

NORTH CENTRAL FOREST LANDOWNERS ASSOCIATION, INC



McKean, Potter, Cameron and Elk Counties

January 2012

www.orgsites.com/pa/ncfla



we're holding tomorrow

We have successfully held an election and have another complete Board of Directors in place for the next two years and I would like to start my Terminal Buds article by showing appreciation to those stepping down after serving us so well. Special Thanks goes out to Ken Comstock from Potter County and Rick Smith from McKean County. Also special Thanks to Verda Knowlton who did a super job as Secretary and will remain on the Board of Directors representing Potter County.

Are you aware that you as private forest landowners are providing somewhere between an average of \$500.00 and \$1,700.00 per acre in free benefits to the public? Jim Herzog shared this with folks at the 2011 NCFLA Annual Banquet in Emporium and most people were perplexed by this statement. Researchers and analysts from the USDA Forest Service, international experts and universities are now assessing the value of these Ecosystem Services. Ecosystem Services is the new term defined as benefits people obtain from healthy ecosystems like your forest land. Examples of ecosystem services or free benefits people obtain would include: food, fresh water, fuel, carbon sequestration, climate moderation, disease regulation, pollination, soil formation, nutrient cycling, education, aesthetics, wildlife habitats, recreation (hunting, fishing, cross-country skiing, photography) and tourism to name a few. Long term assessments are indicating that healthy forests providing these ecosystem services have been declining over the years with

Terminal Buds by Tim Pierson



increased land development, forest health problems and unsustainable forest practices. The Forest Service and others recognize that nearly 57% of all forestland in the United States or about 429 million acres are privately owned and that providing incentives for maintaining ecosystem services will increase the overall sustainability of the forest and its benefits for all. Attaching real values to ecosystem services will also make the general public more aware of the benefits they are gaining from private forestland. The Clean and Green preferential tax assessment in Pennsylvania for private forest land owners is supposed to be an incentive for landowners to keep their land undeveloped. Carbon markets are being developed to pay forest landowners for the carbon sequestered from the atmosphere on their land. The new vision in conservation management may include payments to private forest landowners for ecosystem services like watershed management, carbon sequestration, forest stewardship, ecotourism and other presently free benefits. This does not mean that forest land needs to be protected and unproductive but rather continue to be productive and sustainably managed. So yes, private forest landowners that are managing their lands sustainably are providing many presently free benefits to the general public that do have real value (perhaps \$500 or more per acre). On behalf of all persons in our region, Thank You for keeping your forest lands productive, sustainable, and clean and green, as they continue to provide many ecosystem services!

2011 NCFLA ANNUAL DINNER

Wind Farms and the Impact on Forests

On Sunday, November 6th, the Annual Banquet for the North Central Landowners Association, Inc. was held at the Emporium Fire hall. Michael Barton, a consulting forester from Cambria County who is involved with wind energy projects, gave an interesting talk on wind energy and its impact on forests.

Forests provide many benefits to the public, including carbon sequestration, oxygen production, water system filtration, aesthetics, hiking, enjoying wildlife and birds, interesting plant species, recreational opportunities, timber values, etc. And...this is only a partial list.

In his talk, Michael Barton explained that Pennsylvania alternative energy laws require that 18 percent of the state's electric generation must come from renewable sources by 2020. Currently, Pennsylvania's renewable capacity is less than 8 percent, but 65 companies have applied for permits in the state and three are currently under construction.

Since all wind farms in Pennsylvania have been on private land, it is expected that more leases will be proposed to landowners. These leases should be treated similarly to gas and oil leases, taking into consideration that when the land is leased, the area above the land and the wind blowing across it are resources owned by the landowner.

Landowners should have a good agreement that considers paying for extras, such as quarrying on the property, installing staging areas and access roads, or running ancillary power lines. Requests for restoration or revegetation of the disturbed areas should be considered. Before signing a lease, it is advisable to have a lawyer review it, as well as the Conservation District, a forester and the Penn State Extension Office before finalization.



This way, the landowner can get the best deal and can protect his/her assets.

For the least environmental impact, landowners should request the company use single-blade construction on the windmill. It is easier to install one blade at a time. This allows for narrower road access, which lessens the disturbance area at the site and smaller tower footprints. Erosion and sediment runoff needs to be controlled, using rock-lined swales, vegetative matting, water bars and open bottom culverts. Watersheds around the wind farms can be unaffected by mountaintop activity.

There are negatives to wind farms. There is the possibility of invasives (insects and plants) being carried in by the equipment. Other negatives include noise, ice throw, bird and bat kills. Some of these negatives can be mitigated by careful turbine placement, keeping lights off at night or turning off turbines in low-wind situations. However, turbines create clean, renewable energy with minimum environmental impact when developed correctly.

Barton gives tours at turbine sites and has done more than 200 in the past year. He works with Environmental Resources Information Technology and Educational Center (ERITEC), which is located in Sidman, PA.

Other Meeting Activities:

Jim Herzog and Dave Lombardo gave a report on taxes for landowners. Clean and Green gives the landowner a separate use value as opposed to the fair market value, helping to keep taxes at a reasonable rate for forested land.

Also at this meeting, the results of the officer election were announced. Officers for the coming year will be Tim Pierson; President, Walt Petrick; Vice President, Pam Goodrich; Secretary, and Treasurer; Marie Petrick. One member for the Board is elected from each county and they are: Lynda Pontzer; Elk County, Dave Lombardo; Cameron County, John Stratton; McKean and Verda Knowlton; Potter County.



At this years annual dinner, lifetime memberships were awarded to some of the original members of the NCFLA for their service. They are: Al McCullough, Jack and Jean Culver, Ken and Jane Cogan, and Merle "Bud" Zetler.

This photo shows Jack and Jean Culver receiving their award from Tim Pierson.



At the Annual Banquet and Dinner, Ken and Janice Comstock have been busy talking with other NCFLA members.

Some photos from the meeting and banquet.....

Otto and Elizabeth Matthes are enjoying their selection from the door prize table.

*Meet our new secretary,
Pam Goodrich*



How to Improve Your Timber Security and Minimize Potential Losses

Nathan Meiser and Thad Taylor, *agents/foresters* Ag Choice Credit

No matter what the current status of your timber, it's going to change. You need to be willing to adjust and adapt your management strategies. Over the years, a well executed timber security program will improve profits and reduce potential losses. You'll also sleep better at night knowing your timber is secure.

Without looking, how much cash do you have in your checking, savings and 401K? I'd guess that 90% of readers could come within \$5,000. If someone entered your home tonight and stole your 50" inch plasma television, you would recognize the theft in less than 10 hours. We all utilize some system for managing risk and creating security for personal investments, vehicles, equipment and our residence. However, accurately accounting for your timberland and timber stumpage is equally important. Manage these four categories and you'll improve your timber security and minimize potential risk(s):

Timber Value

- Determine the current market value of your timber. Include the timber that you own (personal and business) and the timber you've purchased from the U.S. Forest Service, PA Bureau of Forestry, PA Game Commission, consulting foresters and private woodland owners.
- Provide all your foresters and managers access to this data to improve their timber and business management decisions. When markets change, they can review present timber inventories and adjust quickly to capitalize.

Timber Location

- Prepare and maintain a database of your current timber holdings. Key information – state, county, acreage, owner and contact numbers. MOST importantly, directions to the timber and maps of the timberland. Does anyone other than you know the exact location of your timber?
- Develop a systematic and regular timber inspection program. Are you 100% sure the timber you purchased in March 2010 is still in the same condition as when you bought it? Monthly, quarterly, semi-annual or annual timber inspections are essential.

Timber Health

- Rate the overall health of your timber - "1" (the worst) to "5" (the best). At a recent Society of American Foresters meeting, presenters discussed: emerald ash borer, hemlock wooly adelgid, gypsy moth, tent caterpillars, beech bark disease and sudden oak death. Wow! That presents numerous threats to your timber. You need to monitor it closely and control it accordingly.
- Implement treatment plans to improve timber health and avoid catastrophic losses. Not being aware of a timber stand that reaches a "1" over time carries extra risk for your business.

Timber Access

- Maintain control over who has access to your timber. Possible solutions to control access and unwanted activity: gates, trail cameras, leasing the property, posting, issuing hunting/recreational permits and knowing your neighbors (woodland watch program).
- Keep open lines of communication between landowners, foresters and loggers. Make sure all parties are aware of scheduled activity on the timberland. Avoid surprises.

There is no crop insurance that you can buy for your timber. The security of your timber relies on you.

Landowner Summer Fun



On Saturday, July 9th, the annual picnic and demonstration day for North Central Forest Landowners Association, Inc. was held at the Petrick's home in Roulette. Forty people joined the activities on a warm sunny day. After a very brief business meeting, members enjoyed a picnic lunch which was provided not only by the NCFLA, but from member "dish to pass" donations.

The landowners learned and talked about "Understanding Soil Types". This included specifically related maps from the soil survey and the geology regarding this area, including soil types and their locations. The variation in growing environments from one small town to another and the reasons why these variations occur was an especially interesting concept. This answered questions by landowners like why one neighbor will have late spring frosts and their next door neighbor does not and why certain plants will not grow in some locations, etc. A brief discussion on pollinator plants and their benefits was also discussed.

Three 6-foot deep holes were dug on the Petrick Property in different locations by Walt. The holes were used to demonstrate the layering of soils over periods of many years. It was pointed out that over 100 years ago when all of the trees in Pennsylvania

were cut, a layer of the soil still shows evidence of that occurrence.

Also, certain rocks, sandstone, for instance, can lower the pH of the soil drastically, making certain soil conditions unable to grow some crops. This answers why, at times, we have difficulty growing a successful garden or our favorite flowers. There are solutions which could mean just planting in a different location or sometimes adding amendments to the soil. This should be done only after testing the soil.

Soil test kits are available through the County Cooperative Extension offices. One local condition of soils is the fragipan layer which is not very deep in Potter County. This layer of soil is so dense that roots from trees and plants cannot penetrate it. As a result, trees are prone to blowing over, leaving large divots and humps (called Hummocks) on the forest floor. Also, certain categories of trees, (nuts in particular) will affect the growth of other plants.

Trees and plants have favorite growing companions, soil conditions, and even prefer particular elevations. Understanding forest and field soils is very important to successful tree or plant growth.

One of the goals of the NCFLA is to communicate good forest management practices to landowners. Non-members are always welcome.



NCFLA Nature Notes

Stan Hess, Service Forester

Latin names are important to understand because they are accepted by the scientific community worldwide. Two words are commonly used in print and are italicized or set apart in bold such as *Aceraceae saccharum*. The first term is the genus, which is capitalized, and the second is the species. Sometimes Sp. is used when referring to all the species in a genus or when the species are difficult to distinguish. If the family name is used it is also capitalized. For instance, *Aceraceae Acer saccharum* refers to the maple family, maple genus, and the species sugar maple.



Juneberry or Serviceberry (*Amalanchier* sp.) trees flower early in spring. They are common in fields, forest edges, fence rows, and roadsides. Many observers mistake them for flowering dogwood trees.

Many native species of bees are common in our forests, fields, and home sites. Some are very small and inconspicuous. Contrary to public opinion, our insect pollinated forest plants and trees do not need honeybees. Honeybees (European and other species) were introduced by early immigrants.



In tough times, some northeastern Native Americans would peel the bark off the stem of white pine (*Pinus strobus*) trees to expose a fleshy layer of inner bark. Being highly nutritious, it can be eaten raw or dried and ground into flour for cooking or baking.



Hawthorn (*Craetegus* sp.) is a genus of so many species that they are just referred to as hawthorn. A common Pennsylvania name is thorn apple which often refers to crabapples too. One way to tell the difference is that hawthorns have sharply pointed thorns without any flower or leaf buds. Crabapples, which are rare in the NCFLA region, have variably shaped thorn-like twigs that bear flower and leaf buds.



Often before the first spring peepers are heard, the fleshy hoods of the skunk cabbage (*Symplocarpus foetidus*) appear above the ground along streams and swamps. The very young leaves are sometimes collected before they unfold and prepared as potherbs, (edible leafy green vegetables), by boiling in several changes of water.



Jewelweed is in the *Impatiens* (*Balsaminaceae*) family and genus *Impatiens*. Notice that the common name for the family is not the same as the Latin name but it is the same as the genus common name and Latin name. We have two species, one with pale yellow flowers and the most common one with spotted orange flowers. Many of us know these plants as touch-me-nots. The sap is used by some as a poison ivy and insect bite treatment.

The nectar is a favorite of hummingbirds.

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Secretary: Pam Goodrich
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Cameron County: Dave Lombardo
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