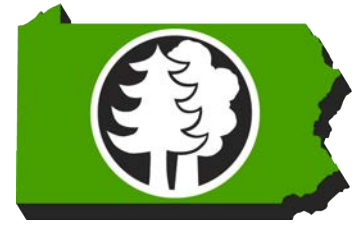


Pennsylvania Forest Stewards News



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Chairman's Column

By Bob Slagter, PA Forest Stewards Steering Committee Chair, '08

Movin' On

First, some comments on the Pennsylvania Forest Stewards Summer Meeting; then we'll talk about Movin'. Okay?

We hadn't had a summer meeting in four years so the one on July 16th had to be special, and, with the help of many, special barely scratches the surface... It was truly remarkable.

The purpose of these summer flings is many faceted. They must be educational; they must bring the PA Forest Stewards up to speed on what is happening with the volunteer program and the Center as organizations; they must offer topics on a wide range of subjects; they must give the PA Forest Stewards time to interact with others about subjects they are interested in; they must be fun and interesting... and they must have a uniqueness about them.

You can check the box yes next to all these items for this meeting AND you can add a tribute to the mix. After a business meeting (informative, not boring!) and a choice of topical sessions and a world class lunch, the entire assembly was led to the woods for an overview of what our forever leader, Jim Finley, worked on in this forest. The topics were led by folks who worked next to Jim on many different projects aimed at improving the health of forests across the state. They were informative and fascinating. It was awesome to have a dialogue in person about our friend and mentor's work. It was a great tribute to a great man.

Now let's "Move On," shall we? Allyson announced at the meeting that I would be stepping down as chairman of the PA Forest Stewards Steering Committee at the next Steering Committee meeting. After the laughter died down, I was approached by my ample fan base, and both of them protested that if I wasn't chairman, how could I continue to write this column that they enjoy so much? A true dilemma—I enjoy the column work and obviously someone out there enjoys some or most of what they read. It is time to step aside. Including the Pandemic Years, I have been the chair for at least five years and I'm getting no younger, so I felt some fresh thinking was appropriate. Nancy Baker has volunteered to take the role of Steering Committee Chair, and others might step up as well.

Nancy asked me what we should do with the Stewards, and my response

was, pick one of these two options. First, leave it as it is, that being a unique, peer-based organization devoted to promoting forest health. We have over 700 members and our fall training has attracted a record number of applicants. OR, we could adapt and try for a new model based on benchmarking similar organizations across the country as well as our own unique situations and expertise. We may be able then to truly maximize our effectiveness and value. The answer is up to you folks.

So that just leaves us with what to do with the "Column". Well, Nancy would have to write that: page one every two months. BUT that leaves the back page open for me to continue with a piece every two months, just like now. If I get the go-ahead, watch for it going forward.

Thanks for your support and your interest. Stay well and be safe.

PA Forest Stewards: You Are Invited!

We are excited to have a full class of participants for the 2022 PA Forest Stewards training at Krislund Camp September 29-October 2. Twenty-nine eager folks will join us for hands-on activities and focused learning during our four-day weekend together.

INSERVICE SATURDAY IS BACK!

All current PA Forest Stewards are invited to join us on Saturday, October 1 at 1 p.m. to spend the afternoon (and evening if you can!) with the

new class. We'll start with outreach strategies presented by some of your fellow Stewards, followed by a field trip to John Hoover's property in nearby Blanchard. We'll return to Krislund Camp for dinner at 6 and an evening campfire and conversation.

If you would like to join us, email or call (PrivateForests@psu.edu or 800-235-9473). Let us know if you plan to stay for dinner so we can have enough food!

Walk in Penn's Woods: You Are Key!

The Walk in Penn's Woods Partnership is gearing up for the 6th annual Walk in Penn's Woods on Sunday, October 2, a day for the public to join a walk in the woods in their area. Hosted walks will be happening across the state, and you can play a key role in raising awareness about the importance of forests and the effort that goes into caring for them.

How can you get involved? One way is to join a walk near you. By joining a walk, you can make valuable connections with people in your area. Are you are interested in hosting a walk? Register your walk at www.walkinpennswoods.org. Participate by volunteering, demonstrating a skill, showcasing your stewardship, and joining a walk on October 2!



THE JAMES C. FINLEY
CENTER FOR PRIVATE FORESTS



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The Forest and Grounding: The Value of Penn's Woods

By Sasha Soto, PhD Graduate Student, James C. Finley Center for Private Forests at Penn State

It's no wonder why many Pennsylvanians take pride in Penn's Woods. Forests sprawl for over 16 million acres which house nearly 200 unique tree species within four distinct forest types^{1,2}. Wow!

As a plentiful resource, forests have long supported the well-being and livelihoods of society by supplying materials and nutritional and holistic resources, and securing workforce opportunities¹. Today, almost 13 million people live, work, and recreate in Pennsylvania³. The value Penn's Woods provide is not limited to work and protection but also expands to include solace, tranquility, joy, and spiritual sustenance.

Each person, just as each tree, has a unique story to tell about their woods. For you, maybe it's a moment or moments where you bonded with the woods and found value. Perhaps it's a fond location where cherished memories are stored, a shady oak tree by the creek, where you'd picnic and fish nearby, a hemlock grove where your ancestors thrived and where you will build your first home. Or it's the sight of a gnarly hardwood, picture-perfect for climbing, that excites and motivates you. Maybe it's under the most peaceful of canopies where your favorite person is buried that you feel solace.

There are infinite ways to value Penn's Woods. But it is the wise who utilize the forest to nurture their spirits.

An interesting study was conducted where investigators looked at the tree-species-specific effect of forest bathing in young adults, particularly looking at their perceived levels of anxiety when in the forest⁴. The study utilized broadleaf urban forests rich in birch, oak, and maple trees and the participants' self-reported surveys to assess anxiety. In each forest, participants expressed perceptions that indicated they experienced anxiety relief while in the forest. This occurrence could be explained by previous reports which have identified and ranked tree characteristics according to how a person perceives a tree and, as a result, which tree species they prefer. There are many variables that can influence the way an individual perceives a tree and a tree stand. Tree characteristics like DBH, crown, leaf shape, color, and size can all affect a person's perceived comfort level when in a forest, on top of influencing the forest's aesthetic appeal. Consider this example: a broadleaf forest with a closed canopy creates an environment with cool ambient temperatures. It is probable that individuals may place a higher value on broadleaf forests than those with a more open canopy such as some coniferous forests. Those individuals likely prefer forests that provide shade and heat relief^{4,5,6}.

Each tree and human requires different elements to thrive. Each grows at different rates. Each event in life is

colored by the environment, the way it's been nourished and cared for. Each experience occurs from a different perspective, marked by a unique journey of failure, perseverance, and growth.

I believe there are similarities between people and trees. Perhaps we have yet to recognize them; that's ok. I recognize that the value of trees varies greatly across individuals and forests.

There is value in everything.

I'd like to believe that at some point, in some forest, each person who has visited has felt or will feel a special connection with the forest. I hope they feel loved, empowered, and whole.

For me, I am humbled and grounded in the forest.

So, how do you value Penn's Woods? And which tree species in Penn's Woods help your spirit to shine?

Be well,
Sasha

Sources:

¹ Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, *Forests and Trees*, 2022 Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, <https://www.dcnr.pa.gov/Conservation/ForestsAndTrees/Pages/default.aspx>.

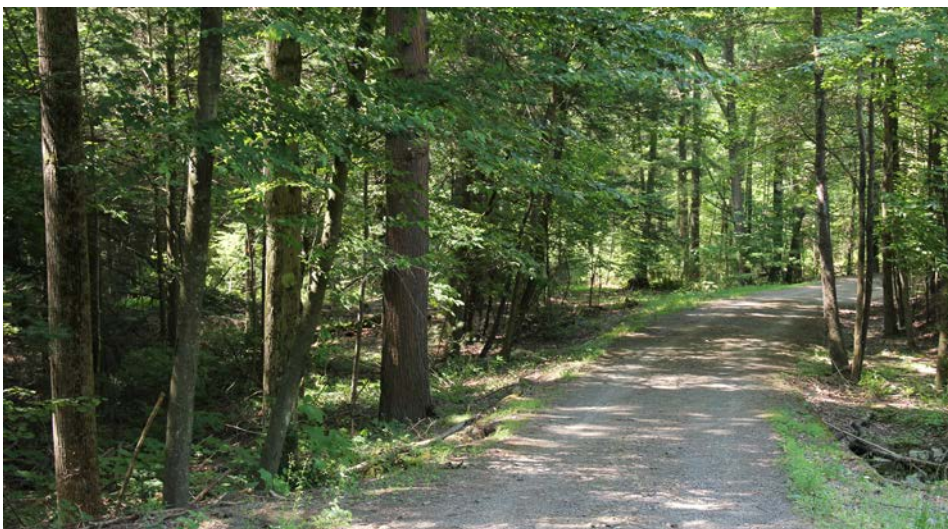
² Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, *Major Forest Types of Pennsylvania*, 2022 Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, <https://www.dcnr.pa.gov/Conservation/ForestsAndTrees/ForestTypes/Pages/default.aspx>.

³ United States Census Bureau, *U.S. Census Bureau QuickFacts: Pennsylvania*, 2021, <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/PA>.

⁴ Guan, Haoming, et al. "The Tree-Species-Specific Effect of Forest Bathing on Perceived Anxiety Alleviation of Young-Adults in Urban Forests." *Annals of Forest Research*, 2017, <https://doi.org/10.15287/afr.2017.897>.

⁵ Gerstenberg, Tina, and Mathias Hofmann. "Perception and Preference of Trees: A Psychological Contribution to Tree Species Selection in Urban Areas." *Urban Forestry and Urban Greening*, vol. 15, 2016, pp. 103–111, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ufug.2015.12.004>.

⁶ Nelson, T., Johnson, T., Strong, M., Rudakewich, G. "Perception of tree canopy." *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, 21 (3), 2001, pp. 315–324, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1006/jevp.2001.0223>.



Many variables influence the way each of us perceives a tree or tree stand, but studies have shown over and over that time spent in the forest, no matter what tree species are around us, can relieve anxiety and bring a sense of calm.

Back Together Again at the PA Forest Stewards Summer Meeting

Saturday, July 16 was a day of presentations, time spent in "Jim's woods," updates, good food, and great conversations. It was a day of being together again!

Over 100 Pennsylvania Forest Stewards and their guests gathered at the Ag Progress Days site in Rock Springs for our first in-person meeting in four years. Many arrived early on a beautiful summer day for breakfast and conversation with fellow Stewards they haven't seen in a long time. A short update on the PA Forest Stewards program and the James C. Finley Center for Private Forests started the day off, followed by a morning session that featured a wide range of options to choose from to strengthen each Steward's toolbox. After a delicious catered lunch, everyone went to the Penn State woodlot—affectionately

called "Jim's woods"—for an afternoon of learning more about the research Jim was involved in and sharing stories and his passion for our forests.

Over \$500 was raised for the James C. Finley Center for Private Forests Endowment Fund through the silent auction—thank you to all who participated and/or donated items. And a big thank you to our presenters and helpers that day, and to all who attended and made this meeting a special one!

Sarah Wurzbacher (below left) explained a two-stage shelterwood harvest and Al Luloff (below center) shared Jim's mission to understand the human dimensions aspect of forest landowners. PA Forest Stewards (top left) covered many topics as they explored Jim's woods; Sandy Smith (middle left) donned the garb of a collier to describe the landscape at the site of an old hearth; Mark Banker (bottom left) explains ways to manage your forest for wildlife.



Photo by Reneé Carey



Photo by Reneé Carey



Photo by Reneé Carey



Photo by Megan Whitmer



Mike (left) and Glenda (right) Thomas presented Linda Finley with a wood carving commemorating Jim and the Center at the summer meeting.

Share Your Favorite "Jim Story" with Us

We know that Jim Finley touched many, many lives, including the hundreds who have passed through our PA Forest Stewards training. We are compiling stories of how Jim left his mark on those around him, and we invite you to share your story with us. You can email your Jim story to PrivateForests@psu.edu or send it to the James C. Finley Center for Private Forests, 416 Forest Resources Building, University Park, PA 16802.



Photo by Beth Glasser

Pennsylvania Forest Stewards
The James C. Finley Center for Private Forests
416 Forest Resources Building
The Pennsylvania State University
University Park, PA 16802

Attention, Stewards! Send Us Your Articles and Your Questions!

If you are missing the *Woods and Wildlife Series* article by Laura and Mike Jackson in this issue, don't worry—they'll be back with another informative piece in the next issue!

Like the Jacksons' articles, we also welcome your contributions to the PA Forest Stewards newsletter. You can share a story about a forest project, a neat way you're reaching out with the message of good stewardship, or a photo and caption—anything that will inform, encourage, or be an enjoyable read to your fellow Stewards.

If you have forestry- or Steward-related questions or concerns that you'd like to see answered in this newsletter, let us know.

You can submit your contributions and questions to us via email at PrivateForests@psu.edu or call us at 800-235-9473. We want to hear from you!

Dates for Your Calendar

September 29-October 2. **PA Forest Stewards Class of 2022 Training.** Krislund Camp, Madisonburg, PA.

Sunday, October 2. Walk in Penn's Woods. Join a walk near you!

March 24-25, 2023. 5th Biennial Forest Landowners Conference. Penn Stater Hotel and Conference Center, State College, PA.

For more information, check the Center for Private Forests website:

ecosystems.psu.edu/private-forests

Remembering PA Forest Stewards We've Lost

We recently learned of the loss of this fellow Pennsylvania Forest Steward volunteer, who was part of our inaugural class of PA Forest Stewards:

- George Freeman (Class of '91)

Our thoughts are with the family of this long-time Steward.

We are so grateful for each Steward's service; if you hear of any of our volunteers who have passed away, please let us know.

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