

Pennsylvania Forest Stewards News



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2012 PA Forest Stewards Nominations

After a fair amount of time spent on the road, we've finally figured out where the 2012 PA Forest Stewards basic training will be held. Our goal of rotating around the state was a little offset when the camp we'd hoped to use this year was fully booked, so we're going with Plan B.

Camp Krislund in eastern Centre County is the site of this year's training. The weekends will be September 21-23 and October 5-7, 2012.

Enclosed with this newsletter is the nominations form. Please share the names and contact information for people you think would make excellent additions to our group. Also enclosed is a recruitment piece written by Bob Slagter after his 2008 training. It gives the "gist" of the training experience and lets folks know what the program is all about. Feel free to make copies to share with your nominees and others you're trying to recruit. If you'd like an e-copy, please contact Allyson.

Announcing the Center for Private Forests at Penn State

We are so pleased to be able to announce the brand new Center for Private Forests! Below is the announcement that came out from the College of Ag Sciences. So what does this mean for the PA Forest Stewards? Our outreach efforts will fall under the administrative structure of the Center. As long as Penn State exists, this is demonstrating a commitment to the concerns and opportunities of Pennsylvania's private forestlands. And the PA Forest Stewards will exist as long as there are volunteers willing to learn and reach out to

promote good forest stewardship.

From the Penn State College of Ag Sciences:

Nearly two-thirds of Pennsylvania is covered by forests with more than 70 percent of those woodlands privately owned. Recent estimates indicate Pennsylvania has more than 600,000 private forest landowners, representing about one out of every nine households.

To better serve and advise those landowners about forest conservation, Penn State's College of Agricultural Sciences has created the Center for Private Forests, housed within its School of Forest Resources. The focus of the center will be applied research, education, and outreach to students, forestland owners, the forest products industry, loggers, conservation districts, agencies, land trusts, nongovernmental organizations, and the public.

The center's mission is to foster the retention, stewardship, and management of private forests, according to center director James Finley, Ibberson professor of forest resources. "We intend focus on outreach and research on the stewardship of private forests and through this process create collaborative learning opportunities for students and stakeholders. Those stakeholders include private forest landowners, educators, volunteers, agencies, organizations, and the general public."

Forests dominate the land cover in Pennsylvania, Finley explained, covering 17 of its 28 million acres. Private forests -- those owned by individuals, families, non-forestry corporations, and organizations -- account for 12 million of these forested acres, 71 percent.

These owners represent an important constituency, Finley noted. Many forestland holdings are in small parcels of 1 to 10 acres and represent 3 million acres, or 25 percent of the private forest acreage. Only 3.5 percent of the state's private forest landowners control parcels of more

than 100 acres.

"Both the many small tracts and bigger parcels are extremely important to conservation efforts, to the forest industry, and for providing many social and ecological values," he said.

"Addressing the needs of all forest landowners, both small and large, is challenging and requires continued development of applied research and outreach mechanisms tailored to the unique challenges of managing forests in the complex ownership matrix."

The benefits derived from these private forests are diverse and widely enjoyed by all Pennsylvanians, Finley pointed out. Individuals own forests for privacy, wildlife, recreation, heritage, and income production values.

"But we all benefit from the critical ecological services such as clean air and water and wildlife habitat provided by these private forests," he said. "The flow of goods and products from private forests is an important economic driver in many rural and urban communities, providing nearly 100,000 jobs and adding an estimated 14 billion dollars to the state's gross product."

"Private forests also contribute significantly to our economy through recreational pursuits such as birding, hunting, fishing, and other activities. The contribution of Pennsylvania's private forests to our overall quality of life is inestimable."

Beyond the needs of current owners and private forest stakeholders, there is an ethical need to ensure that society provide for future generations of owners and users, Finley contends. "For private forests to continue providing these benefits, there is a clear need for focused research, education, and outreach on private forestry issues," he said.

"The more critical challenges include forest parcelization, estate planning, sustainable forest management and re-

generation, cross-boundary cooperation, taxation, ecosystem services, and community support for retaining working forest landscapes. Failure to build a commitment for addressing these and other issues will certainly reduce the flow of benefits and values from private forests.”

Beside Finley, faculty and staff involved in the center include: Theodore Alter, professor of agricultural, environmental, and regional economics; Leland Glenna, associate professor of rural sociology; James Grace, Goddard Professor of Forestry and Environmental Resources Conservation; A.E. Luloff, professor of rural sociology; Carolyn Mahan, associate professor of biology and environmental studies at Penn State Altoona; Marc McDill, associate professor of forest management; Alex Metcalf, postdoctoral scholar in human dimensions of natural resources; Michael Messina, director, School of Forest Resources; Allyson Muth, forest stewardship program associate; Kristen Saacke Blunk, senior extension associate/director, Penn State Agriculture and Environment Center; Gary San Julian, professor emeritus of wildlife resources; Sanford Smith, senior lecturer in forest resources and extension education; Kim Steiner, professor of forest biology and director of the Arboretum at Penn State; and Susan Stout, adjunct assistant professor and U.S. Forest Service project leader.

Communicating Forest Stewardship Effectively Workshop

In conjunction with colleagues at Cornell University, we are offering a workshop for PA Forest Stewards, Extension Educators, and Service Foresters on developing skills and resources to aid in reaching out to landowners and helping them consider the future of their forest. Workshops will be offered April 11 in Acra, NY (Catskills region), April 25 in Clarion, PA (NW region), and May 2 in Owego, NY (southern tier). Watch your inboxes and mailboxes for invitations. Help keep working forests as forests.

Reaching Out to the Bureau of Forestry

At the 2012 winter Bureau of Forestry meeting, Nancy Baker, Amanda Subjin (Delaware Highlands Conservancy), and Allyson Muth presented a session on how Bureau personnel can work with the peer education networks (WOAs, PAFS, and Women and Their Woods) in Pennsylvania. If you haven't already done so, reach out to your county Service Forester. Let him or her know you are interested in helping to promote good forest stewardship in your region. Share the skills and interests that you have to offer. They're looking for ways to engage with the PA Forest Stewards. Give them a little help and let them know what you have to offer.

Dates for Your 2012 Calendar

July 27, 2012 - PA Forest Stewards In-service Training, TBD, Carlisle vicinity.

July 28, 2012 - PA Forest Stewards Annual Meeting, Dave and Judy Twining's Tree Farm, Carlisle.

September 21-23 and October 5-7, 2012 - PA Forest Stewards Basic Training, Camp Krislund, Madisonburg.

Contact Forestry Extension

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Program Sponsors

Penn State Natural Resources Extension
PA DCNR Bureau of Forestry
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Pennsylvania Forest Stewardship Program

PENNSYLVANIA FOREST STEWARDS Nomination Form (2012)

Training Location: Camp Krislund, Madisonburg, Centre County

Dates: September 21-23 and October 5-7, 2012

Person Making the Nomination

Your Name: _____

Address: _____

Town: _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone: _____ E-mail: _____

Please list as many nominees as you feel are qualified for the PENNSYLVANIA FOREST STEWARDS project in the spaces below and on the back of this page. Attach additional pages if necessary. Do not hesitate to nominate a landowner who has been recommended by your colleagues. The number of times an individual's name is mentioned from different sources will be considered in the final selection process. We will send nominees more information about PENNSYLVANIA FOREST STEWARDS, a sample training agenda, and application form.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Town: _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone: _____ E-mail: _____

Has this individual shown interest or agreed to serve? _____ Yes _____ No

Continued on Other Side

Name: _____

Address: _____

Town: _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone: _____ E-mail: _____

Has this individual shown interest or agreed to serve? _____Yes _____No

Name: _____

Address: _____

Town: _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone: _____ E-mail: _____

Has this individual shown interest or agreed to serve? _____Yes _____No

Name: _____

Address: _____

Town: _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone: _____ E-mail: _____

Has this individual shown interest or agreed to serve? _____Yes _____No

Thank you for your assistance. Please return this form, call, or email in your nominees **no later than March 15, 2012**, to:

Allyson Muth
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If you have any questions or comments, please do not hesitate to write, call, or e-mail.



Two Weekends in September

Bob Slagter, Pennsylvania Forest Stewards 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.



The PA Forest Stewards Class of 2008

“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.



We probably learned the most about each other during the evening sessions that let us present our woodlands' background and goals. It is amazing how clear your goals become when you have 5 minutes to tell others what you want them to remember about you.

The weekends are literally PACKED with information and everything there is to know about Forestry. A sampling of the curriculum is like a degree program in Forest Management: forest ecology, forest measurements, non-timber forest products, forest taxes and estate planning, managing forests for wildlife, and oil, gas, and mineral leasing

We have learned (and have copious reading material) about everything from how to identify a tree, to how to select a tree for market, to why NOT to select that tree for market. We have walked in the woods together and seen firsthand what happens with alternate harvesting scenarios and stood in awe of the incredible trees that have grown in a forest that has been left alone. We have seen what we can do to make our entire woodlot (every inch of basal area) productive for years to come both in wood and in non-wood products like mushrooms and ginseng. We have spent time listening to and interacting with experts in everything from invasive species to the tax implications of forestry. It can be daunting when you show up on that first night and see the incredible array of information. You soon learn, however, that every subject is so well thought out and expertly represented that you easily become comfortable with the task of learning and collaborating with these extremely adept professionals.



After the trip to the Hemlock Cathedral on that last morning, it was again our turn in the barrel as we were asked to develop our plans on how we would help spread the word to fellow Pennsylvanians. There was everything from helping to enroll whole groups of landowners in the Forest Stewardship Program to protecting ground water integrity to passing out flyers on forestry when people stop to buy firewood at a road side stand. I was moved to volunteer (something I never do) to participate in planning the 2009 meeting and work on the steering committee... along with several other lofty goals. One key goal that came out in the planning was to begin to work with young people on forest knowledge, conservation, and stewardship. Obviously, we realize that the kids are the key to the future of our lands.

As for my key takeaways, the last morning's walk showed me that we have participated, even unknowingly, in the diminishing of our forests and in so doing we have diminished our own species. We must now create new opportunities to help our resources survive and grow.

When you begin any new learning experience, there may be some trepidation about the class. You fear it will be boring, or over your head, or not relevant. If you are lucky enough to be nominated by your Service Forester to participate in this session, let your mind rest at ease. It is stimulating and rewarding and fun learning. Be thankful for your luck in being accepted; I know I am.

To find out more about the Pennsylvania Forest Stewards volunteer program, contact Penn State Natural Resources Extension at 814-863-0401 or 800-235-9473. Your local DCNR Bureau of Forestry Service Forester also has information about the program and can help put you in touch with volunteers in your area. Visit <http://extension.psu.edu/paforeststewards> for more information.

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