

MCWOA NEWS



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Understanding Privately Owned Forest Retention in Mercer County

By: Gary Miesky, Mercer County Extension Educator Penn State Cooperative Extension

This is the 2nd of a series of short reports on the findings of a recent study in Mercer County designed to examine the impact of public policy and stewardship education on forest retention.

In part one, we discussed the definition and significance of forest parcelization as it relates to retaining privately owned forest land; the impact of more owners and smaller parcels on forest management; factors driving forest and farmland parcelization; and seven topics you as a forest landowner should take in planning for a successful "intact" transfer of your forest to the

next generation of stewards.

This issue will focus on what was learned from the twenty-four forest landowners who participated in the study. Specifically, we will look at their intentions and concerns in planning for their forest's future.

As you consider the eventual transfer of your forest, perhaps your first question should be why or how you came to be a forest landowner in the first place.

Continued Page 2

THE FORESTER'S FORUM

By: Mark Bodamer, Forester

DCNR, Bureau of Forestry

Do Trees Provide Good Habitat for Brook Trout?

When I'm talking with a landowner about their forestland, the conversation usually revolves around the quality and value of the timber even if there are other interests like wildlife and esthetics. However, the one ecological relationship that most people don't recognize is the relationship between a healthy aquatic ecosystem and the forest ecosystem. Because the forest sciences and the aquatic sciences are approached as separate disciplines, there is a general belief that the two disciplines are not related ecologically. But in fact they are dependant upon each other. As I will discuss in this article, the quality of a stream ecosystem is strongly dependant on the quality

and proximity of the forest ecosystem.

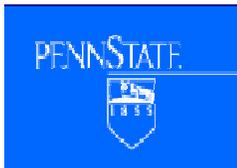
Aquatic organisms require the same conditions for survival as do terrestrial organisms; food, shelter, reproduction, and a hospitable environment. The forest that a stream flows through provides almost all of these needs. A stream flowing through a pasture or open field has fewer organisms (a lower biological diversity) per linear distance and greater variations in stream temperature than a stream with a closed forest canopy overhead.

In a freestone stream like those occurring throughout Pennsylvania, both vertebrates and invertebrates require dissolved oxygen to survive.

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Forests support life.



Forest Retention in Mercer County continued

By: Gary Micsky

from page 1

Similar to national trends, participants of the Mercer County study most often identified “softer benefits” such as recreation and family history as reasons for ownership, followed by economic benefits. (See table 8)

Reason for choosing to own forest land in Mercer County	Frequency
•Recreation (e.g., hunting, hiking)	13
•Family values/history	11
•Economic investment (e.g., land, timber)	9
•Protect forests from development	2
•Location/privacy	3

Table 8. Landowner responses to a question about their choice to own forestland in Mercer County (n=23). Some individuals expressed more than one general theme.

Economic considerations focused mainly on a source of income to defray ownership costs (i. e. tax liabilities, insurance, etc.) and investment potential. It could be argued that the desire to protect forests from development and the location/privacy responses are emotional “softer benefits” as well.

Relationship of Estate/Succession Planning to Parcelization

When questioned about the steps private forest landowners have taken to transfer their property to future owners, landowners revealed an important area of concern, estate planning.

Estate planning represents one area where forest landowners actually have an ability to influence the long-term sustainability of their forested land but it appears to be poorly utilized. Each of the landowners expressed a desire to see their forested acres remain as intact forests beyond their lifetimes. However, when asked for their thoughts on the likelihood of this happening, only thirteen indicated belief that their forested land would remain intact beyond their ownership. Eleven expressed concern of this actually happening or their ability to influence the eventual outcome. Two landowners were certain their forest would not remain intact. Anticipated problems included: financial restraints, tax issues, age/interest of potential heirs, and issues of trust regarding the intentions of a potential buyer to manage and maintain an intact forest.

These findings are worrisome considering the fact that study participants were a purposeful sample of landowners who have attended multiple educational programs dealing with forest stewardship issues.

Several landowners indicated interest in selling or donating the development rights to their property and placing some type of conservation easement to ensure the future of their forestland, but here again, a level of uncertainty regarding options existed. As a forest landowner, you might consider this question ...

“How important is it to you that your lands are transferred to a family member or someone else who shares your stewardship values?”

If you are concerned about the eventual fate of your forest, it is critical that you take steps to ensure the desired outcome sooner rather than later. As mentioned earlier, ownership is often an emotional issue, and as such, planning should be something done well in advance of stressful events such as an unexpected emergency, illness or death in the family.

Continued page 3

Estate planning represents one area where forest landowners actually have an ability to influence the long-term sustainability of their forested land

To this end, Penn State Cooperative Extension, DCNR Bureau of Forestry, and MCWOA will co-sponsor a two-part educational series “**What Will Become of My Forest?**” to be held at the Mercer County Cooperative Extension Office. These meetings should afford you an opportunity to begin shaping your legacy. A suggested \$2.00 donation will help cover the cost of refreshments and materials. To pre-register for either of the meetings listed below, contact the Mercer County Cooperative Extension Office at: (724) 662-3141 and specify the mailbox registration number for the meeting(s) you wish to attend.

Part I. **Monday, September 18, 7:00 – 9:00 P.M.** Mailbox 305

“Understanding Conservation Easement and Estate Planning Options”

Dr. Michael Jacobson,
PSU School of Forest Resources

“Getting Your Affairs in Order”

Gary Micsky, PSU Cooperative Extension

Part II. **Friday, September 22, 9:00 - 11:00 A.M.** Mailbox 306

“Getting Started on Your Estate Plan”

Robert Clark, Attorney at Law

In the next issue, we will examine the goals and impact of public policy, and how you can become better involved in the process. One way to become involved is by submitting your questions and concerns to MCWOA in time for the September 30, 2006 MCWOA Legislative Breakfast .

MCWOA Scholarships and Awards

THE MCWOA SCHOLARSHIP SELECTION COMMITTEE IS PLEASED TO ANNOUNCE THE NAMES OF THE 2006 AWARD RECIPIENTS. EACH WILL RECEIVE A \$400 SCHOLARSHIP AWARD FOR THE 2006-2007 ACADEMIC YEAR.

WE HAD NO APPLICANTS FOR CAMP AWARDS THIS YEAR.

Travis Sereday
West Virginia University
Forest Resource Management
Nominated By Debra Sereday

Francis Whalen
Penn State University
Forestry Major
Nominated By Don Campbell



In the next issue, we will examine the goals and impact of public policy, and how you can become better involved in the process.

FORESTER'S FORUM

By: Mark Bodamer, Forester

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1



Brook trout are very sensitive to stream temperatures changes

forested buffers act as a living filter

Streams receive oxygen from aquatic plants through photosynthesis and from mixing with the air. Of course trees, through photosynthesis, produce atmospheric oxygen. Trees also regulate fluctuations in water temperature diurnally and seasonally by providing shade. The lower the stream temperature the higher the percent dissolved oxygen. With higher stream temperature less oxygen is retained. Brook trout are very sensitive to stream temperatures changes. They prefer stream temperatures between 53.6 and 60.8 degrees Fahrenheit. A difference of just 10 degrees Fahrenheit can make the difference between survival and death of most aquatic organisms. Stream temperature affects the type of plant species present. That in turn affects the cover and food potential. Diatomaceous algae (brown in color), a preferred food source for numerous aquatic organisms like stonefly and some caddis fly nymphs (grazers) occurs in forested streams whereas filamentous algae (green and stringy) grows in open meadow streams with high water temperatures and is basically used by only one species the water boatman.

Along with maintaining desirable water temperatures, forested buffers act as a living filter buffering the effects of excess nutrients, sediments, pesticides, or pollutants. Forested buffers reduce erosion by slowing the rate of runoff allowing the surface water to filter into the ground and by establishing a dense root zone that stabilizes stream banks and increases soil retention. Another benefit of forested buffers to aquatic ecosystems is the addition of organic matter.

Leaves are the primary source of organic matter streams receive from a forest. Streams receive 4 to 5 times more leaf matter accumulation than forests because streams are a depression and they are wet (hydric). Things tend to move down slope including leaf matter. Once leaf matter enters a stream it becomes saturated and sinks to the bottom where it provides cover and a food source for many of the aquatic insects (shredders). Leaves rarely travel more than 200 yards downstream. This relatively slow movement provides the habitat stability for organisms to utilize the organic matter and to

make the recycling of carbon functional. Dissolved carbon (organic matter) is an essential part of the food chain. Dissolved carbon also adds color to the water. Why is color important? Color helps organisms like brook trout to hide from terrestrial and avian predators. Combined the color in the water with the vermiculations (markings) on a brook trout's back and you have an excellent example of camouflage.

A forest buffer also provides the input of large woody material. This material provides improved aeration (water flowing over exposed logs and mixing with the air), protective cover, and reproduction sites. Hellgrammites need large woody debris because they prefer to lay their eggs (a small white patch) on the undersides of exposed logs, sticks and sticks. When the eggs hatch the young drop into the water to continue their life cycle. Small woody debris such as pieces of bark and small twigs provide the building material for the homes of certain caddis fly larvae. The larvae build a case around themselves by cementing the pieces of woody debris together. They then live in this case carrying it with them until they pupate into an adult all the while feeding on the diatomaceous algae that forms on sticks and rocks.

Streamside trees and other plants not only provide shade and the other previously mentioned benefits, they also add to the food web. Insects feeding or resting on these streamside plants can fall into the water where they become a meal for one of the many predators from dragonfly larvae to brook trout.

I've only touched on a few of the benefits that a forested buffer provides to a streams ecosystem and hopefully improved your awareness of the relationship between forest and aquatic ecosystems. I also hope I've tweaked your interest enough that you will further explore these interactions. A forest is definitely more than just trees.

So, do trees provide good habitat for brook trout? **You bet!**

EVENT PLANNING

September 17 Munnell Run Farm Day Mercer PA

MCWOA Display tent—Join us under the MCWOA Tent

September 18 7 p.m.—9 p.m. County Extension Office

“Understanding Conservation Easement Options”

Dr. Michael Jacobson, PSU School of Forestry

“Getting Your Affairs in Order”

Gary Micsky, PSU Cooperative Extension

September 22 9:00 a.m.—11:00 a.m. County Extension Office

“Getting Started on Your Estate Plan”

Robert D. Clark, Attorney at Law

September 24 2p.m. Timber walk “After a Timber Sale”

Place Stallsmith Farm 1606 Carlton Road Carlton, PA

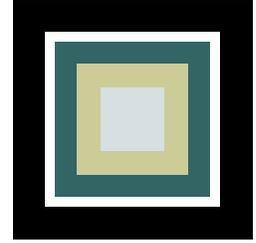
September 30 8 a.m. Legislative Breakfast

M J’s Restaurant, 540 Greenville Rd Mercer, PA

- Discuss issues of concern to woodland owners.

October 28th 6:00 p.m. Annual Dinner

Grantham’s Landing Restaurant Georgetown Rd, Sandy Lake



2006 MCWOA Annual Dinner

Once again, the MCWOA Annual Dinner will be held on Saturday, October 28th at Grantham’s Landing Restaurant located at the intersection of State Route 173 and Georgetown Road in New Lebanon. A dinner buffet will be served at 6:00 pm followed by the evening’s program and activities.

The guest speaker for the evening will be Shayne Hoachlander a wildlife conservation officer/ land management supervisor with the Pennsylvania Game Commission. Shayne has traveled to a number of interesting places and had experiences trapping an elephant in Malaysia, photographing the highly poisonous dart frog in Ecuador and the flora and fauna in the New Guinea jungle and mountainous region. For the Annual Dinner program, Shayne will present an informative Power Point Presentation on his recent trip to Madagascar.

Watch the mail for your Annual Dinner reservation form and make sure you return it before the stated deadline. It is important that we receive an accurate head count by the deadline so that Grantham’s can order the necessary food.

See you at the dinner.

Saturday, October 28th at Grantham’s Landing Restaurant

This is also a good time to introduce the organization to new members—consider bringing a guest.

Want MCWOA to mail them an the invitation?



Keep a journal of your management practices.

...men are from Mars.

I planted Alder because beaver eat it and it will sprout back on its own.

DON'S DIARY

BY: Don & Pat Campbell

It's time to assess our Management Plan objectives. I try to do this twice per year, once in the winter and again during the summer. August is usual the month I look over our plan to see if I have met some of Pat's objectives. This is where we truly know that "men are from Mars and women from Venus".

Our Plan calls for having eight bluebird boxes and to monitor them weekly from April thru August. We have eight bluebird boxes and we monitored them almost every week throughout the season. You see bluebirds will nest two or three times per year here in the north and it is a good idea to clean the boxes out after each nesting to prevent future bird losses to insects and disease. This year we had our best year thus far. The bluebirds fledged sixteen birds out of four nests, and one nest was used twice. Wrens used two boxes while tree swallow used three. We lost two nests of bluebirds one to Raccoons and the other to cold weather. By checking the boxes weekly I know we lost one nest to those pesky Raccoons, thus I need to upgrade the predator guards on four more boxes this winter. Pat likes to bird watch—even in deer season she can tell you every bird that visits her stand, but I thought 'deer' season was the only thing to be watched for.

I planted Alder in the wet areas around the creek and beaver pond. During 2002 and 2003 I planted Alder in two other areas on the farm. This year I noticed that they are about four feet high and 95% of them grew. We have our farm signed up in the Game Commissions Safety Zone project and have received a variety of seedlings, but do to reduced budgeting at the Game Commission they only provide a limited number of seedling this past spring. I planted Alder because beaver eat it and it will sprout back on its own. Grouse will eat the catkins plus it can produce a very nice thicket that they love to use as well. Woodcock will utilize it when the area isn't too wet to find earth-

worms to eat. We need to add more along the gas line right of way that passes through our bottomland. If the right-of-way mowing crew mows them off they will re-sprout immediately. Our property was void of this species. Once established Pat said she would be glad that I can stay out of the area with the tractor so I won't get stuck again. I don't know how she knew about that one.

Hazelnut bushes are located in one area on our property. During 2003, I day lighted them even though they do best in a little shade. I didn't completely release them to direct sunlight. I applied a light application of 10-10-10 fertilizer. We also purchased five two-foot tall bushes and planted them in 2003. During 2004 I planted a grove of 8" seedlings in direct sunlight. We received these seedlings from the Game Commission, about 50 % are still growing. They were fertilized as well. I love to eat the nuts off of this bush, but if you want some I suggest you plant them where you don't have any squirrels or pick them in mid September before the squirrels cut them off of the bushes before they are 100% ready for picking. This year our large native bushes have a very nice crop for the first year since we purchased the farm. I think I will try putting some old horse manure on them that I can get from a neighbor. Pat likes the Hazel nut as well, but has yet to enjoy one of our farm grown ones – I think she'll take up some squirrel hunting this fall—but the birds will surely distract her, nuts!

We planted one-quarter acre of warm season grasses with a wildflower mix this spring. I mowed off the competing vegetation in mid July. The native warm season grass varieties are doing well and some wildflower are blooming. It grows best during the hot dry part of summer. I planted several wildlife food plots this spring. Most of the buckwheat was eaten off by deer as soon as it came up or was killed by the late

(Continued on page 7)

DON'S DIARY

frost we had during May. Some areas that aren't to wet have sunflowers and millet growing but these are not overly abundant. The areas we planted red and white clover in several years ago are doing well. I know I need to lime most of these fields again.

The field corn plot I put in is doing well in most of the field. But the raccoons have demolished the sweet corn. So, Pat bought some from a farmer for freezing. She said we are not doing a very good job of reaping what we sow. I reminded her she bought the seeds.

Our fruit trees are all coming along well. This spring we planted 30 root stock for apple tree grafting, Our little riding mower and cart have gotten a workout this year as I regularly hauled water to the new plantings to be sure they got a good start. We will try our hand at grafting next spring giving some of them new tops. I am making an inventory of some of the old growth apples on the farm. By grafting, I can generate continued growth of the older apple species growing on the farm.

We will be keeping an eye on other places to collect a few apple sprigs from. I just love apple butter and apple pie and apple sauce. Pat reminds me that we need to get some instruction on fruit tree care so we can get a harvest for ourselves as well as take care of the critters. She always thinks of her pantry ...which indirectly means my 'breadbasket'.

Most of the time we agree on the goals but sometimes we seem to be looking at two different things. Our perspective is definitely different. I say put a shallow pond near the house—she interprets that as "mosquito puddle" and points to the beaver pond across the road "you have your pond". She plants flowers for "color" I think one more thing to trim around. So why does she always freeze her deer meat instead of canning it? I was raised in Mars, but I think her planet must be out of this solar system..

*I say pond ...
she thinks
puddle...*

MCWOA REPRESENTATIVES

Officers:	President	Debora Sereday	
	Vice Pres	Bob McGhee	
	Sec/Tres	Pat Campbell	(814)-425-2700

Board Members:
 Alan James
 Albert Law
 John Scheafnocker
 Dane Mitchell

Membership:
 Candy Mitchell

Advisors:	Mark Bodamer	DCNR, Bureau Forestry	(724)-253-3634
	Gary Micsky	Mercer County Extension Office	(724) 662-3141

*Current
Officers,

Board of
Directors

And

Advisors*

Farewell Bob Stallsmith

By Don Campbell

“Mark talked about this tree farmer who did a lot of very good practices.”

I’ve been blessed to know Bob for the past twenty-four years. He came to the park to help me catch a few stray dogs when I was assigned to M. K. Goddard State Park almost on day one of my arrival. When Mark Bodamer moved into our office some fifteen years ago I began to hear him talk about this tree farmer who did a lot of very good practices. I was invited by Mark to go along once or twice on visits to his property. I finally visited a section of his farm along North Deer Creek to get some edible plants Mark was allowed to remove for a class he was teaching. This creek runs through our farm as well many miles up stream from Bob’s farm.

When we purchased our farm with the Boylan one room schoolhouse I found out from Bob that he attended school there. You see, his dad’s farm was part of the game lands located on Deer Creek Road. Bob told me about sneaking down to the schoolhouse and plugging the chimney with burlap bags so that they would get out of school on Monday. The trick worked. Bob told me of many of the pranks the students pulled, but always said they were not destructive like those that occur to in today’s schools. His father never caught him, or at least he never let on, but the

worry about being caught was enough to end his pranks.

Last year Bob took the time to put on paper the history of the farm that Pat and I purchased. You see the bottom twenty-five acre section was owned by an Aunt and used as a sheep pasture. While the top fifty acres was owned by a cousin. I wanted to know if they operated a Sugar Bush on the property. I found out that the sugar bush was on the Boyd farm behind the Boylan School house not on the upper section of our farm where I have many Sugar Maples. I found out that he picked many hickory nuts off of the upper section and there are many shagbark hickories in this area today.

I appreciate the friendship you gave me and the many visits where I got to talk to you when you stopped by the park office to ask Mark a question or two. I regret never visiting more of your farm on one of the many tours you opened your farm for. I will visit the tour this fall for sure.

There is always room for learning and improving what we do on our woodlots and from what I hear and learned from you, is the many decades you spent doing just that.

As stewards of the forest, keepers of woodland, we strive to maintain a healthy – growing woodlot. To the best of our ability, we protect it from abuse, manage it for productivity and esthetics. We have an encompassing concern for the resources it contains and the environment of which it is a part. And for many the ultimate goal is to pass this same care and concern to the next generation.

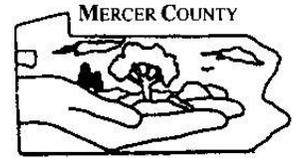
Our Future

MCWOA also requires our stewardship. Created by caring individuals as a resource to share knowledge, experiences, educate and to work together to ensure the continued growth of our woodlands and organization.

Giving a few hours of your time can make all the difference. We will post an information tent at the Munnell Run Farm Days, in Mercer on Sept 17th . Help is needed to man the display. Come help MCWOA spread the news of the importance of maintaining our woodland to others.



Milling demonstration at MCWOA Picnic
Presented by John Scheafnocker



MCWOA

**Mercer County Woodland
Owners Association**

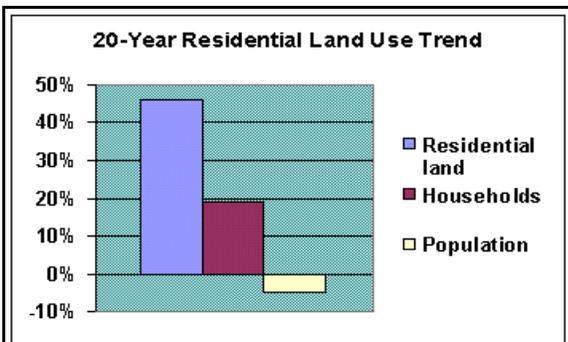
Attn: Pat Campbell, Sec
778 Sunol Road
Cochranon, PA 16314



Did you know?

“In the 20 year period from the early 1970’s to the early 1990’s, residential land use grew 46% while the number of households grew only 19% and the population decreased 5%. In other words, less population lived in more housing units which on the average consumed more land than did older housing.”

Source: Mercer County Regional Planning Commission website: www.mcrpc.com



Graph Credit: Mercer County Regional Planning
Commission website: www.mcrpc.com



**PENN STATE OFFERS
VENISON WORKSHOP FOR SUCCESSFUL HUNTERS --
UNIVERSITY PARK , PA.**

It's a one-day, intensive hands-on program designed for hunters or family members who have an interest in expanding their knowledge of deer diseases, processing venison, and preparing venison for friends and family.

The workshop, which will be held from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. at the Penn State Meats Lab near Beaver Stadium on the University Park campus, begins with an evaluation of deer diseases (including chronic wasting disease), followed by proper field dressing, an opportunity for hands-on processing, and cooking/canning demonstrations. Participants will be able to taste venison products and interact with speakers.

The deadline to pre-register for the Venison 101 Workshop is Sept. 16. The cost of \$99 per person and will cover printed materials, breaks, lunch, venison, and processing supplies. Cathy Cutter - (814) 865-8862 - e-mail: cnc3@psu.edu. Or contact the Cooperative Extension office for a brochure.

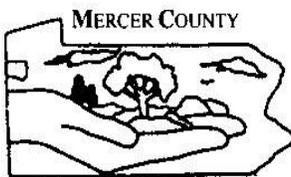
**Forest for Life Jubilee
A Celebration of Pennsylvania's Private Forest Landowners
Saturday, September 23, 2006 9:00 a.m.—3:00 p.m.
Wyndham Hotel, Harrisburg-Hershey**

Cost \$30.00 Payable to PFA—Forest For Life Jubilee Hosted by the Pennsylvania Forestry Association
C/o Linda Finley, 130 Harvard Road, Port Matilda, PA 16870

12 topics—4 concurrent sessions held in each of three time periods. Each session presented only once.

Topics for discussion include:

Why land management	Mature Timber & Marketable Forest Product	Herbicides
Succession Ownership Planning	Getting Annual Income from Your Forest	Water and Forestry
Art & Science of Land Management	Forest Stewardship	Land Ethics and Landscape
Wildlife and Landowner	Computer Web Learning	Taxes



WOODLAND OWNERS ASSOCIATION

MCWOA
c/o Pat Campbell
778 Sunol Road
Cochranton, PA 16314

This newsletter is one way we reach out to the membership, to provide articles of interest to the woodland owner and those interested in woodlands. We would love to hear your input. Have topics you would like to see discussed in this newsletter? How about sharing your experiences—we all love a good story. Experience is the best teacher—right or wrong.

Drop us a line by mail to the address noted to the left of the page, or e-mail us at MCWOA@yahoo.com.

Looking forward to hearing from you.!

Pat Campbell