

2009 Pennsylvania Forest Stewards Biennial Survey

Summary Report



PA Forest Stewards

January 2010

Brief Summary

The 2009 edition of the Pennsylvania Forest Stewards (PA Forest Stewards) biennial survey shows that PA Forest Stewards volunteers continue to actively promote forest stewardship in their communities. The number of volunteer hours reported was comparable to the number reported in the 2007 survey, with a significant number of volunteers (26%) not responding to our survey or phone calls. This year volunteers reached numerous of friends, neighbors, or members of the public (estimated 16,700 people). The most common outreach activity remains talking to neighbors and other woodland owners about forest stewardship. PA Forest Stewards volunteers continue to be active members and supporters of Pennsylvania's local/regional woodland owner associations: 155 PA Forest Stewards (64% of respondents) were members and 73 (30% of respondents) were board members or in leadership roles.

Survey Methods

We sent a survey form (sample on the last four pages of this report) to all of the PA Forest Stewards volunteers in the database (N=359). Married couples received two surveys, however oftentimes responses on one survey indicated actions by both partners. We sent a postcard to those who did not complete the first form by the deadline and emailed or phoned each person who did not respond to the survey or reminder and offered the option to respond via telephone. If we were unable to talk to the PA Forest Steward, we left a message asking them to call us back.

Four hundred ninety-five PA Forest Stewards volunteers have been trained since the program's inception and three hundred eighty-nine remained in the program at the start of the survey. (These numbers include the new volunteers from 2009 – 25 people. These new volunteers were not surveyed this calendar year.) Although we made no attempt to contact people who were no longer involved in the program before the survey began, we do know that we have lost some PA Forest Stewards over the years when they moved out of state, sold their forestland, suffered from deteriorating health, or passed away. In 2009, we removed 5 people from the database, who said they were no longer interested in the program, and two people passed away.

Results and Discussion

Response Rate

Of the 359 PA Forest Stewards to be surveyed in the program at the beginning of the survey period, 264 provided survey information (73.5% response rate). Separate surveys were sent to each PA Forest Stewards volunteer within a household. Several volunteers responded for themselves and their partner – this was taken into account in the reporting below.

Ownership Information

Two hundred seventeen PA Forest Stewards respondents own forestland (89.3%). PA Forest Stewards own land in 56 out of 67 counties in Pennsylvania, as well as New York, Wisconsin, South Carolina, and Virginia. PA Forest Stewards own over 38,955 acres of land, of which 31,609 is forested (81%). Average parcel size for the volunteers is 192 acres.

Communications

With communications a focus of our efforts in 2009, we moved Communications queries to early in the survey.

Preferred Method of Contact:

To facilitate our dissemination of information and outreach around forest stewardship opportunities, the survey queried preferred means of contact for the PA Forest Stewards volunteers. The most preferred were:

- Direct mail (newsletter, other paper mailings) (80.7%)
- Forest Leaves (quarterly newsletter) (74.5%)
- Email (70.0%)
- PSU Cooperative Extension Office (49.8%)

Other Communication

In efforts to speed response to the survey or provide paperless surveys in the future, we asked willingness to complete the biennial survey online. 32% indicated that they would be willing to complete the survey online. Additionally we queried abilities to use social networking (Facebook, etc.) and high speed internet usage. Sixteen percent of our respondents currently use computer social networks and 55% have high speed internet capability in their homes. This information will color our attempts to reach landowners in new ways.

Current Status

The survey asked PA Forest Stewards to indicate their volunteer status: active in the past 12 months; inactive in the past 12 months, but wish to remain in the program; and no longer interested (see Table 1). One hundred eighty-five (54.6%) said they were currently active. Fifty-one (15.0%) indicated that they were currently inactive but were still interested in remaining in the program. Many of the inactive volunteers cited time limitations and health factors as reasons, but hoped to become active again in the future. Five (1.5%) indicated that they were no longer interested in the program, ninety-six (28.3%) did not respond to either the written surveys or telephone calls, and two volunteers passed away this year.

Table 1: Status of PA Forest Stewards Volunteers

Status	Number	Percentage
Active	185	54.6
Inactive	51	15.0
Did Not Respond	96	28.3
No Longer Interested	7 (includes two deceased)	2.1
Total	339	100.0

Affiliations

Local Woodland Owner Associations

Local woodland owner associations (WOAs) are important catalysts for promoting Forest Stewardship in Pennsylvania. Each group is independent, and most sponsor education programs,

woodland tours, and newsletters to provide woodland owners with information about managing their forestlands (see Table 2 for membership numbers). The “Nurturing WOAs” subcommittee of the PA Forest Stewards Steering Committee has targeted supporting existing associations, helping to make connections between strong and struggling groups, and starting new groups in parts of the state where no such organizations exist. As part of this effort, the fourth statewide conference for all of Pennsylvania’s WOAs was held in November 2009.

One hundred fifty-five (64%) PA Forest Stewards belong to at least one local or regional WOA and sixty-seven (28%) reported that they were board members. One hundred twelve respondents reported working to support an existing woodlands association and ten PA Forest Stewards said they were working to start new associations.

Table 2: Local Woodland Owner Association Memberships

Name of Local Association	Number of PA Forest Steward Members
Woodland Owners of the Clarion-Allegheny Valley	17
Westmoreland Woodlands Improvement Association	15
North Central Forest Landowners Association	14
Woodland Owners of Centre County	12
Woodland Owners of the Southern Alleghenies	11
Mercer County Woodland Owners Association	10
Lycoming Woodland Owners’ Association	9
Central Susquehanna Woodland Owners Association	8
Northwest Pennsylvania Woodland Association	8
Dauphin County Woodland Owners Association	7
Bradford-Sullivan Forest Landowners’ Association	6
Laurel Highlands Forest Landowners Association	6
Wayne-Lackawanna Forest Landowners’ Association	6
Allegheny Mountain Woodlands Association	5
Susquehanna County Forest Landowners’ Association	5
Tioga County Woodland Owners Association	5
Clarion County Forest Stewardship Council	4
Cumberland Woodland Owners Association	4
Mifflin County Forest Landowners Association	3
Tri-County Woodland Owners*	3
York Adams Woodland Owners Association*	3
Perry-Juniata Woodland Owners Association	2
Blair Woodland Association*	1
Clearfield-Jefferson Counties Forest Stewardship Committee	1
Southeast Forest Resources Association	1
Southwestern Pennsylvania Woodland Owners' Association	1

* New association formed since the last survey.

Other Associations and Memberships

PA Forest Stewards are active in many other organizations related to forest stewardship (see Table 3). Common affiliations include Forest Stewardship Property (132), American Tree Farm System (78), wildlife conservation organizations (64), Pennsylvania Forestry Association (64), land conservancies (55), the American Chestnut Foundation (49), watershed protection organizations (45), and farm organizations and committees (22). Other memberships or affiliations related to forest stewardship include: Arbor Day Foundation, National Woodland Owners Association, Boy Scouts, NW Loggers Association, Northern Tier Hardwood Association, PA Nutgrowers, and the NRCS State Technical Committee. Nine volunteers are active on their county conservation district board, and three volunteers serve on their county's extension board.

Table 3: Other Memberships and Affiliations Related to Forest Stewardship

Organization	Number
Forest Stewardship Property	132
American Tree Farm System	78
Wildlife Conservation Organizations	64
Pennsylvania Forestry Association	64
Land Conservancies	55
The American Chestnut Foundation	49
Watershed Protection Organizations	45
Farm Organizations and Committees	22
Other memberships related to stewardship	21

Assistance

PA Forest Stewards were also surveyed as to how the program has helped their stewardship or outreach activities during the last year. The top answers were:

- Provided useful resources and materials (182)
- Motivated me to be a better steward of land I own or help manage (139)
- Motivated me to learn more or take additional workshops (123)
- Improved my basic understanding of forest stewardship concepts (119)
- Helped focus my stewardship or conservation activities (107)

Outreach

PA Forest Stewards volunteers were asked to estimate how many friends, neighbors, or members of the public they reached through their stewardship-related outreach activities. Two hundred twenty-seven volunteers responded to this question with an estimated 16,500 people reached. The breakdown of responses can be found in Table 4.

Table 4: People Reached Through Stewardship-Related Outreach Activities

Estimated Range	Respondents	Percentage
None	10	4.4
1-10 people	86	37.9

11-25 people	60	26.4
26-50 people	22	9.7
51-100 people	19	8.4
101-500 people	17	7.5
Over 500 people	13	5.7
Total	227	100.0

Volunteer Hours

The survey also measured PA Forest Stewards volunteer hours. PA Forest Stewards were asked to provide hours for over thirty-one categories of activities on their own land and working with others to promote Forest Stewardship in the past 12 months. The hours reported is probably an underestimate, because it is likely that some of the 96 non-respondents also had volunteer hours that went unreported.

The PA Forest Stewards who did provide quantitative information collectively reported over 45,000 volunteer hours in all Forest Stewardship activities (average = 115.2 hours) reaching an estimated 16,700 people. These numbers indicate a continued high rate of involvement in light of the initial agreement PA Forest Stewards make at the time of their training. Their commitment is limited to 40 volunteer hours in the 12 months after training; no further commitment is required. However, the active volunteers averaged over 115 hours of service in the past year alone, and many of these volunteers went through the initial training years ago.

The new volunteers (Class of 2008) were surveyed for the first time this year. Twenty-two new volunteers were surveyed with seventeen responding. The new volunteers reported 3,595 volunteer hours in all Forest Stewardship activities (average = 120 hours).

Table 5: Number of Hours and Average Hours Volunteered in the Past 12 Months

Volunteers	Number of Hours	Average Number of Hours
All Volunteers	45,150*	115.2
New Volunteers (2008)	3,595	119.8

* Greater than 22 full-time employees at 40 hours per week for 50 weeks.

Stewardship Activities

The survey also asked PA Forest Stewards to list their Stewardship activities. One primary objective of training Forest Stewardship volunteers is to provide them with the tools they need to effectively encourage their friends, neighbors, and other community members to become good stewards of their own lands. The most frequent PA Forest Stewards activity was talking to neighbors and other woodland owners about Forest Stewardship (see Table 6). One hundred eighty-three PA Forest Stewards reported doing this activity in the past year.

The other most common outreach activities were attending forest conferences, workshops, and seminars (139), working to support an existing woodland owners association (112), distributing Forest Stewardship information (74), referrals to consulting foresters (74), and leading and hosting woodland tours (60).

The most commonly cited stewardship activities that PA Forest Stewards implemented on their own properties included maintaining trails and roads (156), removing competing vegetation (150), timber stand improvement (130), planting trees/ reforestation (119), and wildlife enhancement (118).

Table 6: Forest Stewardship Activities in the Previous 12 Months

Activity	Number
Talking with neighbors and other woodland owners about forest stewardship	183
Maintaining trails and roads	156
Removing competing vegetation/invasive plants	150
Attending forestry conferences, workshops, seminars	139
Timber stand improvement	130
Planting trees/reforestation	119
Wildlife enhancement	118
Working to support an existing woodland owners association	112
Distributing Forest Stewardship information	74
Referrals to consulting foresters	74
Other forest management activities on own land	62
Leading and hosting woodland tours	60
Presentations to adult groups	58
Other conservation volunteerism	56
Working with children/schools	53
Watershed-related activities	53
Serving on Advisory Committees	50
Providing input to elected representatives and government agencies	46
Deer fencing/census/control	44
Writing and providing information to media about forest stewardship	39
Planning and coordinating workshops/conferences for woodland owners	39
Assisting service forester	39
Growing non-timber forest products	32
Community tree projects	28
Staffing forestry exhibits	25
Timber sale and preparation	25
Preparing new forest stewardship plan	22
Conservation easements on land	17
Volunteer in state forests/parks	15
Working to start new woodland owner group	10
Other (please list)*	9

* Examples of other activities include: American chestnut breeding orchard, forest products manufacture, Clean and Green, CREP maintenance, bioenergy, surveying property, gypsy moth spray block coordinator, emerald ash borer education.

Continuing Education

Space was provided in the survey for PA Forest Stewards volunteers to suggest topics for continuing education, or follow-up training in the coming years. The most common responses were:

- Lobbying
- Wildlife habitat enhancement
- Tax information
- Timber stand improvement
- Forest pests and diseases
- Invasive Species
- Using GPS
- Non hands-on management strategies
- Timber harvesting
- Native trout stream protection
- Non-timber forest products
- Implications of natural gas drilling on forest fragmentation
- Vegetative site indicators
- Forest succession
- Chainsaw safety
- Tree identification
- Riparian buffers/creek-side stabilization
- Reclaiming abandoned mine lands
- Cost share opportunities
- Carbon sequestration and credits
- Biomass production
- Woods roads and trails
- Forest ecology – beyond the trees
- Educating youth
- Forest stewardship plans

Proud Events

Again this year, the 2009 survey included space for volunteers to share their proudest activities from the past year. A smattering of results...

I assisted local property owners in tree conservation by connecting them with a forester and by offering personal experience and expertise as a biologist.

As a pastor, I have a "captive" audience. They know more about the birds, frogs, and trees than they want to know (sermons, children's messages, bulletin inserts, announcements, etc.).

Joining the Mercer County Woodland Owners Association and participating in board meetings. I have also been educating my young granddaughter in tree ID and about our native wildlife.

I'm just proud to be a small part of what I think is pretty great and also to personally know some real experts.

I worked closely with a local Christmas tree farmer to bring numerous seedlings to a local Pre-K for them to plant. It was a great experience!

I really enjoyed putting together an "earth day" presentation in my home town. We had about 65 adults and kids attend with lots of follow-up. Finley did a world class job helping us. Maybe I should write an article about it for other PA Forest Stewards

It is incredibly rewarding to share the learning of the PA Forest Stewards with your community. You get a great ego boost and you learn by giving assistance... all this while you do your small part to save our forests.

Worked with four other persons as a Bedford County Clean and Green committee to educate county commissioners and the public on forestland and ag land taxation issues and the benefits of forestland to the public and the county. We made general and specific recommendations to the commissions and the public on reassessment issues. The work established credibility with the public and commissioners which has and will in the future enable more effective stewardship communications. The work included 8-10 committee meetings, 4 public meetings, 4 meetings of committee with commissioners, writing and assisting with the formal report. I wrote a two page summary and presented to the commissioners, and wrote/rewrote editorial article for local newspaper.

I've been helping hundreds of people to understand the connection between coal burning and transportation and acid rain and forest health, and stress to trees and forest from climate change and the interconnectedness between our eating and energy habits and our forests and environment and health.

I think the PA Forest Stewards is a good grassroots approach to try to connect with woodland owners that aren't aware of proper woodland management techniques.

Our booth at the Tioga County Fair attracted approximately 500 interested individuals; we had a free cutting board raffle with 250 tickets submitted.

Encouraging my son, Jeff, to become a PA Forest Steward and observing his dramatic growth as a joint participant in the development of our family woodland - Springwood.

Wrote article on injury prevention during physical forest stewardship work; toured my brother-in-law's newly acquired 200 acres with him and provided information on pond management and forest stewardship; spent hours talking / hiking on family forest with my son and son-in-law discussing forest stewardship

I initiated a Backyard Habitat series of articles for local newspapers. I was also successful in getting OnTarget magazine of the Pennsylvania Federation of Sportsmens Clubs to publish two articles.

In May 2009, my students and I planted our 10th tree in our annual Arbor Day event; In August 2008, I was honored with the Schuylkill Conservation Educator of the Year award.

I organized a committee to plan activities for youth. When Woodland Owners of Clarion-Allegheny Valley has a program and we see an opportunity for youth, we set up a special program to help kids. We also had a two day "Kids in the Woods" program in Cook Forest State Park (18 people came - 13 of them were kids).

Working with the local WOA in presenting tree ID programs; using the ID key in small groups; what a fun learning experience for adults and children!

Our woodland owners display at Lewistown's Kid Connections, educating children and parents re: benefits of woodland management.

We've been maintaining a PSU School of Forest Resources Demonstration Area in Gamelands 211 (started by Jim Finley in 1992).

Initiated a WHIP contract to remove invasive species from forest; plant a thermal barrier for wildlife; plant soft mast trees for wildlife; fell aspen trees to promote their regrowth for woodcock and grouse

Emerald Ash borer information person for Mercer County - included speaking to organizations, schools, scouts, radio talk show, newspaper article. Volunteered with American chestnut restoration research: bagging flowers, pollination, and harvesting seed.

Helping my neighbors work on a gas lease that protects our lands from degradation from such activities.

I enjoy walking in others' woods with them - exciting them about their own woods.

It's nice to have the information friends and family need regarding their own forestland. How to guide them or direct them to the professionals when they have a problem we can't answer.

Building new and repairing old unsustainable trails in Boyce Park, and creating a great bridge to protect an intermittent waterway from damage.

I organized a Northwestern PA Woodlands Association event which focused on Ruffed grouse habitat improvement. Invited Mark Banker of the RGS to conduct a tour of a property owned by one of our members.

It is always a pleasure to be in the woods alone, with a favorite pet, or with other people - you almost always observe something new. It is a rewarding experience when you notice a person's interest "spark" after noticing a small detail or discussion a forest/wildlife fact; I enjoy sitting in on the numerous PSU and Cornell webinars. They are informative and up-to-date and give a regional perspective. I hope they can continue.

We are grateful for the knowledge we have received from our forestry group, DCNR Forester, and PAFS. With this, we have been able to manage our land and forests appropriately. Also we are very proud that we have been selected to receive the MK Goddard award.

My involvement with the PA Fuels for Schools and Beyond program has resulted in numerous schools and other end users (greenhouses) converting to biomass heating as opposed to fossil fuels. This is a help to the local industry, economy, and environment in many different ways.

I enjoy advocating forest management to others.

We've been working to improve the forest health on our property.

I successfully steered several landowners to forestry professionals for 1) timber evaluation, 2) timber sale, and 3) timber stand improvement.

2009 Pennsylvania Forest Stewards Volunteer Survey

Name(s): _____

If your contact information has changed recently, please share it with us:

Address: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

I own forestland (Circle one): YES NO

If yes, in what county/counties _____

How many acres? _____ How many forested acres? _____

Communications:

How do you like to be contacted by the PA Forest Stewards program? Please check all that apply.

- Email
- Direct mail (newsletter, other paper mailings)
- Telephone
- Forest Leaves
- PA Forest Stewards Listserv (VIP Discussion Listserv)
- PSU Cooperative Extension Office
- Personal connections with other volunteers
- Other (please specify) _____

Other Communication (Please check those that pertain to you):

Would you prefer to fill out this questionnaire online? Yes ___ No ___

- Experience with computer social networks (e.g., Facebook, MySpace, LinkedIn)
- Broadband capability ___ cable ___ DSL ___ modem ___ satellite ___ Wireless Broadband

Current Status (check one):

- Active: I have volunteered time to promote Forest stewardship sometime in the past 12 months.
- Inactive: I have not volunteered time to promote Forest stewardship in the past 12 months, but I am still interested in the PA Forest Stewards program and would like to be listed in the directory and remain on the mailing list.
- No longer interested: Please do not list me in the directory and remove my name from the mailing list.

Affiliations:

I am active in a woodland owner association (circle one): YES NO

If yes, which association(s): _____

If yes, are you currently a board member or officer of the association: YES NO

Other affiliations:

- Forest Stewardship Property
- Tree Farm System
- Pennsylvania Forestry Association
- American Chestnut Foundation
- Wildlife Conservation Organizations (please list): _____
- _____
- Watershed Protection Organizations (please list): _____
- _____
- Farm Organizations and Committees (please list): _____
- _____
- Land Conservancies (please list): _____
- _____
- Other memberships or affiliations related to forest stewardship: _____
- _____

In the past year, has the Pennsylvania Forest Stewards Program helped you with the stewardship of your property or outreach activities to others in any of these ways? Check all that apply.

- Provided useful resources materials
- Motivated me to learn more or take additional workshops
- Helped connect me to other volunteers with common interests/concerns
- Improved my basic understanding of forest stewardship concepts
- Connected me to new resource professionals
- Motivated me to be a better steward of land I own or help manage
- Helped focus my stewardship or conservation activities

Over the past 12 months, please estimate how many friends, neighbors, or members of the public you reached through your stewardship-related outreach activities:

- None
- 1-10 people
- 11-25 people
- 26-50 people
- 51-100 people
- 101-500 people
- more than 500 people

Activities:

From the list below, please select your Forest Stewardship volunteer activities in the past 12 months and **estimate the hours** spent in each activity. If you do not see an activity listed, please write it in the space below.

Hours spent in these activities are of critical importance to our funders. Please be sure to estimate your hours (and don't just check the box)!

Hours Outreach:

- Talking with neighbors and other woodland owners about forest stewardship
- Working to support an existing woodland owner group
- Working to start new woodland owner group
- Attending forestry conferences, workshops, seminars
- Working with children/schools
- Presentations to adult groups
- Writing and providing information to media about forest stewardship
- Planning and coordinating workshops/conferences for woodland owners
- Served on Advisory Committees
- Leading and hosting woodland tours
- Distributing Forest Stewardship information
- Providing input to elected representatives and government agencies
- Assisting service forester
- Staffing forestry exhibits
- Other conservation volunteerism
- Referrals to consulting forester
- Volunteer in a state forests/parks
- Community tree projects

Personal:

- Maintaining trails/roads
- Timber stand improvement
- Planting trees/reforestation
- Wildlife enhancement
- Removing competing vegetation/invasive plants
- Watershed-related activities
- Timber sale and preparation
- Deer fencing/census/control
- Growing non-timber forest products
- Preparing new forest stewardship plan
- Conservation easements on land
- Other forest management activities on own land

Other (please list): _____

Are there topics you would like to see offered as follow-up (continuing education) training for PA Forest Stewards in the coming year?

Please tell us about PA Forest Stewards volunteer activity(ies) you are most proud of in the past year.

Is there anything else you would like to share with us about the PA Forest Stewards volunteer program or outreach during the past year?

Please return this form in the accompanying postage-paid envelope to:
Forest Resources Extension
320 Forest Resources Building
Penn State University
University Park, PA 16802