



# 2021 ANNUAL REPORT

*Protecting Forested Land and Supporting Rural  
Communities Through Working Forests*



# 2021 Annual Report

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A male black-throated blue warbler caught and released at Thompsons' Wood, Troy Twp, PA.

*Photo Credit: Nancy Ransom*



### Board of Directors

Troy Firth  
*President*

Richard Bowden, PhD  
*Treasurer*

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*Land Manager*

Thomas C. Hoffman II, Esq.  
*Secretary*

Patrick Maloney

Craig Schwegman

Robert Slagter

### Staff

Annie Maloney, PhD  
*Executive Director*

John Noel Bartlett  
*Development Director, Emeritus*

A walk in Thompsons' Wood at the 2021 *Loving the Land Through Working Forests* conference in September.



# GREETINGS FROM THE PRESIDENT & EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear Supporters and Friends,

It is with great pleasure that we present to you our 2021 Annual Report. Its contents are truly a testament to your involvement and generous support. Together, we protected 528 acres of forested land in 2021, bringing our conserved land base to 2,250 acres. The start of a bird diversity and habitat study on FSF lands by Dr. Steven

Latta and his team at the National Aviary is also in part thanks to you. You have long asked us good, yet challenging, questions about our forest management and its implications to the ecosystem. We are so excited to put FSF's approach to the test with this study. We are hopeful that it will inform our work and that of other forest managers moving forward.



In this report you will also read about a new member of our team, Bennett Gould. Towards the end of 2021, Bennett was tasked with carrying out our vision for a strategic planning tool for land conservation. The product, an interactive map, was recently completed and even better than we imagined. It is helping us to see greater opportunity and to be more strategic our project planning. In the year ahead, we will continue this work and can't wait to translate our planning into conserved acres and improved management on the ground.

2021 saw the return of a limited number of in-person events, with thoughtful presentations that we will not soon forget, including those of renowned author and champion of native pollinators, Doug Tallamy. We were also able to host school groups for visits to our forests. Behind the scenes, we engaged directly with landowners who want to begin their forest legacy planning journey. We also ramped up our efforts to raise significant funds directly for land conservation. Projects of this scope take time, but we are resolute in our goals and confident in the momentum that we are building. Thank you for supporting this patient process of foundation-laying for an even stronger future.

Sadly, 2021 also marked the passing of Board Member and thought leader, Dr. Jim Finley. We continue to be guided by the work he was doing on behalf the organization. Though Jim's shoes can never be truly "filled," we are hopeful that existing leaders and forthcoming additions to FSF's team can support the organization in carrying his important work forward. Together with our Board of Directors, and in consultation with his family, we are also working on enduring ways to honor Jim's legacy with this organization. More details to come.

This Annual Report chronicles your dedication to the conservation and careful stewardship of working woodlands. We are continuing this work in earnest, and adding capacity to allow us to build impactful momentum. Thank you for carrying this work forward as financial supporters, volunteers, and thoughtful stewards of your woodlands.

Sincerely and with gratitude,

A handwritten signature of Troy Firth in black ink.

*Troy Firth*  
President, Founder

A handwritten signature of Annie Maloney in black ink.

*Annie Maloney, PhD*  
Executive Director

# Spotlight on Bennett Gould

We would like you to meet a valued member of FSF's team! Since late 2021, Bennett has been expanding our capacity by assisting in strategic planning for land conservation and outreach efforts.

A graduate of Allegheny College who has also worked with the City of Meadville, FSF is so fortunate to be the beneficiary of his skills and passion for conservation. Thank you, Bennett, for all that you do!

*"The forests of northwest Pennsylvania are near and dear to my heart," says Bennett. "It is a privilege to work with the FSF team to advance the Foundation's unique conservation model for the benefit of our region's extraordinary woodlands."*



Two horse crews side-by-side at Floraroe Forest, Girard Twp, PA.  
Photo Credit: Diane Christin Zenchenko-Esser



# 2021 IMPACT

## At-a-Glance

**165 Acres  
Enhanced**

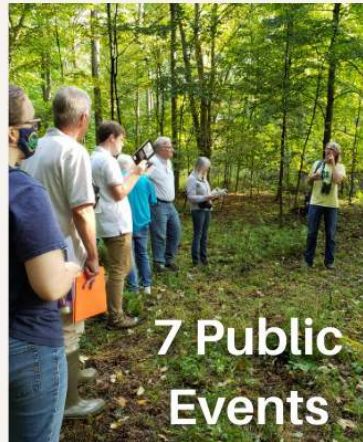
Through "worst-  
first" selective  
harvests

**910 Birds**

Studied by the  
National Aviary  
on FSF  
lands



Chestnut-sided Warbler  
Photo: Nancy Ransom



**7 Public  
Events**

**\$451,381**

of grant funding  
recieved



**300 Tons of  
Gravel**

For access road  
maintenance and  
erosion control



**231 Members**  
Thank you for your support!



**528 New Acres Protected**



**Over 2,250  
acres in PA &  
NY protected  
to date!**

**181  
Erie & Crawford  
Gives Supporters**

Thank you!



**5 Educational Programs**



Photo: The Learning Center

**12 Goats**  
in attendance at the  
"Loving the Land  
Through Working  
Forests" Conference



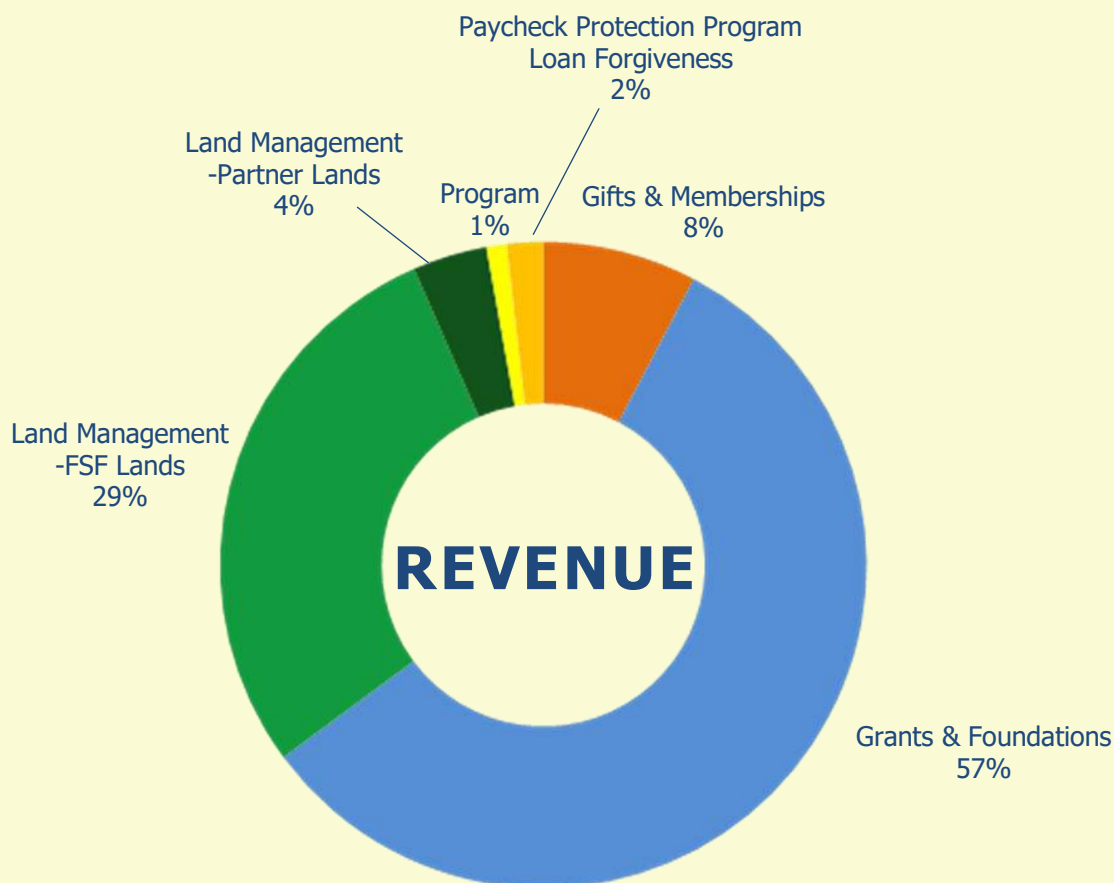


# 2021 Financial Summary

Below you can view the Foundation for Sustainable Forests' unaudited financials for the fiscal year ending December 31, 2021. The activities below represent the exciting acquisition of four parcels in 2021, which together comprise the 528-acre Dotyville Hill Forest. In 2021, we were also able to once again host the annual *Loving the Land Through Working Forests* Conference and Annual Dinner, after a hiatus in 2020 due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

2021 Gifts & Memberships continued to set new record highs for the organization in both the number of gifts and number of members, for which we are humbled and grateful to you.

Conservationist Aldo Leopold wrote of "The oldest task in human history – to live on a piece of land without spoiling it." The Foundation for Sustainable Forests remains committed to thoughtful forest stewardship, as



**Total Revenue: \$773,289**

*Land Management—FSF Lands* includes the sale of timber from "worst-first" harvests, part of FSF's conservation-based management approach.

*Land Management—Partner Lands* includes partnerships in which FSF assists another entity in the stewardship of their land. In some cases, net revenue from a "worst-first" harvest went to the landowner after a fee is paid for FSF's services. In other cases, the landowner made a whole or partial charitable gift of net revenue to support FSF's mission.

*Grants* includes a \$430,000 award from the PA DCNR Community Conservation Partnerships Program in support of the 528-acre Dotyville Hill Forest acquisition, donor-directed funds from Community Foundations, and Erie & Crawford Gives Days matching funds from each respective Community Foundation.

*Program* includes event and merchandise revenue, but does not include some event sponsorships, which were paid in 2020 and held over until the conference could safely be held.

2021 Revenue does not include the value of donated land.

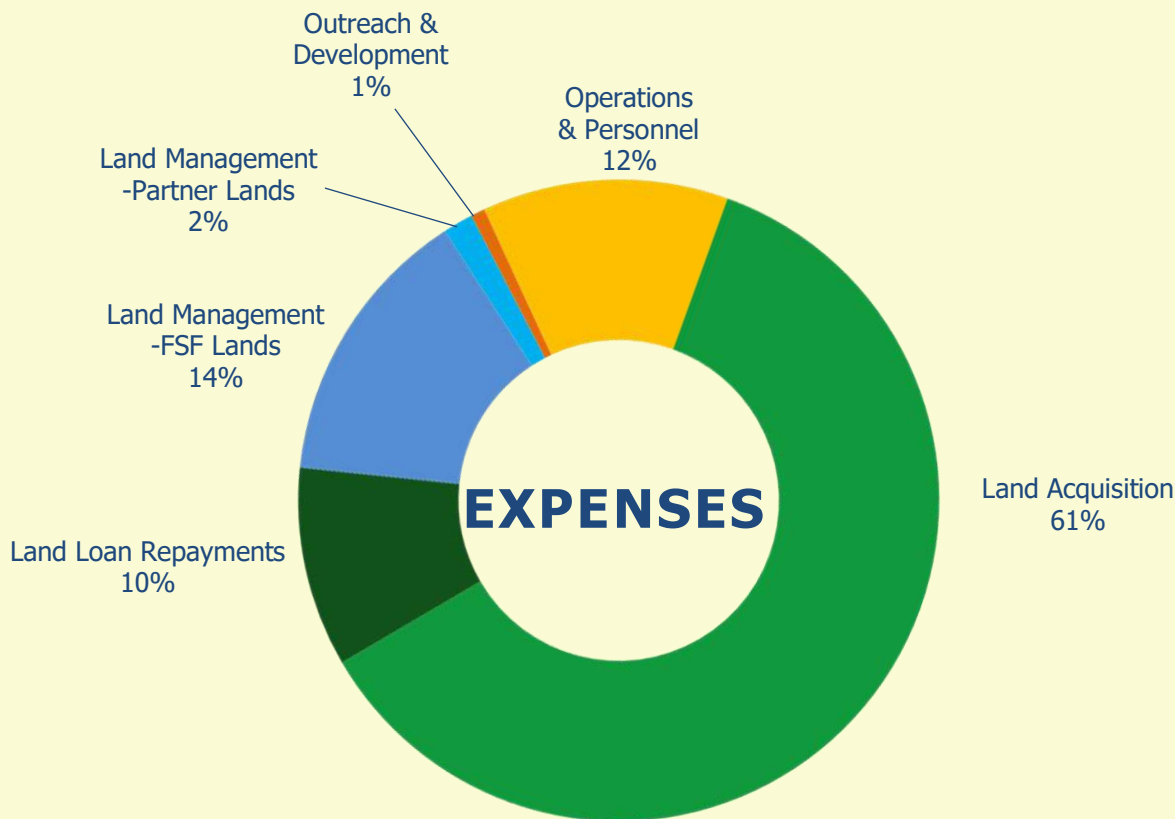
reflected below. As the organization matures, it hopes to continue to grow its capacity to assist other entities— public and private— in the management of their woodlands.

True to our 2020 Strategic Planning and the goals set out by the Finance Committee, activities in 2021 also included addressing existing land acquisition debt. Strengthened timber markets in 2021 provided additional revenue, which we are using to pay existing debt in order to pave the way for future land conservation opportunities. At present, land acquisition debt totals less than 3% of FSF's assets and is an important means of achieving critical conservation impact. Thank you for making all of this progress possible.

*The Foundation for Sustainable Forests strives for fiscal transparency and responsibility, to better steward your contributions and ensure long-term sustainability and impact.*



Craig Schwegman,  
Finance Committee Chair



**Total Expenses: \$716,005**

*Land Management– FSF Lands* includes access maintenance, invasive species & pest management, real estate taxes, and restorative timber harvest expenses on FSF's conserved lands.

*Land Management– Partner Lands* includes restorative timber harvest expenses on forests owned by other landowners, public and private, who have engaged FSF's services to achieve their conservation goals.

*Outreach & Development* expenses include our *Loving the Land Through Working Forests* conference and Annual Dinner, along with other educational programs, site visits, and fundraising activities

*Land Acquisition* includes the purchase of the 528-acre Dotyville Hill Forest.



# 2021 Membership & Support

## Sustaining (\$1000+)

Blaine & Terry Aikin  
Wendell & Tanya Berry  
Henry & Elaine Burkholder  
Dane & Jill Charlton  
Richard & Carol Deiss  
Troy Firth  
Glorianne Leck & Susan Savastuk  
Chris H. Lundberg  
Jim & Jane Reilly  
William & Jane Roche  
Craig A. & Monica Schwegman  
Bob & Jane Slagter  
Emil & Kathy Spadafore  
Doug & Cindy Tallamy  
Beth Thompson  
Jim & Connie Thompson  
Dr. Jane Ewing Woods

## Forest Partner (\$250-\$999)

Advanced Forestry Services, Inc.  
Judy Albert & Anthony Fiorillo  
John & Kathy Bartlett  
Gina Bruno  
Clarence Cleer  
Bob & Kit Concilus  
Pat & Sam Dengel  
Guy & Wilma Dunkle  
John & Anne Farmer  
Ron & Rebecca Fassett  
Robert & Amy Felton  
French Creek Coffee & Tea Co.  
Curtis & Susannah Frigon  
Brad Gould and Family  
The Heesch Hill Family  
David Hess

J. Robert Jaworski & Joanne Kleinhanz  
Michael & Christella Kloecker  
Scott & Joyce Ladner  
Terry Lobdell & Alejandra Lewandowski  
Bob & Kathy Long  
Owen Ludwig & Sarah Nathan  
Patrick & Annie Maloney  
Laura Maloney  
Wayne & Margaret McCartney  
Paul & Barbara Rankin  
Al Richardson  
Elliott & Cyndee Succi  
Tom Succi & Xandra Feathers  
Samuel & Barbara Spencer  
Carmen & Kathy Testi  
Dick & Annette Thor  
Mary Ann & Harry White, II  
David & Margaret Yasenchack  
Frank & Cheryl Zalik

## Family (\$50-\$249)

Judith & Michael Acker  
Richard & Phyllis Ackert  
Glenn & Cathy Anderson  
Nancy G.W. Baker  
Richard Bartlett  
John C. Baun  
Bill Benedict  
Jerry & Becky Biebel  
Brenda Biedrzycki  
Erin Blechman  
Kevin Boozel  
Richard & Tracy Bowden  
David Bruno  
Betsy & Jim Carroll  
Ellen & John Cass

Gordan & Judy Chapin  
Alane & Matt Chinian  
Brian W. Christman  
Evan Clendenin & Amy Seese-Bieda  
Gene Connell  
Brenda & Bryan Costa  
Tracey, Jason, & Landis Crawford  
Kelly C. Culbertson  
Sharon L. Davenport  
Laura Dengler  
Scott Drabert  
Kathy Dropik  
David Dunkle  
Reed Dunkle & Rebecca Vogan  
Robert Durand  
Richard & Dianne Eakin  
Karen Eisenhart  
Jean Engle & Marilyn Norconk  
Tom & Mary Erdman  
Erie Insurance Giving Network  
Diane Christin Zenchenko-Esser  
Karl Evans  
Jim & Linda Finley  
The Flook Family  
Felix Folletti  
The Foote Family  
Holly J. Fuhrmann  
Christine Gabreski  
Marlene & William Gandjos  
Adrienne Geddes  
Bennett Gould & Jenny Tompkins  
Nicole Gross-Camp & Simon Camp  
Thomas Hagamen  
Mark Hale & Penny Lodge  
James & Patricia Harwood  
Robert B. Hass  
Daniel Henninger  
Elsa Higby  
Shanna & Rob Hodgson

Carol & Rick Holmgren  
Janice H. Horn  
Robert C. Howden  
John Hummel  
Lance & Sheryl Hummer  
Irion Lumber Company  
Lonnie & Connie Jantzi  
Ron & Kelly Johnston  
Adam Katrancha  
Ann Kleinschmidt & Lee Coates  
Richard J. Kubiak  
Jim Lang  
Steven Latta  
Josh & Emily Lewis  
John & Norma Liebenguth  
Christine Lindquist  
Julia Ludewig  
Susan Lundell & John McGowan  
Stacy Mallory Tredennick  
Sandra L. Mansmann  
Abby Marschke  
Karlin G. Marsh  
Annette Marshall  
Carol F. Maxwell & Edwin Gurdjian  
Rich McMahan  
Melissa & Larry Mencotti  
Clemence R. Mershon  
Jocelyn Miller  
Andrea Mirth  
Jennifer Mohtashemi  
Susan Murawski & Tim Lyons  
Nancy J. Nalepa  
Brett & Nicole Neely  
Eric Pahlke  
Ryan Pickering  
David & Hallie Rigg  
Franklin Rogers  
Gus & Sandy Romano  
Robert Rosenberg

## Lynn Firth Wildflower Walk

Sunday, May 1st, 1:00 pm

Jim & Pat Harwood's Property

9975 Jamestown Rd., Wattsburg, PA

## Spring Potluck Picnic

Sunday, May 1st, 4:00 pm

United Methodist Church Pavilion  
9904 Jamestown Rd., Wattsburg, PA

## Join us in May!

You are invited to attend  
one or both of these  
spring events.  
Let's get together to  
celebrate forests & you!

*No RSVP is required.*





Grant & Stephenie Ruttinger  
Sarah Sargent & Ron Mumme  
Bob Schoenfeldt  
Ann Scott  
Ted & Judy Self  
Roy Siefert  
Ben & Susan Slote  
Adrienne Socci & Nick Parker  
John Tautin & Joan Galli  
Margie Thompson  
Jane Titus  
Ray & Sue Toombs  
Galen Tromble  
Turnage Family Limited Partnership  
Sherry & Ed Uhler  
Andrew Walker  
David Weaver  
Sue & Cy Wellman  
Scott and Dana Yeager  
Nathan & Kelsey Zimmerman  
*Anonymous Donors*

### **Individual (\$25-\$49)**

Robert Ackerman  
Hannah Albright  
Nancy A. Andersen  
Paul & Deanna Attardo  
Jess Baker  
Nancy A. Barta-Smith  
Harriet E. Beckman  
Terry & Connie Benschel  
James Bock  
Boreal Apiaries  
Aron Boros  
Bonnie Botsford  
Richard Brennan  
Shawna and Kyle Chylinski  
Catharina Coenen  
Barbara Corson  
Kelly Dempsey  
Greg & Pam Duffin  
Will Ferretti  
Denise & Gary Foltz

Michele Frederick  
Jennifer & Jon Glass  
Randy Gorske  
Court and Sherri Gould  
Ian & Jessica Halmi  
Luke Hamilton  
Taylor Hinton & Ian Carbone  
Dr. Harry D. Holt  
Joe Hood  
William O. Howard  
Gail Innocenzi-Boyer  
Sarah & Tyson Johnston  
Wendy & Greg Kedzierski  
Ron Kustra  
Vicky London  
Danuta Majchrowicz  
Jonathan Mallek  
Laura Martin  
Peggy Mogush  
Bonnie Morse  
Vicki and Nick Muller  
Emily Myers

Jean Parker  
Art Peapples  
Penn Forest Cemetery  
Karen Pervier  
Jason Puryear  
Alicia S. Raulerson  
Andy & Jen Reilly  
Meghan & Rich Reilly Best  
Matthew & Melissa Shimek  
Emily & Josh Smith  
Matt Stefanak  
Cecile & James Stelter  
Roxanne Tonn  
Jennifer & Joseph Waddell  
David Washousky & Tracey Taylor  
Charles Weiss  
Lynn Weissert  
Stephen Zuk  
*Anonymous Donors*

In 2021, the Foundation for Sustainable Forests received donations in memory of James C. Finley and Michael Lee Shilling.

*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.*

## **Grantors & Supporters**

### **Sustaining (\$1000+)**

Corry Community Foundation  
Erie Community Foundation  
Ernst Conservation Seeds  
PA DCNR Bureau of Cons. & Recreation  
John N. Rees & Sarah H. Rees Foundation  
James A. & Vicki Stec  
Trout Unlimited - Northwest PA Chapter

### **Forest Partner (\$250-\$999)**

Allegheny College  
Crawford Heritage Community Foundation  
Ecological Field Services  
Knox Law  
Palmiero Toyota

Northwest Pennsylvania Woodland Association  
Trout Unlimited - Caldwell Creek Chapter

**You can support the Foundation for Sustainable Forests with a one-time, sustaining, or legacy gift. FSF's generous supporters have given major gifts of cash and non-cash assets, and have directed funds to support FSF's mission through their local community foundations.**

**A planned gift is another way to have a significant impact on this organization. Supporters can include FSF in their will or estate plans, or help a parent, partner or beloved friend leave their legacy. These one-time gifts are multiplied many times over, as the conserved lands they support will support the organization *and* future additional land conservation projects.**

**For more information or to make a donation, visit [FoundationForSustainableForests.org/planned-giving](https://FoundationForSustainableForests.org/planned-giving), or contact Annie Maloney at (814) 694-5830 to discuss your gift and lasting legacy.**



# Loving the Land — Landowners Tell Their Stories

## Featuring Bill Benedict

Contributed by Ann Kleinschmidt

“Show me The General”, I say, as Bill Benedict walks me through his property near Edinboro, PA. We are on a late fall hike on a damp and windy day. It does not take long to realize how knowledgeable Bill is about his woods. You also realize his appreciation of and affection for this property. The trek to The General was not easy, but was worthwhile, since, in Bill’s words, this cherry tree is “an excellent specimen.” He has been reticent about harvesting The General for the 35 years that he has lived here. He greatly appreciates the genetics of this tree as well as its longevity.

Bill and his wife, Barb, purchased this property in

1986. I was curious to know why they were interested in purchasing a wooded property. He laughed and said, “it was Barb’s fault!” At the time, they were living in Summit Township, near Erie, when Barb said she wanted to move into a bigger house with a dining room. Bill was willing, but his requirement was to have at least 10 acres of woods. They found and purchased a 50-acre parcel on Rice Road in Edinboro and built a home. In 1988 they purchased an additional 20 acres adjacent to the original parcel.

Bill went on to explain that he enjoyed cross country skiing and hunting and this property allowed him to be able to do both right out of his back door. Bill commented that one thing he likes about his land is that it keeps him healthy. “I don’t need to go to the gym; it keeps me physically active.” He said his affinity for forests came from growing up near woodlands in Hydetown, PA. He hunted and fished from his family home around Thompson Run and McLaughlin Run, sometimes venturing as far as Oil Creek.

Over the years he has owned this woodland, he has developed appropriate management plans. The first was done in 1989 in consultation with Tom Erdman (retired DCNR service forester of Erie County). In 1994, he participated in the “Forest Stewardship” program. Tom Erdman guided him through the program, where he worked with a private forester, who did a more complete stand analysis and wrote a 10-year management plan for the property based on Bill’s stated goals/objectives. The program was offered and managed by the PA Bureau of Forestry, who did a 50/50 cost share on the expense for the plan. He highly recommends that “forest landowners seek the knowledge they lack. They should start with their District Forester, who is a great resource and guide, and paid for by our taxes.”

Another reason for Bill’s interest in the property was his sense that he could make improvements. Since



Bill Benedict stands with “The General” on his property.

Photo Credit: Ann Kleinschmidt



the woods were recovering from a high-grade harvest in the 1970s, he wanted to help the best trees. So, Bill went about becoming educated about forest management. He laughed and said: “I knew there were answers, but I needed to know the questions to ask first.” Bill continued to find the right questions to ask, and many answers, by attending dozens of workshops including the Loving the Land Through Working Forests Conferences offered by FSF, and those hosted by Penn State, the PA DCNR Bureau of Forestry, and the Northwest PA Woodland Association (NWPWA). He has also sought out advice from “experts,” especially Tom Erdman, Troy Firth and Guy Dunkle (FSF). When walking the woods with Bill, it is clear he paid attention since he peppers his conversation with “teaching moments” about tree characteristics and how sunlight, damage and disease affect tree growth and productivity.

Unfortunately, in 1996 Bill’s employment in Erie ended and he took a job in Dubois, PA, requiring that they sell their home along with 20-acres of the original 50-acre parcel. Bill told me that after a couple of years in Dubois, he realized his quality of life had declined since leaving his woods in Edinboro and he wanted to move back. I commented that it sounded as if his woods had become part of his spirit, and he nodded and said, “I guess it had.” Bill was eventually able to find employment at the Polk State Center in Polk, PA. He knew there would be challenges but it allowed him to move back to his woods. He and Barb built a new home and moved back in 2001.

While on our walk we stopped near a stand of hemlocks. Here he lamented the challenges he has faced improving his woodlands because of diseases and storm damage that are beyond his control. Over the years, he has had three harvests, which removed tulip trees with

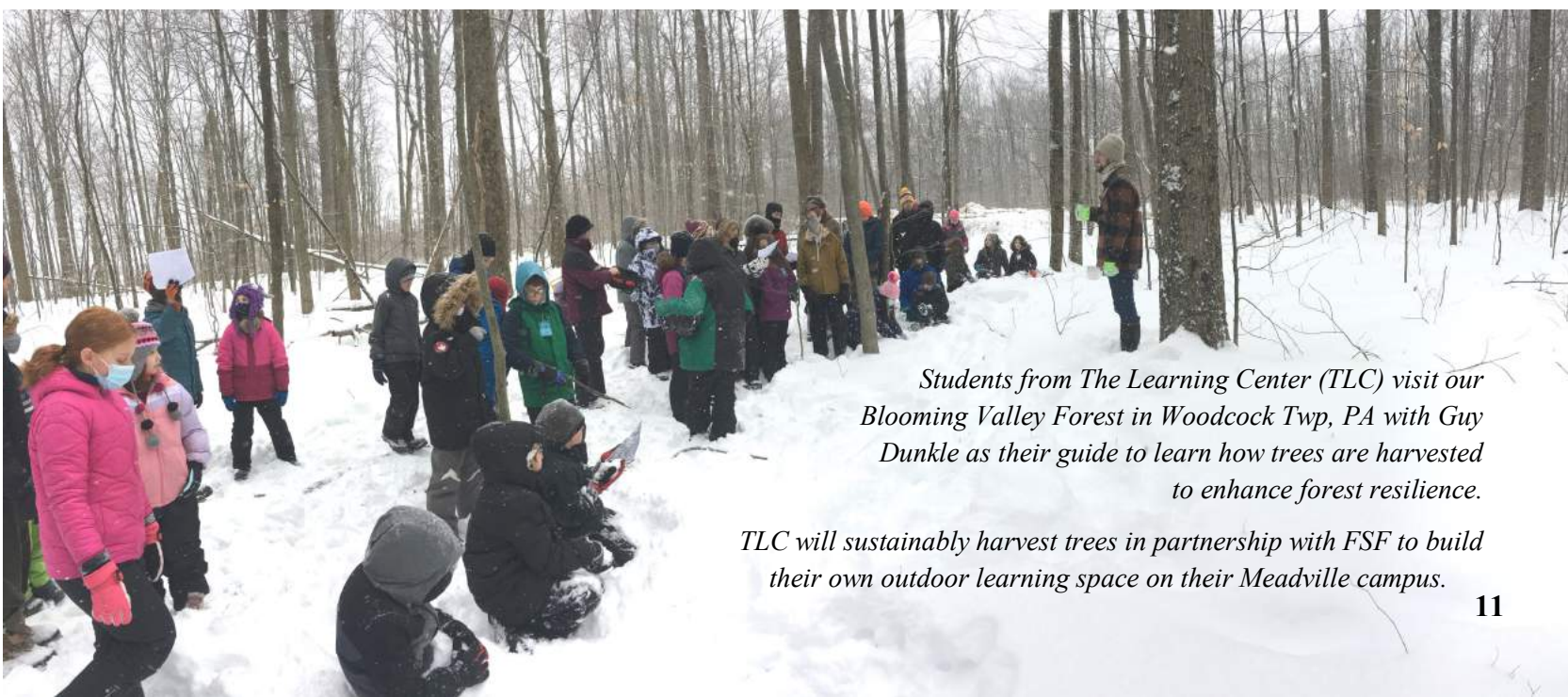
basal rot, 45 trees damaged by a windstorm, and most of his ash and beech trees because of the emerald ash borer and beech bark disease, respectively. He said with a hint of sadness that he has concerns of soon losing the hemlock to the hemlock woolly adelgid, which is slowly but surely making its way to northwest PA.

Today, Bill takes the role of educating others about sustainable forest management seriously. A couple of times during our conversation he expressed his frustration about high-grade harvests of woodlands, and he knows a way to diminish the popularity this practice is through education. The best example of his interest in educating other woodland owners is his current role as the President of the NWPWA. I mentioned to Bill that the FSF was collaborating with The Learning Center in Meadville, PA to teach young people about sustainable forestry and forest products through the construction of an outdoor classroom (see photo below). His eyes lit up and he said, with excitement, “this is exactly what is needed to begin to train the next generation of foresters.”

*Bill Benedict is the current President of the Northwest Pennsylvania Woodland Association and an avid outdoorsman. He hosted a 2021 “Walk in Penn’s Woods” at his Edinboro home.*



*Ann Kleinschmidt, PhD, contributed this story. Ann is an FSF supporter and volunteer, and retired Professor of Biology and Biochemistry at Allegheny College. She and her husband reside in Saegertown.*



*Students from The Learning Center (TLC) visit our Blooming Valley Forest in Woodcock Twp, PA with Guy Dunkle as their guide to learn how trees are harvested to enhance forest resilience.*

*TLC will sustainably harvest trees in partnership with FSF to build their own outdoor learning space on their Meadville campus.*



*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.*

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*Development Director, Emeritus*

## **Upcoming Events**

### **May 1 – Lynn Firth Wildflower Walk & Spring Potluck Picnic**

Wattsburg, PA, 1pm Wildflower Walk, 4pm Potluck Picnic  
*(See page 8 inset for more details)*

### **Aug. 10 – Erie Gives Day**

### **August 29-30 Crawford Gives Days**

### **Oct. 1—Walk in Penn's Woods** *(Location and Time TBD)*

**The next *LOVING THE LAND THROUGH WORKING FORESTS* Conference will be held September 2023.**

**Stay tuned as the program comes together!**