



FSFS Newsletter

Summer 2014

Success Again !

The Loving the Land Through Working Forests 2014

"The weekend conference was our first encounter with the Foundation for Sustainable Forests. We read about the conference in the PA Forestry magazine, and wanted to see more of the Northwestern PA hardwood areas so we signed up. We were only able to join the group for a nice lunch and the afternoon field session, but the forest tour was led by Troy Firth, and he had some very different and interesting ideas about managing hardwood forests, so that alone made it worth the trip. We like what the foundation is trying to do and look forward to interacting with them more," -- Lou and Wanda Irion, Wellsboro, PA.



The third annual Loving the Land Through Working Forests Conference 2014, May 16 and 17 received rave reviews from many participants. The 2014 conference added a Friday morning in-the-field session in partnership with the Forest

Guild and Audubon Pennsylvania. The session was geared to foresters and land managers and led to intense discussions on changing the approach to financing professional services and improving land management.

"I really enjoyed the Friday morning portion of the Foundation for Sustainable Forests Conference that I was able to attend. It was great that the in-the-field program was interactive with an intent to foster discussion," -- Elena Ramsey, Pittsburgh.

The Friday evening speaker's program featured Aldo Leopold biographer Curt Meine. Curt's talk and the following panel discussion met with enthusiasm, and a lot of reflection.

"I really liked how Curt's talk brought Leopold's story home and wrapped it into his (Curt's) hometown of New Castle. It was interesting to hear the whole range of Leopold's life and his shift in thinking," -- Wendy Kedzierski, Meadville.

The conference is the Foundation's signature educational and outreach program, which has proved valuable in not only spreading the word about the work of the foundation, but providing participants with the information and tools to make a real difference in on-the-ground forest management.

Partnering with the Foundation to make the 2014 conference a success were the Forest Guild, Audubon Pennsylvania, Pennsylvania Tree Farm Program, Allegheny College, I Am A Planet Kid and our other conference sponsors: Knox, McLaughlin, Gornall & Sennet; Erie Insurance; the Peter A. Yeager Memorial Foundation; Kathy and Emil Spadafore; Woodland Lodge; Pennsylvania Forestry Association; Center for Private Forests, PSU; Northwest Savings Bank; and Northwest Rural Electric Cooperative.

Conference Pictures



Aldo Leopold Biographer Curt Meine brought Leopold's message of a Land Ethic home in his Friday evening program and the following panel discussion at Allegheny College. Panelists in addition to Meine (center) were Eric Randall, professor emeritus SUNY Buffalo; Amanda Mahaffey, Forest Guild Northeast Regional Director; Carl Russell, Earth Wise Farm and Forestry, VT; and Susan Stout, D.F., Project Leader, U.S.F.S. Northern Forest Research Station.



From registration to the formal sessions to informal discussions everyone seemed to enjoy themselves and find value and meaning in the conference programs.

No? Horsing Around

The benefits of logging with horses are well known. In almost all cases logging with horses is better for the land; they are lighter than mechanized equipment and are more maneuverable, doing less damage to soils, the non-harvested trees and other plants. We also know that logging with horses is financially sound. After all, a team of horses and the related equipment costs only a fraction of the cost of a skidder. Hay and oats cost a lot less than diesel fuel.



It is hard work, but horse loggers can make a good living. However, other than among the Amish, the craft is being lost in western Pennsylvania, and nationwide.

“This is a concern,” said Jason Rutledge, founder of the Healing Harvest Forest Foundation (www.healingharvestforestfoundation.org) based in Copper Hill, Virginia. “Loss of horse loggers will be extremely limiting to the type of forestry practiced and advocated by

organizations like the Foundation for Sustainable Forests and ours.”

Rutledge’s Healing Harvest Forest Foundation is a long-time collaborator with the Foundation for Sustainable Forests and has been a national leader in promoting horse-logging and providing programs to those interested in learning the craft.

Carl Russell of Earth Wise Farm and Forest in Vermont (www.earthwisefarmandforest.com) and a presenter at this year’s Loving the Land Through Working Forests conference is another nationally-known horse logging advocate and educator. He argues that horse loggers ought to deserve a premium.

“I really think the way to bring more highly skilled and invested (horse) loggers into the forest is for the mindset of owners to change, recognizing that ultimately their long-term goals will not be met if the operators are not making enough money to uphold the ground-level activity that is required for those long-term goals,” Russell said. “If the emphasis on forestry is to increase functional profitability, then the harvesting work is so important that it should command a professional wage.”

Both Rutledge and Russell have worked to develop programs and regional and national networks to interest and train individuals in horse logging. A core issue, Rutledge said, is “it is a lifestyle, not just a job. It’s not right for everyone.”

Russell noted that in the northeast right now several schools are expressing interest in developing programs specific to restorative forestry and horse logging including Sterling College in Vermont and Paul Smith’s College in New York.

“I think it is imperative that we bring a focus on professionalism to the purpose of horse logging,” Russell said.

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Project Outreach

The Foundation is moving ahead with Project Outreach, even as it continues to seek funding for the final phases of the pilot project to identify and reach out directly to owners of forested land in Erie, Crawford, Venango and Warren counties.

The focus of the contact will be to familiarize them with the Foundation and the best in management practices for the benefit of the land, the importance of protecting their land and the legacy they hold as owners of wooded land and how they can pass on that legacy.

Audubon Pennsylvania, a project partner, will use the data to focus on contact for managing woodlots for birds and the importance of providing forested blocks. Other regional land trusts will also have access to the forested property information to help coordinate protection efforts and prioritize land holdings.

The first step in the project is to identify forested tracts and the ownership, prioritize them by size, critical habitat, location to other protected properties, forest connectivity, etc. The Foundation recently contracted with Chris Shaffer to do that work and Chris is now engaged in that process, which should be completed this summer.

Forested properties in the four counties selected for this pilot effort are under significant pressure from development, the break-up of ownership and ensuing fragmentation of forested blocks and an expected unprecedented transfer of ownership over the next two decades as a result of the average age of current owners

This Newsletter

You are receiving this newsletter as a member and supporter of the Foundation for Sustainable Forests or as a participant in one of our education and outreach programs, and we thank you. Your support makes the work of the Foundation possible and especially as a member makes our voice for sustainable forestry louder and stronger.

This is our first attempt at using the services of a free email-server designed specifically to distribute newsletters and other mass e-mailings. It should enable you to receive our newsletters and notices without the filter-blocking and related problems often associated with group mailings using our standard email accounts.

If you would prefer to receive a hard copy of the newsletter via post, please email your request to JNBartlett@FoundationForSustainableForests.org.

If you have not renewed your membership for 2014 or have not been a member, please do so now. Membership is just \$15 for an individual, \$25 for a family and \$50 and above for a sustaining membership. Memberships should be mailed to: Membership FFSF, 22418 Firth Road, Spartansburg, PA 16434.

