

2024 Spring Newsletter



*Protecting Forested Land and Supporting
Rural Communities Through Working Forests*



Reflections from the Forest

In some aspects, the mission of FSF is similar to that of other organizations. A commitment to stewarding healthy forests is not unique to us. And our efforts to support rural communities and industry bear similarity to other regional and statewide efforts. Yet, despite a possible overlap in mission, FSF is anything but redundant. As we enter our 20th year, FSF continues to grow in leaps and bounds. Our Board of Directors includes new energy and perspectives, our membership has expanded in both number and geography, FSF has connected with new sawmill buyers for our logs, and our conserved forestland base continues to grow.

Why? What is it about FSF that energizes and calls so many of us to action? I will only speak for myself, but what I love about FSF is that we are innovative. We have new approaches to silviculture and forest management (if you'd like to learn more please come to our *Loving the Land Through Working Forests* conference on September 21st!), and we use an innovative business model to ensure that the long-term success of our organization goes hand-in-hand with the long-term success of our forests.

I am reminded of the value of innovation almost daily through my work. In addition to FSF, I work with several other forest landowners and companies, whose forests represent a variety of land-use histories and biogeographies. Across these different ownerships I see forests changing rapidly, facing new threats, and new opportunities. FSF's process of adaptive management feels like a thoughtfully-crafted response to forest conditions much different than encountered in decades past.

FSF's approach to forest products is also innovative. In an effort to promote quality craftsmanship and a long-term relationship between loggers and the land, FSF merchandises "gate wood" delivered to various sawmills, rather than selling "stumpage," or standing trees. This model builds resilience for FSF; developing relationships with a significant number of local businesses (see Bennett Gould's article on page 6 about Jacob Weaver Company, a key purchaser of FSF polewood), and creating flexibility to adapt around weather conditions, understory plant communities, market fluctuations, and other unforeseen circumstances.

Concern for ecosystems and rural livelihoods are not unique to FSF, but FSF inspires me uniquely, because of our innovative approaches to blending the success of forests and people.

Sincerely,

Guy Dunkle

Director of Land Management

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Cover Image: A beautiful pink lady's slipper orchid stopped us in our tracks during the Lynn Firth Wildflower Walk at Fisherman's Cove this May.

Scenes from the Lynn Firth Wildflower Walk

Right: Cathy & Paul Kentzel, founding members of Fisherman's Cove Preservation Foundation, join FSF President Troy Firth at the property's Allegheny River overlook. Fun fact, this is the same spot where Cathy & Paul had their wedding 39 years ago!



Bottom, Left to Right: FSF member Carmen Testi takes a moment to study the intricate erosion patterns on one of the property's massive boulders.

A hearty group of hikers made it to the Fisherman's Cove overlook, with many stops to admire wildflowers such as rue anemone (*pictured*) and the pink lady's slipper orchid shown on the cover.

Hikers on the upper plateau. Thanks to everyone who came out to this annual celebration of spring!



Save the Dates!

This summer, there are two chances to make a BIG impact. Your meaningful gift will support healthy, resilient forests and the communities that surround them.

YOU ARE NEEDED!

ERIE
GIVES

AUG
13



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GIVES

AUG
24-27



CRAWFORDGIVES.ORG

Your gift during these Giving Days will be partially matched to directly support the conservation of 850 acres of forestland!



Who lives in our woods? 🐾 🐾

Allegheny College student Jake Folaron is working with the Watershed Conservation Research Center to study lures for wildlife cameras at three Foundation for Sustainable Forests properties. In addition to the racoon, fox, turkey, and fisher shown here (*left to right*), Jake's cameras have captured skunk, coyote, deer, and porcupine!



"Working on the Foundation's lands has been an incredible experience. The camera trap images speak for themselves and the memory of seeing two fishers during a field work day at Thompsons' Wood still gives me goosebumps. The best part has been watching the properties "green up" up right in front of me. From Day One at Blooming Valley Forest to my time at Lay-Dopyera Forest now, I've been able to see the lands change so much as summer has rolled in. These sites are beautiful, with and without the greenery that they have now, and I am grateful for the opportunity to conduct research on them. I hope this project will inspire other students to work with the Foundation, as these lands deserve to be appreciated by as many people as possible." - Jake Folaron, Class of '25



CALL FOR PHOTOS - CELEBRATING 20 YEARS OF FSF!

Do you have photos that capture FSF's first 20 years? We would love to share them!
Send images to Info@ForestsAndPeople.org or mail to P.O. Box 146, Spartansburg, PA 16434



Top Left: Wendell Berry, Jim Finley, and Troy & Lynn Firth (*left to right*) share stories at the 2013 conference.

Top Middle: Horse logging demonstration at Troy Firth's property (2006).

Top Right: FSF member Karlin Marsh beams as she holds an American chestnut seed pod (2016).

Bottom: Keeping warm around the campfire at a chilly, wet 2016 conference at Ewing Family Woods.

Spotlight on the Upcoming Conference

This year's Loving the Land Through Working Forests conference on September 21st is full of great presentations and workshops, a few of which are highlighted below. We hope to see you there!



Horse Logging Demonstrations

The careful felling of trees and the use of horses to skid logs out of the woods are cornerstones of FSF's sustainable forestry approach. Join Pat Maloney, one of FSF's Directors and former horse logger, for a demonstration and discussion of this process.

Introduction to Nature Watercolors with Rosalie Haizlett

Rosalie Haizlett is an award-winning illustrator, author, and educator whose mission is to celebrate the hidden wonders of the natural world through art. Join Rosalie for a hands-on workshop to explore the watercolor process and bring your subjects to life on paper. Pre-registration required - see flier or website.



Northwestern REC Community Forest Introduction and Tours

The newly conserved Northwestern REC Community Forest will be managed by FSF as a sustainable working forest and community recreation and learning space. Tours and presentations throughout the day will explore the Community Forest model, our forest management goals, trails built by the PA Outdoor Corps, and future plans.

Hemlock Woolly Adelgid (HWA) Panel Discussion

Hemlocks are critical to forest and cold-water stream ecosystems and HWA has the potential to change our forests more than any other tree pest in the past century. DCNR's Jim Aletmus will provide an overview of HWA and other experts will join for a discussion and Q&A on HWA management, landscape changes, and adaptation.



Programming Also Includes:

Forest Legacy Planning: Moving Towards the Decision Point (Paul Roth, Finley Center for Private Forests)

Beginning Management of a Newly Conserved Woodland (Guy Dunkle and Troy Firth, FSF Foresters)

Lunch is provided. To register, use the enclosed flyer or visit foundationforsustainableforests.org/events/

Listen to Wendell Berry read *A Forest Conversation*, an essay about FSF!

In 2012, Wendell Berry featured the Foundation for Sustainable Forests, founders Troy & Lynn Firth, and Guy Dunkle in his essay *A Forest Conversation*. In 2022, Wendell recorded the story for you to enjoy! To listen, scan the QR code to the right or visit foundationforsustainableforests.org



SCAN ME

Photo by Barbara Corson

Loving the Land: Timber Products

Talking about healthy forests may not conjure up images of whirring saw blades or shipping pallets stacked multiple stories high. Yet, for FSF, these scenes are just as much a part of the conversation about forest health as the image of the pink lady's slipper orchid that graces this newsletter's cover. You may be wondering "How does cutting down trees help forests be healthy?" It is a good question, and one that a new member recently asked of us.

If you have been on a woods walk at an FSF event, you have likely heard us talk about how every forest – whether it has been harvested before or not – is impacted by human factors such as introduced diseases, invasive species, the size of the deer population, and fragmentation, to name just a few. Sustainable forestry, which includes non-commercial stewardship, is a tool to counteract external factors and land use histories, helping to guide the next generation of forest down a healthier path that is more resilient when facing disturbance.

One tenet of FSF's sustainable forestry is a method of tree selection we call a "worst first" harvest. By harvesting trees that are suppressed by others around them, impacted by disease or pests, at the end of their lifespan, or otherwise in decline, we leave behind the healthiest, most vigorous assortment of trees to comprise the future forest.

When practicing this style of forestry, much of the removed timber is smaller in size, may have defects such as curves or basal rot, or is of a species with less economic value. This "low-grade" timber isn't destined to become cabinets or flooring, but does have a use making end products that support everyday life.

The largest buyer of low-grade timber from FSF's forests is Jacob A. Weaver Company, a subsidiary of Olympic Forest Products. Our Board and staff recently had the opportunity to tour the Weaver mill and pallet factory, and discuss the important relationship between sustainable forestry and the timber markets that companies like Weaver provide.

Our tour began at the Weaver Company's scragg mill in Guys Mills, PA, where we were greeted by John Fenton and Scott Seaworth, log buyers and pallet salesmen for the company. They explained that a scragg mill processes pole logs of longer length and smaller diameter than a typical mill, maximizing usable material from "scraggly" wood. Forty truckloads of logs go through the mill each week. Outside, logs are spun in a debarking machine, cut to length by a huge chop saw, and carried inside on a conveyor belt. Multi-blade saws (*pictured right*) remove side slabs and square up the log, then cut it into boards and blocks for pallets. Workers sort and stack the lumber, which is trucked over to the pallet manufacturing facility in nearby Cochranton, PA.

Throughout the log-to-pallet process, there is an emphasis on minimizing waste and using every part of the log. Partnering with other companies, bark becomes mulch, side slabs and damaged pieces are chipped and sent to paper mills, unusable logs become firewood, and sawdust – three to four semi-loads a day – is used for animal bedding, wood pellets, or heating the factory and drying kilns.

At the factory, forklifts scurry around towering stacks of pallets of all shapes and sizes, stockpiled to supply manufactures and shipping companies in large volume. Specialized assembly lines align, nail, flip, and emboss the pallets, while odd-sized custom pallets are



from Thoughtful Management

assembled by hand. Jacob A. Weaver Company is the largest pallet supplier in the northeast with finished products sold up and down the mid-Atlantic and as far west as Chicago. The company has 18 employees at the scrag mill and another 60 to 80 at the pallet factory. In our region, about 100 loggers, big and small, supply pole logs to the mill.



In talking about the success of the business, John credits Troy Firth, FSF's co-founder and President, as an early adopter of the low-grade model and valued supplier of the material needed to keep their factory running. For FSF, the availability of a low-grade timber market from buyers like the Weaver Company is essential to our conservation model. These low-grade buyers allow sustainable forest management activities, which might otherwise break even or incur a cost, to yield a profit that can be used to steward the land, support FSF's operations, and seed new projects. It is a symbiotic relationship that can both improve forest resilience and ensure a steady supply of sustainably produced logs that support rural communities.

Amy Shields, Executive Director of the Allegheny Hardwood Utilization Group (AHUG)*, upon hearing about the tour, added a broader perspective to its significance, stating "A robust forest industry - from landowners and loggers to sawmills, value-added and by-product manufacturers - provides the infrastructure required to implement the forest management practices that sustain and improve the health of Pennsylvania's forests. Reliable markets for

the products and services derived by every sector of this supply chain provide the essential economic stimulus that supports industry vitality - which in return, supports forest health. The long-term partnership between FSF and Jacob A. Weaver Company (both of whom are AHUG member organizations!) demonstrates the essential relationship between robust markets and healthy, resilient forests."

It may seem counterintuitive that chainsaws, log trucks, and lumber mills play an important role in FSF's work to improve forest health. By actively managing a woodland with sustainable forestry practices and non-commercial stewardship, we can respond to external impacts on the ecosystem and make adjustments that put the future forest on a more positive, resilient trajectory. In Wendell Berry's words when he wrote of Troy, Guy, and the Foundation over ten years ago, "A forest, kindly used, will outlive unimaginably any of its trees." Just as FSF strives to protect habitat for rare beauties such as the pink lady's slipper, we also recognize the role of timber management in the "kind use" and long-term health of our forests.

**AHUG is a public-private partnership between the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture and the forest products industry, providing advocacy, promotion, public education, support for research & development, and economic/workforce development services in support of the forest and wood products industry of Northwest and North Central PA.*



*Protecting forested land &
supporting rural communities
through working forests*



**P.O. Box 146
Spartansburg, PA 16434**

(814) 694-5830

foundationforsustainableforests.org

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The Foundation for Sustainable Forests is a 501(c)3 charitable organization dedicated to conserving and stewarding working forests, and promoting forestry practices that enhance health, resilience, and habitat diversity across the region.

Upcoming Events

Aug. 13 - Erie Gives

Aug. 24 - 27 - Crawford Gives

Sept. 20 - Friends of the Foundation Dinner
The Kelly Ballroom, Cambridge Springs, PA

**Sept. 21 - Loving the Land Through
Working Forests Conference**
*Northwestern REC Community Forest,
Cambridge Springs, PA*

Oct. 6 - A Walk in Penn's Woods
Location to be announced

Oct. 22 - Tap Talk at Bent Run Brewing Co.
Warren, PA - 5:00-8:00pm, talk at 6:00pm

Nov. 2 - Jim Finley Stewardship Day
Subagh Preserve, Mayville, NY

**For more information, call (814) 694-5830 or visit
foundationforsustainableforests.org/events/**

Friends of the Foundation Dinner

Friday, Sept. 20, 2024
5:30pm Social Hour
6:30pm Dinner and Keynote
The Kelly Ballroom
Cambridge Springs, PA



Gather around the table with FSF friends for an evening of food and fun! Presentations include a keynote by Tim Palmer, author of “Twilight of the Hemlocks & Beeches”, and remarks by artist Rosalie Haizlett. There will also be a cash bar and chance auction.



Loving the Land Through Working Forests

Saturday, Sept. 21, 2024
8am to 4pm
Northwestern REC
Community Forest
Cambridge Springs, PA

The day is full of presentations and woods walks on critical and emerging topics related to forest stewardship and conservation. Rain or shine. Lunch is provided. We hope you will join us!



Flip over for full conference program.

For additional details and online registration, visit: foundationforsustainableforests.org/events/

Mail-In Registration:

Friends of the Foundation Annual Dinner - Friday, Sept. 20

Loving the Land Through Working Forests Conference - Saturday, Sept. 21

Name(s): _____ Email or Phone: _____

Mailing Address: _____

Conference Tickets: ____ Adults - \$30 per person, \$10 for members of FSF or NWPWA
____ Children under 7 - Free *Limited space program information on back*

Dinner Tickets: \$45 per person, includes dinner and dessert.

Entrée: ____ Filet Mignon ____ Lemon Dill Salmon ____ Vegetarian Lasagna

Dietary Restrictions? _____

Please make checks payable to: **Foundation for Sustainable Forests, P.O. Box 146, Spartansburg, PA 16434**

Loving the Land Through Working Forests Conference Program

Saturday, September 21, 2024

- 8:00am Registration Begins
- 8:45am Welcome Remarks & Introductions
- 9:00am 20 Years of FSF: Reflecting on the Past and Looking to the Future
- 9:30am Morning Breakout Session 1
- 10:45am Break
- 11:00am Morning Breakout Session 2
- 12:15pm Lunch (provided)
- 1:30pm Introduction to the Northwestern REC Community Forest
- 2:30pm Afternoon Breakout Session
- 3:45pm Conference Evaluations & Departure

Breakout Sessions Include:

- Horse Logging Demonstration: The Role of Horses in Sustainable Forestry (Pat Maloney)
- Introduction to Nature Watercolors (Rosalie Haizlett) - *Limited space, see below*
- Hemlock Woolly Adelgid is Here: Panel Discussion (Jim Altemus, Tim Palmer, & others)
- Forest Legacy Planning: Moving Towards the Decision Point (Paul Roth)
- Beginning Management of a Newly Conserved Woodland (Guy Dunkle and Troy Firth)
- Welcome to Your Community Forest

Thank You to Our 2024 Conference Sponsors!

GOLD



Jim & Connie Thompson



THE JAMES C. FINLEY CENTER FOR PRIVATE FORESTS

SILVER



Bob & Jane Slagter

Emil & Kathy Spadafore

BRONZE



Limited Space Program Pre-Registration

Introduction to Nature Watercolors with Rosalie Haizlett



In this all-levels workshop, we'll go over the complete watercolor process, from pencil sketch to final painting. Weather permitting, we'll start the class with a 15-minute walk to see what natural subjects we can use for inspiration, taking photos and making observations of what we see along the way. Then, we'll use a combination of living references that I've collected prior to the workshop and reference photos to bring our lovely muses to life on the page. Watercolor painting supplies will be provided, but you are also welcome to bring your own kit if you prefer.

Space is limited and pre-registration is required via the form below, calling 814-694-5830, or emailing Info@ForestsAndPeople.org. Interested participants will be confirmed in the order registrations are received.

If interested, please indicate your participation preference below.

Morning Session 1 Afternoon Session Available for Either Session