



McKean, Potter, Cameron and Elk Counties

We're holding tomorrow

October, 2009

www.orgsites.com/pa/ncfla

**NCFLA
Calendar:**

Sunday, Oct. 4
Woodwalk at Ken
Comstock's woodlot,
1:00 to 5:00 PM,
1671 Sartwell Creek,
Port Allegany, PA.
*Activities: Tree
Identification and
measurements*

Saturday, Oct. 24
*Election ballots
must be returned to:*
NCFLA, P.O. Box 141,
Port Allegany, PA 16743

Sunday, Nov. 1
Annual Membership
Meeting & Banquet
12:30 to 4:00 PM,
at the Red Fern Inn,
421 Old Kersey Rd
St. Marys, PA. 15846

Thursday, Dec. 15
Board of Directors
Meeting, 9:00 AM,
McKean Co.
Extension Office
Smethport, PA.

Caterpillar Update *from Stan Hess*

About 320,000 acres of forest tent and eastern tent caterpillar defoliation was visible from the air this year in McKean and Potter Counties. Eastern tent primarily defoliated cherry trees while the forest tent caterpillar fed on sugar maple and other hardwood species. Red maple was the exception. Andy Sidelinger of the DCNR/Bureau of Forestry District 15 office in Coudersport completed defoliation flights in early July and defoliation was outlined on a topographic screen. Wellsboro and Emporium offices also reported defoliation in Tioga and Cameron counties. The concentration of the defoliation, was in McKean and Potter counties. Although diseases of the caterpillar stage and parasitism of the caterpillar pupae by friendly fly larvae took a heavy toll, there was still a tremendous moth emergence. Being nocturnal and attracted by bright lights, these moths converged on towns and brightly lighted rural buildings.

Based on the number of emerged moths and the egg masses laid, the prognosis for next year is more of the same. The infestation may spread into new areas, collapse in some areas, and repeat in others. It is inevitable that diseases will bring this outbreak to a close, but when is the question. Normally, the forest tent caterpillar outbreaks run their course in 3 to 5 years. Dieback in some tree crowns has been the history of these insect attacks.

As previously mentioned, a native fly, *Scarcophage aldrichi*, or friendly fly, is an extremely important parasite of the pupae of the eastern tent and forest tent caterpillars. The flies reached a nuisance level this year even in areas where there was no defoliation. No State or Federal agency has released these flies.

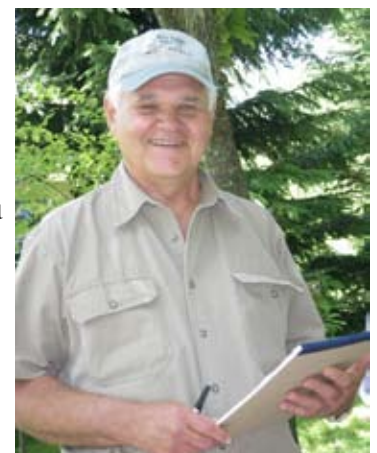
View From The Top Of The Tree

Larry Schultz

This will be my last View From The Top column since I have decided not to run for another term as president. I have been president for eight years and I

think it is time for new leadership for NCFLA. When you do things for awhile you get in a rut and a new president with new ideas will be good for the association. Being president has been an interesting and rewarding experience for me. I appreciate the comments from the members about the things I have written, those who agree and those who disagree. The original intent was for this column to be somewhat controversial and thereby generate discussion and interest.

I want to thank the members, the officers, and the board for all the things they have done to help me over the past eight years. A president only offers ideas and direction, the membership makes things happen and accomplishes these goals. I have been impressed by the willingness of people to offer their time and talents to NCFLA. It's this generosity that makes our association great. I will continue to be active and support this association in anyway I can.



Woods Walks

This summer, two woods walks were hosted at Matt Miller's farm on Cow Hollow in Roulette. The first walk consisted of a lecture by Joe Snyder on lumber grading and a tree identification session in Matt's woodlot. The second woods walk included a demonstration of horse powered log skidding, timber grading and sawing logs on a portable sawmill. Matt



also showed how he uses Google Earth to map the boundaries of this property and key features of his woodlot.

Grading of logs and cut lumber were both discussed. The factory lumber log class is divided into three grades and is closely correlated with the specifications for standard hardwood lumber grades. The grade of the log depends largely on the proportion of log length that is obtainable in clear cuttings. Through measurement of a log, an estimate can be made to determine the grade, how many board feet are in the log, and the value of the tree for each species of hardwood. After the boards are cut, they are graded again for the final value of each board cut from the tree.

Matt works with his team of horses to remove logs from his forest, and has a portable sawmill that is used in the woods to produce boards ready for drying. The use of horses and the portable sawmill minimizes the amount of damage to the land and the remaining trees.



Roll-back taxes on oil and gas drilling

Oil and gas (OG) property had been erroneously taxed in Pennsylvania for many years. Assessors assumed that anything in the ground is real property and could be taxed. In the year 2000, that position was challenged with an appeal in Fayette County. Appellants won based on the argument that the assessment law never included oil and gas but only hard minerals. Further, due to the fugacious nature of oil and gas, only production could be reasonably taxed, not estimates of reservoirs.



Now some taxing districts are attempting to find new methods to tax. The latest effort is to assess roll-back penalties on properties that are under Clean and Green, when drilling begins or when a lease is signed. Only a few counties do this. In our four county area, drilling does not result in roll-back. However, the assessors are definitely active in finding a method to tax oil and gas production, particularly with the huge potential of Marcellus Shale.

Among the many conflicts in taxing is the fact that the surface owner may not be the OG owner. Hopefully the lease has a clause that requires the driller to pay any penalties or tax increase.

Pennsylvania legislatures are reviewing the situation to see what should be done. Proposals have been made but no law has passed. Roll-back penalty charged is the difference between fair market value and Clean & Green assessed taxes plus simple interest at 6% for seven years. The amount will vary in each county..

This brief writing is simply to present the issue. Considerably more detail can be found using the internet with appropriate search terms. You should also be able to find your state representative's position.

Jim Herzog

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