

# Pennsylvania Forest Stewards News



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## Chair's Column: Cacophony vs. Euphony

By Nancy Baker, PA Forest Stewards '00,  
Steering Committee Chair

Along about 8:45 a.m., the word cacophony came to my mind.

It was July 20, the morning of the Pennsylvania Forest Stewards Statewide Summer Meeting. At the woodsy Dauphin County Agricultural and Natural Resources Center, the parking space supply was getting tight. Inside, content in the conference folder box was diminishing, and the continental breakfast was being decimated. Folks put on their name tags, took a sip of coffee... and, you could barely hear yourself think.

Was there some pent-up longing for face-to-face contact? Perhaps. There was heartfelt hugging, the delighted light of recognition in eyes, and the “how-are-you-doings?” were genuine. But my main impression was THIS IS INCREDIBLE NOISE!

It happened again at lunch. And with the goodbyes at the end of the day.

A cacophony, I thought.

My sense of cacophony is that it's a “racket”; to me it's noise, loud enough that it's hard to distinguish meaning. But when I got home, I looked the word up, just to be sure.

**Cacophony noun, Plural ca-coph-o-nies.**

1. Harsh or unpleasant discordance of sound; dissonance.
2. A discordant and meaningless mixture of sounds.

3. Music: frequent use of harsh, discordant notes or chords that seem to be patternless and without connection to each other. First recorded in 1650–60, it's from New Latin *cacophonia*, from Greek *kakophōnia*; equivalent to *caco-* + *-phony* or literally, bad sound.

There's also a whole lot of online Department of English talk about explosive sounds, e.g., “A cacophony is a combination of words that sound harsh or unpleasant together, usually because they pack a lot of percussive or “explosive” consonants (like T, P, or K) into relatively little space.”

That all got me thinking...

I don't believe I was listening to “bad sound”!

I was hearing “good sound.” I think I was hearing euphony...

**Euphony noun, Plural eu-pho-nies.**

1. Agreeableness of sound; pleasing effect to the ear, especially a pleasant

sounding or harmonious combination or succession of words:

Euphony was borrowed from French at the beginning of the 17<sup>th</sup> century; the French word (*euphonie*) derives from the Late Latin *euphonia*, which in turn traces back to the Greek adjective *euphōnos*, meaning “sweet-voiced” or “musical.” *Euphōnos* was formed by combining the prefix *eu-* (“good”) and *phōnē* (“voice”). In addition to its more commonly recognized senses, euphony also has a more specific meaning in the field of linguistics, where it can refer to the preference for words that are easy to pronounce. This preference may be the cause of an observed trend of people altering the pronunciation of certain words—apparently in favor of sound combinations that are more fluid and simpler to say out loud.

*Chair's Column, continued on page 5*



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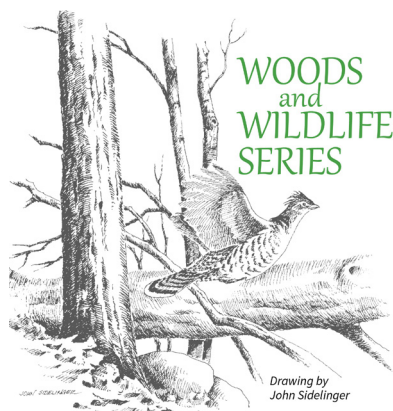
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College of Agricultural Sciences



*A day of euphony: the 100-plus participants in the 2024 PA Forest Stewards Summer Meeting shared lots of conversation, learning, stories, and laughter. Photo by Jeff Osborne.*

# Ticktock...Ticktock...It's Time!

Article and Photos by Mike and Laura Jackson, PA Forest Stewards, Class of '00



*This article is part of a series exploring animals and their dependency on forests. Each article blends personal experiences with factual information and will challenge you to look closely in your woodlot for evidence that you are a habitat provider for wildlife species.*

The clock is ticking if you find a tick on you, but the Tick Research Lab of Pennsylvania offers free identification and testing and will give you an official lab analysis by identifying the tick and testing it to see what diseases it might carry. You can also send a photo of a tick to the lab for free identification. The directions are on the website, but here's a summary:<sup>1</sup>

**Remove the tick:** Grasp the tick with tweezers where it's attached to the skin and carefully, slowly pull it off without twisting. Don't put anything on the tick. Place the tick in a clean, sealable plastic bag and send it to the lab. Don't put anything else in the bag. Immediately clean the bite area with antiseptic, such as rubbing alcohol.

Worried about your dog, cat, or horse? The Tick Lab will also test ticks found on those animals.

**Order a FREE tick test:** Go to [www.ticklab.org](http://www.ticklab.org) to request the free test and fill out a questionnaire, which then provides a receipt. If possible, provide a cell phone number and an email so the lab can text and email the results to you.

If you can't print the receipt (also referred to as a voucher), you can write all the information needed on a slip of paper and include it in the envelope.

The basic panel test is only free to Pennsylvania residents. Non-PA residents must pay \$50.

**Mail the bagged tick and the receipt:** Place the bagged tick and the paper receipt in a business-sized envelope and mail via certified USPS mail to the lab. Don't request a signature, since that could delay delivery. Mail to:

Tick Lab  
Suite 114  
562 Independence Road  
East Stroudsburg, PA 18301

If you live near the Tick Lab, there is a drop box at the Innovation Center in East Stroudsburg.

**Wait for the results:** The lab pledges to send your test results within three business days after receiving your tick; they are not open on weekends.

This is truly a fantastic service for forest landowners and others who spend a lot of time outside, since so many of us are in "tick territory" when we are out in the woods. Both Mike and I used the service this year since we found attached ticks on us.

**Results:** The lab first texted us the identity of the tick. In Mike's case, it was an "adult female deer tick unengorged with blood"...and "likely not attached for more than 7 hours, based on its body size." Deer ticks are also called black-legged ticks.

When we discovered the tick on Mike, it was deeply embedded in his upper arm, so we were surprised that it was unengorged, meaning the tick had not yet started to feed.

In my case, I received a text stating the tick on my neck was an "adult female American dog tick unengorged with blood."



*The deer tick, also called the blacklegged tick, is only about the size of a sesame seed, but can transmit the pathogen that causes Lyme disease. This tick is actively feeding on its human host.*

It took a few more days to get the email with my test results, but we were impressed how quickly we were notified.

We were lucky, since feeding allows disease transmission. And that's the other amazing service: the Research Lab conducted a free basic panel of tests to determine the pathogens present in the tick.

In Mike's case, since he hosted a deer tick, the lab tested for nine different pathogens, including *Borelia burgdorferi*, the bacteria that causes Lyme disease. Other pathogens cause a host of various diseases, such as babesiosis, human and animal anaplasmosis, and two types of viruses. Mike was double lucky—the tick tested negative for all the pathogens that cause these diseases.



*American dog ticks don't carry Lyme disease, but the lab still checks for the pathogen, as well as other diseases that it could carry. This tick species is the largest one found in Pennsylvania.*

Since I found an attached American dog tick, the lab checked for these diseases: Lyme disease, human monocytic ehrlichiosis, tularemia, Powassan virus General, Rocky Mountain spotted fever, and the same two types of viruses in the deer tick. All the results were negative.

If the ticks were engorged, an option for additional pathogen testing is available, for a cost that certainly seems reasonable. If the first round of testing showed a number of pathogens present, we could have requested additional disease tests. The lab keeps the tick's DNA on file for two years.

If we had gotten positive results from the lab, our next step would be to share

**Ticks**, continued on page 3

the results with our personal care provider to discuss the risk of exposure and any clinical treatment that might be needed. The lab offers a disclaimer that the test result does not rule out or confirm the presence of the agent or exposure to the patient, but states the tests are 99.9% accurate.

**Tick-transmitted diseases:** The Tick Lab website also has an excellent section on tick-borne diseases, including how long it may take the pathogen to be transmitted from the tick to a person. According to the lab, transmission time for the bacteria that cause Lyme disease is 18 to 24 hours, but the deer tick virus can be transmitted in just 15 minutes!

**Tick species:** There are a number of different tick species, and it's helpful to learn how to identify them. The Mayo Clinic illustrates different ticks found in the U.S., their range, and the pathogens they could carry. Very importantly, study the section on "Preventing Tick Bites."<sup>2</sup>

The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) website has even more specific information on ticks, including maps that show Pennsylvania counties where the DEP has collected different species of ticks. Search for "DEP and ticks," then scroll down to Distribution Maps.<sup>3</sup>

**Fascinating data:** The Tick Lab website shows lots of data about ticks which is updated daily.

When I checked, the lab had tested 422 ticks from Bedford County, where we live with ticks. Of the ticks tested, 68% were uninfected, meaning no pathogens were detected. In Chester County, almost 4,000 ticks have been tested, 80% were uninfected. Only 153 ticks have been tested in our neighboring Fulton County, with 77% uninfected. Word about the lab has spread in Monroe County, where East Stroudsburg is located. Almost 5,000 ticks have been tested in that county, with 73% uninfected. I didn't check all the counties, but one county with a higher rate of infection was Cameron County: 51% of the 74 ticks tested were positive for infection. Statewide, 84,428 ticks have been tested using the basic panel, with 71% of the ticks uninfected.

Another page with pie charts for Pennsylvania shows how the various levels of testing reveal the number of pathogens per tick over the past five years. All levels of testing show that most ticks are uninfected, and, while most people (78,787) just get the

free basic panel of tests, about 1,500 people paid for the advanced test, and almost 2,500 people paid even more for the comprehensive panel. The comprehensive panel test results showed that 27% of the ticks were infected with just one pathogen, while 132 had two pathogens, 30 had three pathogens, and eight ticks were infected with four pathogens. Note that this data is "live," so the webpage is updated on a regular basis.

**Lyme disease:** I've had Lyme disease three times, but the common bull's eye rash only appeared the last time. Mike has never had Lyme disease—he's too ornery, he maintains! I was bitten in June 2002 but didn't realize it was a tick bite and the symptoms didn't appear until about two months later when I suffered extreme fatigue and malaise—it was difficult to do anything that required even a little bit of energy. The doctor prescribed a combination of doxycycline and amoxicillin for two weeks, which was very effective.

In the spring of 2009, I was teaching at Bedford Elementary's Environmental Education Center in prime tick habitat, so I scheduled tick programs for all teachers and students the last week of school. Ironically, I contacted Lyme disease three days before I could start the programs. This time the lethargy was accompanied by a severe migraine, so the "Tick Talks" were cancelled.

The third time, in the spring of 2015, I removed an embedded deer tick, but a bull's eye rash developed around the bite



*An early sign of Lyme disease is a bull's eye rash, but not everyone develops this symptom. Some bull's eye rashes are very large, and some people develop more than one as the bacteria moves through the person. Other health issues may also cause a bull's eye rash: ringworm, hives, etc.*

site, so I knew I contracted Lyme disease again!

I don't seem to have any chronic problems caused by Lyme disease since I took antibiotics each time, but many people suffer from long-term effects, called chronic Lyme disease. My younger sister suffered symptoms from chronic Lyme disease for over 30 years before she was diagnosed and treated, but she died a few years later from glioblastoma (brain cancer). Did the bacteria that cause Lyme disease also cause her cancer? Was her Lyme disease a misdiagnosis? We don't know the answers, but we are glad research is ongoing to understand the myriad health impacts of the bacteria that cause Lyme disease.

**Alpha-gal Syndrome:** One thing we do know: a bite from the lone star tick can sometimes lead to alpha-gal syndrome. A friend of ours claims she was "stalked" and bitten by a lone star tick while on a birding trip to Texas. Stalked? Yes, this tick species moves quickly when searching for a host. The name is based on the white spot (like a single star) on the back of the adult female tick—the males and nymphs don't have this mark. Some lone star ticks carry a sugar molecule called alpha-gal that is absent in humans, so if the alpha-gal is transferred during feeding, the sugar molecule can trigger an immune reaction.<sup>2</sup> Some people have a mild reaction such as hives or itchiness, but it can be life-threatening in others. Oddly enough, the allergic reaction occurs if the person eats red meat (beef, pork, lamb), but not poultry or fish. Some people, like our friend, are so sensitive that they need to avoid dairy and gelatin, too. Although she is very careful to avoid red meat, she still suffers severe digestive issues associated with alpha-gal syndrome.

As our climate warms, lone star ticks are spreading into Pennsylvania, and tick populations are increasing. Ticks play an important role in nature, but let's be tick smart so they don't get on us. If they do, send them to the Tick Lab.

#### References:

- <sup>1</sup> <https://www.ticklab.org>
- <sup>2</sup> <https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/alpha-gal-syndrome/in-depth/tick-species/art-20546861>
- <sup>3</sup> <https://www.dep.pa.gov/Business/ProgramIntegration/Vector-Management/Ticks/Pages/default.aspx>

# One-Third of a Century of Forest Stewardship Leadership, Decades of Gratitude!

By Allyson Muth, Director, James C. Finley Center for Private Forests

We trace the beginning of Pennsylvania's forest stewardship program, including the PA Forest Stewards, to the 1990 Farm Bill. The programs created and the resources allocated in support of forest stewardship led to the partnership between Penn State and the DCNR Bureau of Forestry and the creation of a statewide network of peer volunteers (along with publications, newsletters, field events, etc.) to spread the message of good forest stewardship.

Steve Jones, Jim Finley, Sandy Smith, and Margaret Brittingham from Penn State and Jim Grace and Jim Stiehler from the Bureau of Forestry—along with support from the Ruffed Grouse Society, service foresters, and many others—created a vast program to promote good forest management practices, and used innovative means to get the message out there (somewhere in our archives are VHS copies of forest stewardship PSAs (public service announcements) created in the early 90s that were shown on various local stations—we MUST get those digitized!). As part of the program, a progression of stewardship-minded professionals has supported the efforts.

Ellen O'Donnell and Yuriy Bihun were both forest stewardship associates at the start of the program. Shelby Chunko joined and overlapped a bit with Ellen. Rance Harmon followed Shelby and I followed Rance. Sara Banker and Abby Jamison both worked for a time in the role, and in November of 2022, we welcomed our current associate, Jeff Osborne.

With Jeff's broad background working in government agencies (both the PA Game Commission and DCNR Bureau of Forestry), filling roles there in inventory and analysis and service forestry, his knowledge and connections have served our program well. For those who joined us on July 20 for the Summer Meeting, the tour and workshop offerings were brought about through his vast and varied network. Based on the feedback received and the smiles on faces, the program was excellent! All kudos to Jeff for a great meeting!

In the background (and foreground) have been administrative assistants who



**Top:** Jeff Osborne shares at the Summer Meeting. **Bottom:** Allyson Muth (facing camera, center), flanked by Linda Finley (left) and Nancy Baker (right), receives a rousing standing ovation as she is honored for 20 years of work with Penn State and the forest stewardship program. Photos by Carl Martin (top) and Erik Martin (bottom).

helped us out. In my time, Doren Plafcan, Stephanie Dalrymple, Carol Leitzell, and Barb Sellers have ensured that everything goes smoothly with our events and programmatic activities. And to note, Barb was the first of our staff who became a PA Forest Steward. Barb is an integral cog in our team. We are grateful for all who have worked with us over the years, but without Barb in the last few years, I can honestly say our program would have suffered. Thanks so much to Barb!

Under the leadership of Jeff and Nancy Baker, as our PA Forest Stewards Steering Committee chair, we are looking to maintain a creative and vibrant community of volunteers who are empowered and supported as they continue to practice good stewardship on their own lands and share that message with others. You've heard them talk about PA Forest Stewards futuring efforts and expanding the opportunities for in-depth trainings and resource creation. We welcome your input into all of these

efforts! Nancy is the fifth to hold the Steering Committee chair role in the 20 years I've been here, following Jack Murray, Bill Park, Walt Petrick, and Bob Slagter in leading the committee. We are incredibly grateful for the engagement of those leaders within the larger steering committee community (and thanks to all of those members too!), helping us keep our program responsive and interesting to our vast volunteer network.

When people ask us why we do what we do in this space of forest stewardship engagement, training, and support, we often say that it's because of a shared passion for the woods. We are grateful to all of you for sharing your love of the land with us, for being willing to educate yourselves, and for sharing your knowledge and experience with others. Because of you, there is a wide network of support for the woodland owners of our state. You are the reason we stay in this space. Thank you so much for all that you do!

Within that noisy hall, I was hearing stories about finally getting NRCS (Natural Resources Conservation Service) funding; I heard about planning ahead and about missed time frames. I heard tales of being intrigued about something new in the woods that had been overlooked for a lifetime; I found someone just beginning to steward—with tentative and apprehensive steps. I could pick out the pros, cons, and recommendations that came from experience: what's the best way to deal with Japanese stiltgrass? With hemlock woolly adelgid? And a recognition that hard-earned practical knowledge goes hand-in-hand with professional expertise and experience.

And there were the big background questions: I heard queries and answers about convincing lawmakers of the importance of Penn's Woods. There were questions about how science works, and how it advances and changes. About

how the forest ecosystem evolves in response to climate. Recommendations about which books to read, about which information to rely upon. I heard an openness, a willingness to be vulnerable.

During the day, we all progressed through a series of informative presentations: from wildlife habitat to fungi, from dendrochronology to forest management practices. I heard harried conversations about the necessity of making a choice between sessions: "What did they say about XYZ?!!!" Thankfully, that initial packet had the contact information for each of the experts, and one can continue the conversations by reaching out.

This was all terrific sound! It was the sound of connection and sharing. It was definitely euphony.

Ultimately, it made me imagine all the connections in that room. And most of all, many potential additional connections.

I'm thinking that there are thousands of Pennsylvania woodland owners out there who are hearing a cacophony of sound, what to them is a cacophony of discordant messages. And that it's our job as Pennsylvania Forest Stewards to sort that out for them and to clue them in to some sort of harmonious euphony about their stewardship of Penn's Woods.

Let's get on with it! Let the good noise begin.

**Nancy**

Reach out to me at bakerii@epix.net.

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"Cacophony." Merriam-Webster.com Dictionary, Merriam-Webster, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/cacophony>

"Euphony." Merriam-Webster.com Dictionary, Merriam-Webster, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/euphony>

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**Deadwaters, continued from page 7**

many times that only the fewest eyelets needed were in use. Greasy old hats slouched on their heads and completed their summer ensemble...it was also their winter, spring, and fall dress as well. The sartorial economy dictated by poverty kept their need for closet space to a minimum.

Around them, 1920s small-town Pennsylvania unfolded beside the tracks. The houses were small, clapboard, porch-fronted, and white-washed with basic colored trim. They were neat with little yards and pebble walks. They were lived in by their friends of the lower echelon of society. The boys' total net worth for all three of their families added together wouldn't reach four figures. And, in Titusville, just prior to the big crash, there was a large lower class of semi-employed families and a large upper class of oil and timber wealthy folks with just a small middle class of doctors, teachers, and the like. Beyond the houses on the outskirts of town, they passed small factories, most spewing some sort of petroleum distillate. After the factories, it was past the town dump where the gang had spent time shooting rats and getting chased by the mangy

dog that hung around the junk piles. Soon they hit the first bridge over Pine Creek and its bottoms.

The walk to Deadwaters was short, even at their unhurried pace. It was only a couple of miles out of town and was the perfect jumping off point for their adventures. The swamp for which the name arose was on the right of the tracks, outbound with Pine Creek on the right, running through two pools with a long-connecting riffle in between. The swamp had plenty of character, with still water pools and mud flats and hemlock hummocks. Filled as it was with ducks, turtles, frogs, and all manner of small mammals, this was the main reason for its choice as a destination. The guys loved the swamp for another reason as well: in July, who else would want to hang around a swamp?

They moved slowly into the swamp to select a campsite and drop their meager possessions. The hemlocks here were big at the base but stunted into small heights by the constant soaking of the waters of the surrounding marsh. They collected needles and mosses in their roots at their bases that formed little islands, soft and spongy in texture, with natural bug

repellent from the pine scent and low, thick branches to keep out the rain that made these the perfect camping spots.

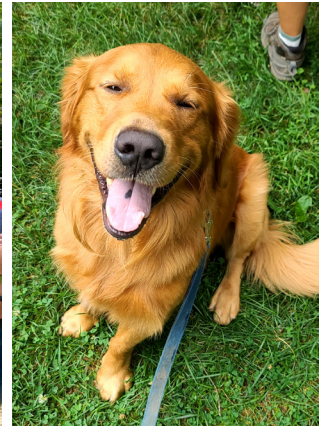
First order was to set up camp, quickly done by hanging the bedrolls from branches, gathering rocks for a fire ring and filling the ring with dead branches to start a fire later in the day. They then just sat back and stared through the small openings in the tree at the blue sky and talked about what to do next...should they fish or hunt or swim or explore? So much to do and two days to do it in. One thing for sure, no need to hurry. It was early and they had all day in which to have fun. And this outing held an additional surprise, for Eddie had found a canning jar of clear liquid in the shed behind the house which by smell he quickly identified as "shine." He had put some in a jelly jar that had remnants of sweet fruit in the bottom then refilled the quart jar with water to cover his theft. So, tonight they would feast and have their first "taste"...the day was made.

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*Don't miss the rest of the boys' adventures at Deadwaters Swamp. Read Part 2 of Bob's century-old tale in the next issue of this newsletter.*

# PA Forest Stewards Summer Meeting Recap: A Day of Learning, Sharing, and Building Excitement for the Future

When 100 like-minded people come together to learn and share their work and passion for our forests, really good things happen. Saturday, July 20 was a perfect day to gather at the Dauphin County Agricultural and Natural Resources Center in Dauphin, PA for the biennial PA Forest Stewards Summer Meeting. A program update kicked off the morning, with highlights about the program's future drawing a lot of enthusiasm from attendees. Three sessions of tours and presentations followed, with a superb lunch in between. State Forester and DCNR Bureau of Forestry Director Seth Cassell closed out the day by sharing some wonderful insights and lessons learned while managing his own piece of Penn's Woods. A huge thank you to all who helped make the day a success, especially our speakers, presenters, and tour leaders!



Enjoy these snapshots from the day's activities. Photo credits, clockwise from above: Allyson Muth, Erik Martin, Jeff Osborne, Barb Sellers.



## ATTENDEES, PLEASE NOTE!

A black Cascade Mountain Tech walking stick with silver and gold designs was left behind at the event. To claim, contact Barb at [bss213@psu.edu](mailto:bss213@psu.edu) or 814-863-0401.

## Important News: Upcoming Opportunities for PA Forest Stewards!

### September 21: In-service Opportunity at Krislund Camp During 2024 Training

We are looking forward to welcoming 25 participants to the 2024 PA Forest Stewards training at Krislund Camp and Conference Center in Madisonburg, PA September 19-22.

There will be an in-service opportunity for all current PA Forest Stewards to join the new class on Saturday, September 21 at Krislund Camp in Centre County. You are welcome to come for lunch at noon, stay for the afternoon, participate as a member of a panel of current PA Forest Stewards sharing with the new class, join us for a tour of a nearby Steward's property, and stay for dinner at 6, followed by a campfire and conversation. Please RSVP to Jeff Osborne, [jao5194@psu.edu](mailto:jao5194@psu.edu) or (814) 867-5982, by September 1 with your plans so we can have a count for lunch and dinner.

### Another In-service Opportunity at Penn State on October 15

On Tuesday, October 15, in the State College area, members of Penn State's Department of Ecosystem Science and Management invite you to join us alongside consulting foresters to pilot a tool to help landowners maintain or increase the ability of their forests to withstand disturbances. We will meet in the morning for indoor sessions, eat lunch, and then head to a woodlot to work through and discuss the forest resilience checklist. If you want to learn more and stay in the loop as details of this opportunity develop, contact Jeff Osborne [jao5194@psu.edu](mailto:jao5194@psu.edu) or (814) 867-5982.

*Thank you for the many ways you support the PA Forest Stewards volunteer program!*

### Join a Facilitated Discussion and Shape Our Program's Future!

If you are interested in shaping future PA Forest Stewards training opportunities, there's still time to sign up to participate in an in-person facilitated discussion. These discussions, held on a weeknight in locations around the state, will last about 90 minutes and answer questions around the potential and opportunities as we investigate the creation of a master peer volunteer network under the umbrella of the PA Forest Stewards program. We will ask for your consent to have the session audio-recorded; note that your contributions will not be attributed to you. A meal will precede the discussion. If you are interested in participating, contact Jeff Osborne with your name and home county at [jao5194@psu.edu](mailto:jao5194@psu.edu) or (814) 867-5982 by August 15.

# The Back Page: Deadwaters Sojourn

By Bob Slagter, PA Forest Steward and Retired Steering Committee Chair, Class of '08

*This tale is based on stories told to Bob by his father ("Eddie" in the saga below) about childhood adventures in Titusville in the 1920s. As Bob says, "It was another place and time and it may be fantasy, but I like to think these times really happened. Enjoy this trip back!"*

It was their favorite time: it was summer and the gang was headed out on the tracks—walking, not riding—on an adventure that would take them to the streams and swamps east of town. No army could have moved with fewer encumbrances, ready as they were for several nights out just camping and having their special kind of good time.

Eddie and Chuck were brothers. Eddie, the oldest, was the best shot and overall woodsman, but Chuck had his special skills, as well, that revealed themselves in the water. There were also Bruce and Flynn, locals who were very intelligent guys who looked up to the Slagters for their woodland prowess. Together they marched, talking about what they would see and what they would try to "bag" on this trip with the first stop at "Deadwaters," their home swamp.

The guys carried the barest of essentials needed for an indefinite period afield. Each had a bed roll that consisted of an old, thread-bare wool blanket tied with a length of rope or bailing twine so that it could be slung over their backs. Rolled into the blanket were two cans of beans each—one per day—that would provide the side dish for every meal. These old-time MREs (meals ready-to-eat) were either purchased for five cents a can or stolen from the local store...probably some of each, with two guys buying beans while the other two were sticking cans in their pants. The total cost of food for two days? Less than 10 cents a man. The beans served a dual purpose: in addition to food value, the cans were also cooking pots for the other food they would procure on the trip. By simply gouging a hole on each side and inserting a supple green stick, they could cook anything they had at hand.

Each also carried a supply of matches in an old tobacco tin, along with a supply of tobacco (also grabbed from the unsuspecting grocer) and rolling papers for that evening smoke around the campfire. There were pocket knives

of various vintages in each guy's pocket. These were hand-me-down knives, rusted in the hinge and well-used but sharp in blade and tip. They were cherished items with pockets continually checked to make sure the precious contents were aboard. All had bone or stag handles and at least two blades, one for small jobs like cleaning rabbits and the larger one for cutting and sharpening branches needed for camp uses. They were constantly being sharpened on flat, smooth stones and kept dry and clean with spit and shirttails.

Flynn carried the old hatchet. This one was really a hammer with a sharpened vertical blade on the back, used in the past for installing shakes on roofing projects but now perfect as a camping tool. It had been appropriated from an old tool box his dad left behind when he had headed out one night in a drunken Irish stupor, never to return.

Chuck and Bruce carried gigs for nailing frogs and other aquatic treats for lunch or dinner. These weapons were lethal when handled by an expert (Chuck qualified as such), with their five-pronged tips on six-foot sticks used for impaling whatever quarry appeared. These guys also had lengths of woven fishing line and several hooks in their trusty tin boxes, ready to be teamed with eight-foot willow stalks as very serviceable fishing poles, an always-needed implement for any camping trip.



*Those were the days, when the gang could grab blankets and rudimentary supplies and head for an overnight adventure under the hemlocks by the waters. Photo by Laura Kirt.*

Eddie toted the only firearm that any of them possessed. This was an old, really old, Stevens breach-loading, single-shot .22 short. Originally costing \$7.00 and paid for with the proceeds of odd jobs at pennies per task, this was Eddie's prize possession and, as such, was always clean and well-oiled...its bare metal and plain oak exterior perpetually free of rust and debris. It was the ultimate weapon for the group...a full box of \$.10 per 50 rounds of ammo would last them the weekend and bring hours of hunting excitement and shooting skills practice.

Eddie took the lead, as he always did on these hikes. Bruce and Flynn were the oldest at 16 to Eddie's 14, but they always deferred to Eddie because of his woodsmanship. Eddie looked like the Indian that was one-fourth of his lineage and had the skills of a Mohawk in the woods. He knew where the game would be, when to move and when to sit still, and was by far the best shot of the group. Bruce was the smartest of them and constantly wanted to know all about the game and trees and the weather... he always marveled at how Eddie's knowledge just seemed to be there when they needed it. Flynn was bright and tough and loved to be away from his mom on these trips. It was his rare chance to get some male input. Chuck had wanted to go with his tall, quiet big brother for some time, but at 12, was always considered too young, especially since he was short and roly-poly with a kid's laugh and constant jabbering. He was allowed to go this time because of his newly acquired "fishing" skills that the others thought might come in handy on the outing.

They headed east on the tracks, bedrolls on their backs, weapons in hand, talking and kidding each other, pushing and shoving and ignoring many of Chuck's interruptions as they planned the day and the weekend. It was July, hot but breezy with a high sun on their arms and necks and a flurry of flies buzzing their heads. Each wore patched and worn trousers of light wool and a thin shirt in a pattern that had long ago been washed beyond recognition. Their feet were clad in beat-up leather boots with laces that had been used, broken, and retied so

**Deadwaters**, continued on page 5

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

### **Walk in Penn's Woods Coming October 6. Join a Walk Near You!**

The Walk in Penn's Woods Partnership is gearing up for the 8<sup>th</sup> annual Walk in Penn's Woods on Sunday, October 6, 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](http://www.walkinpennswoods.org). Participate by volunteering, demonstrating a skill, showcasing your stewardship, and joining a walk on October 6!

### **Dates for Your Calendar**

**Tuesday-Thursday, August 13-15. Ag Progress Days.** Russell E. Larson Agricultural Research Center, 2710 W. Pine Grove Road, Pennsylvania Furnace, PA 16865. Visit us at the Forestry and Wildlife booth in the J.D. Harrington Building.

**September 19-22. PA Forest Stewards Class of 2024 Training.** Krislund Camp & Conference Center, Madisonburg, Centre County, PA. Current Stewards are invited to join with the class on Saturday, September 21—see details on page 6.

**Sunday, October 6. 8<sup>th</sup> Annual Walk in Penn's Woods.** Join a walk near you! The PA Forestry Association leads this year's event, joined by the Finley Center and other partners. Find out more at [www.walkinpennswoods.org](http://www.walkinpennswoods.org).

For more information about these and other upcoming events, check the Finley Center website:

[ecosystems.psu.edu/private-forests](http://ecosystems.psu.edu/private-forests)

### **Program Sponsors and Partners**

The James C. Finley Center for Private Forests at Penn State  
Penn State Forestry and Wildlife Extension  
PA DCNR Bureau of Forestry  
USDA Forest Service

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