, publications, and opportunities to attend advanced training sessions exclusively for PAFS volunteers. Trained volunteers, DCNR Service Foresters, and other partners help to recruit new volunteers for future years.

PAFS STATS:

PAFS trained to-date:	617
Counties Represented:	63 (of 67)
2013 Volunteer Service Hours:	14,482
People Reached by PAFS in 2013:	600,000

The training of PAFS significantly expands the capacity of the Woodland Stewardship Program. These dedicated volunteers can get audiences with people who may not be interested in hearing from government or university staff. They also provide invaluable assistance to the partners by providing locations for workshops and assisting staff in many other capacities.



Pennsylvania Forest Stewards—SUCCESS STORY

Excerpt from a Promotional Piece Submitted by Bob Slagter, PAFS Class of 2008

The sun is just beginning to rise over the side of the Pennsylvania ridge. The coolness of the morning sends little fingers of fog reaching from the surface of the small creek that runs through the Ludlow valley. Our guide stops and so do we... all goes quiet as we absorb the moment... the smell of hemlock and old leaves and fresh water... the sight of the first rays of sun filtering through the tightly-woven bows of the trees overhead... the textured silence of the woods at dawn provided by the far-off woodpeckers, closer cardinals, and the music of the moving water.

“What do you feel here, right now? What is this like for you?” Jim asks.

Jim is the leader of the program that brought us here and the guide for this morning’s sojourn. We have learned from the previous five days of work with Jim to pay attention when he speaks.

“It feels like we’re in the essence of a Pennsylvania woodland...” “It’s peaceful and calm...” “It’s a perfect place to be,” we respond.

Jim is silent for a moment, then in almost a whisper, “To me, it’s very much like being in a cathedral. The sun coming in through the canopy draws your eyes skyward, toward our maker, like you do in church with light streaming in through the clerestory windows.”

Of course, you CAN feel the religion of the moment. In fact, it is easy to imagine that the earliest concept of a deity may have come to our oldest ancestors in a place like this back in the mists of time. It must have grabbed the others of the group the same way, because the next moments were spent in some silent devotion like so many monks at vespers.

Jim broke the mood directly ...

“Now imagine that this is the last place like this on earth... because I’m afraid we may be the last generation of people to experience these places. The hemlock woolly adelgid is moving inexorably south out of New England and it will soon pass through here taking 80% of our state tree with it. We are homogenizing our forests in this global economy and spreading diseases like this and the emerald ash borer and others as we go. It’s a sad consequence of being who we are.”

This was one of the more moving moments of the PA Forest Stewards Volunteer Training session in September 2008 at Olmstead Manor in Ludlow. The session itself is composed of two long weekends (from Friday evening through Sunday afternoon) with a couple of dozen people gathered to learn how to spread the word on sustainable forestry, silviculture, and best management practices in our woodlands. These participants run the gamut from timber investment managers to tree-huggers, coming here with very diverse backgrounds. There is the biologist who works for a conservancy, the champion nut-grower, the fellow who makes his living with selling firewood and timber from his 500-acre woodlot, the couple who have 400 acres in central PA, the lady with 6 acres near Mt. Pleasant. Some know a lot about forests, some don’t, and some think they do. They share one common trait: they believe in the value of their trees and know that they must act to demonstrate the real, LONG TERM value of a woodlot to the thousands of other landowners in the state.

The full article can be obtained from Allyson Muth at abm173@psu.edu.



Woodland Owner Associations (WOAs)



A woodland owner association workshop

PA Woodland Owners Associations are organized groups comprised predominantly of woodland owners with interests in sustainable forest management for a diversity of values and goals. These organizations provide local and regional workshops and tours of forested properties where woodland owners can share ideas, success stories, and challenges involving sustainable forest management. Association membership is open to anyone interested in learning about the principles, practices and benefits of sustainable forest management — and how this in turn reflects positively on the social, economic, and ecologic vitality of rural forests, communities, and owners. DCNR Service Foresters and the Center for Private Forests play an active role with these associations in coordination and advisory capacities, as well as providing technical presentations at woodland tours and regional conferences.

WOA STATS:

Number of PA WOAs:	21
Counties Represented:	48 (of 67)
Total Members:	1,500
Average # Local Workshops/year:	140
Average Local Workshop Attendance:	20
Average Regional Conference Attendance:	80

Woodland Owner Associations—SUCCESS STORY

Submitted by Dave Cole, DCNR Service Forester

The Woodland Owners of the Clarion/Allegheny Valley (WOCAV) held their annual conference in February 2015. The conference theme was centered around accomplishing stewardship practices for wildlife on reclaimed strip mined sites. This area of the state has a long history and breadth of acres associated with strip mining, primarily owned by private landowners. Over 75 forest owners attended the conference, which featured a variety of professional speakers on various wildlife habitat enhancement approaches. The conference was organized by DCNR Service Foresters, Penn State Natural Resources Extension, and forest landowners in the WOCAV group.

At the conclusion of the workshop, the 70 participants were asked to submit answers to several questions regarding the value of the workshop. The results are as follows:

- 28% reported their ability to sustainably manage their woodlot improved greatly
- 43% reported their ability to sustainably manage their woodlot improved moderately
- 70% reported that they were likely to or absolutely would implement a sustainable forestry practice on their property within the next year
- 74% reported that they agreed strongly with the notion of seeking advice from natural resource professionals as part of future management activities



WOCAV members at a meeting

Educational events sponsored by WOAs greatly contribute to developing landowners into land stewards. The uncertainty of our education efforts always rests with the question of how much our efforts “sink in” and translate to sustainable forestry activities on the ground. By planting the seeds with initial education, we hope to foster a stewardship ethic that transcends generations on the landscape and sustains forests for decades to come. The above example makes us “feel good” about the future, but we ultimately hope these efforts indeed “do good”.

Women and Their Woods

The Women and their Woods (WaTW) program was born through a cooperative partnership between the Delaware Highlands Conservancy, US Forest Service, and Penn State Natural Resources Extension. In 2011, the first of many education retreats took place in northeast PA, providing workshops aimed at empowering women forest owners to understand connect, and steward their lands, while also outreaching to other owners in their community. The program was successful in PA, and has to date been carried forth in other states as well for the same intentioned purposes. A 4-day retreat on forested lands takes place each year in Pennsylvania. This program has provided a valuable angle in advancing stewardship to a key facet of private forests and landowners that may have otherwise not been reached.

After attending a recent WaTW event, Ms. Elle Morgan had the following reflections of her time spent and knowledge gained.

“When it comes to land, it’s best to stay connected and keep planning for the future,” landowner Elle Morgan believes. After attending the WaTW retreat, she had a newly found appreciation for all that happens on her family’s land. “I’m looking forward to sharing this knowledge with my family members so we can continue to enjoy this land through future generations.”

WOMEN STEWARDS TRAINED TO-DATE: 53



Women learning together at a Women and Their Woods Retreat

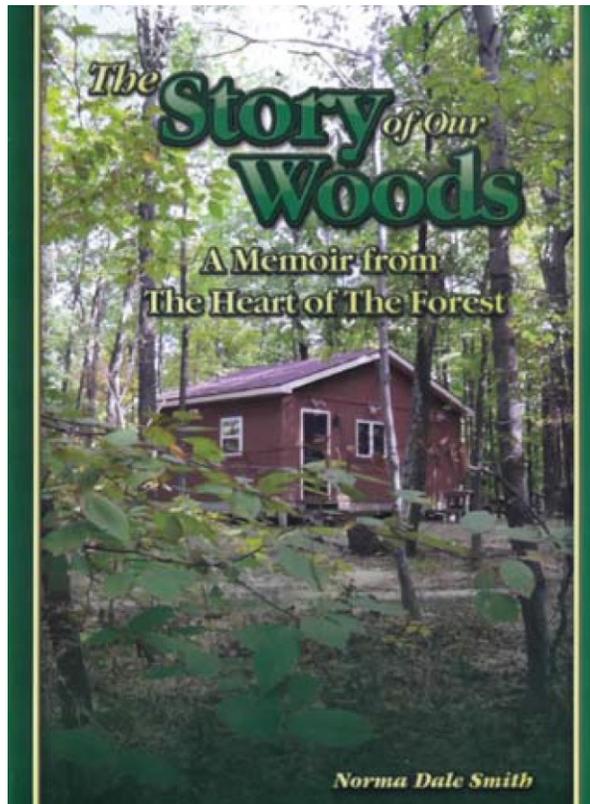
Women and Their Woods—SUCCESS STORY

From Women and Their Woods Newsletter:

The Story of Our Woods: A Memoir from the Heart of the Forest

After I attended the [Women and Their Woods] WaTW retreat in September 2012, I came home bursting with enthusiasm. Knowing I had to do something to instill the love of our land and the importance of stewardship to the next generation of our family, I was inspired to write a story. "The Story of Our Woods - A Memoir from the Heart of the Forest" is the finished result of my project.

-Norma Dale Smith



Excerpt:

It was 1960--the dawn of a new decade. In an area known as Donnertown, a beautiful tract of woods had stood quiet and magnificent for many years. It boasted abundant wildlife, many species of trees and flora, and a lovely little stream known as McDonald's Run. Dad often walked to and from work, and he came whistling home one day to tell Mom about an idea. I'm sure it was no easy thing to say he needed \$800 to buy one hundred and twenty six acres of woodland out in the middle of nowhere, especially when as a "railroader," he could have been laid off at any time--and who knew for how long? I can only guess how Mom reacted to *that* news. I do know for certain that they didn't have that kind of money back in those days. I'm sure Dad pointed out how much he loved getting out in the country and going for long drives and picnics. "Ag, wouldn't it be great to have our very own woods where we could go whenever we wanted to enjoy Nature?" He must have felt those Donnertown Woods calling to him, and he immediately began to have visions of building a pavilion there and putting in a pond complete with fish. Our Dad wasn't a hunter but I found out some time later that when he was a very young man he had spent some time out West cutting timber. Perhaps that's where his love for the outdoors was kindled. Eventually, through his persistence and charm, Dad convinced Mom and they borrowed the money. As soon as weather permitted, Dad was excited to take Mom and me to see "the property."

Stewardship Demonstration Forests

Many landowners prefer hands-on training and experiential learning above all other educational tools. Across Pennsylvania, Woodland Stewardship partners have created Forest Stewardship Demonstration Forests to showcase common stewardship activities for attaining a variety of forest values and goals. These project areas often incorporate interpretive trails and brochures that lead landowners through treatments and described planned outcomes. To date, there are 22 Stewardship Demonstration Forests existing on private and public lands where the public is invited to stop and observe stewardship in action. In addition, many Bureau forest districts invite citizens, landowners, and legislators for tours focused on state forest stewardship activities. Collaboration between DCNR, Bureau of Forestry Service Foresters, Penn State, local Woodland Owner Associations, and PA Forest Stewards is essential for making these events successful and thought-provoking. Stewardship Demonstration Forests are vital in telling the forest management story, and provide a prime setting to explore many activities and issues that landowners may face in improving their woodlots for today and tomorrow.



A DCNR Service Forester prepares a demonstration forest education site

Demonstration Forests At a Glance

Areas Created:	19
Acres:	7,550

Demonstration Forests—SUCCESS STORY

Penn State Extension has, for several decades, hosted Ag Progress Days on its research grounds west of State College. Thousands of people are attracted to this event in mid-August for the knowledge, technological advancements, and activities, and rural setting each year. Throughout the three-day event, educational tours are provided by Penn State to showcase the latest advancements in farming technology, crop sciences, and forest management issues and practices. DCNR Bureau of Forestry staff assist with an educational booth, and provide staffing assistance to partners with the PA Forestry Association and American Tree Farm System. In addition, Service Foresters work with Penn State Extension to arrange three separate woodlot tours per event day on the Rock Springs Stewardship Demonstration Forest, located in a woodlot adjacent to the Ag Progress Days site.



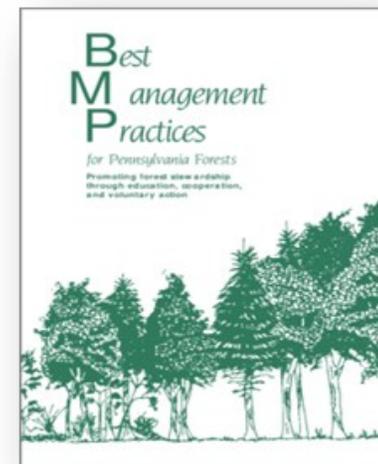
Staff lead tours of a forest demonstration area

In 2014, staff led tours through the Rock Springs site to assess the impacts of hemlock woolly adelgid and tour an active salvage timber harvest where infested hemlock was being removed from the site. With HWA infecting hemlocks in 42 counties of Pennsylvania, many landowners are faced with the decisions about what to do with hemlock dominated forest. The woodland workshops provided a valuable discussion on the benefits of planning and managing forests before insect threats become problematic, and being prepared with options for management should these issues arise. Participants came away with a better understanding of forest threats and how to mitigate these threats with planning, knowledge, and implementable strategies.

Publications and Newsletters

Research sponsored by DCNR Bureau of Forestry and Penn State has repeatedly found that many woodland owners prefer to use printed publications as a learning tool. The Woodland Stewardship Program works with partners to develop publications and newsletters to communicate the overall value of forest stewardship of private lands. The Forest Stewardship Bulletins, one of the most successful series of publications, was initiated in 1990 and continues to capture the interest of many landowners seeking to improve their forests for the future. Detailed information in this series focuses on everything from the importance of planning forest activities, to reaching objectives for wildlife management, the value of timber harvesting when properly coordinated, and considering the elements of deer browsing, sunlight, and competing vegetation in forest stewardship implementation. Twenty five years later, new forest owners still find great value in these working documents as a basis for developing and refining their knowledge. These documents are available both in print form and online through the Penn State Extension website.

Forest Leaves is an electronic newsletter provided by Penn State Extension to update landowners on relevant research, helpful information, upcoming stewardship events, workshops, and webinars, and to provide reports from partners working in private woodland stewardship. Beyond the electronic version, individuals can also receive a quarterly “hardcopy.” Approximately 12,000 individuals subscribe to this publication. In addition, partners are invited to submit articles covering a wide range of topics and experiences they are having with working their forests.



Publications and Newsletters—SUCCESS STORY

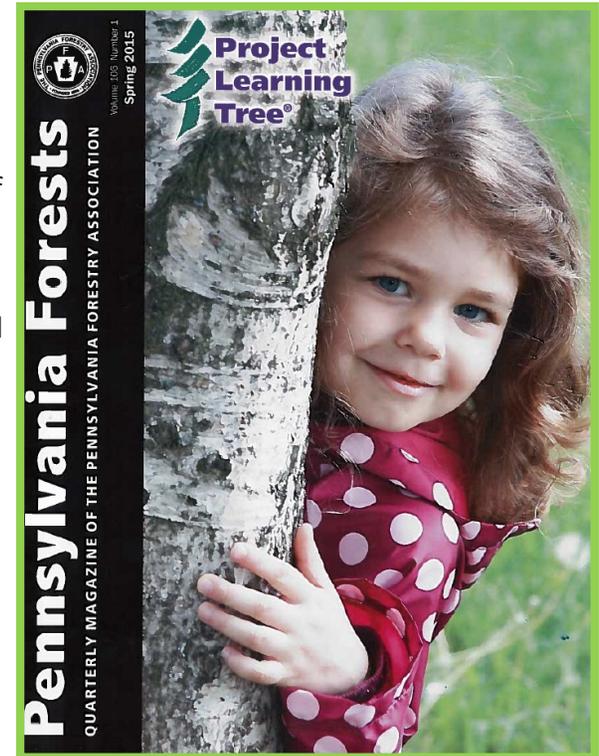
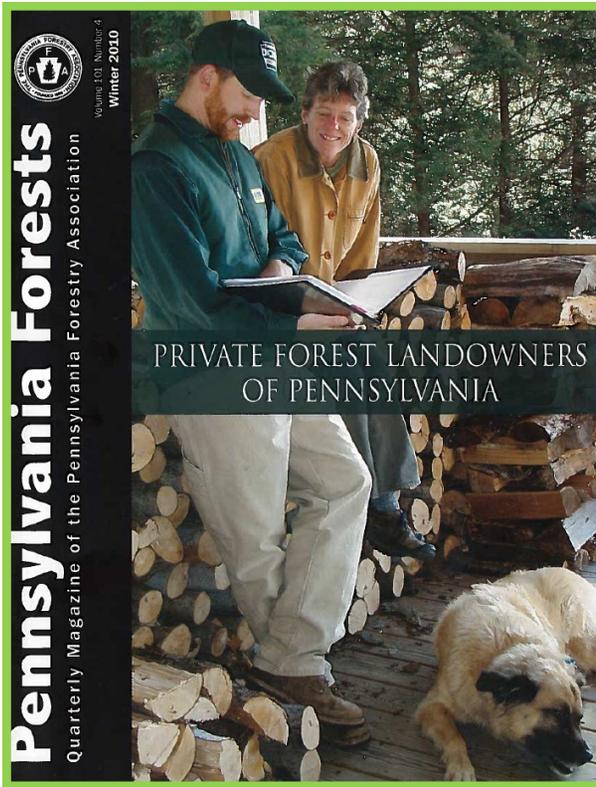
PA Forests Magazine

Several Woodland Stewardship Program staff are board members of the Pennsylvania Forestry Association (PFA)—and a few are part of the communication committee that helps to put together *Pennsylvania Forests Magazine*, which is the flagship publication of The Pennsylvania Forestry Association. Every quarter, the PFA communication team creates this high-quality magazine, which is designed to inform forest landowners about new information that may be of use to them in their woodland management. The publication also covers policy implications

affecting forests. The magazine often creates issues around various forest stewardship-related themes, showcasing upcoming events and current projects. The Woodland Stewardship Program staff have been instrumental in assisting with writing articles for special themed issues.

The PFA was founded in 1886 as a direct result of concern over forest destruction that occurred in Pennsylvania in the late 19th century. Dr.

Joseph Rothrock, a pioneer in forest conservation, was the first president of this association. With its cornerstone mission today of demonstrating the value of sustainable forest conservation to landowners, commonwealth citizens, children, and policy makers, the PFA continues to be a strong voice in shaping awareness and advocacy for forest conservation in PA.



Engaging Youth

To establish a woodland stewardship legacy that spans generations on the landscape, it is essential to reach not only the current landowners, citizens, and decision makers, but those who will eventually follow in their footsteps. The Woodland Stewardship Program focuses on several key initiatives to engage today's youth in constructive ways to shape them as future conservation leaders, woodland stewards, and environmentally conscious citizens.



DCNR Service Foresters teaching youth about forest measurements

The premier Pennsylvania programs that serve to educate youth in woodland stewardship are:

- Project Learning Tree
- PA Envirothon
- Future Forest Steward Program
- DCNR Eco Camp



A PA Envirothon team

Engaging Youth—SUCCESS STORY

Project Learning Tree

Project Learning Tree (PLT) is a highly successful national environmental education initiative lead by the American Forest Foundation. The vision of the program is to create a future where the next generation values the natural world and has the knowledge and skills necessary to make informed decisions and take responsible actions to sustain both forests and the broader environment. The PA Bureau of Forestry assists the Department of Education in spearheading the program in Pennsylvania, providing forest conservation curriculum-based workshops to program facilitators (teachers, youth group leaders, forest landowners, PA Forest Stewards, natural resource professionals, and many others). The program focuses on providing the skills and knowledge necessary to communicate to youth an awareness and appreciation of forests, the value of nature in child development, and the importance of woodland stewardship.



PA PLT Project Coordinator, Jean Devlin, instructing PLT facilitators



DCNR Forester Tim Carr explains tree measurement to PLT facilitators

PLT STATS

Facilitators Trained in 2014:	150
Facilitator Trainings in 2014:	27
Total Trainees (all years):	554

Engaging Youth—SUCCESS STORY

PA Envirothon

Thousands of high school students from across Pennsylvania compete each year in the PA Envirothon. Students are formed into teams for their school and participate in classroom work to prepare them for field competition at local county events each spring. Students study educational materials based around the disciplines of Forestry, Wildlife, Aquatic Ecology, Soils and Land Use, and Environmental Issues. Winning teams at county events compete in the statewide Envirothon, with state winners competing at the Canon North American Envirothon. The Bureau of Forestry spearheads the compilation of study materials and field testing of the Forestry stations at all county and statewide envirothon events, through cooperation between the BOF Communications Section and field Service Foresters. Engaging students at the Envirothon builds awareness of conservation, sparking interest in environmental conservation careers after high school. In 2013, York Homeschool Association placed 9th out of 57 states/provinces at the Canon Envirothon in Bozeman, Montana.



2015 First Place PA Envirothon Winners

2015 Pennsylvania State Envirothon Results (Excerpt from press release on the PA Envirothon Website):

The 32nd Pennsylvania Envirothon state competition was held at the University of Pittsburgh Johnstown and Windber Recreation Park on Tuesday and Wednesday, May 19 and 20, 2015. High school students from 63 Pennsylvania counties participated in this year's event.

At the Envirothon, five-member teams participate in a series of field station tests that focus on five topic areas – soils and land use, aquatic ecology, forestry, wildlife, and environmental issues. The 2015 current environmental issue focused on Urban and Community Forestry. The teams also prepare and deliver oral presentations to panels of judges who evaluate each team on its problem-solving capabilities, oral presentation skills and recommendations to help solve the specific environmental challenge, which relates to the current environmental issue.

Teams participating represent the best and the brightest of the thousands of high school teens who have competed in county Envirothon competitions sponsored by conservation districts from across the state. At the state level, the Envirothon is sponsored by Pennsylvania's sixty-six county conservation districts, the State Conservation Commission, and the Pennsylvania Association of Conservation Districts. The program is managed by a board of directors representing those sponsors.

Technical expertise is provided by the following partners: PA Department of Environmental Protection, PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, PA Game Commission, PA Fish and Boat Commission, U.S.D.A. Natural Resources Conservation Service, and the Penn State Extension. Sponsors and partners of the 2015 Envirothon are PPL Corporation, Marcellus Shale Coalition, Shell Oil Co., Air Products Foundation, Weis, The Hershey Company, National Conservation Foundation Envirothon, PA Department of Agriculture, Pennsylvania Department of Education, PA Outdoor Writers Association, PA Trappers Association, Pennsylvania Association of Conservation Districts, and State Conservation Commission. The Hershey Company, Dwight Lewis Lumber, Lewis Lumber Products, PPL, and Cargill are corporate station sponsors.

The 2015 Pennsylvania Envirothon champions will represent the Commonwealth at the 27th North American competition planned for July 27 – August 1 at Missouri State University, Springfield. Pennsylvania has won the North American event in 1988, 1989, 1990, 1991, 1994, 1997, 2000, 2001, 2003, 2005, and 2009. More than 46 states, eight Canadian provinces, and one Canadian territory have initiated Envirothon contests based on the program that was originally developed by Pennsylvania's conservation districts. The 2015 Pennsylvania Envirothon champions, scoring 572.00 points of a possible 600, are from Penncrest High School located in Delaware County. The Delaware County team earned the honor to represent Pennsylvania at the NCF-Envirothon North American competition.

Engaging Youth—SUCCESS STORY

The Future Forest Steward Program

Submitted by Penn State Extension

In 2007, The Pennsylvania Forest Stewardship Program introduced a “patch recognition” initiative for youth called the Junior Forest Steward Program (recently renamed as the Future Forest Steward Program). The Future Forest Steward Program is a free program offering youth (ages 8-12 years old) an opportunity to learn about the forests of Pennsylvania and the important concept of forest stewardship. Pennsylvania youth often know very little about the forests and natural areas that cover the state and this educational initiative can get kids excited about and interested in Penn’s Woods. Penn State Department of Ecosystem Science and Management and The DCNR Bureau of Forestry teamed up to offer The Future Forest Steward Program.

The program relies on cooperating adults (such as teachers, youth group leaders, 4-H volunteers, Scout leaders, and other adults working with youth) to help facilitate learning. Adults do not need to be naturalists or forestry experts to carry out the Future Forest Steward Program, but an interest and willingness to learn right along with youth is essential. The program works in both formal and non-formal educational settings.

The program format is straightforward. Youth read the interactive Future Forest Steward publication (individually or as a group), discuss the questions, and then participate in a forest stewardship activity led by the adult educator or helper. A Future Forest Steward Educator/Helper Guide (for adult educators or helpers) accompanies the Future Forest Steward publication to provide answers and ideas for activities that youth can undertake, but you may design your own activity as well. After participants complete the three steps, the adult submits the "Tally Sheet" at the end of the Educator/Helper Guide to receive a Future Forest Steward patch for each participant.

It is that simple! However, the benefits are potentially far reaching. This program encourages youth understanding about forest stewardship, collaborative learning through discussion, and hands-on learning through activity. It raises awareness of stewardship concepts and the importance of being a steward of the natural world. After all, today’s youth will be responsible for the forests that give Pennsylvania its very name, and they will pass them on to future generations.



Engaging Youth—SUCCESS STORY

DCNR ECO Camp

Exploring Careers Outdoors (ECO) Camp was launched in 2002 within DCNR. This unique camp provides funding to approximately 20 students each year to attend a week-long outdoor based residential camp. The camp's purpose is to expose students to a broad range of career paths in recreation, conservation, and natural resources. Staff from DCNR serve as camp counselors. Students are selected based on their application, an essay, and letters of recommendation. After camp "graduation," students are offered career development opportunities through mentor programs with counselors, job shadowing, newsletters, and alumni events. Outstanding students are selected to return as Student Leaders. Some graduates become involved in "School to Work" programs in DCNR and other conservation agencies. Many have returned as interns, pursued college degrees in conservation disciplines, or obtained professional conservation jobs. Service Foresters and other DCNR staff provide hands on activities that showcase the multiple roles foresters play within DCNR and other agencies.

Following are quotes showing the power and effectiveness of this life changing opportunity:

"As a DCNR Service Forester in Northeast PA, I served as a counselor for ECO Camp from 2005-2010. This experience was one of the most rewarding in my 15-year career with DCNR. The transformation that occurs from Day 1 at camp to the final day, in terms of their development and awareness of conservation careers, challenges, and opportunities, and their ability to work together as a team to engage in activities, was awe-inspiring. One of the most inspiring activities each year occurs at the end of camp, when all counselors and students sit together and discuss what we learned and what we planned to do moving forward. The lessons learned and experiences shared in those sessions created lasting friendships and a generation of newly empowered young conservationists with deep commitments to the cause. To this day, I still hear from and provide mentorship to numerous students I advised at ECO Camp. No reward is greater than knowing you helped to positively shape young minds and made a difference in their perspective on life."-**Andrew Duncan, Former ECO Camp Counselor and current Private Forestland Stewardship Coordinator with PA DCNR.**

"I am a Geology/Environmental Science graduate and worked for Glacier National Park doing environmental programs. DCNR's ECO Camp allowed me to see all the available opportunities in education and environmental careers. I hope to pursue a career in state parks.-**Bridget Gross, Former ECO Camp Student and Student Leader.**



Eco Camp students enjoying camaraderie

Opportunities for Professional Foresters

The PA Woodland Stewardship Program has long recognized and utilized the services of professional private foresters to prepare management plans and implement forestry practices on private woodlands. Woodland Stewardship partners encourage landowners to contact foresters for management plans and practices on their properties. Given the sheer number of private woodland acres and ownerships in PA, it's easy to see how consulting foresters, working in partnership with Service Foresters and other conservation entities, play critical roles in building support for the principles of sustainable forestry in private woodlands.

For over 25 years, DCNR has maintained a list of private professional foresters who have agreed to conduct business in all counties of PA. This list includes professional certifications, work experience, contact information, and services offered for private woodland owners. To be included

on the list, foresters must possess a minimum of a two-year degree in forestry or closely related discipline. The list shows landowners the type of employment each forester has (self-employed private consultant or works as an industrial forester) and indicates additional certifications or trainings — for example, it shows if a forester belongs to a professional forestry certification program, such as the Society of American Foresters (SAF) Certified Forester Program, or has full membership in the Association of Consulting Foresters (ACF). Both of these organizations have rigorous standards for professionalism in the field of forestry. Foresters that have taken the required training to provide NRCS-based technical assistance, create Forest Stewardship plans, create prescriptions for Quality Deer Management, or write plans that meet the standards of the American Tree Farm System are indicated. Other services foresters provide to landowners are indicated on the list. Forest landowners are presented with county-based lists to identify who is available to perform desired forestry services.



Allyson Muth teaching an “Expand Your Base” workshop for foresters

The PA Woodland Stewardship Program continues to provide professional trainings to private foresters on a range of topics. Every two years, interested consulting foresters are provided Stewardship Planwriter Training, enabling them to be certified to provide Stewardship Activities Plans. Tree Farm Inspector training is also provided each year to certify foresters as inspectors. In cooperation with the BOF Division of Forest Health and Penn State Extension, forest pest updates are provided each year in the spring at locations across the state. Service Foresters and Penn State Extension also offer yearly trainings to update foresters on a wide range of current forest conservation challenges, opportunities, and sustainable forest management strategies.

Opportunities for Professional Foresters—SUCCESS STORY

2014 Eastern PA Consulting and Industrial Forester Conference

Submitted by Andrew Duncan, Private Forestland Stewardship Coordinator, DCNR Bureau of Forestry

Over 60 private consulting and industrial foresters from across Pennsylvania, Maryland, and West Virginia came together at the Dauphin County Conservation District Office on October 16, 2014 for the Eastern Pennsylvania Consulting and Industrial Forester Conference. This popular event is hosted every two years by the PA Bureau of Forestry and Penn State Extension. The conference featured presentations on current hot button conservation topics, such as Healthy Deer Management, Pest and Disease Updates, Safety of Forestry Herbicides, Private Forest Challenges and Opportunities, and NRCS Forest Landowner Incentive Programs. Attendees received continuing education credits for PA Department of Agriculture Pesticide Certification, as well as for the Society of American Foresters.



Dave Jackson teaching professional foresters

Assistance to Forest Industry

DCNR Service Foresters provide outreach to forest industry in a variety of ways.

In 2012, Service Foresters conducted surveys of active sawmills in Pennsylvania to determine the status of the forest products industry in Pennsylvania, as well as to compile a directory of these active mills in PA. The status report is then used as a communication tool to express the value the industry brings to Pennsylvania. The directory serves as a guide for landowners, consulting foresters, and others who may wish to market timber in all counties of PA.

Service Foresters work with the Sustainable Forestry Initiative of PA to provide training to loggers, industrial foresters, and sawmill owners on topics ranging from chainsaw safety and maintenance, logging equipment safety, Erosion and Sediment Control and Best Management Practices, and Wildlife Management. The results of these outreach trainings yield a safe working environment and professional standards of practice for industry representatives.

Periodically, the Woodland Stewardship Program staff help to staff the PA Woodmobile in cooperation with the PA Hardwood Development Council. This travelling trailer has showcased sustainable forestry benefits and challenges to thousands of visitors over the past 15 years.

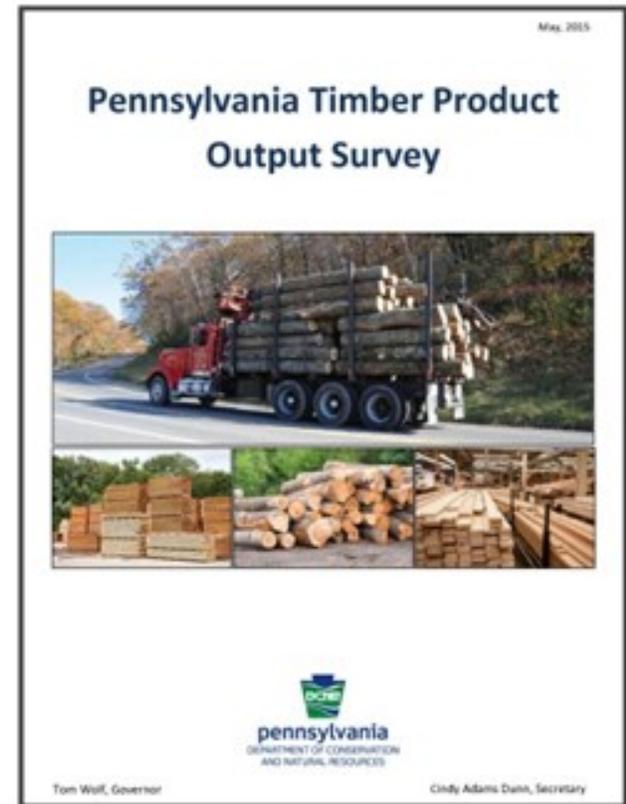


Chainsaw Safety

Assistance to Forest Industry—SUCCESS STORY

In cooperation with the PA Forest Products Association, Penn State's Department of Ecosystem Science and Management, the PA Hardwoods Development Council, and the USDA Forest Service, the Bureau of Forestry initiated a Timber Product Output (TPO) Survey in 2013. DCNR Service Foresters collected data from 312 of 430 working product facilities across 62 of the 67 PA Counties. This effort was designed to gain information reflecting the current characteristics of the wood products industry in the state. Data was collected for the 2012 production year. The survey was instituted to gain insight into volume, species, uses, products, and origin of the wood harvested and processed in PA, as well as information about the facilities operating in PA (employment, age, functions, etc.) The survey process also provided an opportunity for Bureau foresters to interact directly with the private facilities located in their districts and enhance vital professional relationships. This information can be used by landowners, wood processing businesses, and other interested parties to plan and adapt to the needs and current condition of the market.

As a result of the TPO survey, Pennsylvania employed roughly 58,000 people in the forest products industry at more than 2,100 facilities across the state. The 2012 data estimated that the total economic impact of the Pennsylvania forest products industry is approximately \$19 billion, which obviously has a significant impact on the state's economy. In order for Pennsylvania forests to remain resilient to sustainability challenges while maintaining a continuous supply of high quality forest products, it is critical to have an understanding of current timber harvest levels, tree species harvested, and timber market dynamics. To fulfill this need, the Pennsylvania TPO survey is slated to occur every three years.



Woodland Stewardship Activities Planning: Envisioning the Future of the Land



Service Forester Gerald Hoy discusses a Forest Stewardship Plan with local landowners

Creating plans to guide woodland ownership, management, and legacy is essential for the execution of woodland owner value-based goals and objectives. Plans are built on the solid foundation provided by the educational efforts of the Woodland Stewardship Program staff. Woodland owners utilize plans to help define how they want to carry out their stewardship ethic. This enables them to make informed decisions that will help them reach their ultimate goals. The plan becomes a roadmap for the future of the property. A forest stewardship activities plan describes current woodland health, value, and productivity, individual values and goals held by the landowner, and how specific actions and assistance can enhance the forest and owner values.

The Woodland Stewardship Program collaborates with partners in the development, maintenance, and execution of a variety of management planning programs for private forest owners in PA. Primary partners in this endeavor are DCNR Service Foresters, private consulting foresters, Penn State Department of Ecosystem Science and Management, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, and several non-governmental organizations.



Collaborative Partnerships in Woodland Stewardship Activities Planning



Jim Stiehler, former PA Stewardship Coordinator, counting tree rings



Forest Stewardship Plans

The Forest Stewardship Program was established in 1990, as a joint partnership between the USDA Forest Service and state forestry agencies. Partners in Pennsylvania promote this program to private forest owners who own 5 acres or more of forest land and have expressed an interest in implementing stewardship practices on their lands. DCNR Service Foresters educate landowners on the value of creating a Stewardship Plan and approve all plans completed by private consulting foresters. The plans are based on demonstrated landowner goals, so long as those goals can be accommodated with sustainable forestry practices. Stewardship Plans are the most recognized and widely-accepted professional management plans in Pennsylvania.



PA landowners proudly displaying their Forest Stewardship sign

Forest Stewardship Plan STATS

Total Plans (since 1990):	3,274
Number of Plans in 2014:	72
Total Stewardship Plan Acreage:	560,000
Number of Acres in 2014:	8,525

Stewardship Plan holders are required to have a forest stand analysis completed by a professional forester prior to doing any timber harvest, to help ensure their sustainable goals for the harvest match up with resource conditions in the woods. Landowners sign a Memorandum of Understanding with the Bureau of Forestry agreeing to manage the property according to the plan for 10 years. Consulting foresters are utilized to carry out the recommendations within the approved plan.

Forest Stewardship Plans—SUCCESS STORY

Submitted by Mary Hosmer, Landowner

“Perseverance Pays for Wildlife Habitat”

“Endeavor to persevere,” is a famous quote from the Clint Eastwood movie *Josie Wales*. This same idea pertains to forest stewardship of your private lands.

In the late 1970s, the Rolfe Beagle Club purchased 74 acres of beaten down, abandoned pasture with abundant erosion concerns amidst the wetlands and small streams crossing the property. It was 1990 before the club started managing the property. The first Forest Stewardship Plan was approved in 1999 after much discussion amongst the members. Not all club members believed stewardship of the lands was the way to go – for some members, high-grading the woodlot and draining wetlands were more preferred options.

The Forest Stewardship Plan galvanized the members in one direction... the plan writer met with club members and asked, “What are YOUR objectives for this property?”

The Private Lands Diversity Biologist from the Pennsylvania Game Commission also prepared a Habitat Diversity Recommendations Plan for the club. The clubs’ lands couldn’t be all things to all wildlife. But, being surrounded by private, working timber lands on three sides and a working farm on the fourth side, coupled with the wetlands, easily led the club down the path of selecting early successional habitat and wetlands restoration. Early successional habitat was the missing link in the landscape.

The members’ objectives of rabbit habitat, watching birds, seeing wildlife, walking paths, a future wood supply on the good soils, firewood, and something pretty to look at, could all be met with an early successional emphasis.

Sixteen years after the first Stewardship Plan the club now has warm-season grasslands, amphibian wetlands, many successful plantings of soft mast (such as crabapple, winterberry, hawthorn, dogwoods, and highbush cranberry), conifer cover for winter thermal protection for critters, drumming logs for grouse, small openings for woodcock, pollinator fields, and native tamarack and Juneberry for visual variety across the landscape.

Endeavor to preserve. Complete a little bit at a time. Take time out to do maintenance such as mowing or herbiciding of your warm-season grasses, stand those tubes back up, replant the conifers if a hard spring frost kills your plantings... it all takes time... endeavor to persevere....

The Rolfe Beagle Club thanks their many partners: Woodland Agricultural Services, LLC, Ruffed Grouse Society, Pheasants Forever, Pennsylvania Game Commission, Center for Private Forests, the Forest Stewardship Program, DCONR, NRCS, and PSU Extension.



Ms. Hosmer with Service Forester Toby Herzing

Forest Stewardship Plans—SUCCESS STORY

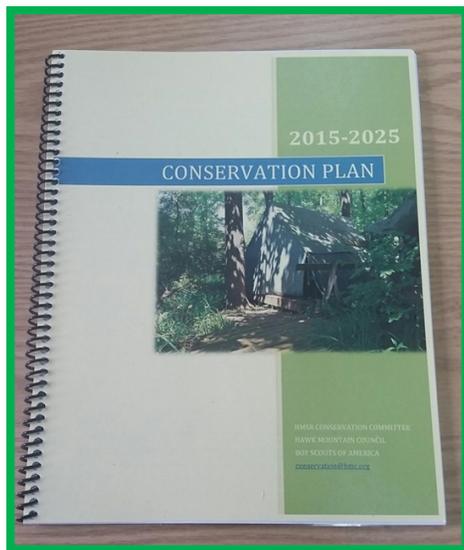
Submitted by Hawk Mountain [Boy]Scout Reservation

Conservation has been a tradition in scouting since the Boy Scouts of America's founding in 1910. In 2015, the Pennsylvania Forest Stewardship program plays a significant part in providing guidance and assistance in caring for the forest resources at the Hawk Mountain Scout Reservation.

Hawk Mountain Scout Reservation is a scout camp located on the north side of the Blue Mountain near Summit Station in Schuylkill County. This summer scout camp is 670 acres in size or just over a square mile of contiguous forests. The camp includes approximately 25 campsites and pavilions, shotgun, rifle, and archery ranges, two swimming pools, two mess halls, about 4.5 miles of dirt roads, and 5.6 miles of hiking trails. Over 5,500 youth use the camp annually. Definitely, this camp is a premiere destination for many youth in the Pennsylvania and surrounding states.

During this past year, a conservation plan for the camp was finalized. The plan addresses the major conservation interests or concerns at the scout camp. The plan includes policies on recycling, controlling invasive insects and plants, harvesting timber and fuel wood, and promoting "Leave No Trace" concepts to youth and leaders.

The scout's conservation plan is analogous to an automobile operator's manual. As an operator's manual helps the driver become familiar with components and accessories, how to use it safely, and maintaining its life during ownership, the conservation plan provides the camp users with information to use and care for the natural resources of the camp.



During the development of the plan, a comprehensive inventory evaluated the aesthetic quality of the property, recreational opportunities including camping, hiking, shooting sports, individual extreme sports offered in camp, the water resources including the creeks, streams, wetlands and lake, and environmental education opportunities available during summer camp. A detailed study of the woodlands was conducted that evaluated the health and sustainability of the forests.

Specific recommendations were developed for each resource to ensure that they are enhanced, even under all of the demands of a highly managed camp organization. The inventory coupled with these recommendations created the conservation plan.

Besides a guide to stewardship and long term sustainable benefits, the conservation plan is a template for other scout camps in the country to use in developing their conservation plans.

In addition to having an official BSA Conservation Plan, Hawk Mountain Scout Reservation complies with the standards and benefits of the US Forest Service's Forest Stewardship Program; the American Forest Foundation's American Tree Farm System and may be eligible for the US Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) cost share programs.

Cover photo taken by David Muldowney, Camp Director. The photo depicts an ecological friendly campsite. The tent is nestled in the understory of the forest and wooden walkway protects the fragile forest floor from soil compaction. This photograph serves as the conservation goal to strive for at HMSR.

American Tree Farm System

The Pennsylvania American Tree Farm System (PATFS), a program of the American Forest Foundation (AFF), provides Certified Tree Farm Plans to interested landowners who own 10 or more acres of forestland. The plan is similar to a Forest Stewardship Activities Plan; however, all activities described in the plan follow the Eight Standards of Sustainability, which are the basis of the Tree Farm certification system. Once enrolled in the program, a plan is developed by a consulting forester (Tree Farm Inspector). Landowners pay an annual fee to maintain their certification status and participate in periodic inspections by Tree Farm Inspectors for compliance with the Standards of Sustainability. Tree Farmers enjoy the satisfaction of knowing that their activities represent high-quality forest management. In some cases, there may also be financial benefits from periodically selling certified wood. Tree Farmers also qualify for incentive funding to implement their management plans through NRCS. AFF offers multiple educational opportunities to Tree Farmers—they also offer state, regional, and national recognition programs to showcase the innovative management of its members. The Bureau of Forestry Service Foresters market this program to landowners and support the program as Tree Farm Inspectors and PATFS steering board members.



DCNR forester Mike Roche with a Monroe County Tree Farmer

American Tree Farm System—SUCCESS STORY

Submitted by Susan Benedict, Volunteer Chair of the PA Tree Farm Committee, Tree Farmer, and PA Tree Farmer of the Year in 2012

Being part of the Tree Farm program has been very beneficial to us. Maintaining our property to recognized certifiable standards is very important to us. Being a certified Tree Farm helped us to successfully negotiate favorable terms in both our wind farm and natural gas leases. In addition, because we have to keep our plan updated, we have regular meetings as a family to set goals and objectives and plan for the long term maintenance of the property and its stakeholders. The relationships we have made across the nation with like-minded tree farmers are valuable to us. They give us a wider perspective and a network of mentors we can turn to for advice. The training we received in legislative advocacy has been very valuable as well. Being Tree Farm Grasstops leaders has helped us learn to articulate the benefits of forestry to our legislators, helping to ensure beneficial programs are available to support our sustainable forestry efforts.



Benedict Tree Farm Family and Partners



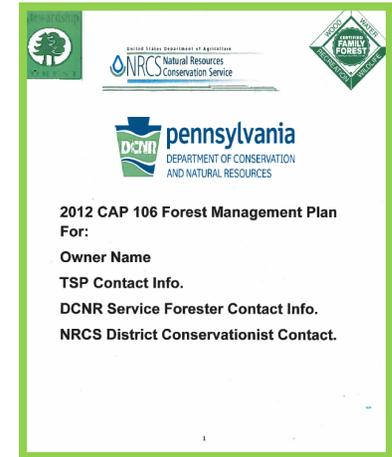
Annual PA Tree Farm Public Workshop at the Benedict Property

Commentary:

Mrs. Benedict regularly opens her large Centre County property for sustainable forestry tours, workshops, and visitors. She has accomplished a multitude of sustainable forestry projects on the property. One of the greatest rewards of working in the PA Woodland Stewardship Program is meeting and spending time with true land stewards like Mrs. Benedict. Her actions and generosity speak volumes for everything we endeavor to do. – Andrew Duncan, DCNR Private Forestland Stewardship Coordinator

NRCS CAP 106 Management Plans

In 2011, the DCNR Bureau of Forestry and PA NRCS signed an MOU to facilitate forestry plans and practices on private land. The funding for these plans and practices was authorized in the most recent Farm Bill. One of the focus areas is the development of professional Forest Management Plans that address sustainable forestry challenges and resource concerns such as wildlife habitat, water quality, soil erosion and sedimentation control. The Forestry Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) currently provides incentive funding to develop CAP 106 (Conservation Action Plan) Forest Management plans that also meet the standards of Forest Stewardship Plans and Certified Tree Farm Plans. Incentive funding often covers 50-75% of the cost of the plan prepared by private sector consulting foresters trained as Technical Service Providers. DCNR Service Foresters work with landowners to assist them in getting a CAP 106 Plan, and then provide quality assurance plan reviews for NRCS. Landowners with one or more acres of forestland are eligible to receive cost share funding for a plan upon passing a screening and ranking system.



CAP 106 Plan STATS

Total Plans (since 2010):	380
Number of Plans in 2014:	60
Total CAP 106 Plan Acreage:	64,232
Number of Acres in 2014:	7,000



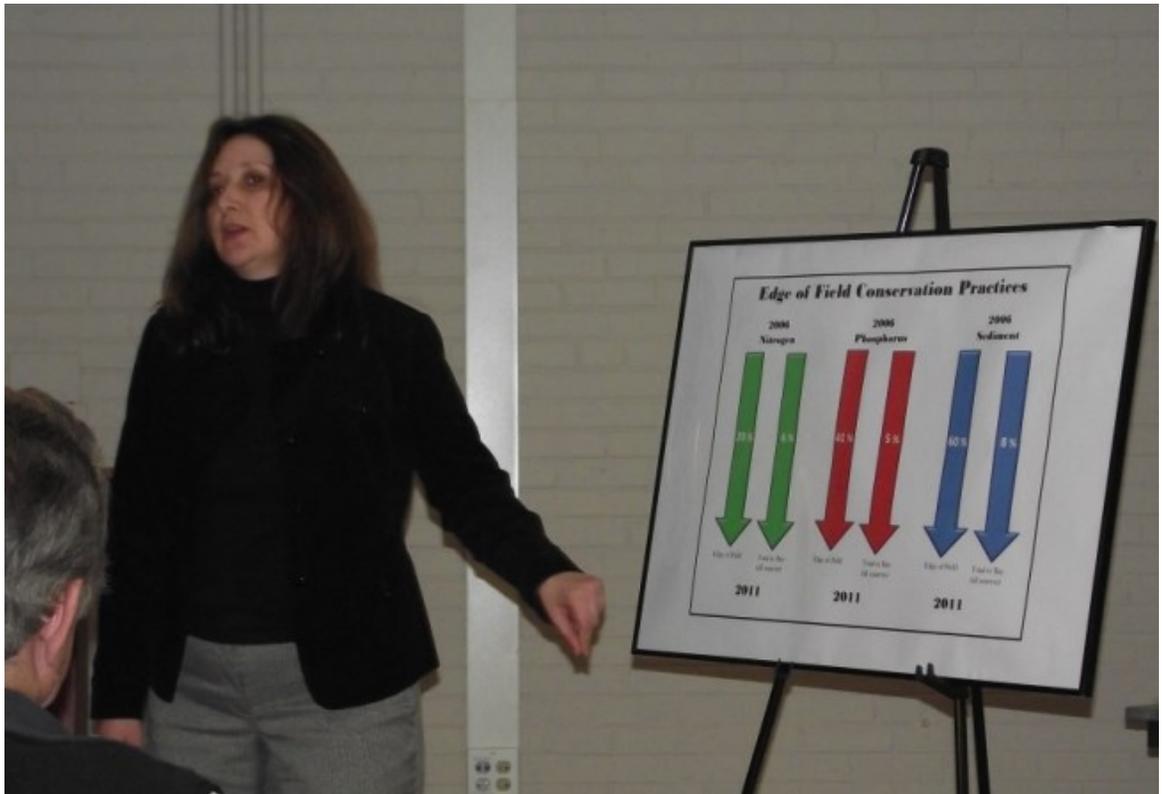
Forest Stand Improvement for wildlife and plant diversity through hinge cutting

NRCS — SUCCESS STORY

Submitted by Denise Coleman, Pennsylvania State Conservationist, NRCS

The Natural Resources Conservation Service, working in partnership with the DCNR, Indiana University of Pennsylvania, and private forestry consultants successfully obligated over \$1,006,491 to implement forest stewardship activities on over 13,900 acres in Pennsylvania in fiscal year (FY) 2015. Over 150 forestry landowners have signed Environmental Quality Incentives Program contracts to implement practices that will control invasive species, restore habitat for declining species, such as the Golden-Winged Warbler, and improve the condition of hardwood stands. The DCNR and NRCS partnership enables private landowners to receive not only financial assistance to complete stewardship activities and forest management plans, but also the necessary technical assistance to ensure such actions conserve, protect and preserve Pennsylvania's forests using the most updated science and technical expertise.

In addition to these stewardship activities, NRCS was also successful in acquiring four easements totaling 230 acres under the Healthy Forest Reserve Program (HFRP) in FY 2015. In PA, HFRP is used to enhance and permanently protect habitat for the Indiana Bat. Since 2013, NRCS has acquired 1,048 acres to protect the forest habitat of this endangered species.



State Conservationist Denise Coleman presenting on NRCS conservation practices

TNC Working Woodlands



The Nature Conservancy's (TNC) Working Woodlands Program provides a high-quality forest management plan for landowners with greater than 250 acres of contiguous forestland within priority areas designated by TNC. Working Woodlands provides a plan with a detailed inventory and recommendations based on sustainable forest based landowner goals. The inventory is very rigorous, complying to standards set by the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC), the leading third party certification system in the world. This inventory qualifies landowners for carbon credits and other developing ecosystem service markets. Professional recommendations then guide landowners on how to manage the property according to set goals. TNC covers the cost of creating the management plan for the property and the landowner must sign a long-term conservation easement, restricting development of the property. The landowners may keep any profits made off of the property — except revenue from carbon credits, which are shared with TNC. These properties in most cases also qualify for NRCS incentive funding. The Nature Conservancy, Penn State Extension, Consulting Foresters, and DCNR Service Foresters work together to publicize this program to large landowners.



Mark Banker takes measurements for a Working Woodlands forest inventory



TNC Working Woodlands—Success Story

Excerpt: Article by Anne Murray of The Allegheny Front

Value-Added Forests: The Working Woodlands Program

Pennsylvania forests have a new, surprising ally. You might even call it a sponsor. Chevrolet is footing the bill for a 22,000-acre parcel near Bethlehem, Pennsylvania. The forest is owned by the city's water authority, which draws off tributaries in the forested watershed to supply its 115,000 customers.

"We're anticipating— to be on the safe side— somewhere from \$75,000 to \$100,000 annually. If we get more than that... great," said Steve Repach, Authority director.

Carbon markets allow companies like Chevy to pay forest owners to sequester CO₂ to compensate for their own greenhouse gas emissions. These markets are growing. California has a brand new one that just began January 1.

Bethlehem has access to carbon markets through The Nature Conservancy's Working Woodlands program. It's a model project the Pennsylvania arm of the Conservancy has put together with Blue Source, a carbon credit broker in California. Roger Williams, the president of Blue Source, the carbon brokerage, said Working Woodlands is a "one-two punch for landowners".

Blue Source and The Nature Conservancy have combined FSC forest certification with the creation of carbon credits for landowners.

FSC is the Forest Stewardship Council. It is considered by many people to be the gold standard in sustainable forestry. Timber with an FSC certification can be sold for more than regular wood.

Getting that certification and access to carbon markets can cost tens of thousands of dollars but they're free for Working Woodlands landowners. In exchange, they sign an agreement with the Conservancy that essentially says their land won't be developed...

Read the full article at: <http://www.alleghenyfront.org/story/value-added-forests-working-woodlands-program>



Woodland Stewardship Activities Implementation: Doing the Most Good on the Land



Wildlife habitat partners implementing stewardship on private lands

PA woodland owners are faced with myriad challenges and opportunities in reaching their forest goals. For landowners who purchased properties with a history of sustainable management, the challenges to reaching goals are often overcome fairly quickly. However, many Pennsylvania woodland owners acquire woodlands that have suffered from neglect, poor timber harvesting practices that degrade sustainable forest values, selective deer browsing, invasive species abundance, and insect and disease outbreaks.

The next step after creating a plan is putting a plan into action: doing what is necessary to begin to turn the challenges of sustainability into opportunities. This takes time, patience, knowledge, sweat equity, funding, and some help from professionals, all of which are available through the Woodland Stewardship Program and its partners.



Collaborative Partnerships in Woodland Stewardship Activities Implementation



Control of invasive and/or competing species



NRCS and FSA Cost Share Programs

When forest owners become interested in actively managing forestland for sustainable values and goals, they often seek out the assistance of Woodland Stewardship Program partners. Systems are in place to help walk landowners through the entire process, from application to completion of the activities. The first point of contact is often a DCNR Service Forester. If a plan has not already been created, information is gathered concerning values, goals, objectives, needs, and interests in forest ownership—and a plan is developed (usually by a consulting forester). Once a plan of action has been created, landowners become eager to start applying the recommendations in the plan. Consulting Foresters help landowners in the administration of the sustainable forest activities, as indicated in the plan. Forest industry partners (loggers, invasive species contractors, deer fence contractors, etc) are often brought in to do much of the heavy lifting in terms of implementation. Landowners may have the opportunity to do some of the work themselves with guidance from plans, previous trainings, consulting foresters, and Service Foresters. The USDA NRCS and Farm Services Agency provide several incentive programs for landowners that help to cover costs associated with implementing expensive sustainable forestry activities on the land. Popular forestry-related activities are forest stand improvement, deer fencing, invasive species control, streambank restoration, wildlife habitat creation, and tree planting.



A forested buffer funded through NRCS

NRCS and FSA Cost Share Programs—SUCCESS STORY

The Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP) at Resica Falls Boy Scout Camp

Submitted by Garrett Beers, Service Forester, Delaware Forest District

Resica Falls Boy Scout Camp is in Monroe County and is owned by the Cradle of Liberty Council of the Boy Scouts of America and is roughly 4,100 acres. The camp has undertaken projects such as deer fencing, mowing and cutting to create Early Successional Habitat, and tree planting. One of my favorite projects is a Forest Stand Improvement project that was finished up this spring. It was an EQIP Forestry project. The Council's land manager feels that it is their responsibility as the Boy Scouts of America, to demonstrate good forest stewardship. The camp is also a Forest Stewardship property. All revenue generated from timber harvests is being put back into the land.



Resica Falls Scout Camp forest health treatment

Resica Falls undertook a 150-acre forest stand improvement project. The areas that were targeted for forest stand improvement suffered from gypsy moth mortality in the 1970s and 1980s and had a legacy of high deer numbers. This led to a stand that had a large proportion of pole-sized birch and fern. Before the forest stand improvement took place, a broadcast herbicide application was conducted to mitigate the fern problem in the stand. The areas were harvested in the winter between 2014 and 2015 by a local logger. The logger was fully mechanized and utilized a cut-to-length system. Species that were targeted for removal were the poor quality birch, maple, gum, etc. from the intermediate tree class, along with salvaging any ash and other mortality that was present. The oaks, hickories, poplar and conifers were favored for retention wherever possible. The goal of this treatment was to get the stand to a point where they were left with desirable tree species, allowing for natural regeneration, and eventually rotating the stands to a newly developed early successional stage forest.

NRCS and FSA Cost Share Programs—SUCCESS STORY

Emergency Forest Restoration Program

Submitted by Jessica Salter, Service Forester, William Penn Forest District

When Hurricane Sandy hit the east coast in October 2012, damaging winds caused downed and snapped trees throughout northern Bucks County. The Farm Service Agency's Emergency Forest Restoration Program (EFRP) was promoted as a way to assist landowners in re-establishment of forests that were impacted in the storm. In the spring of 2013, 34 landowners were approved to complete restoration practices on a total of 243.8 acres. Over \$1 million was set aside for landowners to complete EFRP projects, with 895,053 considered priority.



Typical Hurricane Sandy deforestation in Southeast Pennsylvania

The Ockanickon Scout Reservation, located along the Tohickon Creek in Pipersville, PA, has been a Stewardship Forest since 1998 and manages 246 forested acres. After Sandy, approximately 50 acres of Ockanickon were approved to receive cost-share reimbursement due to moderate to severe tree windthrow. Because of personnel and volunteer changes at the camp, restoration work was postponed until the spring of 2015. After receiving an extension to complete the work, Camp Ockanickon hired a consulting forester, who completed invasive plant herbicide treatments on approximately 30 acres in early June 2015. As of July 2015, a salvage operation has been completed which removed the downed trees from the heavily damaged property. Most of the wood will be used by a commercial firewood operation. Because of the timing of the project, tree planting is planned for the spring of 2016 after a follow-up herbicide treatment is completed in the fall of 2015. The steep slopes where the majority of the storm damage occurred have made this an especially challenging project. Although Hurricane Sandy created an overall negative impact on the forest at Ockanickon, the camp is interested in updating their Forest Stewardship Plan because of the degree of forest and management changes over the last three years.

Woodland Stewardship Conservation: Ensuring the Future of the Land

With over 70 percent of Pennsylvania woodlands held by private landowners, it is imperative that those lands are managed sustainably for future generations. Recent data from Penn State shows the average age of private forest landowners to be 57 years. Estimates indicate that half of all private forestland will change hands within the next two decades. This issue, coupled with a lack of planning, represent a great challenge to keeping healthy, vibrant working forests across our landscape. When private forestlands are converted to non-forest uses, everyone loses out.

“Being a good steward of woodlands necessarily involves the ability to look beyond your tenure. The actions, sweat equity, labor put into the land now will likely not reach their full potential within one lifetime. A natural extension of stewarding the land, caring for the woods, is helping to engage those who you hope will come after you in caring for the land— demonstrating love, helping them to understand how past actions translate into future opportunities, and fostering that connection that many woodland owners express as their primary reason for owning the land.” Quote from Allyson Brownlee Muth, Ed.D., Forest Stewardship Program Associate, Center for Private Forests

The work of the Woodland Stewardship Program partners specific to Woodland Stewardship Conservation include several areas of work:

- Forest Legacy Program
- Woodland Legacy Planning
- Ordinances and Other Planning Tools
- Highlands Conservation Act
- Clean and Green Program Forest Reserve Tax Program



PA's Forest Legacy Program Area Tree Farm #1
Photo by Sidney Kuhn, Land Conservancy of Adam County



Collaborative Partnerships in Woodland Stewardship Conservation

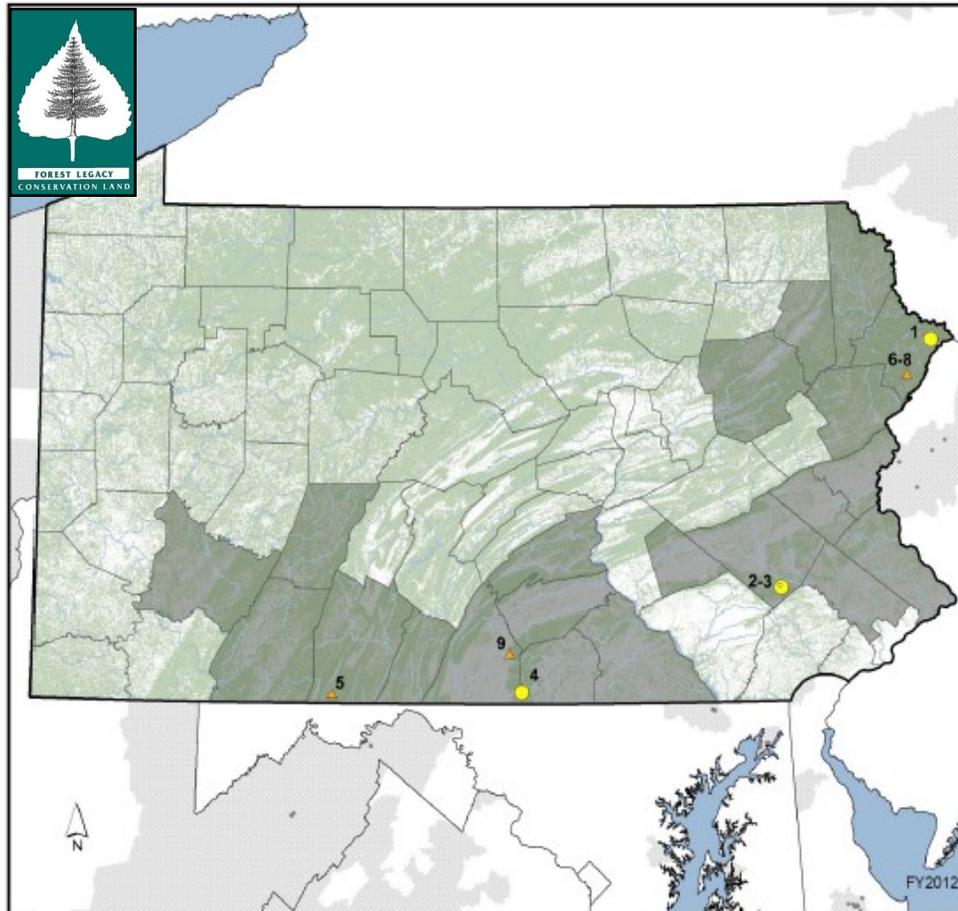


Northeast Connection: a Proposed Forest Legacy Project



The Forest Legacy Program (FLP)

The Forest Legacy Program is administered through the USDA Forest Service and its state partners. In Pennsylvania, DCNR has been designated the state lead agency. The program’s mission is to protect working forestland threatened by development through fee simple acquisitions or conservation easements. Pennsylvania entered the program in 2002 and currently has four completed projects. One of these project was recently closed and is the project marked “proposed (#9)” on the map below. The shaded areas of the map are Pennsylvania’s current Forest Legacy Areas (FLAs). Only properties located within FLAs are eligible for funding through the program. New FLAs can be added through the state’s application process, with support from county government and a sponsoring conservation organization.



The Forest Legacy Program allows DCNR to acquire and protect private forestland in perpetuity, to the benefit of all residents of Pennsylvania. Woodland Stewardship personnel continue to manage and monitor the program and its easements.

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FLP STATS

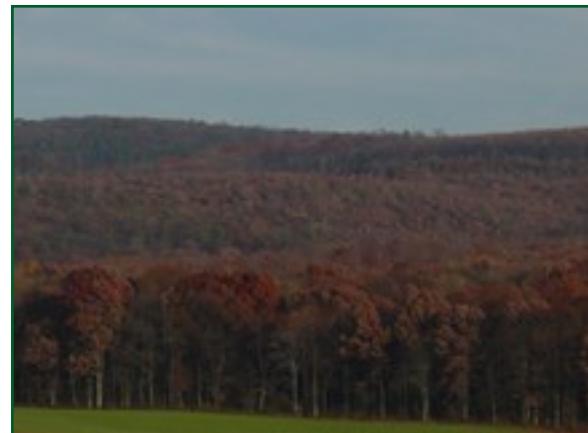
Project Title	Acres Protected	Federal Funds	Fiscal Year	Non-Federal Cost Share
History of Forestry	1,191	\$2,215,833	2006	\$1,800,000
Birdsboro Waters	1,765	\$800,000	2002,2007	\$1,400,000
Tree Farm #1	1,466	\$3,500,000	2009	\$2,070,000
Eagle Rock	1,100	\$1,500,000	2013	\$1,500,000
Total	5,522	\$8,015,833		\$4,970,000

The Forest Legacy Program—SUCCESS STORY

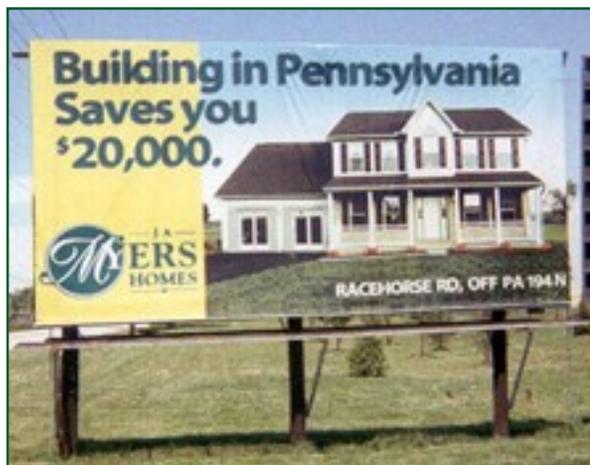
Submitted by Kyle Shenk, The Conservation Fund

Here in Pennsylvania, The Conservation Fund (TCF) is primarily focused on protecting large tracts of working forest. In order to accomplish the most important conservation results, TCF often employs a “layer-cake” funding strategy, combining funding from multiple sources to complete the project. The Forest Legacy Program (FLP) provides a critical layer of funding for our organization and can serve as the foundation of a tract of land’s funding package. Without FLP funds, TCF might not be able to protect some of the largest, most critical working forests in Pennsylvania, thus significantly impacted our mission.

Located within two miles of the Appalachian National Scenic Trail in Franklin County, the Eagle Rock project is a key acquisition priority for inclusion within the Michaux State Forest. The property is the last remaining large block of private forestland of its size within the region and features high value habitat for state-listed plants and animals including a species of special concern, the Northern Bat and an endangered plant species, the Oakes’ Pondweed. The existing trail infrastructure on the property links to the Appalachian Trail through the adjacent state forest. Eagle Rock is also located in DCNR’s South Mountain Conservation Landscape Initiative (CLI). Because of its close proximity to Chambersburg, Hagerstown, MD and the Baltimore/ Washington metropolitan area, Eagle Rock faces strong development pressure (*see photo below*). Forest Legacy Program funding, leveraged with non-federal funding, will be critical for the long-term conservation of this important property.



Autumn at Eagle Rock



Development Pressures are Next Door

Through our work on the Tree Farm #1 tract, and now with the Eagle Rock property, TCF worked very closely with DCNR staff to prepare and submit the FLP application. The technical assistance provided by DCNR was critical to crafting a successful application. As we learned with the Tree Farm project, it is prudent to engage with FLP staff at the federal level early on in the process, to ensure all due diligence materials (appraisals, surveys, etc.) are done to meet the federal requirements. The process can be daunting, and takes some time to work through, so patience and properly managed expectations on behalf of partners and the landowner is important.

The Forest Legacy Program has the opportunity to play a leading role in the protection of Pennsylvania’s working forests — an important legacy and one of the best resources we can offer to future generations.

Woodland Legacy Planning

What happens when the next generation has no interest in keeping the forestland as their inheritance, instead selling it off for development or quick cash from a diameter-limit timber sale? Penn State has found that when land changes hands, the chances of large-scale timber harvesting and parcelization does increase. This issue is more important than just individual property rights, as private forests are just as beneficial to the public as those lands in the public domain. Private forests help to sustain clean air and water, quality habitat for wildlife, and other immeasurable attributes benefiting the public as a whole, all at little to no cost.

As a result, the next generation must be considered. When property is passed from one generation to the next without an estate plan in place, heirs sometimes must sell land, timber, or both to pay state and federal taxes and other expenses that occur. The need to pay these expenses quickly may lead to poorly-informed decisions in order to receive the largest—albeit shortsighted—payout possible. Short-term financial need trumps long-term sustainable forest management. An estate transfer to multiple heirs without a well-conceived plan in place may result in the division of the land into multiple parcels. The resulting smaller parcels increase the likelihood of development or open the door to poor forest management or no management at all.

The Bureau of Forestry means to ensure that many acres of forestland remain as productive, sustainable forests long into the future. As a partnership, program partners want to encourage forward thinking and proactive approaches. Some of the work-to-date includes:

- A Woodland Legacy Workgroup created by the Center for Private Forests at Penn State, in partnership with several private landowners and the Bureau of Forestry. This group will focus on offering insight on the topic of forest legacy to enhance projects, tools, and interactions with woodlot owners and others who care about the woods via case studies and landowner stories
- The creation of a Forest Landowners Estate Planning Workgroup to discuss the issues involved with woodland owner estate planning and how each of the meeting participants can assist with education and outreach to such audiences
- Forest Landowners Estate Planning Workgroup is amending a white paper originally created for DCNR executive staff and other stakeholders, that details the issue, the work of the stakeholders work group, the importance of estate planning professionals, DCNR's involvement in future woodland estate planning, and next steps

The Forest Landowners Estate Planning Workgroup includes stakeholders from various professions:

- Forestry (Bureau, PSU, consultants)
- Legal
- Healthcare
- Financial Planning
- Real Estate
- Private Landowners

Woodland Legacy Planning—SUCCESS STORIES

Submitted by Penn State University Extension

Education Saved their Heritage

Jack and Nancy Kentzel found refuge in their Butler County farmland they inherited and the forested Venango County land they added to parcel by parcel. They intended to leave their land to their son Paul. However, Nancy died at a young age and Jack, who lived for many more years, failed to make an estate plan.



When Jack died, the state and federal inheritance taxes on the property were enormous. Paul and his wife, Cathy, harvested timber from the land to pay the tax bill, but the proceeds fell far short and the harvest was improperly done. The farm had to be sold.

The couple vowed to keep the remaining forestland in the family and never again destroy a forest due to a lack of forestry education. They formed a not-for-profit foundation with friends and nearby landowners to purchase and preserve a woodland property, adjacent to their own, which had an uncertain future. In the course of developing the foundation, and with help from Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) foresters and Penn State Extension, they learned sustainable forestry practices. Along with their children, they developed an estate plan for their land that includes conservation easements, methods for generating income and rules of inheritance. Planning and education helped the Kentzels continue to enjoy Jack and Nancy's forestland.

A Business Structure Ensures their Legacy

The Antonios, Sydney and Evon, own and manage more than 450 acres of woodland that has been in their family since 1959. While caring for an elderly parent, they realized their own mortality and the need to make estate and legacy plans.

As a family they set a goal: to keep their land in the family, to generate income from the forest and to keep the forest healthy and productive for the long-term. They consulted with a certified forester who helped them develop a forest management plan. Next they engaged a legal specialist who helped them create a Limited Liability Company that holds their Limited Partnership Association.

These legal entities allow the Antonios to keep their land within the family and allow flexibility for making changes as the family's concerns and interest change. They also provide a legal structure for financial and business assets to help to reduce taxes.

Ordinances and Planning Tools

Ordinances, comprehensive plans, and other planning tools can help a municipality steer development away from environmentally-sensitive areas. These tools can have either a positive or negative impact on timber harvesting. Negative ordinances can have detrimental impacts to landowners who may find their property rights infringed — or to forest industry, who may find their right to practice forestry thwarted— these situations potentially lead to lengthy and costly legal challenges.

The Woodland Stewardship Program partners are working together to ensure that ordinances and other municipal planning tools have positive impacts on forests within Pennsylvania. This is accomplished, in part, by:

- Revising Penn State’s model forestry ordinance and making municipalities aware of it and understand how to use it
- Creating guidelines and talking points for service foresters and other field staff for work with municipal officials
- Working with the PA Association of Township Supervisors, the PA State Association of Boroughs, and other municipal government associations to disseminate model ordinances and other helpful planning resources, as well as contact information for Woodland Stewardship Program staff
- Hosting workshops and webinars to educate municipal officials on model ordinances and other planning documents related to working woodlands



Trees in parking lots can help MS4 communities manage their stormwater run-off



Working with municipal officials can help conserve working forests

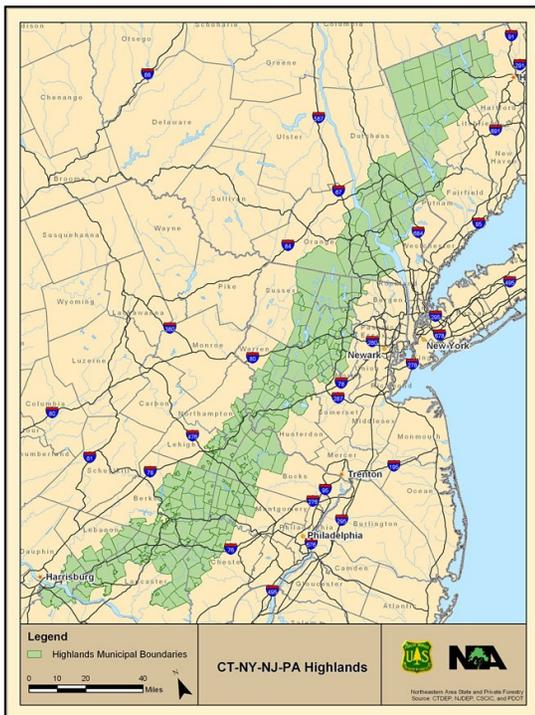
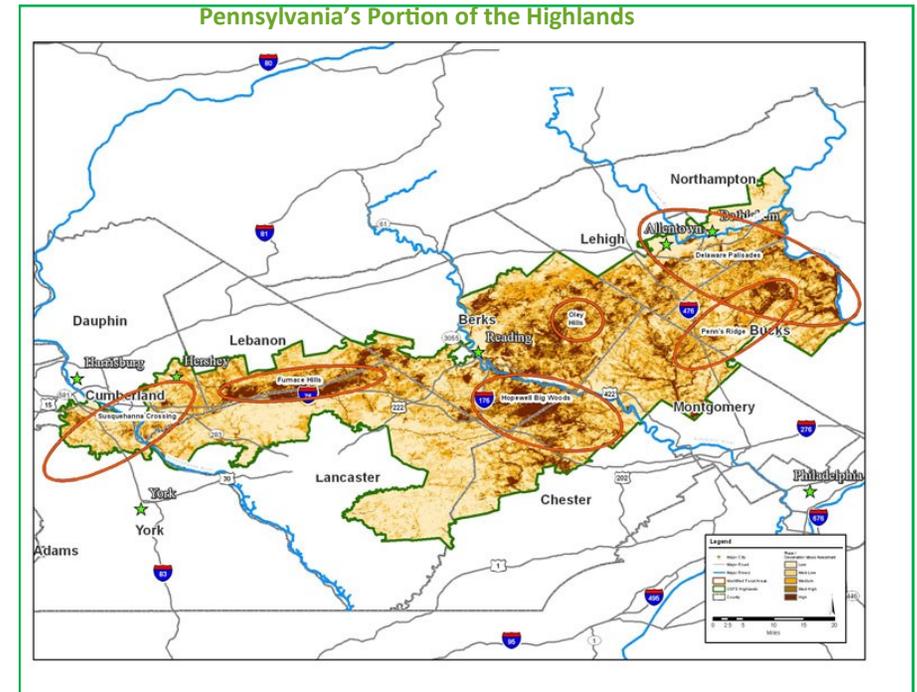
Highlands Conservation Act

Passed by Congress in 2004, the Highland Conservation Act (HCA) designated the four-state Highlands as a region of national importance and authorized up to \$100 million in land acquisition funding and \$10 million in technical assistance funding to be made available over 10 years.

Federal funding provided by the HCA has helped protect well over 5,000 acres of the highest valued conservation lands in the four-state Highlands region, in partnership with non-profit organizations and state and local governments. Provided through the Land and Water Conservation Fund, \$13.5 million in federal funding has been allocated to the highlands program

since 2004, matching over \$30 million in private and local matching funds.

For more information, visit the Highlands Trail website:
<http://pahighlands.org/>



Four-state Highlands Region



Highlands Conservation Act—SUCCESS STORY

Press Release EXCERPT: Gibraltar Hill added to Pennsylvania State Forests; trails expected to be ready later this year

Driving north on Interstate 176 towards Reading, Gibraltar Hill rests on the horizon like a sleeping giant. Just a short time ago, an approved subdivision plan would have cleared the dense woodlands and forever altered the skyline.



Conservationists and elected officials celebrated the permanent protection of the 234-acre Gibraltar Hill property today. Left to right: Rick Hartlieb, Pa. DCNR-Bureau of Forestry; Senator Judy Schwank; Congressman Ryan Costello; Molly Morrison, President

On Monday, June 22, a group of government officials and conservationists gathered to celebrate its preservation by Natural Lands Trust and recent transfer to the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources Bureau of Forestry.

The 234-acre property is located in Robeson and Cumru Townships, just three miles southeast of downtown Reading. When trees drop their leaves in winter, the property's forested hilltop provides stunning, 360-degree views of Reading and the surrounding area. Those views and Gibraltar Hill's beautiful woodland habitat would have been developed into 34 home sites under the development plan. A two-year conservation effort, led by Natural Lands Trust and the PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR), brought together federal, state, and private funds to purchase the property as a new addition to the state forest system.

"Gibraltar Hill will stand as a powerful, visible reminder of how important open spaces are to us all," said Molly Morrison, Natural Lands Trust's president. "Under the Bureau of Forestry's care, generations of Pennsylvanians will have the opportunity to explore its woods and enjoy the countless benefits of time spent in nature."

According to DCNR Secretary Cindy Adams Dunn, Gibraltar Hill will be the first forested property in Berks County managed by the Bureau of Forestry's William Penn Forest District to demonstrate best practices to local residents looking to wisely manage and conserve their woods.

The Bureau of Forestry expects to have trails at Gibraltar Hill ready for the public later this year.

The federal Highlands Conservation Act, a fund established to protect an almost unbroken band of forested hills running through Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania—including this portion of Berks County, provided leadership funding for the preservation of Gibraltar Hill.

Congressmen Pat Meehan (PA-7) and Ryan Costello (PA-6) reinforced the significant role that federal support for conservation has played in preserving important landscapes in Pennsylvania and Berks County, in particular.

Gibraltar Hill lies within the Schuylkill Highlands, a DCNR-designated region at the nexus of two landscapes that have been prioritized for protection: the Highlands and the Schuylkill River Watershed. Allegheny Creek—designated a "High Quality" stream by the PA Department of Environmental Protection—winds around the foot of Gibraltar Hill as it makes its way to the Schuylkill River.

"Preservation of Gibraltar Hill also furthers the objectives of the Delaware River Watershed Initiative (DRWI), an ambitious effort to protect and restore the Delaware River Basin's water quality and overall ecological health. Led by the William Penn Foundation of Philadelphia, the DRWI is targeting eight "clusters" of watersheds within the basin for conservation investment. One of the areas of focus is the Schuylkill Highlands where high quality streams are abundant. The protection of Gibraltar Hill is an important step in maintaining the health of Allegheny Creek and waters downstream.

Funding for preservation of Gibraltar Hill was provided by the US Forest Service through the Highlands Conservation Act, PA DCNR's Community Conservation Partnership Program, Open Space Institute, and the Schuylkill River Restoration Fund.

Clean and Green (Act 319)

The Clean and Green program is administered by the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture. It is a preferential tax assessment program that bases property taxes on use values for the land rather than fair market values. This typically results in tax savings for agricultural and forest landowners enrolled in the program. Penn State University faculty develop the Forest Reserve use values annually, based on timber type values in specific regions of the state, then create average values for each county. The program partners review these figures to ensure their accuracy before sending them off to the Department of Agriculture. Counties can then elect to use the Penn State figure, use an average, use a previous year's figure, or develop their own, however the figure must be less than what it would be if the landowner was not enrolled in the program.



Photo by Rick Hiduk

Periodically the program receives complaints and questions from forest landowners and field staff about the program. Because counties have a lot of leeway in how they run the program there can be issues, especially in regions with a lot of cherry and other valuable hardwoods. Harvesting timber is a long-term endeavor, while tax revenues are collected yearly. It can be difficult for landowners to make property tax payments on land that is not currently generating revenue for them. This is an issue that needs to be looked at in more detail.

Woodland Stewardship program partners are in the process of developing a factsheet and talking points for Bureau staff to educate them on the

Clean AND Green STATS

Total acres currently in forest reserve: 4,378,778

Counties Participating: 52 of 67

details of the Clean and Green Program, so that when they receive questions from landowners in their district they will be better able to assist them. This information will be added to the Bureau's "Your Woods" webpage as well.

Conclusion:

The PA Woodland Stewardship Program continues to be a positive force for sustainable forestry that is vital to the citizens of Pennsylvania. It is clear that Pennsylvania private woodlands are essential to the economic, ecologic, and social well-being of these citizens and generations to come. The work of program partners is critical to sustaining stellar education, management planning, stewardship project implementation, and forest legacy work on the landscape. We face core challenges to woodland sustainability that have been present for decades, such as the prevalence of invasive species, deer overabundance and its impact on regeneration, permanent loss of forest land associated with unplanned sprawl and development, and non-sustainable forest harvesting practices. As tax burdens place more pressure on woodland owners, many challenges are intensified—and owners of larger parcels are often forced to subdivide properties, which significantly complicates the type of management that can be done. The public’s need for the critical ecosystem services that forests provide will only grow as our population continues its upward trend. We must embrace these challenges head-on and create strategic processes to address sustainability on a landscape scale. The consolidated voices of the partners, tied with sustainable funding and dedicated staff positions, can accomplish high-value outcomes for private woodlands. The partners continue to use the best science, solid communication skills, and a diversity of programs to instill awareness, appreciation, and a conservation ethic. Slowly but surely, the PA Woodland Stewardship Program is building a value-based contingent of advocates for woodland stewardship.

Of great concern is the nationwide trend of declining federal funding for conservation. Specific to the PA Woodland Stewardship Program, we rely heavily on the funding passed through the USDA Forest Service to sustain our education initiatives with Penn State and other key partners. Many ongoing, successful initiatives on the state, regional, and local level are in jeopardy due to federal funding shortfalls. It is therefore more important than ever to effectively communicate the value of our work to decision makers, funders, and the general citizenry.

Recent technological developments in calculating meaningful benefits of urban forests show promise in application to rural forest acres. Continued research into quantifying ecosystem services and their associated markets holds much promise for financially assisting landowners and justifying the need for sustainable forest management. By better communicating the tangible and intangible values associated with forests and our activities to sustain them, we see a future that shifts trends of parcelization, fragmentation, and increasing ownership age. The PA Woodland Stewardship Program partners look forward to exciting challenges ahead.

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PA WOODLAND

Stewardship

Working Forests for today and tomorrow



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DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION
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