

Pennsylvania Forest Stewards News



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New PA Forest Stewards Website

With the College of Ag Sciences' move to a new web software, we had the opportunity to update the PA Forest Stewards website. The new site, <http://extension.psu.edu/paforeststewards>, is just for the volunteer group. The Forest Stewardship information, news releases, and woodland owner associations' information were all moved to the Private Forests extension webpage, to increase their visibility and help distinguish between the statewide forest stewardship program and the PA Forest Stewards volunteer program. (Click on the blue button, titled, "Private Forests," to view the new extension page devoted to private forestry resources.) Please visit the sites and offer your feedback. We hope to make them most useful for you.

Passing On Forestland and Stewarding Forestry Income

By Harold Hartley, '06

Two aspects of forest stewardship infrequently treated are the passing on of property to future generations and stewardship of income from timber sales. Here is how two Susquehanna County forest landowners have done both.

Since 1969 Harold and Carolyn Hartley have managed over 100 acres of mixed hardwood trees in Lenox Township, Susquehanna Co. They have three children and two timber properties that go to the two older children; the minerals (gas and oil) will go undivided to the three children. One of the two timber properties (54 acres) is now owned by daughter Carol, who with her husband Bill Mait-

land, are operating that tree farm. They live in Lenoxville with their two teen-age sons Ben and Keith. Carol is active in the Susquehanna County Forest Land Owners Association, and Carol and Bill are volunteers in the PA Forest Stewards program. While income from timber sales frequently lead to small profits, when added to money received from gas leases, the combined revenues make it possible to return some money to the community. The Hartley family has established a scholarship at Clarion University honoring Harold's childhood friends, Wesley and George Stephens for their selfless service in rescuing Harold on his eighth birthday in 1939 when he fell through the ice on the East Branch of the Tunkhannock Creek. This incident occurred in front of the Hartley home, which the family still maintains in Lenoxville. In 2010 the scholarship was awarded to Kate Webster from Hop Bottom. Kate is now in her second semester at Clarion University. Eligible candidates for the Stephens Scholarship must meet admissions requirements for enrollment and plan to matriculate at Clarion University. First preference for the scholarship is a student matriculating from the Mountain View School District; second preference is for a student pursuing studies in Speech Pathology and Audiology. The Admissions Office at Clarion is now considering candidates for the 2011 award. High school students contemplating college may talk with their guidance counselor or contact the Admissions Office at Clarion University for additional information about the Stephens Scholarship.

Gas Pipelines and Your Woods

Due to ongoing negotiations with the pipeline company, the author of this piece has asked to remain anonymous.

By now most forest landowners are aware of the new wave of gas drilling taking hold in Northern Pennsylvania and spreading to what will eventually be a large portion of the state. Many have heard horror stories. Others have heard of instant wealth. Regardless of your views on the drilling itself and regardless of whether you leased or not, many of you will eventually be confronted by requests for rights-of-way (ROWs) for gas gathering pipelines to connect the individual well pads to interstate pipelines and the market.

The first thing to know, due to the high volumes of gas being produced by the horizontal well technology, is that the gas gathering pipelines are large. Up to 32" gathering-lines are now being installed in Bradford and other counties. Such large lines require large equipment and a wide working space. I was recently asked to grant a pipeline ROW that would have a permanent width of 50' but a temporary width of 100'. That meant all existing vegetation—in my case mixed deciduous forest—would be removed.

The gas companies will typically offer to reseed with a mixture of grasses designed as a food plot and are usually open to specific grass seed mixtures the landowner specifies. That said, I did not really like the thought of a 100' foot wide permanent food plot over a thousand feet long where I currently have forest.

But as I thought about it, I considered the benefits of creating some edge with fruit and nut trees and shrubs. I was able to negotiate with the gas company that they would replant the temporary ROW width with a mixture of vegetation I specified. Further, they will put a short (maybe 12" to 18") tree tube and a five foot high wire cage around each sapling to mitigate the deer pressure.

My consulting forester, Jim Roberts of Rome, PA suggested the following (numbers of tree/shrub seedlings per acre):



- Red spruce – 25 of 2-2 or 2-3 seedlings planted in groups
- Apple and pear--6 of each per fenced area along the edge
- Chinese Chestnut – 6
- Serviceberry – 50
- Maple leaved viburnum – 75
- Hazelnut (filbert) – 25 located along edges
- Scrub oak – 50
- Flowering dogwood – 25
- Sassafras – 25

On the permanent pipeline ROW Chad Spencer from the NRCS in Towanda recommended the following grasses (per Acre):

- 4 pounds – Timothy
- 20 pounds – Orchard grass
- 12 pounds – Birdsfoot Trefoil – with inoculants
- 2 pounds – White Clover – with inoculants
- 2 Bushels – Oats (Spring) Wheat (Fall)

Mulch (per acre): 2 tons straw (No hay will be permitted due to fewer potential weed seeds. Some of my neighbors required that all mulch come from their farm. That gave them a sale of the mulch and ensured no outside weed seeds were imported.)

Take soil samples to determine the correct application of lime and fertilizer.

During the negotiating process work with your neighbors. Talk to them. Get their input and get them on board. The gas company would rather have a mile or more of the same specifications rather than every property owner wanting a little different planting treatment. A united front improves your negotiating position.

Work with the pipeline company. Rather than having two strips of temporary ROW 25' wide on either side of the final permanent ROW, maybe it would work out better with 50' on one side and none on the other.

If you decide to allow a ROW, think it through and make sure you get the best long-term deal you can for the rest of your forest and the wildlife that lives there.

Dates for Your 2011 Calendar

Saturday, July 16, 2011 – Annual Meeting, Park Farm and Forest, Columbia County. Details to come soon.

September 30-October 2 and October 21-23, 2011 – Basic Training, South Mountain YMCA, Wernersville, Berks County.

In-service Trainings – July 15 and October 21 – the Fridays before the Annual Meeting and the Second Weekend of PA Forest Stewards Basic Training. Watch for more details coming soon.

Newsletter by Email?

Would you like to receive your copy of the PA Forest Stewards Newsletter by email? Not only do you save some paper and copying costs, but you get the newsletter a lot more quickly. Please let Allyson know if you'd prefer not to receive a paper copy. Thanks.

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