



2020 ANNUAL REPORT



A YEAR LIKE NO OTHER 2020 IMPACT AT-A-GLANCE



1720 ACRES PROTECTED TO DATE

With the addition of the Sugar Creek Access at Thompsons' Wood this year, the FSF now protects 1720 acres in northwest PA and western NY.



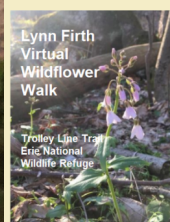
178 MEMBERS STRONG

Together, you made this most difficult year a record-breaking one for membership support. Despite being disconnected by the pandemic, the FSF community has never been stronger!



COMMUNITY IMPACT

Pandemic restrictions did not prevent the FSF from practicing its sustainable and restorative practices on its partners' woodlands in Erie and Crawford Counties.



Lynn Firth
Virtual
Wildflower
Walk

Trolley Line Trail
Erie National
Wildlife Refuge

VIRTUAL OUTREACH

The 2020 wildflower walk was a GIS story map so you could explore the trail on your own during the pandemic. More than 10x the usual participants "attended"!



CAPACITY-BUILDING

Shifting from outreach to introspection by necessity this year, FSF Board and Staff worked hard to improve systems and engage in strategic planning initiatives for a bright future!

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*On the Cover: Blooming Valley
Forest in winter , Crawford County*

Bloodroot flower (*Sanguinaria canadensis*) on the Trolley Line Trail, Erie National Wildlife Refuge, the site of the 2020 Virtual Wildflower Walk.

Photo credit: Annie Maloney

Executive Director's Message

When the pandemic quarantine first began in 2020, there were the expected shortages and changes in consumer behavior- toilet paper was scarce, groceries flew off the shelves, etc. As time went on, less predictable patterns began to emerge. One that stood out to me in particular was the boom in landscaping and gardening activities, after marked declines in both in recent years. Yes, with more time at home and more open schedules, 2020 was a year, among many other things, for yard care and home-grown food. And the trend persists- right now seed companies are barely keeping up with demand as people dream of springtime and plan their vegetable gardens and flower beds.

As I worked in my own vegetable garden last spring, I couldn't help but wonder whether this trend would last beyond a global pandemic. To take it one step further, would good yard stewardship include better care of the land as a whole, including our forests?

For the FSF's part, once we all became more familiar with the requirements of social distancing and which activities were safe to continue, the isolation of 2020 was quite conducive to forest stewardship, and Guy Dunkle, Troy Firth, and team got right to work (see pages 10-11). Similarly, our partners- including the Presque Isle Audubon Society and the City of Erie- were also in the stewardship mindset, enlisting the FSF's help in the care of their properties through invasive species management or a selective "worst-first" thinning.

The self-care and stewardship mindset of 2020 also extended to the FSF's organizational operations. A year ago, on the heels of unprecedented growth in our conserved land base in 2019, I could never have told you that this would be a year of introspection and thoughtful strategic planning for the FSF, but so it was. Bolstered by a capacity-building grant from the Richard King Mellon Foundation at the end of 2019, the onset of the pandemic coincided with wrapping up a professional consultancy that provided key guidance on strategic growth and operational changes that would better support the FSF's current success and long-term sustainability. In short, the FSF Board of Directors has been VERY busy in 2020, and the results continue to inspire and energize. Bob, Craig, Guy, Jim, Pat, Rich, Tom, and Troy, please allow me to thank you again whole-heartedly for the hard work that you have done this past year, and continue to do, to shore up the FSF's future and continue its success in working woodland conservation. I owe additional thanks to John Bartlett, Bob Long, and Dan Williams for assisting the Board in these efforts.



As we enter the second year of pandemic life, I hope for health and a return to the kind of normalcy that will allow us to safely gather again soon. But in addition, I hope that the same trend in yard care that was characteristic of 2020 will persist and expand to better stewardship across our collective landscape in the year ahead. The FSF promises to do its part, and will continue to look for ways to assist you in doing the same.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Annie Maloney". The ink is dark and the signature is fluid.

Annie Maloney, PhD
Executive Director

2020 Membership & Support

Thank you for choosing to support forest conservation and stewardship in this difficult year!

Sustaining (\$1000+)

Blaine, Terry & Lenley Aikin
Wendell & Tanya Berry
Henry & Elaine Burkholder
Dane & Jill Charlton

Ted & Deborah First
Troy Firth
Chris H. Lundberg
James & Jane Reilly

Craig A. & Monica Schwegman
Bob & Jane Slagter
Jim & Connie Thompson
Dr. Jane Ewing Woods

Forest Partner (\$250-\$999)

Advanced Forestry Services, Inc.
John & Kathy Bartlett
Bob & Kit Concilus
Pat & Sam Dengel
Guy & Wilma Dunkle
Jean Engle & Marilyn Norconk
Ron & Rebecca Fassett
Robert & Amy Felton
Jim & Linda Finley

Brad Gould and Family
The Heeschen Hill Family
David Hess
Bob & Kathy Long
J. Robert Jaworski & Joanne Kleinhanz
Michael & Christella Kloecker
Laura Maloney
Patrick & Annie Maloney
Eric Pahlke

Theo Parker
Al Richardson
Tom Salmon
Elliott & Cyndee Socci
Ray & Sue Toombs
Mary Ann & Harry White, II
Frank & Cheryl Zalik
Richard Zeber

Family (\$50-\$99)

Judith & Michael Acker
Dale & Sue Baker
Jess Baker
Richard Bartlett
John C. Baun
Terrence & Connie Bensel
Jerry & Becky Biebel
Kristen Blucas
Kevin Boozel
Scott Carlson
Betsy Carroll
Ellen & John Cass
Kyle & Shawna Chylinski
Evan Clendenin & Amy Seese-Bieda
Brenda Costa
Jason & Tracey Crawford
Sharon L Davenport
Richard & Carol Deiss

Jason Dilworth & Megan Urban
Scott Drabert
Reed Dunkle & Rebecca Vogan
David Dunkle
Robert Durand
Richard & Dianne Eakin
Tom & Mary Erdman
Helen Dawn Firth Albers Post
Matthew Flaming
The Flook Family
French Creek Coffee & Tea Co.
Curtis & Susannah Frigon
Marlene & William Gandjos
Randy Gorske
Nicole Gross-Camp & Simon Camp
Thomas Hagamen
Mark & Mari Harrison
James & Patricia Harwood

Robert B. Hass
Carol & Rick Holmgren
Janice H. Horn
Robert C. Howden
Lance & Sheryl Hummer
Irion Lumber Company
Lonnie & Connie Jantzi
Jeaneen Jaynes
Ann Kleinschmidt & Lee Coates
Michael Kozalla
Richard J. Kubiak
Scott & Joyce Ladner
Jim Lang
John & Norma Liebenguth
Terry Lobdell & Alejandra Lewandowski
John McGowan & Susan Lundell
Sandra L. Mansmann

*“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens
can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.”*

-Margaret Mead

Grantors

Corry Community Foundation
Crawford Heritage Community Foundation
Erie Community Foundation

Palmiero Toyota
John Nesbitt Rees & Sarah Henne Rees Foundation
USDA NRCS Rural Business Development Program

Family (\$50-\$99) (continued)

Carol F. Maxwell & Edwin Gurdjian
Margaret & Wayne E. McCartney, Jr.
Clemence Mershon
Judith Messina
Jocelyn Miller
Paul Miller
Nancy J. Nalepa
Lisa Olszak-Zumstein
Penn Forest Cemetery
Ryan Pickering
Paul & Barbara Rankin
Andy & Jen Reilly
Meghan & Rich Reilly-Best

David & Hallie Rigg
Franklin Rogers
Grant & Stephenie Ruttinger
Sarah Sargent & Ron Mumme
Ben & Susan Slote
Gretchen Smith
Tom Socci & Xandra Feathers
Emil & Kathy Spadafore
Samuel & Barbara Spencer
David Snyder & Susan Stout
Richard Steigerwald
George Szymanski
Richard Szymkowski

John Tautin & Joan Galli
Carmen & Kathy Testi
Dick & Annette Thorr
Jane Titus
Jenny Tompkins & Bennett Gould
Shirley Turnage
Andrew Walker
Gregory & Heather Yahn and Family
David & Margaret Yasenchack
Scott & Dana Yeager
Nathan & Kelsey Zimmerman
Zook Computer Services

Individual (\$25-\$49)

Katie Andersen
Nancy Andersen
Dale Bkaer
Barry Beal
Harriet Beckman
Peggy Bell
Richard & Tracy Bowden
Paul Burroughs
Pat Bywater
Gordan & Judy Chapin
Gloria Corbett
Kelly C. Culbertson
Kelly Dempsey
Laura L. Dengler
Gregory & Pam Duffin
Karen Eisenhart

Matthew Ferrence
Denise & Gary Foltz
Emily Frigon
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Wendy & Greg Kedzierski
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Melissa C. Mencotti
Peggy Mogush
Joanne Munzert

Sue Murawski
Brett & Nicole Neely
Terrance O'Connor
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Derek Reno
Jason D. Roblee
Matthew & Melissa Shimek
Christopher Sides
Scott Sjolander
Emily & Josh Smith
Cecile Stelter
Karen Styborski
Roxanne Tonn
Sherry Uhler
Stephen Zuk
Anonymous Donors

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

Thank You Emil!

Following a decade of service, Emil Spadafore, Esq. has stepped down from the Foundation's Board of Directors.

Emil brought passion, knowledge and unique skills to his role as a board member. His advice was often sought and he was a willing and thoughtful sounding board for everyone's ideas. His legal experience was especially helpful as the Foundation grew and matured as an organization during his time on the board.

Emil's community service extends beyond the Foundation. He is a Trustee of the University of Pittsburgh. He is deeply involved in the transformation of Pitt-Titusville to a regional education and training hub that will focus on the education and training needs of northwestern Pennsylvania. He serves as chairman of the UPT Advisory Board.



Emil and his wife Kathy have a deep appreciation for the natural world and a commitment to conservation, land protection and the success of the Foundation for Sustainable Forests.

Emil will be missed as a board member, but we know he and Kathy will remain as supporters and friends.

Thank You Emil!



Left to Right: FSF Director/Land Manager Guy Dunkle, Emil, and his wife Kathy Spadafore share a laugh at the 2017 Friends of the Foundation Dinner

A Reflection on 2020

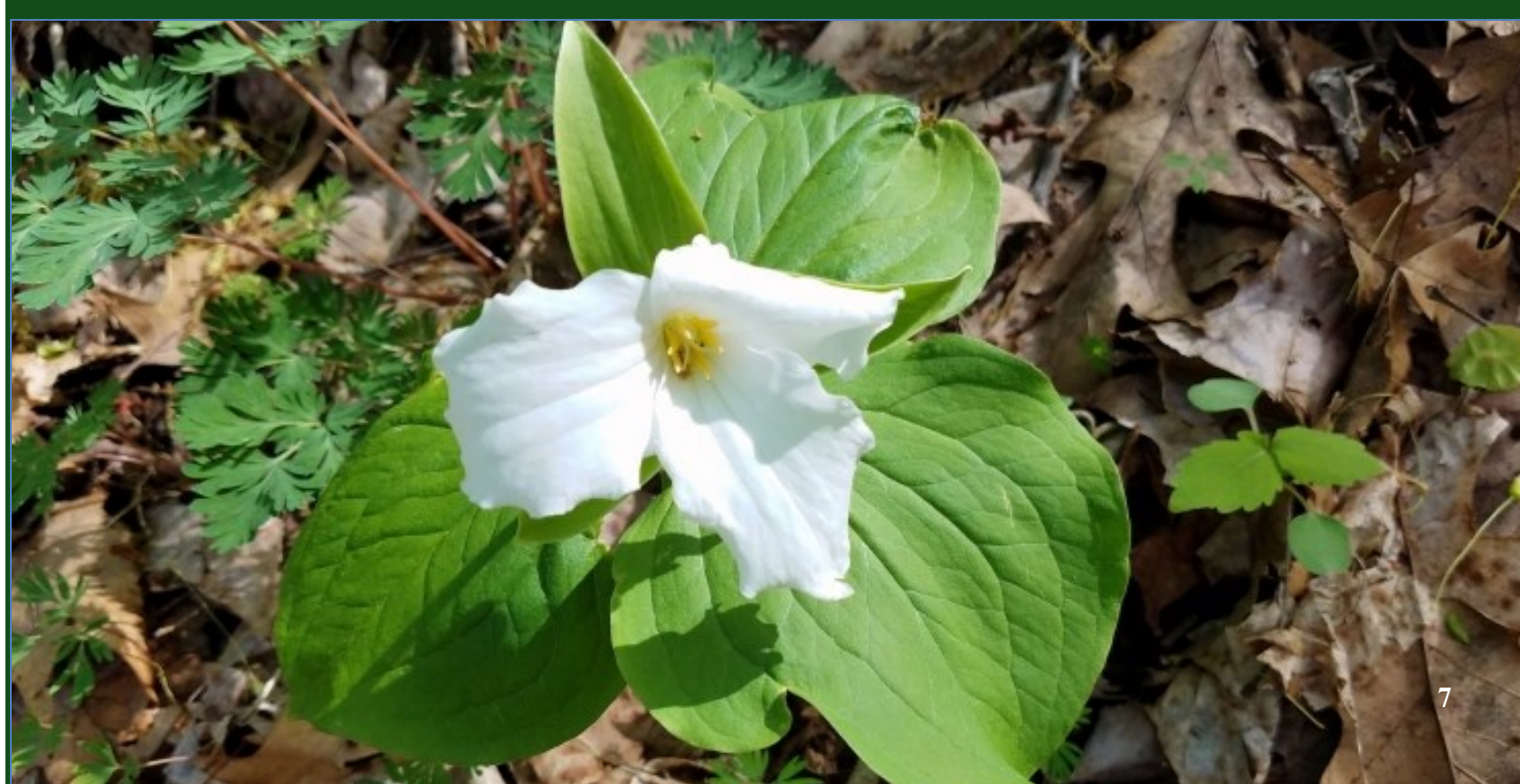
By Guy Dunkle

For FSF the year 2020 has been one of growth and development, both in our forests and as an organization.

Our members, Board of Directors, staff and friends stepped up in a big way this year to help us weather the impacts of COVID-19. Although the pandemic is not yet in the rear-view mirror, having come as far as we have it feels safe to say that FSF has passed this test. It has taken empathy, community, hard work and patience but by every measure 2020 was a year that saw FSF move forward, rather than stagnate or fall behind. We've developed new skills (Zoom meeting), re-invented the way we operate (grant review discussions in lawn chairs under a shade tree), and learned just how difficult it is to be heard speaking through a mask, over the background noise of a chainsaw. While 2020 has thrown some bumps in the road for FSF, we don't take for granted that we have the support systems, opportunities and resilience to find our way through. Our hearts go out to those who have not been provided the same; the past year has laid bare so many inequalities.

We are looking forward with optimism and pent-up excitement to the coming year. Soon you will be hearing from us about a large expansion of our land protection efforts along Caldwell Creek (Warren County, PA). This winter has seen a strong improvement in timber prices, providing higher revenue from our sustainable harvest operations. And, most importantly, we have several in-person outdoor events planned for 2021.

Over the last 12 months we've operated independently, each of us at work like a separate component of FSF, it will be so wonderful to come together as the symbiotic community that we truly are. SEE YOU SOON!



2020 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.

With the generous support of many individuals, families, organizations and foundations, the Foundation for Sustainable Forests (FSF) continues its mission to raise awareness of the importance of conserving intact forested ecosystems, and to highlight sustainable forestry practices for the benefit of the land.

To accomplish our mission, extensive steps were taken in 2020, by the board of the Foundation for Sustainable Forests. We have spent the year in strategic planning. Our focus has been on updating our operational plan for the next three years. We tackled this undertaking by forming committees of board members and concerned members of the FSF in the following areas: Financial Management, Land Management and Conservation, Development and Outreach and finally, Long Term Vision and Succession Planning.

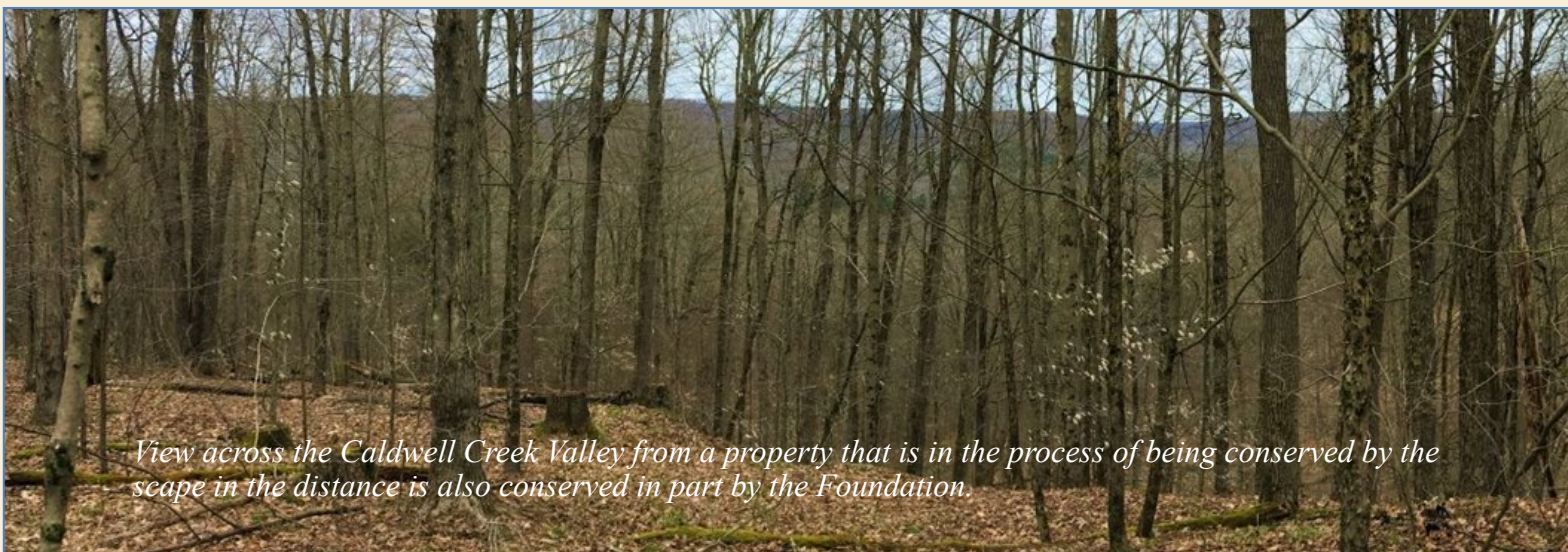


*Craig Schwegman,
Finance Committee
Chair*

In the area of Financial Management, we had one strategic goal: Create strong financial systems and practices. We accomplished this goal by achieving four objectives in cooperation with our Executive Director: Established a Finance Committee (James C. Finley, John N. Bartlett and Craig A Schwegman), committed to regular financial reports (income statement, balance sheet, budget vs. actual, cash flow, projections, debt repayment schedule and cost center tracking) both to support ongoing operations and to test the efficacy of and hone the FSF's unique business model, obtained nonprofit expertise capable of supporting FSF needs with support from the Richard King Mellon Foundation, and are developing a plan for addressing land conservation debt.

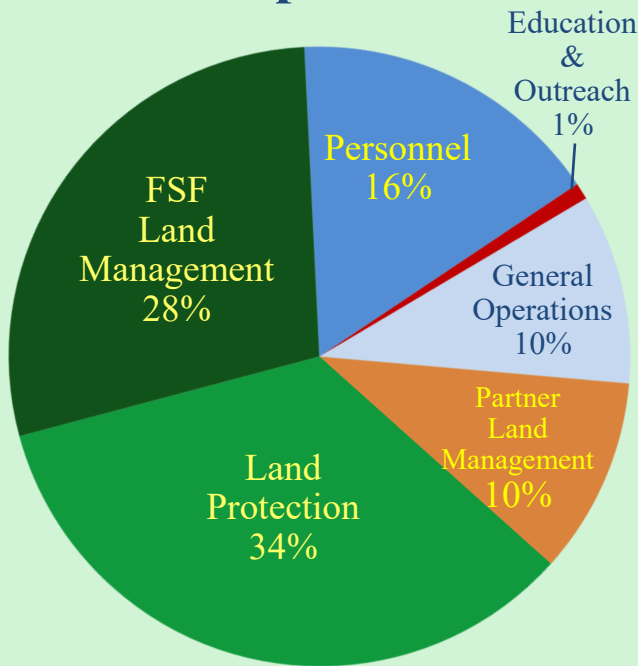
We have much to be thankful for in 2020! In a year when the pandemic changed "life as we know it," your supporters- came through in flying colors. Our COVID-19 appeal took the place of the annual spring membership campaign. The response went above and beyond what we normally receive in annual renewals for membership. The 2nd fundraiser of the year was the Erie/Crawford Gives Day campaign on August 11 & 12th. Our goal was to raise \$17,000 to support the stewardship of the FSF's 1700 protected acres and with \$37,775 raised, your support far exceeded those goals and opened doors for new stewardship and conservation opportunities.

Lastly, we want to mention the FSF successfully conserved a 15-acre Sugar Creek Access at Thompsons' Woods in Troy Township, Crawford County. Included in the 15-acres are an access road, sensitive riparian areas around Sugar Creek and forested land. This new acquisition was made possible through donated funds from five families and a grant from the USDA Rural Business Development program. We mention this because we know there are more friends of the Foundation who would like to be involved in the ongoing success in forest conservation and stewardship. There are many ways you can ensure healthy forests for generations to come. Contact us to learn more about these possibilities and how you can make a positive impact on the forests now and for the future.



*View across the Caldwell Creek Valley from a property that is in the process of being conserved by the
scape in the distance is also conserved in part by the Foundation.*

Expenses



Total Expenses: \$350,850

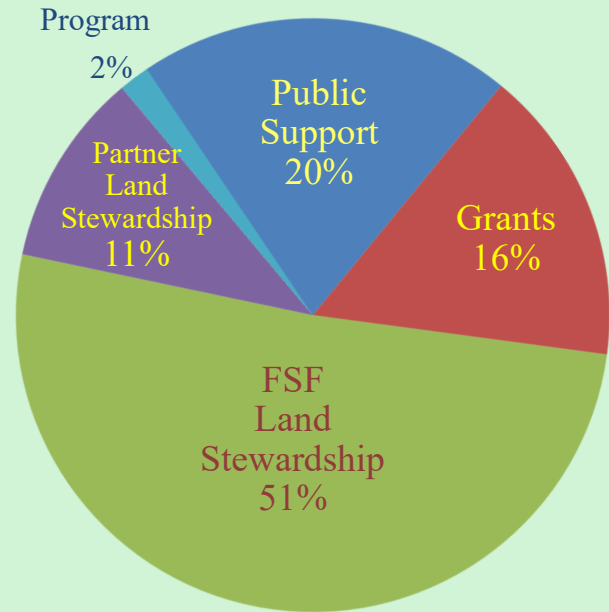
FSF Land Management includes maintenance, invasive species & pest management, real estate taxes, and restorative timber harvest expenses on FSF-conserved lands.

Partner Land Management includes invasive species & pest management and restorative timber harvest expenses on forested lands owned by other organizations, such as Presque Isle Audubon Society and the City of Erie.

Note that this year's *Education & Outreach* expenses were significantly reduced by to the need to cancel in-person events due to the pandemic.

Land Protection includes legal fees & payments towards protected lands, including principal and interest payments on long-term liabilities associated with land conservation.

Revenue



Total Revenue: \$301,900

FSF Land Stewardship includes the sale of timber from “worst-first” harvests, ash tree salvage, and other forest quality improvements, as well as hunting leases on some properties.

Partner Land Stewardship includes the sale of timber from “worst-first” harvests, ash tree salvage, and other forest quality improvements on lands owned by other entities that have engaged the FSF in the management of their woodlands. Note that net revenue is returned to the landowner, or used to further steward the property (ex. invasive species management) at the owner's request.

Public Support includes membership dues and donations from private donors and philanthropic businesses.

Grants include federal and private funds for land conservation, and grants associated with the CARES Act.



FSF with the help of funds granted by the PA DCNR Community Conservation Partnerships Program. The land-

FOREST STEWARDSHIP

What's in a year?

464 TONS

of carbon dioxide sequestered in long-term storage through wood harvests

Forests of this region, if managed carefully, can help to offset carbon emissions to the atmosphere from other human activities. Wood products (ex. construction materials, furniture, etc.) can contain these carbon stores long-term, thus mitigating rising carbon dioxide levels in the atmosphere that contribute to climate change.

**3,800 FEET
(15 ACRES)**

of Deer Fence constructed

Deer exclosures are used in target areas that are heavily browsed by deer to create opportunities for native plants- from spring ephemerals to tree seedlings- to re-establish and thrive.

STEW·ARD·SHIP

1: the office, duties, and obligations of a steward

2: the conducting, supervising, or managing of something

Especially : the careful and responsible management of something entrusted to one's care

Protecting a forest from development or harmful management is merely the starting point of our perpetual responsibility to the land that follows. The concept of "stewardship" and the work it entails are core to the FSF's mission, yet is seldom seen in action. Here we share with you what went on in the woods in 2020 and how it supports important conservation goals.



34 ACRES

Treated for Invasive Plants

Careful use of herbicide, mechanical cutting, and weed-pulling all contributed to intensive management of invasive plant species that interfere with native plant success and the continued regeneration of healthy forests.



510 TONS

Amount of gravel to improve an existing road on the newly protected Sugar Creek Access at Thompsons' Wood

The 15-acre Sugar Creek Access includes forested land, a headwater to Sugar Creek, and riparian vegetation. The access road improvement ensures that we can continue to manage this woodland without creating erosion and sedimentation disturbance to the creek.



262 ACRES

Enhanced through "worst-first" selective harvests and small group selections on 2 FSF properties and 3 partner properties

The small "group selection" pictured here is at the Floraroz Forest, Erie County. The exceptional regeneration of trees in the understory made this a good candidate to remove a homogenous and struggling overstory, thus enhancing the patchwork mosaic of forest age and species diversity within this 106-acre parcel.

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



22418 Firth Rd.
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.

Board of Directors

Troy Firth, *President*

Richard Bowden, PhD
Chair, Outreach/Education

Guy Dunkle
Chair, Forestry

James Finley, PhD

Thomas C. Hoffman II, Esq.
Secretary

Patrick Maloney

Craig Schwegman

Robert Slagter
Chair, Fundraising

Dr. Jane E. Woods, *Emeritus*

Staff

Annie Maloney, PhD
Executive Director

John Noel Bartlett
Development Director, Emeritus

Upcoming Events

2021 events are dependent on CDC guidance for Covid safety and therefore remain tentative at this time.

May 2 – Spring Wildflower Walk. *Time and location to be announced.*

May 8 – NY Forestry Walk at First Forest located off Joslyn and Fenner Roads, Stockton, N.Y. *Details to be announced.*

Aug. 10 – Erie Gives Day. The online event opens at 8 a.m. and concludes at 8 p.m. *Crawford Gives dates are to be determined.*

Sept. 17 – Foundation for Sustainable Forests Annual Dinner. *Details to be announced.*

Sept. 18 – Loving the Land Conference. *Details to be announced.*

Nov. – Annual Potluck. *Tentative, Details to be announced.*