

- THE CENTER FOR -
PRIVATE FORESTS

*Working at the Intersection
of People and Forests*

2019 ANNUAL REPORT

Since its founding in 2011, the Center for Private Forests at Penn State's mission has been to continuously improve the health and vitality of forests. By engaging forest landowners, natural resources professionals, and the public as a community, we work diligently to apply sound stewardship practices to care for forest ecosystems. We skillfully blend leading academic research and the practical experience of forest landowners to cultivate a model for applied excellence in sustaining our forests.

Building Community

We know that building relationships that matter—with forest landowners, professionals, the public, and our partners—is key to advancing sustainably managed forests.

Meeting Challenges

We work with our partners to explore the issues, perform critical research, and discover better solutions for old—and new—forest sustainability challenges.

Inspiring Stewardship

As part of a vibrant community, we aim to inspire and equip private forest landowners to care well for their land, ensuring the continued health and vitality of our forested landscapes.





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From the Director

Dear friends,

In the last few months, I've had cause to reflect on the field of forestry and the Center's practice within it. For foresters and other natural resources professionals, the primacy of our education is focused on learning how best to steward the natural resources that we are so passionate about. But we recognize that stewardship requires knowledge to be applied; people must be engaged and motivated to act.

The Center was founded to create a community among the professionals and the landowners who have a common commitment to work together for the stewardship of Pennsylvania's forests. By nature of our research, projects, engagement, and education strategies, we foster skills and knowledge to work with landowners to encourage better practices leading to long-term stewardship on private lands—critical work at that intersection of people and forests. As we near the first decade



Allyson Muth
Interim Director

of the Center's existence, we feel like we are hitting our stride. We're excited to share more about what we've accomplished and the innovative opportunities we're planning in the future.

This year we hosted our 4th biennial Forest Landowners Conference, March 22 and 23, moving

our venue to the Penn Stater in State College. Over 600 landowners, natural resources professionals, stakeholders, and interested members of the public joined us for one of the best conferences yet—the community built was amazing to witness. See the details on page 8.

During 2019, Leslie Horner concluded her five-year term as a forest stewardship program associate, having conducted programs and developed resources for forest landowners under a generous grant from the Hamer Foundation. The regeneration grant, *Improving Forest Regeneration and Engaging Pennsylvania's Beginning Forest Landowners through Peer-led Demonstration*, was also completed during 2019. You can learn more about that project on page 12.

The Pennsylvania Forest Stewards remain an important resource for working at the intersection. 2019 was a survey year, and once again, the impacts of the volunteers far exceeded expectations—providing the equivalent of six full-time employees in time and reaching over 330,000 people with a message of good stewardship (page 4).

Work continued on projects to build the connection between foresters and woodland owners (page 10). We led another year of the Walk in Penn's Woods partnership (page 16) and continued our work to help more landowners feel confident and competent to begin planning for the future of their land beyond their tenure (page 14).

We were successful in obtaining grant funding for future work that will allow us to repeat the 2010 forest landowner survey in 2020—to understand changes in landowner populations, their values and activities, as well as funding for legacy planning programming and support of the stewardship program. In addition to grants for projects, the Center has been recruiting and engaging students on work tied to private forest landowners and the myriad challenges they face. We're excited to have these energetic young adults take active roles in the Center's applied research and engagement. You can meet some of them on page 21.

Once again, the success of our work was achieved with partners who we were excited to have working with us toward common goals. Our partners are listed throughout, but particularly on page 18. We also owe a huge thank you to the many donors and other supporters who have shared resources to advance the work and unique projects of the Center. A listing of these generous folks can be found on page 27.

We hope you enjoy reading about the work we've done and are doing in this report. We thank you for your support at the intersection of people and forests, and we invite you to join us in that space.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'S M', located at the bottom right of the page.

Pennsylvania Forest Stewards

A growing network of trained volunteers sharing stewardship in their communities

This longstanding, vibrant network of peer volunteers cares about good forest stewardship and is committed to sharing their experiences and knowledge with others. As a mainstay of the Center, the Pennsylvania Forest Stewards multiply our impact, often reaching people who are hesitant to engage with professional or government entities. They are the “boots on the ground,” an active community over 500 strong who are building relationships with other woodland owners and serving in many stewardship-related roles across the state.

Here is just a sampling of what these peer leaders accomplished in 2019: Gloria Mahin started an invasives co-op with her local woodland owners association; Jeff Balla talked with neighbors about improving their woodlots and regeneration; Allen Jones worked with school groups to generate awareness of and appreciation for vernal ponds; George and Brenda Kirik hosted dozens of people during Walk in Penn's Woods; Ed Kadel served as chairman of the Parks and Recreation Board in his township; John Hilewick served as president of the Westmoreland Woodlands Improvement Association; Paul Solomon and Jeanne Riley co-authored several articles about the importance of forests to communities; and Catherine Smith staffed a forestry exhibit at Ag Progress Days.

In 2019, 24 new Pennsylvania Forest Stewards completed the basic training program which included 40 hours of practical learning and hands-on activities during a four-day weekend in September. In its 29-year history, this program has produced 727 trained volunteers, with over 500 active in the program today.



The Pennsylvania Forest Stewards Volunteer Program's 29-year history is filled with inspiring stories of how Stewards have helped fellow woodland owners take those first steps to better care for their woods. This neighborly approach often reaches people who want to take good care of their woods, but who may not know where to start or whom to contact for help.



2019 Survey Highlights

The Pennsylvania Forest Stewards biennial survey provides a measure of the activities, influence, and reach of Stewards across the state. The 2019 results show that volunteers continue to actively promote forest stewardship in their communities. Two key measures of volunteer impact are the number of outreach hours invested and the estimated number of people reached through stewardship-outreach activities. Respondents reported investing 12,166 hours in outreach activities, equivalent to six full-time employees at 40 hours a week for 50 weeks. Using the national volunteer time average of \$25.43 per hour, the volunteer time is valued at over \$300,000. The number of people reached totaled over 332,500.

The funding that supports this volunteer program requires a 1:1 match of time and other contributions to supplement the grant monies received. The volunteer time reported in outreach is almost double the grant monies received to support all aspects of the Pennsylvania Forest Stewardship program. These efforts are tremendous.

by the NUMBERS

12,166
HOURS

total outreach time promoting good forest stewardship

3,094
HOURS

servicing on woodland owners associations

306,682
PEOPLE

reached through media outreach

4,090
HOURS

participating on conservation-related boards

6

FULL-TIME EMPLOYEES equivalent amount of work performed

758

HOURS assisting natural resources professionals

4,847
PEOPLE

reached through presentations to youth

5,927
PEOPLE

reached through presentations to adults

\$309,381
DOLLARS

value of the volunteer time invested



Why Is Peer Learning so Effective?

Learning from someone who has shared similar experiences, who understands the challenges you're facing, and who has come up with effective solutions to those challenges builds connections and community. This is what makes the Pennsylvania Forest Stewards Volunteer Program so powerful: landowners who care deeply about the woods and are trained in forest stewardship entering conversations with fellow landowners that can help spread the story and ethic of caring well for our forests.



What Pennsylvania Forest Stewards Are Saying...

“Getting started with land management is the hardest thing to do. The education provided to Pennsylvania Forest Stewards enabled me to be an effective participant and leader as president of my watershed association, in becoming a member of a county park management development team, and in participating in source water protection initiatives.”

Paula Zankel, class of 2012

“I would not be doing anything on speaking to and passing information on about forestry if not for having been offered and taken these forestry courses. If not for the Pennsylvania Forest Stewards program, I could not have helped anyone with their concerns.”

- Walt Sinnwell, class of 2014

“This program has been a great blessing and transformative in my approach to nature and community. I loved being able to learn in such an open, friendly atmosphere. I felt encouraged to take a leadership role in my community to make our forests more healthy—it has helped me to think big and gain confidence in something I’m passionate about!”

Gloria Mahin, class of 2018



What Pennsylvania Forest Stewards Are Doing...

Frank Snyder: Restoring for a School

Frank Snyder has been working on an ongoing project with Tri-Valley School District's 25-acre environmental center. Over the past several years, disease and invasive insects have caused hemlock, oak, and ash trees to die, making access unsafe to students. The district superintendent closed the center until the dead trees are removed. After many attempts to find someone to salvage the dead trees, a timber harvester has finally been found. With a contract now signed and in place, the District is hoping the cutting goes through before the timber becomes worthless. Frank knows that they will face many challenges after the salvage cut, including stiltgrass and deer control. He is proud that the project has come this far and will continue the work needed to get trees back onto the site and open it to students.

The Mills: Making a Connection

For Darrel and Elizabeth Mills, a simple invitation embodied the heart of the Pennsylvania Forest Stewards Volunteer Program. They invited a young couple who had recently bought some woodland to their property and showed them the projects they have been undertaking on their 25 acres. In the course of their conversations, Darrel and Elizabeth shared about Pennsylvania Forest Stewards and the couple accepted the opportunity to go through the training. They are now part of the class of 2019. Through this kind of ripple effect, reaching more and more of Pennsylvania's 740,000 private forest landowners, Stewards continue to elevate the health and resilience of our state's nearly 12 million acres of private forests.



Forest Stewardship Mapping Project

Our staff is collaborating with the Penn State Center for Environmental Informatics to develop a map-based web application for private forest landowners to log forest stewardship activities. The tool will provide a means for the PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) Bureau of Forestry and Penn State to demonstrate the on-the-ground impact of stewardship funding, provide a historical record of the landscape, and help promote good stewardship activities. Using this browser-based web mapping tool, landowners will specify the location and designate the stewardship activities taking place on their property, creating a personal, historical record of their activities and allowing us to aggregate the data to show impacts.

Users will designate a point where activities occurred or draw the area on a map, recording acreage impacted, activity, investment, and other notes as desired. At the end of the year, landowners can print an annual log of activities for their property, serving as important documentation for tax purposes. Over time, the application will record areas impacted, work done, people hired, and cost share programs used—an incredible resource for those who are next to take on stewardship.

The early phases of development are underway. Pennsylvania Forest Stewards will be the first group to pilot the project, with use expanding from there.



Pennsylvania Forest Stewards will soon be able to track their stewardship activities—like hand-pulling the invasive mile-a-minute shown above—using a browser-based web mapping tool being developed by the Penn State Center for Environmental Informatics in partnership with the Center and DCNR Bureau of Forestry.

Forest Landowners Conference

Building community and learning together to better care for our woods

Woodland owners, natural resources professionals, and interested people gathered by the hundreds at the Penn State Hotel and Conference Center in State College, PA on March 22 and 23 for two days of learning, connecting, and discovering more about their woods at the 4th biennial Forest Landowners Conference. Over 600 attendees benefited from the broad array of topics covered and all the outstanding resource professionals and peers who shared their expertise.

One main feature of the conference was the nine learning sessions with 11 presentation offerings at each session. Presentations ranged from controlling invasives, improving wildlife habitat, and legacy planning to drones, fungi foraging, pollinators, prescribed fire, and so much more. With nearly 100 sessions to choose from, plus exhibits, field tours, in-depth workshops, keynotes, and valuable connection and conversation opportunities, conference-goers agreed that this is one of the premier events for forest landowners in the Northeast.

Sponsored every two years by the Center for Private Forests and its partners, the Forest Landowners Conference focuses on promoting the vitality, productivity, and enjoyment of privately-owned woods through networking, educational sessions, and resources to help forest landowners throughout Pennsylvania and beyond steward their woodlands well.



With 60% of Pennsylvania covered in forest, and 70% of those 17 million acres held by nearly three-quarters of a million private citizens, the cumulative effect of the individual decisions made about the care and future of the woods is significant. Our goal is to help good things happen in those woods through informed decision-making and actions, with the result that we all have healthier, resilient, and more sustainable forests. Bringing hundreds of people together to learn and connect is a big step toward achieving that goal.





What Conference-goers Are Saying...

Six months after the conference, attendees were still talking about its impact:

"This was a tremendous program that served us very well, both in terms of what we learned and also in expanding our network of people to call upon for assistance and advice...We're really looking forward to the next conference!"

"I really enjoyed the conference on a number of levels. It made me feel part of a larger community that shares the same values, provided excellent, expert information, and inspired me to be the best steward of my land that I can be."

"My farm and my people enjoyed the (conference) so very much (that) we plan on bringing more of our family and friends to the next event...It was stellar."

...and What They're Doing

Landowners also shared what they are now acting upon, based on what they learned at the conference. Almost one-third are now working to control invasive species, several are learning more about pollinators, and some have undertaken charcoal making, working on a carbon inventory, and identifying mushrooms. Others reviewed their financial, estate planning, and land management strategies. As one landowner shared, "I was encouraged to dig out my forest stewardship plan and complete some invasive plant species eradication."



Over 200 people joined Friday morning's pre-conference field tours and workshops for enhanced learning opportunities. They saw forest stewardship practices in action and added to their stewardship toolbox. Tours included an in-depth look at the steps taken—from tree felling to sawing lumber to building furniture—in creating a wood product, restoring young forest habitat, the importance of forests and riparian buffers in protecting water quality, winter tree ID, a "Legacy Farm Property," the inner workings of the Penn State Arboretum, and using drones in forestry. Workshops explored key topics including estate planning strategies for forest landowners, getting to know your woodland, assessing your woodland's health and regeneration capability, and a special workshop for consulting foresters looking to become NRCS Technical Service Providers.

by the NUMBERS

70%

strongly agreed they learned new, useful information

71%

strongly agreed they would take action based on what they learned

79%

strongly agreed they would recommend the event to others

Enrolled Foresters Project

Working to strengthen connections between foresters and forest landowners

Pennsylvania's consulting foresters play a vital role in ensuring the sustainability of the state's nearly 12 million acres of privately-owned forestland. Many serve landowners well, prescribing sustainable forest management practices so that healthy forests will thrive for generations to come. But for decades, both research and personal stories have shown a marked disconnect between landowners and the foresters who serve them. Landowners are often unaware that resource professionals exist to help them care well for their woods, or they think the cost is prohibitive. And with no licensure or registration of foresters in the state, anyone—trained or not—can call themselves a forester. When undertaking a critical action such as a timber harvest, doing it alone or getting poor advice can be devastating to the future health of the woods.

Partnering with the PA DCNR Bureau of Forestry, we analyzed the results of two surveys conducted in 2018, one asking larger forest landowners (owning over 25 acres) in three counties about activities, challenges, and interactions with foresters, and another asking consulting foresters about their work with forest landowners. Using information from the surveys and previously-held focus groups and facilitated discussions, work continues with an advisory group of consulting foresters to determine the feasibility of establishing a program that holds foresters to a higher standard. This program would serve to build strong working relationships between landowners and foresters, inspiring active stewardship and providing landowners with the assurance that sustainability is foremost in activities prescribed.

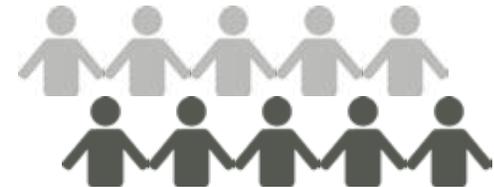
Our 2018 survey of landowners in three Pennsylvania counties found that almost 40% of the respondents had conducted a recent timber sale. Nearly half did not use a forester. Reasons ranged from landowners believing they could negotiate the sale themselves or believing a forester's benefit was not worth the cost, to not knowing better or not knowing foresters existed. Even though many forest landowners don't use a forester for a timber harvest, foresters are reporting that 40% of their time each year is spent on timber harvests.

We are working to increase awareness and build better relationships between foresters and private forest landowners.

by the NUMBERS

40%

percentage of responding landowners who conducted a recent timber harvest



5 OUT OF 10

of those landowners hired a “forester” for the harvest

40%

percentage of foresters' hours spent per year on timber sales





Timber harvests continue to be one of the top land-related actions private forest landowners undertake. The results can be both profitable for the landowner and good for the future of the forest—or, when performed unsustainably, they can impair the health and resiliency of the forest for generations. The Enrolled Foresters Project will go a long way toward promoting satisfying, sustainable harvests across the state.

Some interesting survey findings...

Our 2018 survey found that the average age of reporting foresters was 60 and they have practiced forestry for 33 years. These findings point to a large-scale turnover and possible shortage of consulting foresters as landowners try to find reputable foresters to help them care well for their land.

We are exploring potential solutions, such as creating an internship program where select foresters would train students interested in becoming consulting foresters. See page 25 for an opportunity to support an internship program.

60

average age of Pennsylvania's consulting foresters

33

average number of years working as a consulting forester

Our surveys also found that both forest landowners and foresters saw cost as one of the greatest barriers to woodland owners hiring a forester for management actions on their forestland.

We are working with our partners to bring more cost-effective management options to owners of privately-held forests.

Fostering Regeneration

Developing a step-by-step regeneration assessment process for forest landowners

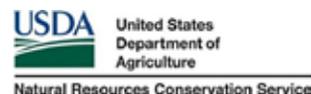
Inadequate forest regeneration—seedlings and saplings that will become the next forest—is one of Pennsylvania’s top forest health concerns. Many woodland owners, as well as those who do not own woods, believe forests will grow just fine on their own. Today, the opposite is true.

Under a multi-year, national-level Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Conservation Innovation Grant completed in September 2019, we developed a step-by-step assessment tool and supporting materials to help landowners—especially beginning and novice landowners—understand forest development, learn to assess their forest's health and regeneration potential, and identify next steps of action.

During the program, we adapted and refined a proven regeneration assessment tool for woodland owners. A group of highly-engaged landowners was trained to use the tool to assess overall forest health and status and then help beginning landowners see where challenges to successful regeneration may exist on their own property. These trained Woodland Ambassadors helped to lead field days in several counties in conjunction with woodland owners associations across the state. At these one-day workshops, participants learned the basics of forest development, how to assess if their forest is at a stage where regeneration should be present, and how to determine barriers to creating the next stand of trees—the three most common barriers being too many deer, not enough light reaching the forest floor, and/or the presence of competitive vegetation. Publications and data sheets to guide landowners in understanding their forest and assessing regeneration, a video showing the assessment process, and a guide for sharing this methodology with others is available at ecosystems.psu.edu/research/centers/private-forests/outreach/forest-regeneration.



Successful forest regeneration is vital to forest sustainability. Natural disturbances, invasive plant and insect threats, and poor management decisions all put future forest health and resilience at risk. Through this grant, we developed regeneration assessment resources that map out a practical, hands-on way for woodland owners to evaluate and plan management activities to improve forest regeneration and the overall health of their woods.



This material is based upon work supported by the Natural Resources Conservation Service, US Department of Agriculture, under NRCS Conservation Innovation Grant 16-042.





A Peer-led Field Day at Shaver's Creek

On a beautiful Saturday in May, Pennsylvania Forest Stewards Mike and Laura Jackson, who were trained as Woodland Ambassadors through the project in 2017, hosted a field day at Shaver's Creek Environmental Center in Huntingdon County with Center staff.



The day started with an early morning bird walk where participants were thrilled to see golden-winged warblers and other birds that benefit from young healthy forests. The Jacksons shared their experiences on their own forested property as part of the golden-winged warbler project through NRCS, including how in 2014, NRCS foresters oversaw the management of a logging operation on 27 acres of their property that is now a healthy regenerating forest.



The walk was just the beginning of a day filled with opportunities to share and learn. Activities equipped participants with a foundational understanding of how forests grow and the challenges affecting successful forest regeneration, and then guided them through the hands-on assessment process. They learned the process of establishing plots within their forest stands, and how to collect and record data to assess light conditions, competitive plants, and deer impacts in order to interpret the presence, diversity, and abundance of regeneration, and they discovered how to identify potential challenges to establishing the future forest. The workshop provided not only hands-on training, but was also intended to inspire participants to use the resources and tools to evaluate their own forested properties.



This was a collaborative event sponsored by the Center for Private Forests as well as Juniata Valley Audubon Society, which received funding from Audubon PA for the workshop.



Deer browsing on young seedlings and saplings (top), a closed canopy not allowing light to reach the forest floor (middle), and dense coverings of competitive plants (bottom) are barriers to successfully regenerating new forests. As the resources developed under this grant continue to be shared in trainings and workshops, more landowners will come to understand the condition of their forests and how they must act to ensure their continued existence and functionality.

Woodland Legacy Planning

Guiding forest landowners in making critical decisions about the future of their land

*Your land is part of your legacy. Planning what will happen to your land after you are gone is a critical step to being a good steward. In fact, it may be the most important step you can take as a landowner—not just for your benefit but for the benefit of your family, your community, and the land itself.**

Forest legacy planning continues to be an important component of the Center's work. In 2019, Center staff gave several presentations based on resources published last year for woodland owners seeking guidance on their path to creating a legacy plan. We also developed an easy-to-use legacy planning worksheet that follows a simplified decision-tree format. Graduate student Paul Roth completed his Ph.D. research investigating the legal and financial options available to help woodland owners achieve conservation-based outcomes through estate/forestry legacy planning.

Our work uncovered a critical shortage of estate planning professionals with a conservation-based legacy planning background. The end of 2019 saw Center staff preparing for the 2020 start of a National Fish and Wildlife Foundation grant to develop a program to expand the number of professionals who can meet the conservation-based legacy planning needs of forest landowners.

Learn more about our legacy planning research and resources at ecosystems.psu.edu/legacy.



Forest landowners care about the land they own. Numerous studies have shown that they value the solitude, aesthetics, recreation, and enjoyment their woodlands bring. We are working to connect landowners with the people, tools, and resources to protect the forest they love for generations to come.

*Catanzaro, P. and W.S. Ferris. 2018. *It's Your Legacy: A Pennsylvania Landowner's Guide to Conservation-based Estate Planning*. University of Massachusetts Amherst.





A Landowner's View

Bob Slagter, landowner and Pennsylvania Forest Stewards volunteer, recently completed a conservation easement on 60 acres of forestland. As Bob sees it, the key to legacy planning is training, which extends well beyond landowners simply knowing they need a plan. “For legacy planning to really work...training has to be given to people in the planning business—like financial planners, like lawyers—those who are charged with helping people figure out what to do with their hard assets when they pass. People in the legal field have to see this as a service they can provide to their clients, to say, ‘Have you thought about a real plan for your property?’ Because sometimes the property is the biggest asset they have. It isn’t just about educating the owners, but also the professionals who advise them.”

Center to Undertake Key Legacy Planning Project

*Forests are the dominant land cover in Pennsylvania. Of the total area of 27 million acres, 16.5 million are forested, and, of those, nearly 12 million are privately owned by 740,000 owners. The average age of these landowners is 57 years old. Only 40% have actually discussed a legacy plan; fewer still have a plan in place.**

With the average Pennsylvania private forest landowner nearing or at retirement age, significant acreages of forestland will change ownership over the next 10 to 20 years as current owners sell or pass their land on to heirs or beneficiaries. Because many landowners don't know how to go about planning for their land's future and many professionals are unprepared to help them, forests are most at risk for development, subdivision, or unplanned harvest when they change hands.

At the close of 2019, the Center was awarded a competitive grant from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation to train estate professionals in understanding the connection many owners have to their land and the tools available to assist landowners in meeting their long-term stewardship objectives. Simultaneously the project will advance the relationships between planning professionals, natural resources professionals, and forest landowners to expand the community to achieve conservation-based estate planning objectives. Work will begin in January 2020.

*Metcalf, A.L., J.C. Finley, A.E. Luloff, and A.B. Muth. 2012. *Pennsylvania's Private Forests: 2010 Private Forest Landowner Survey Summary*. Report for the PA DCNR Bureau of Forestry.

Walk in Penn's Woods

A day for Pennsylvanians everywhere to learn about and enjoy our forests

On a drizzly, chilly first weekend in October, folks throughout Pennsylvania took part in 85 organized woods walks in 51 counties, getting out, having fun, and learning during the 3rd annual Walk in Penn's Woods event.

At walk sites across the state, participants spent time with natural resources professionals and knowledgeable landowners, learning about Pennsylvania's forests, seeing them in new ways, and understanding and appreciating the work that goes into caring well for them. From small groups and guided tours to interactive learning stations and relaxing strolls, organized walks took place at a wide range of venues. Participants saw what was happening in public parks and forests, on privately-held lands and conservancy properties, and at forest and nature preserves, watersheds, museums, and education centers. And, for the first time, Walk in Penn's Woods featured over a dozen "walk and roll," wheelchair- and stroller-friendly sites in an effort to provide a more inclusive experience.

Walk in Penn's Woods is a partnership of the Center for Private Forests, PA Forestry Association, PA DCNR Bureau of Forestry, Penn State Extension, PA Sustainable Forestry Initiative® Implementation Committee, PA Chapter of the Association of Consulting Foresters, and PA Forest Stewards. Learn more at www.walkinpennswoods.org.



As a Walk in Penn's Woods partnership leader, we've seen these walks open new doors to raise public awareness of the challenges facing forests and the critical need for good forest stewardship—all while having a great time in the woods!

by the NUMBERS

In 2019, we offered

85 WALKS

in

51 COUNTIES

with nearly

1,000 PARTICIPANTS



Stairway Ridge, Pike County





“The kids were remarkably engaged as they picked up leaves, walnuts, acorns, and a caterpillar during the tour!”

Montour Preserve, Montour County



“Despite getting a thorough soaking, folks were excited to be in the forest. We admired the many American chestnut tree sprouts, a couple of them over 20 feet tall. This is a great initiative and we are thrilled to be a part of it!”

Governor Dick Park, Lebanon County



“Everyone in the group was so engaged; we ran over by an hour and no one cared!”

Durham Township, Bucks County



“We walked along a marked trail that traverses a relatively wild part of what is a surprisingly diverse and beautiful forest...One hiker said that the walk had really opened his eyes to the beauty of this deep forest.”

Allegheny National Forest, McKean County

An Idea That's Taking Root

Walk in Penn's Woods evolved from a simple statement made by Pennsylvania Forest Steward Ruth Park to a receptive audience in 2016: “I do wish we could ALL get out into the woods for a walk one day!” That idea, spoken with such passion, birthed a partnership of forestry organizations and woodland owners, motivating people throughout the state to get into the woods every first Sunday in October. Over 3,000 people have taken part in Walk in Penn's Woods, with a growing number of walks and counties added each year. Calendars are already being marked and walks are being planned for the 4th annual Walk in Penn's Woods on October 4, 2020.



Partnering to Build an Engaged Forest Stewardship Community

Collaborative partnerships are critical to serving the mission of the Center and cultivating the community that serves the landowners and lands of our changing forests. As you can see on these pages, our work occurs in partnership with many groups and organizations as we work together to influence caring well for the woods. We are grateful to the myriad partners with whom we work. We continue to cultivate existing and seek new partnerships to inspire good stewardship across the forests.

OUR WORK	OUR PARTNERS
29 years of the Pennsylvania Forest Stewardship Program, Woodland Legacy Planning Partnership, Forested Riparian Buffers, Walk in Penn's Woods, Woodland Stewardship Innovation Team, Governor's Green Ribbon Task Force, Enrolled Foresters Project, 2020 Private Forest Landowners Survey	Pennsylvania DCNR Bureau of Forestry
Enrolled Foresters Project	US Endowment for Forests and Communities
29 years of the Pennsylvania Forest Stewardship Program	USDA Forest Service
Women and Their Woods	Delaware Highlands Conservancy
Pennsylvania Implementation Committee, Walk in Penn's Woods	Sustainable Forestry Initiative®
Woods in Your Backyard, Ag Progress Days, Walk in Penn's Woods, Pennsylvania Forests Web Seminar Center	Penn State Extension
Forest Stewardship Program Associate	The Hamer Foundation
Improving Forest Regeneration and Engaging Pennsylvania's Beginning Forest Landowners through Peer-Led Demonstration Project	USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service
Bald Eagle Area School District Forest Stewardship	Domtar
Building Capacity and Legacy Planning for Woodland Owners	University of Wisconsin-Madison, University of Massachusetts
Walk in Penn's Woods, <i>Pennsylvania Forests Magazine</i>	Pennsylvania Forestry Association
Walk in Penn's Woods	Association of Consulting Foresters, Pennsylvania Chapter
Scotia Barrens Project: The Scotia Young Forest Conservation Initiative	ClearWater Conservancy





Working Groups

In 2018, the Center established four volunteer-led working groups to serve as resources for the Center in order to expand its role as an essential source of expertise for landowners, identifying critical research questions and aiding in the development of educational resources. We asked these groups to put their finger on the pulse of landowners, so to speak, and report their findings to the Center to help guide applied research, work with partners to create programming and resources, and deepen our understanding of private forest landowners, their values, and their concerns.

In 2019, the working group members came together for the first time to begin to collaborate and address their first question (see box at right). At the kickoff, group members and chairs learned interview techniques for getting to know people, and project management guidance to facilitate the process. Groups were then turned loose to talk with landowners and build a foundation for answering the questions.

In October, the working group chairs joined the Center Council to share what their groups had uncovered. Now Center staff are taking those results and making plans for sharing information with partners, pursuing grants, and finding or creating resources to address gaps. And the groups have moved on in their continuing investigation.

The Center working groups have allowed diverse partners and individuals to engage in guiding the work of the Center and ensuring we are responding to needs and opportunities as they arise to best serve private forest landowners. Our gratitude goes out to all who stepped up to be a part of this work.



Ideas flowed at the Forest Legacy Group's first brainstorming session.

FIRST QUESTION EXPLORED BY EACH WORKING GROUP

FOREST ECONOMICS

What are the drivers for an unplanned harvest?

FOREST LEGACY

For landowners who have developed legacy plans for their properties, what led them to do so?

FOREST PRACTICES

What factors do landowners consider when deciding whether to address invasive species?

FOREST VALUES

From the 2010 survey of Pennsylvania forest landowners, solitude and enjoyment are the top two reasons landowners say they own their woodlands. What does it mean to own the woods for solitude and enjoyment? How do landowners act on these values? Or do they?



Mentoring Students

Fostering opportunities for Penn State students to interact with forest landowners

As the Center grows, we are continuing our role in mentoring graduate students who want to learn more about working at the intersection of people and forests. We take very seriously our commitment to spend time and resources to prepare them to work skillfully in key roles in the professional community and build strong relationships with the forest landowners they serve. In 2019, we celebrated with Paul Roth as he received his Ph.D. in Forest Resources. We welcomed M.S. student Abby Jamison as she pursues a dual-title degree in Forest Resources and Human Dimensions of Natural Resources and the Environment. And we prepared to welcome a new Ph.D. student at the start of 2020. In addition to these students who are working directly with the Center, staff also served on advisory committees for Andrea Ferich, Kalaia Tripeaux, and Alex Curtze, all M.S. students in Forest Resources.

Paul Roth completed his Ph.D. program and was awarded his degree in December. His research uncovered gaps in the legacy planning process—many landowners don't know how to plan for their land's future, and many estate professionals are unprepared to help them. Paul will continue working with the Center under a grant to train estate professionals and bridge the gaps between planning professionals, natural resources professionals, and forest landowners.



Abby Jamison has been busy laying the foundation for her master's program research by attending events such as Ag Progress Day (shown here), Pennsylvania Forest Stewards regional meetings, and professional conferences where she is building relationships with landowners and natural resources professionals.



Center staff serves on the advisory committee for Kalaia Tripeaux, who will finish her master's program in Forest Resources in spring 2020. She is looking at how well-versed municipal officials are in understanding the importance of forests to their communities.



Expanding Our Impact

Reaching woodland owners through digital and print media, educational materials, workshops, and presentations

Ramping Up Our Social Media Presence

The Center's presence on social media received a significant boost when master's student Abby Jamison joined the staff in May. Through her work under an assistantship with the Center, we are cultivating a consistent use of social media as a place to collaborate and connect, and to share valuable information. Our Facebook page features frequent eye-catching infographics that share snippets about forest topics and challenges in a compelling, engaging way. These posts often link people to programs, resources, articles, and events where they can find more information. In order to expand our reach to a younger demographic, we have shared many of these posts on Instagram as well.

By developing a more structured social media strategy, we are reaching more forest landowners and the professionals who serve them, making more connections with the public, and building our online community. Our Facebook page finished the year with about 450 "likes" and nearly 500 "followers." Posts are seen by hundreds, and some by thousands. Our "Importance of a Forester" post in June reached over 6,000 people and was shared 64 times by partners, associations, trusts, conservation districts, consulting foresters, forestry-related businesses, and academics. It reached over 70 people on popular forum site Reddit as well, with comments from foresters working in the UK, France, and Germany discussing the different services foresters provide worldwide.

Visit us on:



facebook.com/privateforests



@privateforests



This July post on Facebook, linked to a Penn State Extension article, reached over 2,700 people and was shared 26 times by the Sustainable Forestry Initiative® Implementation Committee, consulting foresters, associations, and individuals.



Forest Leaves Newsletter

One of the most widely-distributed forestry publications in Pennsylvania, *Forest Leaves* reaches nearly 14,000 print and email subscribers with news and information on forestry-related topics. In 2019, we covered the latest updates on the spotted lanternfly, how to destroy egg masses, and how to control tree-of-heaven, the spotted lanternfly's preferred host; we provided important tax tips for forest landowners and information about forest topics such as ramps and deer management; and we made sure our readers knew about events going on around the state. *Forest Leaves* is a long-standing effort of the Pennsylvania Forest Stewardship Program, a collaboration between the Center for Private Forests at Penn State, the PA DCNR Bureau of Forestry, Penn State Extension, the USDA Forest Service, the PA Tree Farm®, the PA Forestry Association, and the PA Sustainable Forestry Initiative® Implementation Committee.

Stewardship News Releases

Monthly news releases on topics relevant to woodland owners, forestry, and stewardship are another educational tool the Center uses to reach landowners and the public. Nearly 600 email recipients learned about forest-related topics like winter woods safety, the inextricable relationship of forests and water, the importance of small acreages in stewardship, scouting for deer browse, and tree pollen allergy season during 2019. News releases are often picked up by newspapers, included in newsletters, and shared among woodland owners. They are also archived on the Center for Private Forests website at ecosystems.psu.edu/research/centers/private-forests/news.

Webinars and Online Courses

Center staff continue to use webinars and online courses to increase learning opportunities over a broad range of topics. A 12-hour, nine-session self-paced online course, *Woodland Stewardship: Management Practices for Landowners*, has been used as part of the Pennsylvania Forest Stewards training program since 2017 and is available through Penn State Extension. Center staff hosted a segment of the highly successful *The Woods In Your Backyard* webinar series, which drew over 400 registered participants, and co-hosted a webinar highlighting small businesses which sell forest-grown and harvested goods. Over 100 recorded past webinars can be found on the Center for Private Forests website under *Resources for Woodland Owners*.



“Mind the Gap”: Introducing the Pause in Forest Stewardship, a timely stewardship news release by Interim Director Allyson Muth and graduate student Abby Jamison, used the image of entering and exiting a British subway to remind woodland owners to pause and take time to reflect, to seek out resources and ask for advice, to carefully assess the impact **before** undertaking an important action—such as a timber harvest—in their woods.



Forest health and regeneration assessment workshops, designed to help landowners find a starting place in woodland stewardship, were held in northeastern, southcentral, and western Pennsylvania.

Presentations and Workshops

Presentations and workshops led by Center staff in 2019 included woodland legacy planning presentations centered around new materials developed to encourage and assist landowners in making decisions about the future of their land, woodland health and regeneration assessment workshops in conjunction with woodland owners associations, and presentations on various forest-related topics at landowner meetings around the state.

One of our more unique opportunities in 2019 came when Interim Director Allyson Muth was invited to present to Penn State Extension's Agronomy Team during their in-service day. During her presentation, *Facilitating Adult Learning Across the Engagement Spectrum*, she shared the insights and strategies gained during her years of work with landowners.

Our Financials

As you have read throughout this report, the future of Pennsylvania’s woodlots, both large and small, depends in large part on the 740,000 private landowners who own nearly 70% of the Commonwealth’s forested acreage. This population continues to grow and change as new generations assume responsibility for stewardship of the land.

The Center, with its deep, research-based knowledge of private forest landowners, highly regarded Pennsylvania Forest Stewards volunteer network, and extensive experience working at the intersection of people and forests, serves as a unique resource to both landowners and the natural resources community. The perspective of the Center is needed now more than ever to inform and inspire private forest landowners and the professionals who assist them in caring for their land.

Through philanthropy, the Center is striving to build an endowment to expand its capacity to conduct research, design innovative programs, and collaborate with academic institutions and natural resources organizations to advance stewardship of private forests. The Center is also seeking philanthropic donations that support specific Center initiatives such as the biennial Forest Landowners Conference, widely distributed publications such as *Forest Leaves*, and student projects and internships.

The development professionals within the University and the College of Agricultural Sciences are available to provide information about the many philanthropic tools available to individuals interested in supporting the Center. For more information about *A Greater Penn State for 21st Century Excellence* and ways of giving to the Center, please contact:



Lauren Steinberg
Senior Director of Development for the
College of Agricultural Sciences
lxs229@psu.edu
814-865-0158

Individuals and families interested in supporting the work of the Center are welcome to contribute to the endowment or to the annual operating fund. Estate gift commitments also are important in ensuring that the Center maintains a strong presence in the private forest landowner community into the future.



ENDOWMENT PRINCIPAL ACCOUNT

	BOOK VALUE	MARKET VALUE
Initial Balance, July 1, 2018	\$281,155.13	\$304,096.10
Cash Flows		
Gifts and Transfers	67,762.00	67,762.00
Funds reverted from spending account	0.00	0.00
Market Appreciation/(Depreciation)		
Includes any market changes for above cash flows	-	8,121.60
Ending Balance, June 30, 2019	\$348,917.13	\$379,979.70

SPENDING ACCOUNT

	VALUE
Initial Balance, July 1, 2018	\$239,509.45
Inflows	
Endowment Spending Allocation	12,270.37
Additional Gifts and Transfers	67,800.65
Fiscal 2018-19 Total Available Spending	\$319,580.47
Outflows	
Expenditures	(102,365.57)
Unused spending allocation reverted to principal	0.00
Ending Balance, June 30, 2019	\$217,214.90

Funding the Endowment

The Center for Private Forests at Penn State Endowment provides the opportunity for everyone who cares about the future of privately-held woodlands and forests to ensure that the Center extends its applied research efforts to address salient questions that challenge our forest's health and vitality and prepares future natural resources professionals to work with landowners on forest issues. How does the endowment work? Any funding the Center receives into the endowment is labeled for our exclusive use. It becomes part of Penn State's larger endowment-based investments so that it earns dividends, which become working funds in future years. Gifts to the endowment for the Center are tax-deductible.

Ways to Give

- If you are obligated to take a Required Minimum Distribution (RMD) from your IRA, you may contribute a portion or all of this distribution to a charitable organization.
- Gifts of land — Penn State will accept gifts of land and help landowners, if they wish, protect the land with a conservation easement. Only in rare instances will the University hold property.
- Stock or income distribution — Make contributions directly through your investment fund portfolio administrators.
- Outright charitable contributions — All donations to the Center through Penn State count as charitable contributions and can be deducted from your income tax.



Employ one student for a 14-week **summer internship**



Empower 40 people with **Pennsylvania Forest Stewards Basic Training**



Provide a **Center for Private Forests Fellowship** award of tuition and stipend for one graduate student



Bring together 1,000 landowners and others for the **Biennial Forest Landowners Conference**



Compensate the **Director of the Center for Private Forests** including health and retirement benefits

Funding the Endowment in Perpetuity

\$180,000
funds one internship program each year in perpetuity

\$450,000
sponsors training for 40 people each year in perpetuity

\$1,000,000
funds one graduate student each year in perpetuity

\$2,000,000
ensures a low-cost biennial conference in perpetuity

\$2,500,000
sponsors the Center directorship in perpetuity

Why We Give

Mary Hosmer's Legacy Gift to the Center for Private Forests and the Ruffed Grouse Society

One of my early memories is of riding in the back seat of the old sedan as my Dad drove the sand roads in the Upper Peninsula (UP) of Michigan looking for grouse in the cutover aspen. It was my job to help find the dead grouse, as we had no dog. I got to play with the feathers on the birds because Dad always kept the birds in the back seat. This was something we did on a Sunday afternoon after church and Sunday dinner.

I graduated from college in Fish and Wildlife Management and the first thing I did was acquire two springer spaniels for bird hunting. Bird hunting in the UP meant grouse and woodcock, or the occasional sharptail on the Seney Plains after the big burns.

Fast forward 20 years and the USDA Forest Service assigned me to Pennsylvania during the heydays of grouse hunting before West Nile virus. Grouse and rabbits were plentiful in the mid-80s. I renewed my love for both types of hunting.

And then in the early 1990s, I learned about the Pennsylvania Forest Stewardship Program. By then, I was hooked on managing an old farm of 79 acres for small game—grouse, rabbits, and woodcock. I joined the Pennsylvania Forest Stewards program and my life was transformed! I met other like-minded folks, and the course gave me the background to communicate with other landowners I met who also wanted to improve their private lands holdings. I retired in 2009 and have thoroughly enjoyed communicating with other landowners, sharing information with hunters, and serving on boards and executive committees of different organizations interested in bettering our outdoor heritage.

In 2009, the Ruffed Grouse Society (RGS) started the Upland Bird Hunt in the PA Wilds, an event featuring upland bird hunting in northern PA, sharing what northern PA has to offer for upland enthusiasts not fortunate enough to live here, and bringing in some unique PA Wilds art.

The Upland Bird Hunt in the PA Wilds and the Pennsylvania Forest Stewards Program completely hooked me on what the RGS and the Center for Private Forests do to promote habitat and sharing of conservation knowledge. These two events led me to my decision to support the RGS and the Center for Private Forests, with each to receive 50% of my estate.

May woodcock continue to twitter above golden aspen leaves in the fall, may grouse continue to flush from partridgeberry mats to spruce cover, and may snowshoe hare continue to flourish in sustainably managed forests.



Couple's Gifts Support Endowment and Programs

Tony Riley is chief medical officer of Gilchrist, a nonprofit organization dedicated to caring for patients with serious illness and those at the end of life. Jeanne Riley is a retired biopharmaceutical executive. After becoming the owners of about 200 forested acres in Spruce Creek, Pennsylvania, the Rileys added new roles to their lives and realized what an awesome responsibility they had taken on.

Neither are Penn State alumni, but they knew to reach out to the Penn State College of Agricultural Sciences and the Center for Private Forests, an organization that quickly became one of their philanthropic priorities.

Since 2014, the Rileys have made contributions supporting the Center's many projects as well as the Endowment Fund, which ensures the long-term financial viability of the Center and allows it to expand and share its knowledge about private forest landowners and their land.

"Our forests provide vital health, ecological, and recreational benefits to communities, while also contributing to the economic vitality of the Commonwealth's forest products and tourism industries," said Tony Riley. "We are excited to support the Center, which has become a distinctive voice in shaping the understanding of academic institutions, government agencies, natural resources organizations, industry, and the public about private forest landowners and their woods."

- Adapted from Penn State News, 2019



List of Donors

Blaine Aikin ^{*,3}
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 Arborchem Products ⁴
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* General donation

¹ In honor gift

² In memory gift

³ 2019 Walk in Penn's Woods supporter

⁴ 2019 Forest Landowners Conference supporter

⁵ 2019 Forest Landowners Conference scholarship supporter

We are grateful to all who choose to support the work of the Center for Private Forests through gifts and partnerships. With your support, the Center looks forward to continuing to serve as a leader in connecting people to resources that foster the growing community of all who are committed to the stewardship of our forested landscape well into the future.

ecosystems.psu.edu/give-to-private-forests

Looking Ahead

Here's a look at some key programs in 2020:

2020 Pennsylvania Private Forest Landowners Survey

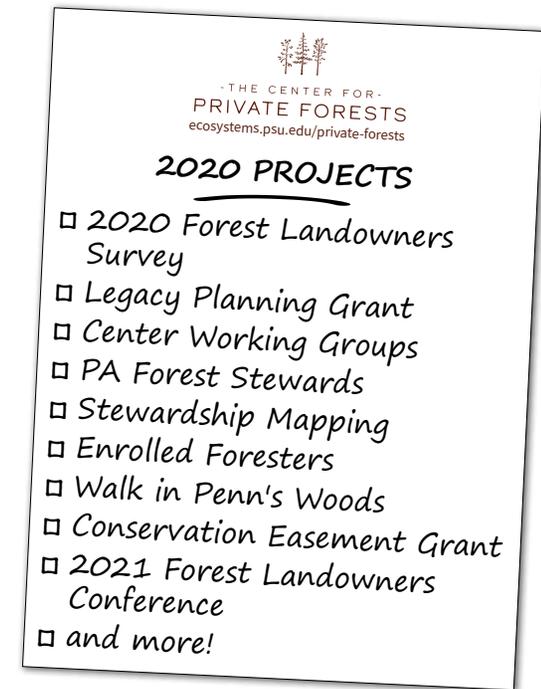
In 2020, we are partnering with the DCNR Bureau of Forestry to repeat the 2010 statewide forest landowners survey. This work will give us a ten-year perspective on the change in landowners and landownership, as well as guide future applied research and the creation of outreach strategies for our educational programs and partners. The survey will expand on past work with landowners and natural resources professionals, helping us to better understand the actions landowners are taking, or not taking, in planning for what happens next to their land.

Enrolled Foresters Project

We will finish work in June 2020 on the Enrolled Foresters Project, an effort that centers around surveys of forest landowners and consulting foresters to assess the feasibility of creating a sustainable forestry assurance program for Pennsylvania consulting foresters. Surveys of forest landowners and consulting foresters uncovered an aging consulting forester base, with an average age of 60. This has led to some additional considerations including the potential development of a mentoring/apprenticeship program to train new foresters to replace the many that may retire over the next several years.

Forest Legacy Grants

Work will get underway in early 2020 on two forest legacy-related grants. A grant from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation will fund training for planning professionals in the tools and resources available to assist landowners in legacy planning and the advancing of relationships between planning professionals, natural resources professionals, and landowners. Work in 2020 on a USDA McIntire-Stennis grant will include developing a database of model forest-focused conservation easements and identifying and evaluating the success of conservation easements in Pennsylvania involving forestlands and forest management.



Pennsylvanians will be taking to the woods for the 4th annual Walk in Penns Woods on Sunday, October 4, 2020. Be sure to look for a walk near you!



Staff, Faculty, and Affiliates

The Center for Private Forests Staff



Allyson Muth
Interim Director



Barb Sellers
Administrative Assistant



Sara Banker
Conference Coordinator



Paul Roth
PhD Student



Abby Jamison
MS Student

Pennsylvania Forest Steward Affiliates



Blaine Aikin*



Nancy Baker*



Renee Carey*



Laura Jackson*



Tony & Jeanne Riley*



Craig Schwegman*



Bob Slagter*

Faculty, Staff, and Stakeholder Affiliates



Ted Alter
Professor of Agricultural, Environmental and Regional Economics



Margaret Brittingham
Professor of Wildlife Resources, Extension Wildlife Specialist



Mike Eckley*
The Nature Conservancy, Working Woodlands Forest Manager



Jim Finley*
Professor Emeritus of Private Forest Management



Leland Glenna
Professor of Rural Sociology and Science, Technology, and Society and Human Dimensions of Natural Resources and the Environment



Jim Grace*
Retired Goddard Professor of Forestry and Environmental Resources Conservation



Dave Jackson
Forest Resources Educator, Penn State Extension



Matthew Keefe*
Assistant State Forester, PA DCRN Bureau of Forestry



Al Luloff*
Professor Emeritus of Rural Sociology and Human Dimensions of Natural Resources and the Environment



Carolyn Mahan*
Professor of Biology and Environmental Studies and Co-chair of the Environmental Studies Program at Penn State Altoona



Marc McDill
Associate Professor of Forest Management



Alex Metcalf
Assistant Professor, Department of Society & Conservation, University of Montana



Frans Padt
Teaching Professor of Environmental Planning



Gary San Julian
Professor Emeritus of Wildlife Resources and Human Dimensions of Natural Resources and the Environment



Sanford Smith
Teaching Professor in Forest Resources and Natural Resources and Youth Extension Specialist



Kim Steiner
Professor of Forest Biology, Director of The Arboretum at Penn State and Human Dimensions of Natural Resources and the Environment



Susan Stout*
USDA Forest Service Project Leader (ret.)



Sarah Wurzbacher
Forest Resources Educator, Penn State Extension

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* Denotes The Center for Private Forests Council Member



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