



2019 ANNUAL REPORT



YOU MAKE THE DIFFERENCE

2019 IMPACT AT-A-GLANCE

742 ACRES PROTECTED IN 2019



With the conservation of 7 properties in 4 counties across Pennsylvania and New York, it has been an unprecedented and inspiring year for working woodlands protection.

156 MEMBERS STRONG



FSF Members are loyal, and new members bring fresh energy each year. Together you are landowners, naturalists, educators professionals, and enthusiasts from across the region.

COMMUNITY IMPACT



2019 opened new doors for the FSF's goal of broadening impact through community partnerships for forest management.

STATEWIDE RECOGNITION



Troy Firth was honored with the Western PA Environmental Award and the PA Land Trust Association Lifetime Conservation Achievement Awards

OUTREACH



From woods walks with local groups to presentations at statewide conferences, the FSF continues to be a Thought Leader in sustainable forest management.

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President's Message

When we review 2019, the Foundation for Sustainable Forests has definitely experienced its best year in terms of lands protected and also what was probably our best year for furthering our mission and the positive name recognition that accompanies this.



The year began with a donation of 144 acres of exceptional woodland near Corry, PA. This donation came from Jane Ewing Woods, Board Member Emerita, and added an excellent gift to all of the other things that Jane has done for the Foundation. As you well know by now, we completed the Stony Hollow acquisition with a large grant from the DCNR, thus protecting 540 acres of forest in the Caldwell Creek drainage. The FSF was then the recipient of a very large donation from Jim and Connie Thompson of Williamsburg, VA that allowed us to buy a 55-acre property that adjoined other properties that the Foundation owned near Townville, PA. Lastly, in early fall the FSF received a donation of 102 acres from Ted and Deborah First. This parcel is our first in New York state and is located in the Town of Ellery east of Chautauqua Lake. Once again, this was a case of exceptionally generous individuals wishing to see lands protected.

Looking ahead to 2020, this year's "Loving the Land Through Working Forests" Conference is scheduled to be held at the newly named "Thompsons' Wood" property near Townville with the annual Friends of the Foundation Dinner the evening before at the Iroquois Boating & Fishing Club on Conneaut Lake. The featured speaker at both events, sponsored by Ernst Conservation Seeds, is the noted author Doug Tallamy. His latest book, *Nature's Best Hope*, is a description of how we can all contribute to the enhancement of our natural surroundings no matter how small the acreage that we own may be.

In his book Mr. Tallamy uses a quote from Aldo Leopold "The oldest task in human history is to live on a piece of land without destroying it." With the successes of 2019 and the many projects ahead, the FSF will continue to embrace this task on its own lands and challenge our neighbors to endeavor to do the same.

Troy Firth, President & Founder

***“When we see land as a community
to which we belong, we may begin
to use it with love and respect.”
-Aldo Leopold***

Cover Photo: A horse crew steaming on a sunny, wintery day in the forest at Woodcock Creek Campground while salvaging dead and dying ash trees that have been affected by the emerald ash boring beetle. This work is being done as a stewardship partnership with the Army Corps of Engineers to assist them in the stewardship of their woodlands.

2019 Membership & Support

Forest Partner (\$250+)

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Henry & Elaine Burkholder
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Ray & Sue Toombs
Jane E. Woods

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With gratitude to you all for sustaining the Foundation's Mission

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*The FSF makes every effort to acknowledge the generosity of its supporters each year.
If you have been omitted in error, please accept our deepest apologies and kindly let us know.*

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Pennsylvania Forestry Association

Emil & Kathy Spadafore
Northwest PA Woodland Association

Grantors

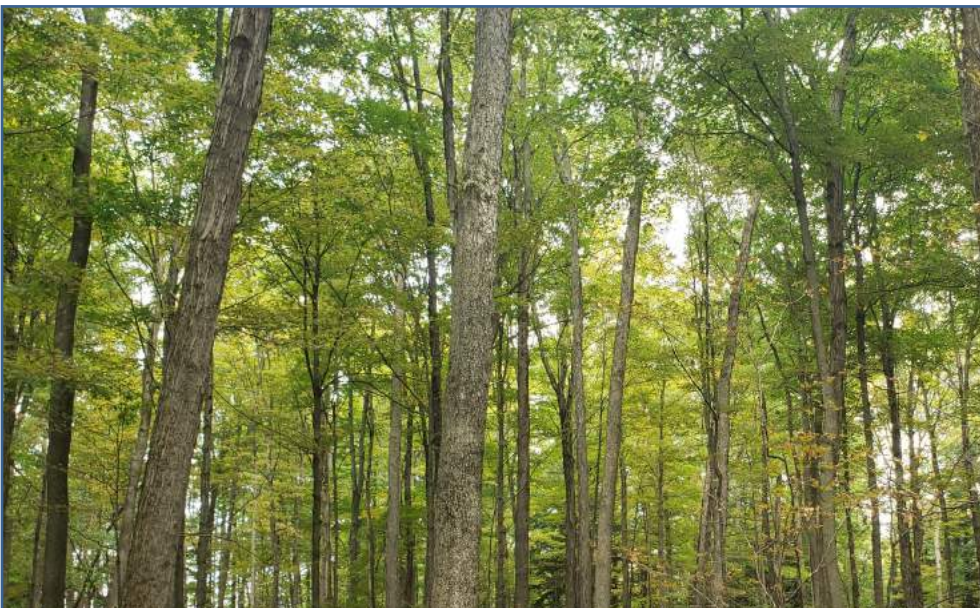
Corry Community Foundation
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Dominion Energy Charitable Foundation
Erie Community Foundation
PA DCNR
Bureau of Conservation & Recreation

Palmiero Toyota
Richard King Mellon Foundation
Meadville Rotary Club
Pennsylvania Environmental Council

THE FACES OF WORKING W

Ewing Family Woods

Under the care and stewardship of the Ewing Family since 1949, this 144-acre forest located in Corry, Erie County, PA, contains the headwaters of Spencer Creek. Donated in early 2019 by Jane Ewing Woods, pictured below (center) with her nephew and niece, Chad and Jessica Ewing, it will serve the community as a model working forest and educational site.



Thompsons' Wood

Jim & Connie Thompson read about the FSF in Wendell Berry's essay "A Forest Conversation". Thus began a relationship that led to their donation of funds to purchase a 55-acre forest adjacent to FSF lands in Troy Township, Crawford County, PA. Comprising 179-acres together, Thompsons' Wood will be the site of the Loving the Land Through Working Forests Conference.

WOODLANDS CONSERVATION

Stony Hollow (Caldwell Creek Watershed)

The purchase of the 292-acre Stony Hollow forest was made possible by the DCNR Bureau of Recreation & Conservation's Community Conservation Partnerships Program and matching donations of an additional 250 acres of forest by Troy Firth, all within the Caldwell Creek Watershed. Together these properties further the FSF's efforts to protect the integrity of the forested watershed surrounding a natural reproduction trout stream and public-access fly fishing corridor.



First Forest

Ted & Deb First have donated the FSF's first conservation project in New York State. They hope this forest will serve as an example of sustainable management in Chautauqua County. True to their word, the FSF has begun with a salvage of dying ash trees and will host a woods walk on the 102-acre property for landowners and forest professionals this spring.

2019 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 forested lands.

In 2019, the Foundation for Sustainable Forests achieved a milestone year for woodland protection with over 700 acres protected. The majority of this acreage was received as donated lands or cash donations to purchase specific land, which in itself is the biggest milestone of all. We remain humbled and grateful by the generosity of Jane Ewing Woods, Jim & Connie Thompson, Ted & Deb First, and our own Founder and President, Troy Firth. This year also included the Foundation's largest purchase of land for conservation to date—the 292-acre Stony Hollow property in the Caldwell Creek Watershed. This is part of a broader conservation campaign to protect the integrity of the watershed, which surrounds a public access catch-and-release fly-fishing trout stream. This acquisition was made possible in large part by the grant we received from the DCNR Community Conservation Partnerships Program. As pertains to the scope of the FSF's expenses in 2019, note that 90% of that grant was received in 2018, but was held over to 2019 and used to purchase Stony Hollow in May.

As described by Troy in his President's address and in "Faces of Conservation" (pp 6-7), 2019 was also an unprecedented year for public support, and an amazing display of your collective generosity. Together, your contributions on Erie Gives Day alone totaled \$168,000! Furthermore, your donations led to an additional \$14,000 in matching funds from the Erie Community Foundation and Corry Community Foundation. At the end of the year, the Foundation for Sustainable Forests received an anonymous donation of \$20,000, directed towards paying down land acquisition debts. We thank those generous visionaries who recognize this crucial, albeit unglamorous, step for the organization, and will be continuing those efforts moving forward.

As we look ahead, we continue to hone our organization's operations and financial model to ensure the long-term stability of the organization. To further this endeavor, we have received an organizational capacity-building grant from the Richard King Mellon Foundation to assist us in strategic planning for the three years ahead. To that end, after receiving much recognition in 2019, we expect 2020 to be an introspective year as we envision our long-term future while strategizing in the short-term.

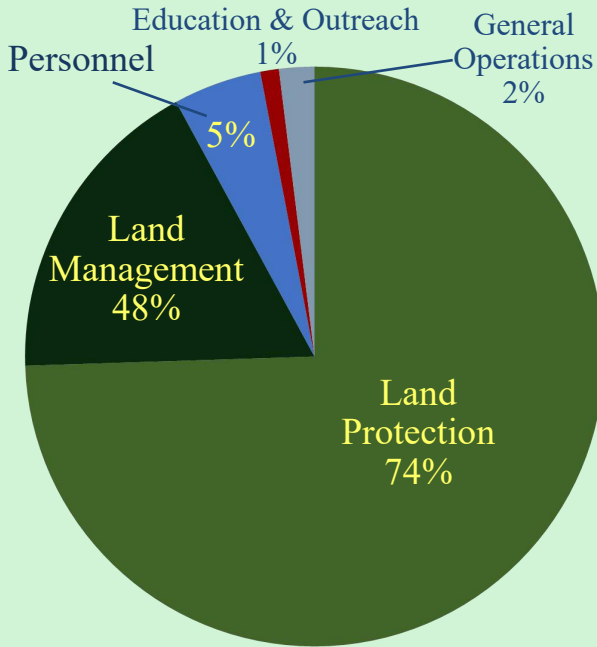


Attendees at the Dedication of the Stony Hollow Forest in July. Left to Right: Julie (of Sen. Michelle Brooks' office), Erin Wiley-Moyers (DCNR), Guy Dunkle, Troy Firth, Craig Schwegman, Patrick Maloney, Matt Marusiak (WPC), Bob Slagter, Luke Bobnar (WPC), Cecile Stelter (DCNR), Warren County Commissioner Ben Kafferlin, Rep. Kathy Rapp, Annie Maloney.



The Annual Friends of the Foundation Dinner in May was held at the rustic Woodland Lodge, featuring a presentation by author and editor Dave Mance, III of Northern Woodlands magazine.

Expenses



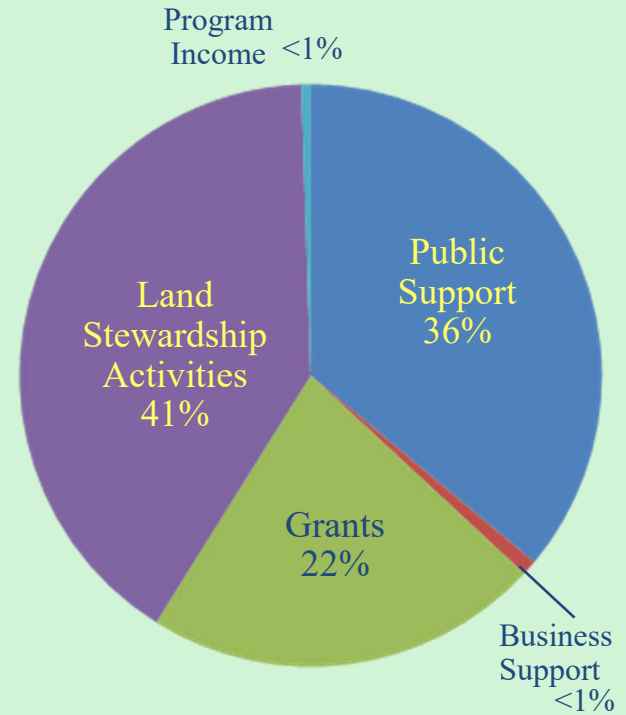
Total Expenses: \$1,054,500

Land Management includes maintenance, invasive species & pest control, real estate taxes, and timber harvest expenses

Land Protection includes legal fees & payments towards protected lands, including principal payments and interest on long-term loans.

Note that \$652,500 was received from DCNR in 2018, but was used for the purchase of Stony Hollow in 2019

Revenue



Total Revenue: \$531,300

Land Stewardship Activities includes the sale of timber from “worst-first” harvests, ash tree salvage, and other forest quality improvements.

Public Support includes membership dues and donations.

Grants include both public funds received for land acquisition, and private funding for organizational capacity-building and operating capital expenses.



Troy Firth received the PA Land Trust Association’s Lifetime Conservation Achievement Award in April at their annual conference. Left to right: FSF Board Member Jim Finley, Troy Firth, PAL-TA Executive Director Andy Loza



Troy Firth received a Western Pennsylvania Environmental Award at a recognition dinner in Pittsburgh last spring. Left to right: Whitney Firth, Guy Dunkle, Troy Firth, Annie Maloney, Bob Slagter, and PA Environmental Council President Davitt Woodwell



Emerging Themes in Forest Management

In addition to the speaking program offered each year at our *Loving the Land Through Working Forests Conference*, the FSF's Executive Director Annie Maloney, and Director and Land Manager Guy Dunkle have presented a number of programs recently on the subject of forest management for **ecosystem health**, a holistic approach to **managing your forest for wildlife**, and forest management for **adaptation and resilience to climate change**. Each of these presentations are predicated upon a crucial question related to your forest:

“To Act or Not to Act?”

This question is key because we are so often asked if it would be better to “leave the forest alone” rather than practice active forest management. When asked, we are unwavering in our reply — “*There is no such thing as an 'untouched' forest any longer.*” Regardless of whether or not a person even walks into a woods, it is being influenced by external stressors such as invasive pests and weeds, edge effects associated with development and parcelization, the legacy effects of prior timber harvests and climate change, to name a few.

If we do it right, careful management is a way that we can have a positive impact on a forest. That is, we view intentional, thoughtful **management as a proactive tool** to improving forest ecosystem health and resilience. Thus, the FSF's outreach programs focus how the “tool” of active forest management can be wielded to improve the health and condition of our region's forest to address the many stressors they are facing.

Below is a list of outreach programs offered by the Foundation for Sustainable Forests in 2019:

“High Grading 101: What is it and why is it one of the biggest threats to our forests?” -*PA Forest Landowners Conference*

“Forest Management as a Tool for Enhancing Ecosystem Resilience” - *PA Forest Landowners Conference*

“Forest Management for Climate Resilience and Overall Health” - *PA Land Conservation Conference*

“Sustainable Forestry for Conservation: Beginning a path to (pro)active management for forest health, habitat & resiliency” - *PA Land Conservation Conference*

“Proper Tree Selection & A Holistic Approach to Habitat” - *Woodland Owners of Clarion & Allegheny Valley Conference*

“Using Expanding Gaps and Low-Intensity/High-Frequency Thinnings to Create Vibrant, Resilient Forests” -*Penn State Webinar Series: Progressive Forestry in PA Hardwoods*



Guy Dunkle speaks at the Audubon Community Nature Center near James town, New York in March 2020

Visit our website
for updates
related to Covid-19

UPCOMING EVENTS

APR 26 SPRING WILDFLOWER WALK

In memory of FSF founder Lynn Firth, we will take a walk through the woods and enjoy spring's wildflower display. Sunday, 12-2pm @ Erie National Wildlife Refuge, Trolley Line Trail, Cambridge Springs, PA



MAY 15 FRIENDS OF THE FOUNDATION DINNER

Attend the 4th Annual Dinner, a celebration of the FSF community. The featured speaker is writer and professor Doug Tallamy, author of "Bringing Nature Home" and "Nature's Best Hope". RSVP Required. Begins 5:30pm @ Iroquois Boating & Fishing Club, Conneaut Lake, PA



MAY 16 LOVING THE LAND CONFERENCE

Our premier field event, open to all. The day's program includes woods walks, horse-logging demonstrations, demonstration goats on invasive species management, tips and tools for women woodland owners, and a special presentation by author Doug Tallamy.

8am-4pm, @ Thompsons' Wood near Centerville, PA. RSVP Required.



JUN 6 WOODS WALK @ FIRST FOREST

Troy Firth will lead a walk on sustainable forest management at the newly conserved First Forest in Ellery, NY, north of Chautauqua Lake. 9:30am-12pm @ First Forest, near 5513 Fenner Road, Sinclairville, NY



AUG 11 ERIE GIVES DAY



The region's annual day of giving, and the FSF's biggest campaign of the year

OCT 4 WALK IN PENN'S WOODS DAY

This is a statewide event a Sunday afternoon to take a stroll in the woods and appreciate our regions' forests. 1pm-4pm, Location TBA



NOV 7 FALL POTLUCK GATHERING

This gathering at the Woodland Lodge in Grand Valley, PA is to celebrate you, and all you do for our region's forests!

Walks and Talks begin at 4pm, Supper at 5:30pm



[FoundationforSustainableForests.org/events](https://www.FoundationforSustainableForests.org/events)

*Protecting forested land
and supporting
rural communities
through working forests*



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Spartansburg, PA 16434

(814) 694-5830

FoundationForSustainableForests.org

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 forests.

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The Foundation for Sustainable Forests is keeping careful watch of Coronavirus (Covid-19) updates, and will only hold this and other events if it is determined to be safe to do so. Please check our website or call for updates.



The Foundation for
Sustainable Forests
invites you to attend

The 9th Annual Field Conference

Loving the Land Through Working Forests



Saturday, May 16, 2020

Thompsons' Wood, near Centerville, PA

For more information or to register visit:
foundationforsustainableforests.org/loving-the-land