



North Central Forest Landowners Association, Inc.

We're holding tomorrow

McKean, Potter, Cameron and Elk Counties

October, 2011

www.orgsites.com/pa/ncfla



Terminal Buds *by Tim Pierson*



One of the strengths of the North Central Forest landowners Association has been our large and diverse membership of private forest landowners from four counties. In these tough economic times it may seem frugal to allow your membership to lapse until things are better. However, I can assure you that your Board of Directors for the NCFLA has been very active on your behalf to keep abreast of issues important to forest landowners in our region from taxation to gas development and wildlife enhancement to forest health. You can be proud of your association and consider its accomplishments, your accomplishments. So, keep your membership current, pay your dues and invite family and neighbors to join us.

Another strength of the NCFLA is the many educational programs sponsored by our association, DCNR-Bureau of Forestry and Penn State Cooperative Extension. We had some memorable events in recent months that Marie and Walt have covered with more detail in later articles. All 35 persons that participated in the Elk Area Management

Tour were very pleased spending the day learning about our elk herd in Pennsylvania which concluded with our partners from the Pennsylvania Game Commission in the field surrounded by a herd of elk.



Our association was represented with a booth and newly developed continuously running video display about the North Central Forest Landowners Association at the First Annual Forest Festival held on September 25 at the Arboretum at Penn State University.

Special THANKS for our last two Woods Walks hosted by Jim Herzog in Smethport and John and Judy Stratton in Farmers Valley. Folks brought their mules and ATV's which helped get everyone around to see the many forest and wildlife practices and treatments utilized by these member landowners. Each of our hosts provided all participants with food, snacks and refreshments. Be sure you join us for future Woods Walks, they are awesome!

Annual Banquet on November 6th

The Annual Membership Meeting and Banquet is a business meeting for the North Central Forest Landowners Association, as well as a social get-together for members and other interested parties who might choose to hear the speaker, find out about what the NCFLA is all about and share knowledge with other members. It is held once a year and the meeting place is rotated throughout the four county area that we represent, McKean, Potter, Elk and Cameron counties.

The speaker this year, *Michael Barton*, consulting forester will talk about "Wind Energy and its Impact on the Forest". Non-members are welcome to attend, but they must make a reservation.

Each year, the NCFLA offers some impressive door prizes; usually something that is related to forests or forest management and a chainsaw carving. Members in past years have donated other things for door prizes such as maple syrup, young trees, books, homemade jellies, homemade pies, holiday decorations, paintings and a wide variety of other items. Last year a canary was one of the items that proved to be lots of fun. The bird found a new home where it is much enjoyed and doing well. We are asking members to look around your home again this year to see if you could share something to donate for this entertaining and sometimes amusing door prize activity. It is enjoyable to see who chooses each prize and results in pleasurable conversations.

So...please join us on November 6th from noon to 4:00pm, at the Emporium Fire Hall for some business, a little education and a great time with the NCFLAers.



Stan Hess (DCNR) explains to an NCFLA member some benefits of good forest management at Jim Herzog's property



Toby Herzing (DCNR) offers information on shelterwood cuts at the Elk Country Visitors Center in Benzetette, to NCFLA members. Tim Pierson on the left is the President of the NCFLA



Signing in members at the picnic:
Verda Knowlton
and Claire Head



Tim Pierson adding to the discussion of the regeneration of cherry seedlings on Jim Herzog's hilltop.



Mark (Game Commission) explains how the elk can be tracked using specialized radio equipment

MY THOUGHTS ON MARCELLUS SHALE GAS

by **Larry Schultz**

The Marcellus Shale gas development is going to change the face of north central Pa. and I would like to give you my thoughts on the good and bad aspects of it. In the interest of full disclosure; last fall I signed a gas and oil lease with Ultra Resources on my 160 acres so I am not an unbiased or impartial observer.



We are in the early phase of this development, much of the land is leased, some wells have been drilled, and pipelines are being placed. Much more drilling is going to take place, and with this there will be heavy traffic, noise, and disruption of our lives. Our part of the state has been a sparsely populated and quiet place and we enjoy that, this is going to change.

There are economic benefits to our region. I have spent more money with local business than I normally would, and I know other landowners have done this also. I have paid more income tax than ever and the state and federal governments can certainly use the additional revenue. Jobs are being created in a part of the state that has had traditionally high unemployment. The only part of the state that has seen an increase in sales tax revenue is in the north central counties. The economic benefits are real and they will result in a higher standard of living for a lot of people.

So why is there so much opposition to the gas drilling? Some of it is because of environmental concerns. I think these can be addressed with better regulation and through oversight of the drilling activities. However much of the opposition is driven by established interests that are threatened by natural gas. Why should we give large government subsidies to the wind and solar industries that only produce slightly more than 1% of our power needs? Natural gas produces about 25% and will produce a lot more as more Marcellus gas becomes available. Can't anyone see the obvious? When the sun doesn't shine and the wind doesn't blow solar and wind

produce nothing. Also threatened is the coal industry. "Clean Coal" is actually very dirty. No new coal fired plants are being built, the power plants that are being designed and built are all going to use natural gas. Natural gas is the most abundant, reliable, and reasonably priced source of energy.

I am irritated by the misinformation, distortion of facts, and outright lies of those opposed to the drilling. Just a few examples that come to mind. I have had people tell me that 150 different chemicals are used to hydrofrack a well. There may have been 150 or more chemicals used at one time or another but a typical frack job will use four to six different additives. Some of these are toxic and some are common substances that are also used in cosmetics and food. At last years PFA tour in Lycoming Co. the speaker at lunch made the statement that gas drilling would destroy 40% of Pa. Forests. He came up with this number by using a high estimate of the number of wells to be drilled and 10 acres for each well. He assigned additional deforestation to road and pipeline construction. Actually once the drilling is done a well pad may be less than one acre and have four or five wells on it. The well site in most cases will use existing roads and pipelines will be placed along these roads. We will lose some forest acreage but we should consider this cost against all the other benefits.

There are environmental risks involved with the drilling. The risk is not 6000 feet below us where the hydraulic fracturing is occurring, it is on the drill pad. During drilling a forested area is converted temporarily to an industrial site and hoses or tanks can leak, diesel fuel can spill, or other problems can occur. When this happens cleanup should be prompt and fines or damages assessed. Gas development must proceed in spite of the risks. Shale gas is a tremendous gift to our country and our state and we would be fools not to develop it.

JIM HERZOG WOODSWALK

SUNDAY SEPTEMBER 18

On the warm and sunny Sunday of September 18, Jim Herzog gave an introduction to his 800 plus woodlot beside his .8 acre pond to 18 NCFLA members. He talked about its history and how his land was acquired. He talked about the variety of trees on his property and presented a timber type map from his forest plan which showed the location of tree stands. Jim spoke about his experience with the electric company routing power lines across the property and how he dealt with the situation. The lesson learned is that the owner should know the details of the situation and keep notes of all the meetings to prevail.

Jim also told us about his pond, when it was constructed and how it is used for fishing, swimming kayaking and general recreation. It is aerated by an air pump driven by a windmill. He had wisely chosen the fish to keep the vegetation in the pond under control. He controls the visiting geese by frightening them with an electric powered, remote controlled boat.

Jim has been applying good forest management on his property for many years. This was an excellent opportunity to see the results of those practices.

These practices consisted of: timber harvests, basal and folier spraying to control

interfering plants, deer fencing, and shelter wood treatments.

For the basal spraying, Jim and his son sprayed their property using hand powered sprayers over a three year period. For the folier treatment, Jim used a tow-behind 50 gallon sprayer and commercially available spraying services. He used Garlon 4 mixed with diesel fuel for the basal spray and a Glyphosate based mixture for the folier spray. Jim purchased the services for aerial spraying during the forest caterpillar infestation

last year. From his spraying experience, Jim concluded that basal spraying in the spring will kill plants the same spring but spraying in the fall will not kill plants until the next fall.

Fifteen acres of woodland were fenced after a harvest to protect the emerging seedlings from damage caused by browsing deer. Although there was more growth in the fenced-off area than in an adjacent non-fenced area, Jim concluded that the improved growth in the fenced-off area may not be worth the expense of constructing and maintaining the fence.

While visiting a shelter-wood cut that was about 20 years old, we examined the growth of healthy 30 to 50 foot cherry pole trees. This site demonstrated how the forest can be successfully regenerated after a shelter-wood cut. Since this site was about 3 miles away from the meeting area, ATVs were furnished by other NCFLA members to transport the attendees to the viewing area.

After arriving back at the pond from the site visit, we had pizza and cake, compliments of Jim. After eating, Judy Stratton took a ride in the Kayak around the pond while others played with one of the two remote controlled boats.

Because of the time consumed by the introduction and traveling to and from the viewing site, we did not have a chance to visit other areas of interest. So, we are considering another woods-walk on Jim's property in the future to cover these areas.





New Elk Country Visitors Center in Benezette

Thirty plus NCFLA members signed up to visit the new Elk Viewing Country Visitors Center in Benezette, PA. The center has many interesting historical displays, information about the elk herd, and an outdoor summer picnic or meeting area. Throughout the park there are selected spots where visitors can view the elk herd from their cars.

Our very special tour included an introduction at the center with a movie in a unique wrap-around theatre, complete with special affects. We learned about how the elk herd was strong in number historically, but uncontrolled hunting wiped out the herd completely. In the 1930's, a delegation was sent to Yellowstone National Park to bring back a number of elk to see if they could re-establish a herd in Elk County, PA. Hunting was not allowed for many years, to see if the herd could flourish and they finally have. Hunters now can apply for a spot in a lottery for a select number of licenses to hunt.

This area in Pennsylvania was mined for coal in past years. As a result, the water and soil had an extremely low PH number which created problems growing any plants and also making

an unsafe water supply. There has been an ongoing and successful attempt to rectify this situation by treating the water coming from the mines and by treating the soil so food crops can be planted for the elk herd. The result has been a growth and good health of the elk herd and also an improvement to the beauty of the area.

A very nice beef on weck dinner (not elk), was served to our members in the outdoor picnic area on a beautiful warm, sunny day. After the dinner, we boarded a school bus which took us on a tour of the elk viewing areas. John Dzemyan, pictured at left, is a land manager for the Game Commission, who provided an excellent look at management strategies in the elk area. As you can see from the photo, the elk both large and small, were quite comfortable with all of us staring at them and all of them staring back. For many of our group, seeing this many elk was a real treat.



Stratton Woods Walk

Working strategies to create a balance between wildlife and woodland management



John and Judy Stratton in front of their home. The pumpkins are a part of their "harvest".

October 9th was a beautiful day to spend in the woods at the Stratton property with fall colors at their peak and a comfortable warm sunny day as a bonus. Several members brought their utility vehicles to transport members for viewing the numerous remote areas on the property. John and Judy planned and carefully executed good forest management as well as successfully reassured that there is ample food and safe havens for the various wildlife species.

One of the problems we all have encountered on our properties is the loss of seedlings and young trees to foraging deer. During winter months, deer have difficulty finding food, so they browse on trees that we are trying to protect. John has planted several food plots for the deer, to discourage

the browsing on the trees, but provided an alternative means of survival by planting brassicas, warm season grasses, oats and some corn, which deer, turkeys and other wildlife species love. Other areas have dense cover which provides a safe place for wildlife to stay, which is not far from the food plots.

All of their efforts have been rewarded by less browsing on seedlings, a fun source for interesting photography or just seeing wildlife, and opportunities for hunting for the family. They have several deer stands and blinds throughout the woods that they use for taking wildlife pictures and just enjoying what they might see.

After our tour of the property, the Strattons served a tasty lunch with salads and desserts. This gave all of us a time to reflect on the day and share ideas and techniques that we have learned for use on our own properties.



John is explaining the wildlife food plots...
what he plants...weed control...soil amendments...
location

"In order to save the Association money, would you like to get an e-newsletter rather than the printed copy?" If you haven't already done so, please contact Walt Petrick at waltpetrick@hotmail.com. Thank you.

Officers:

President & Advisor: Tim Pierson, PhD
Vice President: Walt Petrick
Secretary: Verda Weder Knowlton
Treasurer: Marie Petrick

Board Members:

McKean County: Rick Smith
Cameron County: Dave Lombardo
Potter County: Ken Comstock
Elk County: Lynda Pontzer

Service Foresters:

McKean, Potter: Stan Hess
Elk, Cameron: Toby Herzing
Editor and Web Service: Walt Petrick
Newsletter layout: Marie Petrick