



Pennsylvania Forest Stewards News

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PA Forest Stewards Gift of Learning

By Cathy and Paul Kentzel '06

Growing up surrounded by the outdoors seemed to be a given to me and my husband of twenty-five years. Our parents both purchased cottages along the Allegheny River when we were small and still wide-eyed. Through the years of growing with the forest, we fell in love with the land and each other.

A situation presented itself when a parcel of land went up for sale. Our family, with community support, decided to form a nonprofit to purchase and preserve the property. We began to immerse ourselves in education to enrich our understanding of the ecological aspects of the land. A local forester was contacted and through her knowledge and guidance we began a new path in our lives.

The path to a world of resources: The PA Forest Stewards Program. After our education with Jim and Allyson we formed goals and continued our journey. The forest of the preserved property had been unmanaged for decades. Many obstacles presented themselves: diseases, invasives, poor timber harvest practices; all of which left the land in a state of peril. Our greatest obstacle other than funding and manpower was educating others to understand the processes of correct forest management. Most folks think an untouched forest is naturally a healthy forest.

Our organization began the process of entering into the Pennsylvania Stewardship Program. Working with our DCNR BOF Service Forester we refined our goals and sectioned the property into management areas. A writer for the Forest Plan had to be chosen. Our board would hike the 207 acres of property with potential writers while gaining much needed insight into

the land. Finally a writer was chosen. This young man presented himself with a rare quality of honesty and a thirst for unchartered opportunities. Not surprising to me he was a former graduate of Jim's at Penn State.

Since then we have begun the long road to educating the public. Forest hikes and programs have been created to introduce the community to the processes that lie ahead in the management of the forest. Together with the resources we have we forge ahead in a larger picture, the development of a "Resource Management Plan" for all 207 acres. Within the plan, state, local and independent experts have come together to lend their knowledge in their respective fields of wildlife management, riparian assessment, biological diversity, forestry, birding inventory, cultural and environmental preservation. The Resource Plan will serve as an educational hallmark in the region, using the land's story to enhance the public's awareness. All of these individuals became part of a whole to positively impact the lands along the Allegheny River.

Collectively the 207 acres with DCNR's adjoining State Forest Land and other private land forms an even bigger picture: the second largest managed green way along the Upper and Middle Allegheny region. Somewhere down the road a vision is forming of a land we can share and come to understand. We are all part of the big picture. I invite you to go out and walk through a forest today. Stop, listen and hear it breathe. In your mind if you are open to new thoughts and ideas you may actually become part of the ecological enrichment of that forest.

Our story continues.....

Steering Committee Representatives Update

We owe a huge debt of gratitude to three volunteers who recently stepped down from the PA Forest Stewards Steering Committee. Bill Dreibelbis, Tony Suppa, and Carol Park gave freely of their time on the committee and made excellent contributions. We are grateful for their support and effort and wish them well.

New members of the committee include: Allan Larsen, Fred Peabody, and Carol Hartley. For the first time in a long time, we have no vacancies on the Steering Committee.

November Steering Committee Meeting

On November 20, the PA Forest Stewards Steering Committee met at Foxdale Village for our biannual meeting. The committee reviewed 2009 activities including the basic training, annual meeting, in-service trainings, and partial results from the 2009 Biennial Survey (more on this below). Plans were also shared for 2010 events (see Dates for Your Calendar).

A majority of the discussion revolved around the endowment fund campaign, the Best Practices for Woodland Owners Associations Conference, and improved communications within the steering committee and between the steering committee and general volunteer population.

Dates for Your 2010 Calendar

Friday, July 23, 10 a.m. – 4 p.m., In-service Training (Topic to be Announced), Ag Progress Days site, Centre County.

Saturday, July 24, 9 a.m. – 4 p.m.
Annual Meeting, Ag Progress Days
site, Centre County.

September 10-12 and October 1-3,
Basic Training for New Volunteers,
Camp Sequanota, Jennerstown,
Somerset County.

An additional in-service training will be
held in the spring of 2010.

Heads-up: 2011 is the International
Year of Forests

2009 Biennial Survey

We are holding steady at a 69%
response rate on the Biennial Survey.
We've sent surveys, postcard
reminders, emails, and pled through
this newsletter. Once again... please,
please, please send in your survey. If
you haven't sent it in because you feel
like you haven't done enough, don't
worry about it. The goal is to hear back
from you! I use the responses to update
my databases and know with whom I
should continue to stay in touch. Thank
you.

2009 Best Practices for Woodland Owners Associations Conference

On November 20, ninety-three
representatives from 23 woodland
owners associations from across the
state gathered at the Penn State School
of Forest Resources to gain some
informational resources, network, and
build support for their regional and
county woodland owner groups.

Presentations covered the 2008
Farm Bill and programs for private
forest landowners, the Wisconsin
example for reaching out to unengaged
landowners, and how to advocate for
woodland owner interests with
government officials. New this year
was a poster session in which groups
celebrated and shared their
accomplishments. All in all, it was a
very productive and rewarding day.
Thanks to all who attended!

PA Forest Stewards and Social Networking

In efforts to reach out to volunteers
in different ways, the PA Forest
Stewards volunteer program has joined
the social networking frenzy with a
page on Facebook. If you are active on
Facebook, you can become a Fan of the
PA Forest Stewards Volunteer
Program. We're using the page to send
out reminders and details of events to
Facebook members. Come online and
check it out.

Ken and Jane Cogan – M.K. Goddard Award Recipients

Ken and Jane Cogan are this year's
winner of the M. K. Goddard Forest
Management and Sustainability Award
presented by the PA Sustainable
Forestry Initiative. Their property,
which they have owned since 1988,
consists of 98 acres and is located near
Crosby in McKean County.

Due to a number of contributing
factors, and for management purposes,
they have segmented the property into
twelve distinct parcels. A variety of
management activities is evident on a
number of the parcels, while on others
little recent human intervention has
been applied.

The property is enrolled in both the
Tree Farm and the Forest Stewardship
programs. Ken and Jane became PA
Forest Stewards in 2004, and were
members of the steering committee that
worked to establish the North Central
Forest Landowner's Association.

Beyond their management efforts,
the Cogans have hosted a number of
functions on their property, all designed
to help others better understand how
different management approaches are
used to effect desired outcomes. Their
property is a prime example of how
benefits can and do accrue from both
short and long-term management
efforts.

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