

Pennsylvania Forest Stewards News



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New Dates for the 2013 Private Forest Landowners Conference

When we began planning the 2013 Private Forest Landowners Conference, we didn't realize the dates happened to coincide with Penn State's University Park and Altoona graduation weekends. Now, after futile attempts to line up hotel room blocks for the 1,000 or so landowners, backyard woods owners, and private forestlands stakeholders we hope to attract, we realized the dates needed to change.

Please mark your calendars for May 10 and 11 (pushed it later by a week) to join us in Altoona for this exciting event!

We hope to see you there.

Visit: <http://ecosystems.psu.edu/private-forest-conference> for more information.

PA Forest Stewards Class of 2012

Twenty-six new PA Forest Stewards joined the program after two weekends of training on September 21-23 and October 5-7. We had some of our youngest volunteers

(and legacies) ever. Participants hailed from all over the state and are enthusiastic about sharing what they've learned when they return to their home communities. Please make these new volunteers welcome as they join our program.

North Central Region

Steering Committee representatives from the North-Central region contributed to this issue of the PA Forest Stewards Newsletter, and we received a suggestion to include resources available in each region. Apologies go out to the Northwest Region folks who I didn't get it in the last issue, but we'll make this a continuous contribution.

Woodland Owners Associations:

Clearfield-Jefferson Counties Forest Stewardship Committee, c/o Gary Gilmore, 1514 Rt 28, Brookville, PA 15825, Email: ggilmore@pa.gov.

North Central Forest Landowners Association, Inc., PO Box 141, Port Allegheny, PA 16743, <http://www.orgsites.com/pa/ncfla>
Woodland Owners of Centre County, PO Box 1156, State College, PA 16804, <http://woodland-ownerscc.info>

Service Foresters:

Cameron and Elk Counties: Toby Herzing, therzing@pa.gov, 814-

486-3353.

Centre County: Tim Cole, ticole@pa.gov, 814-643-2340.

Clearfield County: Rich Johnson, melvjohnso@pa.gov, 814-765-0821.

Clinton County: Lin Greenaway, egreenaway@pa.gov, 570-923-0301.

Jefferson County: Gary Gilmore, ggilmore@pa.gov, 814-849-7463.

McKean and Potter Counties: Stanley Hess, sthess@pa.gov, 814-274-3616.

PGC Wildlife Diversity Biologist:

Mario Giazzon, mgiazzon@pa.gov, 570-547-7259.

Penn State Cooperative Extension:

David Jackson (Centre, Clinton, Clearfield, Jefferson), Extension Forester, drj11@psu.edu, 814-355-4897.

Tim Pierson (McKean, Potter, Elk, Cameron), Extension Forester, tgp2@psu.edu, 814-887-5613.

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Craig Altemose (Clinton, Centre, Clearfield), Extension District Director, cea10@psu.edu, 814-863-6095.



North-Central Contribution: Treasures in Your Woods or How I Discovered American Chestnut in Our Woodlot

By Walt Petrick, '06

In the Fall of 2011, we purchased about fifteen acres, more or less, of south facing, adjacent land from our neighbor, Gary. Like any new purchase, I just had to look it over, so one fall afternoon in 2011, when the leaves were just starting to drop, I walked up the hill, (every place in Potter county is "up the hill"), from our old north boundary line through the purchased parcel to the new boundary line. The route I chose was through a thickly wooded area with trees of varying sizes and underbrush.

A main objective of the walk was to assess the amount and quality of the trees. After passing through some dense beech brush and approaching the new boundary, I noticed a straight, greyish tree about ten inches DBH. I initially thought it might be a red oak. The leaves did not resemble a red oak and reminded me of the leaves on the Chinese chestnut growing beside a house I had previously owned in Port Allegany. So, I assumed that it was a chestnut oak.

I plucked a leaf from the tree, stuck in my backpack and continued the walk. Back at the house, I looked in the National Audubon Society Field guide to trees to check on my original assessment of the tree. The picture for chestnut oak did not look like the leaf that I had, so I started to browse the book for a better match. Luckily, I quickly found the leaf matched

American chestnut and the description in the book closely matched the trunk's color and texture.

Since I had heard American chestnut had been killed off by the chestnut blight, I doubted it really was one. I called my good friend and fellow land owner, Ken Comstock who is a Penn State Forestry graduate, retired surveyor, tree expert and all around good guy. He was excited about the news and, as I had hoped, was eager to see the tree. A couple of days later, we revisited the tree which, as is typical of American chestnut, still had green leaves although the maple and beech leaves were turning color and dropping. Ken confirmed the tree was indeed an American chestnut with no cankers or evidence of the blight.

While he was examining the tree and its surroundings, Ken noticed another tree to the east that still had green leaves. Sure enough, it was another American chestnut. Again, this chestnut had no signs of the blight and was smaller, measuring about five inches DBH. Now we were really getting excited. Further to the south, down the hill, we found two clumps of about twenty American chestnut saplings, from ten to twenty feet tall, growing from stumps. Although most looked healthy, a few had patches of the bark missing.

From a presentation by Sara Fitzsimmons at one of our NCFLA functions, I remembered that the American Chestnut Foundation (ACF) Webpage (www.acf.org) was available to report wild occurring American chestnuts. So, I visited the ACF webpage, found the tree locator form, and read the

accompanying instructions. The instructions included a request for a branch including leaves and catkins. Since it was fall, I decided I would wait until next spring to get a fresh branch with catkins.

The next year, 2012, I anxiously waited for the flowers to bloom, which was supposed to occur around July 4th. Instead of being covered with blooms, the tree just had just a few catkins hanging from it with some on the ground. There were a few burrs but no nuts. According to the ACF instructions, I filled out the forms, including a branch with leaves and a catkin. A month later I received an e-mail from Sara Fitzsimmons with a report confirming that it was an American chestnut.

Now that I have two American chestnut trees on my property, I feel it is my responsibility to care for these trees. Since the trees were crowded by adjacent trees, I decided to open up their canopies, reducing competition for sunlight and enhancing their chance of survival. In late August of 2012, two neighbors and I surgically removed the hard maple trees from the west side of the ten-inch DBH chestnut and maples and a large hemlock from the south side of the five-inch DBH chestnut without disturbing either chestnut tree.

Now that the canopy of the chestnut trees are more exposed to the sunlight, I am looking forward to prolific flower and nut production and a fuller branch development next year.

Should PA Forest Stewards Be Working with Youth?

By Sanford Smith, Natural Resources and Youth Extension Specialist

First, do you have children or grandchildren of your own? If so, we hope you are already working with them to instill a love and appreciation for the forest and the natural world. No one can do this more effectively than parents, and there's much research to back this up. Take a moment to think about who influenced you in this way; 80-90 percent will say it was a parent or grandparent!

Should PAFS work with youth? The answer is an emphatic YES! If you have an interest in working with youth in your community as part of your PAFS volunteer work, there are some precautions and requirements Penn State Cooperative Extension would like you to know and follow.

PAFS interested in reaching the next generation should conduct youth programs that include parents or legal guardians. Regardless of whether you hold a program on your property, a park, or at a community location – require that all youth attend with a parent or legal guardian (such as a grandparent), AND that the “older ones” (i.e., adults) stay and participate in the entire program. PAFS should not conduct programs with unsupervised or non-parent-chaperoned youth, or in a one-on-one manner. While this may seem restrictive, we believe you will find such programs more satisfactory as they provide an opportunity to educate participating adults. Cooperative Extension-sponsored programs for

youth conducted without parents require “authorized and screened adults” who have gone through the proper background checks and mandatory reporter training. Most PAFS do not have these clearances.

Some of you might ask, “What about PAFS who are also teachers in schools and actively teaching youth about forest stewardship in their school?” The restriction against working directly with youth does not apply in these situations; since these PAFS are working under the policies and precautions of their professional place of employment.

How about visiting a school, scout group, or other community organization to give a talk or presentation about forest stewardship? As an invited speaker or demonstrator, this situation requires the least precautions on your part. However, you should ask (to be sure) and require the requesting group provide participant supervision while you are giving the talk. This is a must, and will make your experience much more successful.

Finally, some PAFS have expressed a desire to work more closely with youth through an organization or group that will allow them to have multiple contacts with the same youth over a longer term. This is great and can be accomplished through the PA 4-H program. Perhaps you are thinking, isn't 4-H just for farm kids? Not anymore, in fact, 4-H is an active and vibrant organization for all Pennsylvania youth. It relies upon adults to help teach and mentor youth and it has a wealth of excellent natural resources curricula ready for PAFS to use!

4 Penn State Cooperative Extension administers 4-H as its premier youth development program. There are 4-H youth Educators in every Pennsylvania county who will be happy to work with you to obtain required training (and undergo the required background checks) to become a 4-H wildlife, water, environmental, or forestry group leader.

If you have any further questions about working with youth in your capacity as a PAFS, please don't hesitate to contact me, Sanford Smith, at sss5@psu.edu or 814-865-4261.

Regional Foci for PA Forest Stewards News – Northeastern Region, You're Up!

Just a gentle reminder for those of you in the Northeastern region of Pennsylvania... Your region is responsible for an article in the November/December issue of the PA Forest Stewards News. Nancy Baker (bakerii@epix.net), Carol Hartley (hartmait.carol@gmail.com), and Monroe Cressley (busy-beez@ptd.net) are taking the lead in compiling the region's piece(s). Please contact them if you have items of interest to share.

And heads-up to the Southwest region! You're on tap for the January/February newsletter. Please contact Fred Lau (fredlau2@hughes.net), Bill and Margaret Baber (baber@lhtot.com), or Gary and Page Wetterberg (gwetterberg@hotmail.com, pwetterberg@hotmail.com) with your items for that future newsletter.

We're looking forward to hearing from you all!

Dates for Your Calendar

May 10-11, 2013 – 2013 Private Forest Landowners Conference: the Future of Penn's Woods, Blair County Convention Center, Altoona.

Contact Penn State Natural Resources Extension

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From Barbara and Henry Williams: After we purchased the Finley Frog at the PA Forest Stewards silent auction on July 28, we hit the road from Carlisle for a ten-day trip to Florida to visit Henry's mother. Of course, the Frog had to come with us and, as you can see from the pictures above, seemed to enjoy his trip. It was a bit hot, but he found time to relax poolside at the Tiki Bar.

Where trade names appear, no discrimination is intended, and no endorsement by Penn State Cooperative Extension is implied.

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