



Newsletter

Fall/Winter 2016-17

Autumn Greetings from the Foundation for Sustainable Forests!

On a recent Sunday afternoon, my partner and I headed over to his parents' house for a visit. Enjoying the fall breeze we piled into the truck with homemade corn muffins, a chainsaw to trim the yard trees, and barrels for cider apples.

As we lumbered along the road, he pointed out his old stomping grounds. "That's the old swimming hole we used to go to." Later, "The woods edge by that field was great for trapping fox." And, because making syrup has always been dear to his heart: "That patch there would make a dandy sugarbush!"

As we approached his childhood home he declared "Last we spoke, the neighbors were thinking of making a cut in their woods, I'll stop over to see what they've decided."

Well, our fine spirits were about to change. The neighbors had hired a logger who would do a 'high grade' of the forest, removing the healthiest trees for timber and leaving those trees in the worst shape behind.

Their decision was hard to hear. It is their land of course, and their wishes must be

respected always. But, this woods was enjoyed by my partner's family for years, so it also felt deeply personal.

For a landowner, it is hard to ignore the short-term earnings of a heavy cut. But as you know all too well, this approach can also do long-term damage to a healthy ecosystem. With our forests so vulnerable to invasive species and disease, it could be downright devastating.

Unfortunately, this scenario echoes across the region all too often. It makes the Foundation's mission even more urgent. So, this is where you come in. **We need your help- through contributions to support land protection, and as ambassadors to friends and neighbors.** Together, we can ensure that woodland owners who are concerned about the future of their land know and understand their options.

Respectfully,

Conservation & Outreach Manager



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- Fundraising Report & Erie Gives Day
- Recent Events- Annual Potluck, Woods Walks, Palmiero Toyota Giveback
- *Loving the Land: Landowners Tell Their Stories*, by Margaret Lay-Dopyera

(Pictured at left) Member Karlin Marsh proudly displays an American Chestnut fruit in her Blooming Valley woodland

FUNDRAISING NEWS & UPDATES

Who put the **FUN** in **FUN**draising? *by Craig Schwegman*

Have you met or spoken to our **FUN** crew: Bob Slagter, Jane Woods or Craig Schwegman? Prior to the summer of 2016, we really did not have a formal Fundraising Committee to support the FSF activities. Volunteers stepped up when asked or needed. Today, we have actively engaged board members and members that understand there are costs associated with protecting Penn's Woods, from having a leadership team to guide us forward, to having the funds critical to land protection and education programs.

The Fundraising Committee is a busy one. Without them there is no Foundation. In previous newsletters, you have learned about Project Outreach (more about this later), our annual "Loving the Land Through Working Forests" conference and a variety of community programs. These are just a few of the activities that the committee strives to support in the course of the year. For 2017, we intend to develop an annual calendar to keep our members informed about the plans of the committee.

We promised you more information about Project Outreach. In 2016, we reached 4,400 households in Crawford, Erie,

Venango and Warren Counties with a mailing about the importance of woodland protection and having a legacy plan. **In 2017, we plan to contact these landowners to invite them to a "Coffee & Dessert" information session.**

These sessions will be led by a member of our leadership team alongside volunteers. Our plan is ambitious to say the least. We want to contact 100 households a week to invite them to one of our quarterly sessions, each an hour or less, to learn more about the FSF. These sessions will be conducted at a site centrally located in each county (ex. fire hall, community room, VFW). **If you know of a low- or no-cost facility available, or would like to join us in engaging landowners at these sessions, please contact Annie Socci.**

Once we announce these Project Outreach meetings, we hope you will attend and tell your story about your association with the FSF. As Bob Slagter likes to say, "We will have short topics, do a lot of listening and have **FUN**!" Again, thank you for your support of this important mission.



GIVEBACK PROGRAM

16167 Conneaut Lake Rd
Meadville, PA

During November, Palmiero Toyota is holding its community giveback program, and you get to Vote! The organization with the most votes will receive \$5,000, an award that would enable exciting new land protection & outreach projects for the FSF.

Visit the showroom to vote and be sure to thank Palmiero Toyota for their support of this community!

Erie Gives 2016

Your generosity made this one-day giving campaign on Tuesday, August 9th our most successful yet!

Thanks to you, the FSF is engaging in new land conversations and the planning of a new in-person outreach campaign.

Thanks for your support *and* the great conversations our volunteers had with you when they called!



Craig Schwegman and Annie Socci (at center) pose with Erie Community Foundation Trustees at the Erie Gives 'big check' presentation



Guy Dunkle & Commissioner Ben Kafferlin discuss approaches to achieving desired forest regeneration.

Warren County Commissioner Ben Kafferlin Supports the FSF's Mission

Last month, Guy Dunkle, Bob Slagter & Annie Socci met with Warren County Commissioner Ben Kafferlin at Slagter's Grand Valley cabin to talk about FSF projects in the region.

Kafferlin grew up helping his family to manage their woodlands, and understands the importance of sound forestry. He pledged his willingness to promote future projects. We are thankful to him for lending an ear to get to know the FSF!

Many Thanks to the Attendees of the 3rd Annual Potluck Gathering

What a warm, engaged community- you have energized the FSF for the important work ahead!



Over 60 people gathered on Sunday, November 5th for this event. Activities included tours about woods management and maple sap harvest, and a tree ring program for kids.

At dusk, all gathered inside the Woodland Lodge for a meal and thoughtful conversations.

Loving the Land— Landowners Tell Their Stories

By Margaret Lay-Dopyera

Across my 85 years I have lived in seven different states and traveled in many countries. Throughout these years, what I have always considered as "home" are the places in Eldred Township, Warren County that Ezra Trim homesteaded from about 1840. Mr. Trim is one of the central characters in the early history of this area. He farmed and carried on a lot of business. He couldn't read or write but kept track of his dealings on shingles that he had on a window sill in his barn. I grew up hearing stories about him and about how my great-grandfather, Orange Robinson (1834-1911), always had to help his friend Ezra with any dealings that required more than his signing with an "X."



Orange Robinson, an early settler to the region & the author's great-grandfather

Other areas had been settled earlier, but when Mr. Trim arrived the countryside was all woods. There was a path that he used to carry wheat and corn to Garland, eight miles away, to have his wheat ground into flour and corn into cornmeal. To haul in barrels of oil, he told of having to unload the barrels and roll them through mud holes and then load them again.

My first 13 years of life were spent on our family farm on Mickle Hill Road, close to sites named for Trim: Trim's Corner, Trim School, and Trim Cemetery. What I think of as my home place is the stretch of countryside between East Branch, up to Mickle Hill Road, Devil's Slide

Road, Eureka Road and into the Three Bridge Hollow. In the north part of this stretch, the springs flow into Spring Creek, onward to Brokenstraw Creek, and then to the Allegheny River, headed toward Pittsburgh and on toward the Gulf. At the south end the waters flow toward Caldwell Creek into Oil Creek and eventually also to the Allegheny River. I don't know when I started to appreciate the local geography but I remember asking my parents again and again, "Is that a river or a creek?"

It was a wonderful place to grow up! I always liked the idea of living at what I thought of as the top of the world. To go anyplace from where we lived, we had to go down hills. I liked that! Also, the properties owned by my family or our neighbors all had gentle springs that offered growing children like my cousins and me places to engineer miniature dams, tiny ponds, and bridges. Our woods were full of mossy areas, hollows left where aged trees had once grown, and glacially-dumped rocks good for construction. We had no playgrounds but we had plenty of opportunities to play, climb, explore and learn to appreciate the natural world.

"Knowing that this 100 acres of woodland will be well taken care of across the years is a source of happiness for me."

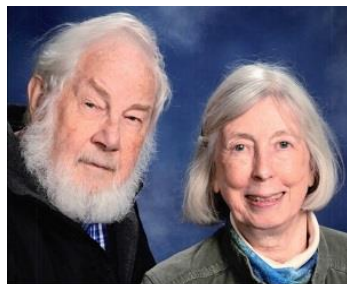
A main attachment to my home place comes from my family history there. The great-grandfather, already mentioned, Orange Robinson, built his home close to Trim Corner. He also provided land for his three daughters, one of them my grandmother, Cassie. She and my grandfather, Archie Smith, were given land they called the Green Place after its original owner. My

mother, Berdena Smith Lay, had many stories to tell of her childhood there. Some of those stories were about her mother, who she described as unusually wise, respected and resourceful.

Doctors were “far away” by buggy, so in Trim’s Corner it was my grandmother who was routinely called upon to assist with health issues and especially with births. “Go get Cassie!!” was the watchword signaling the birth of a child.

After their children were grown, my grandparents moved to just north of Trim’s Corner but continued to own and use the original Green property and adjoining land that they had purchased. The property stayed in my family, and I was able to buy it from my Uncle Keith in 1972. During the 1970s and 1980s my parents, my husband John Dopyera and I often visited the property and wandered through the woods to admire the beauty of the towering trees. John and I had not yet, at that point, seriously considered ever living on the property. Our work kept us in Syracuse, New York. In the 1990s, though, we retired and moved to what for me was a return home. In our retirement John and I created a lodge on the Eureka Road end of the property and lived there for more than twenty years.

In our years of living in the middle of our forest, John and I had many adventures, some problems and many satisfying accomplishments. Of all the times that are fun for me to recall, one is particularly memorable. Our dog, P.D., and I scared up a skunk as we enjoyed our morning walk along the path that circled through the



*John Dopyera & wife
Margaret Lay-Dopyera*

woods and through stretches of the Green Place property. We were quite thoroughly sprayed. When the two of us, P.D. and I, arrived back at the lodge, I called in to John saying, “I think we have a problem!” John quickly became aware that we did, indeed, have a BIG problem. What to do? We knew that tomato juice might be the way to reduce the smell but we had none— only canned whole tomatoes. Holding his nose, John brought out jars of them. The image of me, a fairly dignified person, stripped naked beside our lodge in the forest, washing myself and P.D. with tomatoes, seeds and all, is not easily forgotten.

Among the many happenings of all kinds there in our forest, we came to know Troy & Lynn Firth and spent a great deal of time learning about the Foundation for Sustainable Forests. We participated in conferences, provided housing for guest speakers and were happy to assist and learn the practices that were being promulgated.

Wanting to support this effort, John and I decided together to gift the Green Place and the adjoining 50 acres to the Foundation. John died in 2014, but I was able to realize our shared vision and completed the arrangement in 2015.

Knowing that this 100 acres of woodland will be well taken care of across the years is a source of happiness for me. As I observe forestry practices elsewhere that are abysmal and the total destruction of many forests altogether, **I am pleased that John and I were able to make a contribution that will ensure that a portion of my family’s beautiful woodland will forever be protected.** I urge others to consider making such a lasting gift of their property.

Margaret Lay Dopyera now lives in Ithaca, NY. She invites you to e-mail her if you have questions: m Lay@twcny.rr.com



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We wish to acknowledge and thank all those who contributed on Erie Gives Day

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