



Pennsylvania Forest Stewards News

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

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A Funny Thing Happened to Me in the Woods

By Bob Slagter '08

Or should I say a fun thing happened to me in the Reserve? After having given a presentation at Earth Day in our town's local Nature Reserve and instructing residents on planting 50 seedlings in tubes, I was approached by a local 7th grade teacher to do the same for two of her classes. I was out of seedlings, but knew where I could get some; so I called Musser Nursery in Indiana, PA. They contributed a couple dozen seedlings (I just paid shipping).

On two consecutive mornings in May, I faced two dozen kids and about six of their moms with some shovels, seedlings, and a few ideas on what they already might know and what they might find interesting. Having read "Last Child in the Woods," I realized that many of today's kids spend most of their time inside. This means the woods may be foreign to them, but they still have that pre-teen curiosity I hoped to exploit.

The talk centered on why we were doing something as silly as planting trees in a forest. I mean look around, isn't this place FULL of trees? This led to discussing canopy and understory, native and non-native species, and deciduous and coniferous species. Well, before they got too much information and their eyes began to glaze over, I gave a short demo on tree planting. Then I chose six teams each led by a mom and each armed with a seedling, a shovel, a tube, a stake, and a hammer.

This really got them going. They got to choose the location and even sign the tube when they were done. I was surprised by how the teams

worked together. They laughed and ran and argued about locations and duties; but, in the end, there were contented looks on all their faces ... and on the faces of the moms and the teacher.

The most contented face was probably mine. Teaching something as simple as planting trees to young people and, perhaps, increasing their idea of the value of living things was something I had wanted to do since my Stewardship training. I thought that by doing that, I could really help impact forest value into the next generation. I don't know if that happened during our two May mornings; but, I know we encouraged the growth of some trees and smiles.

The DCNR and the Stewardship Program has materials to help you get involved with kids. I can almost guarantee that if you do, it will be one of the most rewarding things you do. I can absolutely guarantee that you will want to do more.



Bob Slagter shows students the correct way to plant a tree.

PA Forest Stewards Annual Meeting: The Largest Yet!

On Saturday, July 24, the largest group of PA Forest Stewards, their guests, and presenters gathered for the Annual Meeting at the Ag Progress Days Site at Rock Springs. One hundred fifty-six participants

came to Centre County to take part in a variety of sessions aimed at advancing our knowledge.



Jackie Grant, Wildlife Instructor, rallies her tour on woods amphibians.

Presenters came from the Penn State School of Forest Resources, the DCNR Bureau of Forestry, Shaver's Creek Environmental Center, land conservancies, and the Quality Deer Management Association. Sessions covered wood's history, American chestnut, white-tailed deer, NTFPs, thinning and regeneration, amphibians, forest hydrology, charcoal, GPS, PFL research, jawbone aging, conservancies, and woodcrafting.

Keynote speaker Jim Grace capped the day with an overview of the history of Pennsylvania's forest resources, how that history fits within the larger context, and how the state is moving into the future with new challenges and opportunities. Martin Link took home a new chainsaw. The silent auction raised over \$2,000 for the endowment. And, a good (and sweaty) time was had by all.

On Friday, July 23, sixty-two folks joined us a day early to enhance their woods safety skills with Lee Stover in one of his last official presentations before retirement.



Lee Stover demonstrates a tractor-driven log arch as part of the woods safety presentation.

We're so lucky to have such tremendous support and folks who are willing to share their expertise. Thanks to all who came out. You were missed to all of you who couldn't make it.

November 20: Combined Woodland Owners Association Conference and Continuing Education Opportunity

I've been promising a continuing education opportunity for quite some time now, and it's time to make good on that promise. In the interest of pinching pennies and because our topic of choice goes beyond what PA Forest Stewards are interested in, we've decided to merge the fall In-service Training and the annual Woodland Owners Association Conference into one event.

The theme will be *Communicating a Forest Stewardship Message* and include sessions on working with print media, working with audiovisual media, and communicating across generations.

Come to the School of Forest Resources on Saturday, November 20 for a full day of learning. We'll have learning and information sessions and ample opportunity for fellowship. We plan to continue the poster session so that groups and individuals can share events of which they're most proud; though, with such a late start folks will be responsible for their own printing costs. This cross-pollination might grow some new PA Forest Stewards and some new Woodland Owners Associations.

Look for a mailing with more details in the near future.

Tour, Dinner, and Meet the New Volunteers

We hope you'll consider joining us on Saturday, October 2 to meet the new class of PA Forest Stewards. Come before 3 p.m. and join us for a tour of Bob and Susie Bastian's property to see what they've been doing in the years since they hosted the annual meeting. Join us at 6:30 p.m. for dinner with the new volunteers. Or come at 7:30 to hear half the new volunteers share their forest stewardship story.

We'll be at Camp Sequanota in Jennerstown (Somerset County). Please let Allyson know if you will be attending so we can include you in the dinner count.

Dates for Your 2010 Calendar

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

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

Saturday, November 20: PA Forest Stewards In-service and Annual Woodland Owners Association Conference, Auditorium, Forest Resources Building, Penn State, University Park.

Heads-up: 2011 is the International Year of Forests. Think about how you can lead or contribute to a worldwide celebration of forests and the benefits they provide.

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.

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