



The Foundation for Sustainable Forests

2015 Annual Report

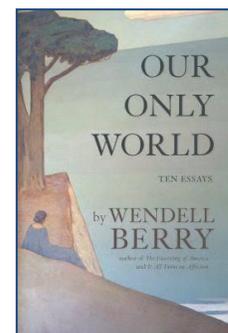
Our Mission: To protect forested land and ecosystems and support rural communities through working forests; to raise awareness of the importance of preserving intact forested ecosystems; and to highlight sustainable forestry and practices for the benefit of the land.

Dear Foundation for Sustainable Forests community,

We are pleased to present this annual report to you after a year that saw many positive steps towards long-term sustainability. This 2015 Annual Report features an overview of notable work in the past year, a brief summary of the Foundation's finances, and a glimpse at what is ahead in 2016.

Notable Achievements in 2015

- FFSF received a donation of 100 acres in the Caldwell Creek watershed in Eldred Township, Warren County by Margaret Lay-Dopyera (see President's Message on page 2 for more detail).
- Our Shared Gift Program had its first bequest this year. This program allows the landowner to share net earnings from gifted property with a designated charitable organization in perpetuity.
- In Fall 2015, the FFSF conducted a timber harvest and invasive plant control on property owned by a longtime supporter. By hiring the Foundation as forest managers, a landowner ensures that decisions are made with a long-term perspective and sound ecological principles.
- Board and Project Leadership Team members met in July for a reflective and strategic planning retreat to outline short- and long-term needs and goals (for a detailed outline, see our Fall/Winter 2015-16 Newsletter, available under "What's New" at our website).
- We welcomed Bob Slagter, a woodland owner and PA Forest Steward, and Craig Schwegman, a Financial Advisor, to our Board of Directors. Both bring a high level of dedication to the conservation of forests, and diverse skill sets to lend towards that mission. In the words of Bob Slagter: *"I support not only [the FFSF's] practices but also their woodland ethics and deep concern for the future of our forests. I hope to use my current position on the board of the PA Forest Stewards to work with land owners to consider supporting The Foundation financially and physically. I also hope to work to bring more legacy planning into play with FFSF. I feel this could be the best growth vehicle for the Foundation."*
- At the end of 2015 we welcomed Annie Socci in a new role as Conservation & Outreach Manager to increase the FFSF's capacity for development and educational outreach. John Bartlett will be stepping back from some of his former responsibilities to focus on grant-writing and development.
- Troy Firth & the FFSF were featured in "A Forest Conversation", one of ten essays in Wendell Berry's 2015 book release, Our Only World. This has brought some national attention to our mission and we have received support from readers outside this region as a testament to this.
- We had a successful Loving the Land Through Working Forests conference in May and other outreach and education programs for youth and adults throughout the year.



President's Message

In 2015 the FFSF received a donation of 100 acres of forested land in Eldred Township, Warren County, within the Caldwell Creek watershed. This legacy gift by Margaret Lay-Dopyera represents a big step forward in the FFSF's efforts to conserve forested land in the watershed.

Margaret's great grandfather, Orange Robinson, originally settled the land, and then gave it to his daughter (Margaret's grandmother) and her husband soon after they married in 1899. Concerned about the many threats to forests in the region, Margaret sought out the FFSF to ensure that the land settled by her ancestors would remain a healthy forest in perpetuity. In her words, *"to have this acreage become protected forest under the auspices of the [FFSF] is a source of great happiness for me."*

In 1890, my grandfather, Wave Blakeslee, was born at a logging camp just south of Woodland Lodge in the Caldwell Creek drainage. He is pictured above, 100 years ago, following in his father's footsteps as a logger. Like Margaret, I seek to ensure the health of the forests and the rural forest economy we inherited from our ancestors. In the future, when Lynn and I donate the Woodland Lodge and surrounding property to the FFSF, it will enhance the legacy begun by the Lay-Dopyera Forest donation.

We are at a precarious time for forests in our region, with high turnover of land ownership resulting in more and more development and parcelization of forested lands. I urge other landowners to consider their own legacy and, like Margaret Lay-Dopyera, take steps to secure the future integrity and sustainability of their woodlands. *– Troy Firth, President*



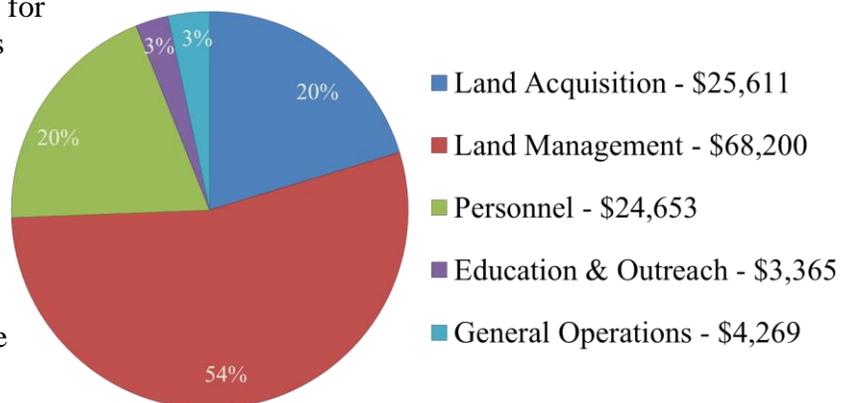
Wave Blakeslee, Troy Firth's grandfather, delivering a log to the sawmill in Spartansburg, PA (circa 1915)

2015 Financial Summary

The Foundation for Sustainable Forests strives for fiscal transparency and good stewardship of its finances, in addition to the land.

The chart (right) shows annual expenditures, with the exception of the significant in-kind donations of goods and services by foresters, land managers and members.

Contributions, including memberships, donations and grants, accounted for 40% of the FFSF's total income in 2015, while earnings from the FFSF's protected lands managed as working forests amounted to 58%. Conference registration income and merchandise sales accounted for 2% of total income in 2015. The goal of the Foundation is to move towards the coverage of operational expenses using land earnings, thereby increasing capacity for education, outreach and other projects. While we appear to be moving towards that goal, timber earnings in 2015 were notably high, as timber earnings vary from year to year depending on the health of the woods, and the threat and occurrence of the invasive emerald ash borer and beech bark disease complex led this year's harvest to be more significant than it is likely to be in future years.



Your Support Makes it Possible

Be it financial support, volunteering at events, sharing your vision and/or including us in your plans for the future, the Foundations for Sustainable Forests' mission is made possible through your support and engagement.

If you are a current or planned woodland owner, ask us about the many conservation options that are available for your land, as well as estate and legacy planning that can be tailored to ensure its future protection and meet the needs of you and your family. You can also ensure the future of the Foundation by including us in your legacy and estate planning. We would be happy to speak with you about any of these options.

Want to be more involved? Contact Annie Socci, Conservation & Outreach Manager (amsocci@foundationforsustainableforests.org), about volunteer opportunities at events, from educational outreach presentations to our annual Loving the Land Through Working Forests event in May (see enclosed flier).

For more information on gift planning, conservation options for your land or general inquiries, please email: info@foundationforsustainableforests.org or call: (814) 694-5830

Your support ensures the future of Penn's woods and a growing legacy of environmental stewardship, and we thank you for it!



“A forest, kindly used, may outlive unimaginably any of its trees.”
–Wendell Berry in “A Forest Conversation”

Board of Directors

Troy Firth	Spartansburg, PA	Owner of Firth Maple Products
Thomas C. Hoffman II, Esq.	Erie, PA	Attorney & CPE at Knox, McLaughlin, Gornall & Sennett, P.C.
Guy Dunkle	Centerville, PA	Forester at Firth Maple Products
Terry Bensel, PhD	Meadville, PA	Associate Provost and Professor of Environmental Science at Allegheny College
Dr. Jane Woods	Fairview, PA	Retired Dentist, Forest Landowner & Conservationist
James Finley, PhD	University Park, PA	Professor of Forest Resources & Ibberson Chair of Forest Resource Management at Penn State, Pennsylvania Extension Forester
Emil Spadafore, Esq.	Meadville, PA	Attorney & Partner of Thomas, Spadafore, & Walker LLP, Adjunct Instructor at University of Pittsburgh at Titusville
Robert Slagter	Grand Valley, PA	PA Forest Steward and Advisor to the Center for Private Forests at Penn State
Craig Schwegman	Erie, PA	Financial Advisor at Edward Jones

Staff

Troy Firth	Spartansburg, PA	President & Founder
Guy Dunkle	Centerville, PA	Land Manager
John Noel Bartlett	Oil City, PA	Development Director
Annie Socci, PhD	Cambridge Springs, PA	Conservation & Outreach Manager

The
Foundation for Sustainable Forests

It's Habitat



It's Landscape



It's Jobs



It's Heritage



It's Everything We Care About

- ❖ A Land Trust
- ❖ A sustainable forestry education & advocacy organization
- ❖ Dedicated to the protection of working forests for the benefit of the land



Visit our website:

www.foundationforsustainableforests.org

Find us on **f**: **www.facebook.com/sustainableforests**

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