



2016 Annual Report

Our Mission is to protect forested land and support rural communities through working forests, to raise awareness of the importance of preserving forest ecosystems, and to highlight sustainable forestry practices for the benefit of the land.

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A Message from Troy Firth

*"The land belongs to the future.
...that's the way it seems to me.
...I might as well try to will the sunset over there
to my brother's children.
We come and go, but the land is always here.
And the people who love it and understand it
are the people who own it- for a little while."*

-Willa Cather, "O Pioneers!"



Troy Firth (right) in conversation with attendee Dan Cleer at the 2016 Conference

This is certainly an accurate depiction of my late wife Lynn's viewpoint. I would hope that I, along with everyone else involved with the Foundation for Sustainable Forests (FSF) can contribute to a wider acceptance of an attitude that strives to protect our homeland for future generations, rather than the all-too-prevalent perspective that the land is simply a commodity to be bought and sold.

The FSF made a significant addition to its protected properties in 2016 when Jean Engle sold the Moxie Woods to the FSF at a price that was deeply discounted from its so-called 'market value'. This is real proof of a true commitment to land protection. The annual "Loving the Land Through Working Forests" conference will be held at this newly protected property on May 20, 2017, and will include a dedication of the Moxie Woods to honor this act of loving the land more than loving self-gain.

We are currently working on several other conservation projects that would bring the FSF closer to its goal of becoming permanently economically self-sufficient [*see the Financial Summary on page 4 for an overview of the FSF's unique model*]. A number of people have been working on these projects, and if the increased enthusiasm and commitment that occurred in 2016 carries forward into 2017 I am confident that we will see significant gains this year.

I hope to see everyone at the Moxie Woods in May.

For more information about our upcoming conference, see Page 6 or visit us online at forestsandpeople.org

President & Founder

Organization Updates

Woodland Protection

2016 saw the protection of the 128-acre Moxie Woods in Otter Creek Township near Greenville, PA, via a charitable bargain sale made possible by the generosity of FSF Member Jean Engle. Board Member Dr. Jane E. Woods made the crucial gift of \$25,000 to cover the initial payment on the sale. The FSF remains humbled and grateful for the generosity and vision of both of these women.

This is our first woodland protected in Mercer County. It opens up new opportunities for conservation in the region, and has already been enjoyed as an educational site by Dr. Richard Bowden and his students at Allegheny College. This property will make its debut at this year's *Loving the Land Through Working Forests* conference on May 20th. We urge you to attend!



Jean Engle (center) highlights how she has managed part of the Moxie Woods for native plant and wildlife diversity over the years

Support the Moxie Woods Fund

As a bargain sale, the Moxie Woods was purchased for significantly less than market value, thanks to Jean Engle's generosity. Nonetheless, over the next five years we must pay a total of \$35,000 in annual mortgage payments.

The FSF has launched a fundraising campaign in Mercer County, but your support is needed to ensure the success of this project.

Please consider contributing to the Moxie Woods Fund. You can donate a specific dollar amount, or alternatively you can leverage the benefits of a sustainable timber harvest on your woodland by donating the net proceeds. For more information, contact Annie Socci or Guy Dunkle at (814) 694-5830.

A New Role within the FSF - Executive Director

In January 2017, the Board of Directors voted to appoint Annie Socci, formerly Conservation & Outreach Manager for the Foundation, as our first ever Executive Director.

Annie brings a unique range of experience in ecological research, leadership and management to the FSF. This is an important developmental step for the organization, and a sign of greater organizational capacity for conservation projects in the future.

A Sad Loss for our Community

As you may have heard, Lynn Firth, co-founder and strong supporter of the FSF, passed away on February 6, 2017. Lynn was a naturalist, conservationist, educator and adventurer. She held a broad perspective on the natural world, yet always carried a tiny lens in her pocket; she taught us that in order to understand trees we had to also get down on our hands and knees to see the plants, fungi and insects that are so often passed by underfoot. Lynn's curiosity and stewardship of the environment reminds us to keep an open mind and a kind heart in our interactions with forests.

Thank you to those who have made donations in memory of Lynn Firth. Throughout her life, Lynn traveled extensively to learn about people and nature. In that spirit, we will use Lynn's Memorial Fund to help others to attend educational events and gain first-hand experiences in forest stewardship which they can bring back to their communities.



Lynn Firth (right) pictured with her daughter, Whitney, in 2014

A Look at Our 5-Year Goals, 2016-2020

In July 2015, the Board of Directors and members of the FSF Community held a strategic planning session. They laid out a list of organizational priorities and set 5-year goals associated with each. Now in the 2nd year, we offer an update on our progress.

Outreach: Engage new Woodland Owners in Forest Conservation Planning

In late summer of 2016, we completed a mailing to 4,200 woodland owners in northwestern PA. It emphasized the importance of forest protection in the region, and identified legacy & conservation planning options. This yielded new inquiries and land protection conversations.

In 2017 we are launching a series of Landowner Outreach programs, informally known as “Coffee & Cake Sessions”. Board Members Bob Slagter and Craig Schwegman have devoted vital time and energy to this effort. Each quarter, landowners in a smaller focal geography within northwestern PA will be invited via postcard and phone calls to attend and learn about conservation options for their land. The first evening program was on March 16th in Edinboro, PA. These events are open to all.

Project Outreach is on its way to addressing our organizational priorities of engaging and educating woodland owners on the need for land protection and their options for achieving this. It is too soon to determine the full impact of this project, but we are evaluating each step in the process.

Land Protection: Protect 5,000 acres of forest as sustainable working forest

With the protection of the Moxie Woods, the FSF currently owns and protects 903 acres. While no land protection project is guaranteed until complete, the FSF is currently working on projects which would protect over 1,000 acres of forest in the next year. We are encouraged by this momentum.

Are you considering a donation or bequest to the FSF to ensure that your woodland will be sustainably managed and protected in perpetuity? We would like to hear from you, so that we may better support your conservation goals. See the Financial Summary on Page 4 to learn how land protection also supports our organization’s sustainability.

Membership: Reach 150 memberships by 2020 (from 70 memberships in 2015)

In 2016, the FSF held 97 memberships that comprised at least 140 members. Our metric is based upon memberships, and so we have much work to do in achieving our 5-year goal.

Thankfully, we have reasons to be optimistic. Over the past year, we welcomed new and potential members through events such as our annual conference and this year’s first ever “Our Woods & Waters Film Series”. Nationally, our membership has grown among readers of Wendell Berry’s feature of the FSF in his collection of essays, *Our Only World*. In late March 2017, Annie Socci & Guy Dunkle will interact with the 450+ attendees of Penn State’s Private Forest Landowners Conference through speaking programs and our table display. And in May 2017, the Loving the Land conference will take place in a new region for the FSF, Mercer County.

With plenty of opportunities to engage prospective members, our task is to improve our message to impart the significance of the FSF and the urgency of our Mission, and inspire good intention into action. **You can help by spreading the word about the FSF, and urge Membership as a gateway to forest protection and sustainable working forests.**

Fundraising: Expand Giving to \$7.5k in 2016, and \$25k in 2020

Thanks to the dedication of the FSF community, we surpassed our goal for 2016 with a total of \$9,241 in unrestricted donations, which excludes the generosity of the Firth Family. To progress steadily towards our 2020 goal, we will continue to broaden the range of ways in which the public can learn about and support our Mission. *See the Upcoming Events on page 6!*

Financial Summary

The Foundation for Sustainable Forests strives for fiscal transparency and good stewardship of your contributions. We are committed to keeping operational and personnel expenses low, to be able to direct more funds to the care and protection of forests.

The FSF has a one-of-a-kind operating model that sets it apart from other land trusts across the nation. With every forest it protects, the FSF moves closer towards self-sustainability.

Here is how it works:

Over time, the lands that the FSF protects will serve as a kind of endowment for the organization. That is, timber income will sustain the organization's general operations and personnel costs and, along with grants and membership support, fund the protection of other forests in the future.

In a nutshell, our approach forever intertwines the sustainability of the organization with sustainability of the forests it protects.

This model also allows for partnerships with land donors and other organizations through the FSF's *Shared Giving Program*, in which a donor can designate a proportion of the timber earnings on a donated property to be donated to a trust or organization of their choosing, either for a fixed period or in perpetuity.

It is estimated that the FSF will need to own 3,000-5,000 acres of woodland in total to reach this milestone. The wide range reflects the range of timber quality in protected forests.

Currently, the FSF owns and stewards 903 acres of forest. Several thousand acres of forest in the region are planned gifts to the FSF as bequests. With every forest that it protects, the FSF moves closer to achieving this vision.

At A Glance



With 903 acres protected to date, the FSF ranks 18th out of 69 among Pennsylvania land trusts in acreage of land protected, according to the 2015 census by the Pennsylvania Land Trust Association.

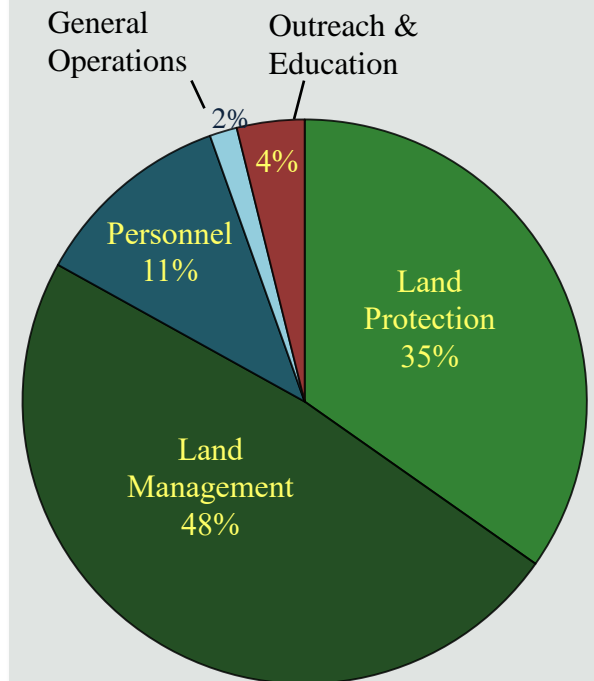


The FSF needs 2000+ acres of additional forests for protection in order to achieve financial self-sustainability.



The Firth Family is the FSF's primary benefactor, with average contributions of 39% of our annual budget over the last four years. Our goal is to reduce our dependence upon the Firth's generosity by cultivating a more diverse giving base.

Expenses in 2016



The chart above shows the relative proportion of the Foundation's expenses in 2016, which totaled \$178,942.

Land Management includes road and trail maintenance, logging expenses, invasive species and forest pest control and real estate taxes.

Land Protection includes legal fees for the newly acquired Moxie Woods and payments on already protected lands.

Personnel includes staff salary and benefits, and mileage reimbursement for volunteers.

General Operations primarily consist of printing and mailing expenses for our membership program, annual legal & accounting services and capital purchases such as our printer.

2016 Membership

Thank you for sustaining and furthering our Mission

Sustaining

Blaine, Terry & Lenley Aikin
Scott Alexander
Jeff Baker
Sarah Kiley Baker
John & Kathy Bartlett
Richard Bartlett
John C. Baun
Wendell Berry
Brenner Forest Products
Bill Briggeman
Henry & Elaine Burkholder
Ellen Cass
Dane & Jill Charlton
Clarence Cleer
Evan Clendenin & Amy Seese-
Bieda
Richard & Carol Deiss
Scott Drabert & Steve Yoset
Guy & Wilma Dunkle
Jean Engle
Ernst Conservation Seeds

Diane Esser
James & Linda Finley
The Firth Family
Gingerich Hardwoods
Mark & Mari Harrison
Robert Hass
David Hess
Brian Hill & Laura Heeschen
Thomas C. Hoffman, II
John Hummel
Lou & Wanda Irion
Lonnie Jantzi
Ann Kleinschmidt & Lee Coates
Jim Lang
Steven Latta & Family
Margaret Lay-Dopyera
Terrence Lobdell
Bob Long
Patrick Maloney & Annie Socci
Robert & Laura Maloney
Sandra Mansmann

Karlin Marsh
Wayne E. McCartney, Jr.
Judith Messina
Eric Pahlke
Paul Rankin
Al & Peggy Richardson
Brian Schultz
Craig A. & Monica Schwegman
Craig K. Scwegman
Gretchen Smith
Sam Snellenberger
Emil & Kathy Spadafore
Adrienne Socci
Elliott & Cynthia Socci
Tom Socci
John Tautin & Joan Galli
Douglas J. Villella
Ron & Michele Weisenstein
Jane E. Woods
Scott Yeager
David & Margaret Yasenckack

Family

Patty Arnold
Terry & Connie Bensel
The Bizer-Cox Family
Richard & Tracy Bowden
The Carroll Family
Sharon L. Davenport
Richard R. Eakin
Karl Evans
Gary & Denise Foltz
Edwin Gurdjian & Carol Maxwell

James & Patricia Harwood
Joseph L. Hood
Lance & Sheryl Hummer
Robert & Joanne Jaworski
Ron & Kelly Johnston
Larry & Melissa Mencotti
David & Nancy Ohmer
Dave & Hallie Rigg
Grant & Stephenie Ruttinger
Robert Sambroak

Sarah Sargent & Ron Mumme
Carmen Testi
Ray & Sue Toombs
The Turnage Family
Andy Walker
Recovery Solutions, Inc.
Subagh Winklestern
Howard & Cynthia Wurzbacher
French Creek Eyecare, LLC

Individual

Peter Dalby
David Dunkle
Robert Howden

James Kelley
Richard Kubiak
Peggy Mogush
Robert Ostryniec

Andrew Plaza
Cecile Stelter
Richard Szymkowski

New in 2017!

To acknowledge your generosity, a new Membership Level has been added. You can now **become a "Forest Partner"** with a contribution of \$250 or more.

Please consider renewing your commitment to our Mission in 2017 as a Sustaining Member or Forest Partner.

Look for a Membership Letter in the mail shortly,
or visit forestsandpeople.org/membership

Upcoming Events



22418 Firth Rd.
Spartansburg, PA 16434
forestsandpeople.org
info@forestsandpeople.org
(814) 694-5830

Annie Socci, PhD
Executive Director

John Noel Bartlett
Development Director, Emeritus

Board of Directors

Troy Firth
Founder & President

Terrence Bensel, PhD
Chair, Outreach & Education

Guy Dunkle
Chair, Forestry

James Finley, PhD

Thomas C. Hoffman II, Esq.

Craig Schwegman

Robert Slagter
Chair, Fundraising

Emil Spadafore, Esq.
Chair, Governance

Dr. Jane E. Woods

Our Woods & Waters Film Series

A Joint Offering of
the Foundation for Sustainable Forests & the French Creek Valley Conservancy



Gather on a winter's night
for warm community
and great films!

All events are free
& open to the public

Friday, March 31st at 7pm
Scot's Cinema @ Pogue Student Center
405 Scotland Rd., Edinboro, PA
Enjoy a series of selected film shorts, refreshments
will be provided!

The Foundation for Sustainable Forests
Presents

FRIENDS OF THE FOUNDATION DINNER

Friday, May 19, 2017

The Country Club in Meadville, PA

You are invited along with friends & family to enjoy
Dinner, Presentations, Recognitions & more

\$25 per Person 🍷 RSVP to (814) 694-5830

6th Annual In-the-Field Forestry Conference

Loving the Land Through Working Forests



Saturday, May 20, 2017

The Moxie Woods, near Greenville, PA

For more information or to RSVP,
visit forestsandpeople.org/events
or call (814) 694-5830