



# Newsletter

## Spring/Summer 2018

### Planting Their Future

*Contributed by Bob Slagter*

*Bob's family owns a ~50 acre wooded property along Caldwell Creek in Warren County. In 2013 Bob and his family made the significant decision to entrust the FSF with the future of that land. As part of our ongoing, cooperative stewardship, trees and shrubs were planted along the creek bank this past spring.*

It was 28 degrees on April 10, but the ground was muddy under the crust. As I looked down my driveway about a quarter of a mile, a group of figures emerged, marching toward the creek house. They were 40 high schoolers the bus let off to work on a riparian buffer planting on my property.

I was excited about the project, as my creek needs all the help we can give it, and 435 trees would certainly be a tremendous addition to water quality improvements. But kids working on a freezing cold morning in the soggy creek bottom? Well, the prospect seemed dismal at best. After all, if you've been around teenagers, you know that their reputation for being non-communicative tweeters is legendary.

The activities began with DCNR, NRCS, County Conservation, and, most importantly, their wonderful teacher explaining to the kids exactly what was needed and precisely how it was to be done. Interjecting here, I am known by DCNR as mass murderer of seedlings, having planted some 250 trees on my property with maybe a 10 percent success rate. If I touch a tender little sprout, it's curtains for that baby. What chance would these kids have to plant trees successfully and why would they possibly care about trees out here in the middle of nowhere?

I had a lot to learn that day about kids in the woods. First, they listened, they were attentive and they actually did seem to care. Next, they jumped into the work with a high level of energy. Could it be they welcomed the work? I'm talking digging and handling wet dirt with your hands on a frosty morning. Nobody would want to do that, and, if they did, there would certainly be a huge helping of complaining about it.



*Young trees line the creek on Bob's property in April after 40 high schoolers spent a day planting with him.*

What was it that I heard? Laughing, talking, even some singing... I was shocked! They did exactly as instructed, planted each tree with care — almost reverence — and did not stop until lunch when a dozen pizzas disappeared with an almost audible whoosh. Then after lunch, it was back to work without being asked. They completed the project by 2:30 in the afternoon, scrubbed the tools, and thanked me for letting them come out to my place to work.

Valuable lessons here are many, not the least of which is teens minus cellular devices equals really cool people. And, these kids do this several times a year. If you were to add it up, the long-term good they are doing for themselves and their own future teenagers is very significant, not just in work ethic but also in physical protection of cold fresh water, something in dwindling supply and of the utmost importance.

If you are considering a planting project, contact any of the agencies mentioned above or contact me, and I'll help point you in the right direction. You will help the forest, help the water, help the kids as they "Plant Their Future," and you will learn that we are leaving the world in very good hands.

#### **In this issue:**

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*Bob Slagter is a member of the FSF's Board of Directors and a PA Forest Steward. He is Warren County's Forest Landowner of the Year. Bob can be contacted at [slags@zoominternet.net](mailto:slags@zoominternet.net).*



# Celebrating Forest Conservation & Stewardship in May



*Jason Rutledge (left) travelled from Virginia and represented the Healing Harvest Forest Foundation at the 7th Annual Loving the Land Through Working Forests Conference near Girard, PA in May. Jason shared his passion for and knowledge of horse logging with the FSF community through woods walks and horse logging demonstrations. Jason also delivered the keynote presentation at the **Friends of the Foundation Dinner** (below) at Nick's Place in Edinboro.*



*The 7th Loving the Land Conference also featured the first **Women in Working Forests** program in collaboration with Amanda Mahaffey of the Forest Stewards Guild (bottom left), Cecile Stelter of the DCNR (bottom center), and Allyson Muth of Penn State's Center for Private Forests (bottom right).*



*We wish to extend our thanks to our sponsors, who made these events possible!*

*Craig & Monica Schwegman*

*Bob & Jane Slagter*

*Emil & Kathy Spadafore*

**Northwest Pennsylvania Woodland Association**



**Lloyd Casey Memorial Fund**



**NATIONAL WOODLAND OWNERS ASSOCIATION**





*Faces from the 7th Annual  
Loving the Land Through  
Working Forests Conference*

*“Holding the conference in an area you have been managing was so helpful to see the results of your practices.”*



*“[A highlight was] being in the forest with Troy Firth and Jason Rutledge for their respective sessions on Saturday, they present with passion.”*

**Executive Director’s Note**

On behalf of the Foundation for Sustainable Forests, I would like to apologize for mistakenly omitting the following contributors from the 2017 Annual Report Giving Summary:

John & Kathy Bartlett — Forest Partners

Karlin Marsh — Individual Member

John, Kathy, and Karlin, your continued engagement with the Foundation is invaluable to our mission, and I thank you for your support of woodland conservation and sustainable working forests. We would not be able to do our work without you!

Sincerely,

Annie Socci, PhD.  
Executive Director

**Renew or Become a Member Today**

Join a vibrant community of conservationists, woodland owners, land managers, ecologists, naturalists, and concerned neighbors, and strengthen our voice in forest protection – tell your friends and family about us too!

**\$15 Individual • \$25 Family • \$50 Sustaining • \$250+ Forest Partner**

Please send your preferred contact information and a check payable to the Foundation for Sustainable Forests: 22418 Firth Rd, Spartansburg, PA 16434  
Or visit [foundationforsustainableforests.org](http://foundationforsustainableforests.org) and join online!



# *Loving the Land— Landowners Tell Their Stories*

*Contributed by Ellis Giacomelli, edited by Jane Woods*

Jane Ewing Woods walked with me one early fall morning to show me special wooded spaces and one very special hilltop. When Jane was seven or eight years old, her father, Orlo Ewing, brought a telescope outside in the front yard of their hilltop home in Corry, Pennsylvania. That evening, through the telescope and with her father's guidance, Jane saw the rings of Saturn: one powerful and magical moment. Many more followed.

Jane's father, Orlo Ewing, purchased the 184-acre Corry property in 1949. Occasional piles of field stone along the eastern edge of the woodlot hint at the land's historical uses; they are a sign of pasturing for agriculture after forest clearing. Remnants of hand-made saws and other tools have been found at a site in the woods as well. Even before building their hilltop home, Orlo got busy right away and planted 20,000 pine trees. When employment changes forced the young Ewing family to relocate in the mid-1950's, the property was sold to a church foundation for development into a campground. Several years later when the Ewings returned to PA, Orlo learned that campground plans had been abandoned, making the property available again. Orlo and Ruth Ewing were delighted to repurchase their acreage, which became a place for family and friends to gather, and provided a lovely setting for their final years. After their passing, the open hilltop pasture acreage was sold to maintain its use and vitality, but the forest has remained in the family for these 67 years.

Jane inherited the property in 1990 and began attending seminars and field workshops to learn more about forest management and ecology, along with touring her woodlot with foresters for further perspective and education. Through these experiences, she has learned the merits of the practices and "worst-first" forestry of Troy Firth, our founder. Jane adamantly views herself as a "temporary guardian" of the land. "It really belongs to God. It's my privilege to be charged with its protection and conservation for the future," she said.



*Continued on page 5*



**Left:** *The view from the former Ewing home on the Corry property where the hilltop pastures and home are now owned by another family. The forest land under the protection of the Foundation follows the tree line on the right side of the photo and continues to the right out of this view. Right:* Jane calls this a "Storybook Tree" because of its several branches and its resemblance to illustrated trees in children's books.

For years Jane has enjoyed hiking, horseback riding, skiing, snowshoeing, photography, and collecting natural materials for artwork on the many trails her father established in the early 1960s. As we walked some of those trails, Jane was always looking for tree regeneration, pointing out her “little guys,” the seedlings emerging from the earth that she treats with a sort of hopefulness and gentle kindness. She remembers her canine companions seeking out the cool waters of some of the deeper pools in the streams that flow through her woods. With frequent soft smiles, she recalled moments in her favorite ravine and its hemlock stand, gobbling turkeys, blankets of spring wildflowers, countless mushrooms, close encounters with swooping owls. She pointed out the remnants of an extraordinarily branched “Halloween” tree, many “Story Book” trees, and she described the excitement of passing black bears and seeing migratory birds join year-round residents. A flood of memories washes over her now — this wooded playground of her childhood, growing up revering nature, seeing her mother in the birds. Busy adult life only cemented her enjoyment of and need for nature. “Especially in quiet alone time, the woods sings to all your senses, in synchrony. Each moment creates a memory bank of soul-food,” she said. Jane is further gratified that the work of the Foundation will allow that soul-food legacy to continue.

In our conversations, Jane used the word “treasure” to help describe her wooded land and her songbirds, hemlocks, and Halloween tree. She treasures the memories of experiencing the diversity of plant and animal life in her family’s woods, the profound peace and beauty of each season. “My time here began before rural properties were being subdivided and their farming fields and woods fragmented,” she said. “But I’ve also had enough years now in working with Troy Firth and the FSF to see their astute observations and forest management work with nature to benefit and protect the whole ecosystem.” She remains resolute as a landowner that what is best for the woods comes first. Aided by the Foundation’s management, a new forest of hardwoods emerges in the stand of declining pine trees her father once planted.

If you focus, you begin to hear only what you want to hear — the melodies of Jane’s birds, the crunch of the leaves, the beating of your own heart as you traverse the soft slopes. As we emerged from her woods, the sun greeted us with its humbling and rejuvenating warmth. Jane took me to the crest of the hill where her family’s former home still stands to enjoy the unparalleled view and revel in the wide open space. She can see her favorite people in nature and described seeing the rings of Saturn on that hilltop with her father as “a treasure beyond measure.” For Jane, the land is a source of renewal and a source of priceless memories. Those memories and her moments in the woods — when she feels so enchanted by nature’s music — do something for her soul.

*You may recognize Ewing Woods as the site of our 2016 “Loving the Land Through Working Forests” Conference. Jane Woods is an active member of the Foundation for Sustainable Forests. She serves on the FSF Board of Directors and continues to support stewardship efforts in the area.*

Would you like to share your landowner story? E-mail [info@foundationforsustainableforests.org](mailto:info@foundationforsustainableforests.org)

Congratulations to the FSF’s Annie Socci & Pat Maloney on the birth of the FSF’s newest member!  
Rowan Robert Maloney  
was born June 14, 2018, weighing 8lbs 5oz.

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Annie will be on maternity leave until September,  
so please direct FSF inquiries to:

Ellis Giacomelli at [info@forestsandpeople.org](mailto:info@forestsandpeople.org)  
or Guy Dunkle at [gdunkle@forestsandpeople.org](mailto:gdunkle@forestsandpeople.org)





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*The Foundation for Sustainable Forests is a 501(c)3 nonprofit land trust and outreach organization dedicated to conserving forested land and protecting sustainable working forests. Through direct ownership and active forest management we promote the protection and stewardship of healthy, resilient forests.*

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### **Staff**

Annie Socci, PhD  
*Executive Director*

John Noel Bartlett  
*Development Director, Emeritus*

## **UPCOMING EVENTS**

### **Special Screening of the Wendell Berry Film**

**“Look and See”**

**Sunday, July 29th • Time TBD**

*Chautauqua Institute, Chautauqua, NY*

### **Erie Gives Day is Tuesday, August 14<sup>th</sup>**

To give, visit [www.eriegives.org](http://www.eriegives.org)

Or call (814) 454-0853



### **2nd Annual Walk in Penn's Woods**

**Sunday, October 7th • 1pm-4pm • Location TBD**

### **Annual Fall Potluck @ Woodland Lodge**

**Saturday, November 3rd • 4pm Onward**

The Woodland Lodge, 2662 Eureka Rd. Grand Valley, PA

*For more information, visit [forestsandpeople.org/events](http://forestsandpeople.org/events)  
or call (814) 694-5830*