



Pennsylvania Forest Stewards News

A bi-monthly newsletter of the Pennsylvania Forest Stewards Volunteer Program

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Nancy Baker: Women and Working Lands Panelist

On Thursday, March 25 at the *Women and Working Lands: Past, Present, Future* panel, USDA South Building, Washington, DC, Nancy Baker of Bradford County, Pennsylvania gave voice to women forest landowners. Chosen from a national call for nominations, Nancy joined three other women agricultural producers to discuss what it means to be a woman on working agricultural and wooded lands, to contribute to the discussion of how to engage and mentor more women landowners, and to inspire the audience with their own passion and enthusiasm for the land.

Nancy Baker and her husband Marvin own and manage The Panther Lick – a 163-acre property passed down from Nancy's great-grandfather. The Panther Lick is a Pennsylvania hardwood and hemlock forest alive with deer, bear, birds, otters, and trout. As a forest ecologist and mentor to other landowners, Nancy has a wealth of resources and experiences that engage other forested landowners in determining how to move their forest to a sustainable place.

In her outreach, Nancy is a PA Forest Steward (PAFS) volunteer, sits on the PAFS State Steering Committee, is president of the Bradford-Sullivan Forest Landowners Association (the oldest Pennsylvanian woodland owners association), and is a past member of the Forests for the Bay Committee. She and Marvin host frequent educational events on their property.

Nancy's passion, beyond her own woodlot, is mentoring other women forest landowners. She has helped the Delaware Highlands Conservancy and USDA Forest Service Grey Towers personnel to begin a *Women and Their Woods* program in the northeast corner of Pennsylvania, drawing additional participation from New Jersey and New York women forest landowners. Nancy frequently travels the state (and beyond) to support efforts focused on mentoring women forest landowners.

Following a keynote address by Mrs. Christie Vilsack, the "First Lady" of Agriculture and wife of U.S. Department of Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack, the panelists spoke about their properties, their heritage, and their connection to the land.

Joining Nancy were Vicki Hebb, a cow and bucking horse rancher on the Cheyenne River Sioux Reservation, Nicolette Hahn Niman, a grass-fed cattle, meat goat, and heritage turkey producer from Northern California, and Tammy Steele of Oklahoma, a farmer and lawyer who created a program to engage farmers and underserved audiences with advice and markets for produced crops. Moderator Dr. Kathleen Merrigan, USDA Deputy Secretary, posed questions to the panelists, along with audience members.

Part of a nationwide USDA initiative to promote women on working lands, the panel and comments stressed the importance of women to agriculture and the need to support and engage current and new women landowners to sustain the enterprise and reconnect society to the natural world.

PA Forest Stewards 2009 Biennial Survey Results

The 2009 edition of the PA Forest Stewards biennial survey shows PA Forest Stewards continue to actively promote forest stewardship in communities.

Of the 359 PA Forest Stewards surveyed (we did not survey the 2009 class), 264 provided survey information (74% response rate). 55% of the population reported itself as active; 15% reported itself as inactive; and 2% removed themselves from the program.

Volunteers gave us 45,150 hours of outreach time in the last year. This equates to almost 23 full-time employees. Volunteers estimate they reached almost 16,700 friends, neighbors, or members of the public with a stewardship message.

Eighty-nine percent of respondents indicated they own forest land = 38,955 acres (31,609 forested). Fifty-six out of Pennsylvania's sixty-seven counties are covered, as well as New York, Wisconsin, South Carolina, and Virginia.

One hundred fifty-five volunteers reported belonging to at least one local or regional woodland owners association and 67 reported a leadership position. Since the last biennial survey (2007), three new woodland owners associations have formed.

The most common stewardship outreach activity remains talking to neighbors and

other woodland owners about forest stewardship; followed by attending conferences, working to support a woodland owners association, and distributing forest stewardship information. On personal properties, the most common activities remain maintaining trails and roads, removing competing vegetation, timber stand improvement, and planting trees.

We have a color one-page summary sheet that is available for your outreach. Please contact Allyson if you would like a copy.

Thanks for all that you do!

PA Forest Stewards Steering Committee

On March 19, the PAFS Steering Committee held its spring meeting. The committee worked on activities planning (see the calendar below), committee membership, committee leadership, and reports were heard from the communications committee, endowment committee, and nurturing woodland owners associations committee. The committee is working to improve name recognition for the PA Forest Stewards and help forest landowners to understand that the volunteers are a resource with knowledge and connections for forest stewardship questions.

Newsletter by Email?

Would you like to receive your copy of the PA Forest Stewards Newsletter by email? We can oblige. Please let Allyson know if you'd prefer not to receive a paper copy. Thanks.

Jack Murray Award

Included with this newsletter is a piece from the Central Susquehanna Woodland Owners Association about the First Annual Jack Murray Forest Stewardship Leadership Award that was awarded to Fred and Kathy Fries at the March 6 regional Forest Landowners Conference in Williamsport. Those of you who remember Jack will appreciate how his commitment to forest

stewardship and his leadership among forest landowners is being carried on.

Yearbook Biography

As mentioned in an earlier newsletter, we are in the midst of creating a “yearbook” of PA Forest Stewards. We started with the steering committee and now would like to start collecting stories from all the volunteers.

If you would please, send us a few sentences about who you are (job, family, etc.), your land, hobbies, interests, skills you’d like to contribute, and anything else you like to share. We’ve got pictures of most folks who have attended the annual meeting in recent years. We hope to create a useful document that can be used to remember folks you meet at training, make connections in your county, and help strengthen our community of volunteers.

Take a few minutes to jot down something you’d be willing others to see. Send it to Allyson and we’ll get it in the system so that we can create our yearbook. Thank you.

PA Forest Stewards Endowment: A Challenge

We’re not trying to beat a dead horse here, but we can’t help but share what’s going on with our funding situation. With our latest submission for Forest Stewardship dollars, we are exactly at half of where we were when the program started 20 years ago. We are incredibly fortunate that the DCNR Bureau of Forestry sees us as a valuable partner and is willing to help support this program, but soon they may not be able to. It is becoming more and more critical that we find ways to stand on our own.

In 2010 the PA Forest Stewards Endowment Fund committee is going to be launching some initiatives to grow our fund. We’ll be looking for your ideas, your connections, and your help. Watch your mail, answer the phone... we’ll be contacting you.

Help Us Write the Next Newsletter

We’d like your help in writing the PA Forest Stewards Newsletter. We’d like your story contributions for the following columns:

- 1) *A Funny Thing Happened to Me in the Woods...* stories related to woods safety.
- 2) *Now is the time to...* things to do or watch for in May and June.
- 3) *Things I’ve learned...* two or three lines about forest or wildlife facts you learned recently.

You don’t have to be a professional writer. We’ll help you edit. We’re looking for ways to share more of your voices in this newsletter. Thanks in advance.

Dates for Your 2010 Calendar

Friday, July 23, 10 a.m. – 4 p.m., In-service Training, Chainsaw Maintenance and Woods Safety, 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.

September 2010: An additional in-service training will be held focused on communication skills: getting a forest stewardship message out. We’ll share details as they are finalized.

Saturday, October 2, Come meet the new PA Forest Stewards. Join us for dinner and the evening program at Camp Sequanota, Jennerstown, Somerset County.

Heads-up: 2011 is the International Year of Forests

Available Resource: National Tree Benefit Calculator

The Tree Benefit Calculator allows anyone to make a simple estimation of the benefits individual street-side trees provide. This tool is based on i-Tree’s street tree assessment tool called STRATUM. With inputs of location, species, and tree size, users will get an understanding of the environmental and economic values trees provide on an annual basis. Visit: <http://www.treebenefits.com/calculator>.

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