



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



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



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Development Director, Emeritus

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,



Troy Firth
President, Founder



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 Floraroz Forest, Girard Twp, PA.
Photo Credit: Diane Christin Zenchenko-Esser

2021 IMPACT

At-a-Glance



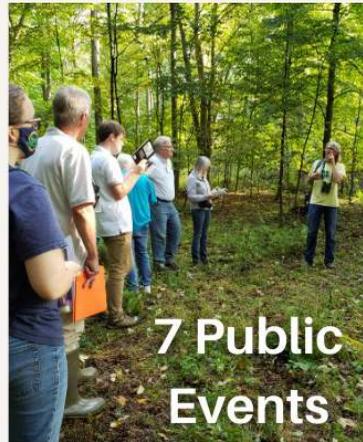
165 Acres Enhanced

Through "worst-first" selective harvests

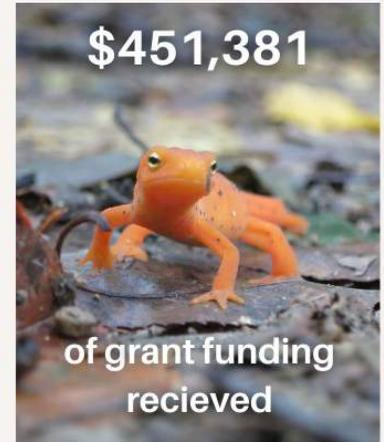


910 Birds Studied by the National Aviary on FSF lands

Chestnut-sided Warbler
Photo: Nancy Ransom



7 Public Events



\$451,381

of grant funding recieved



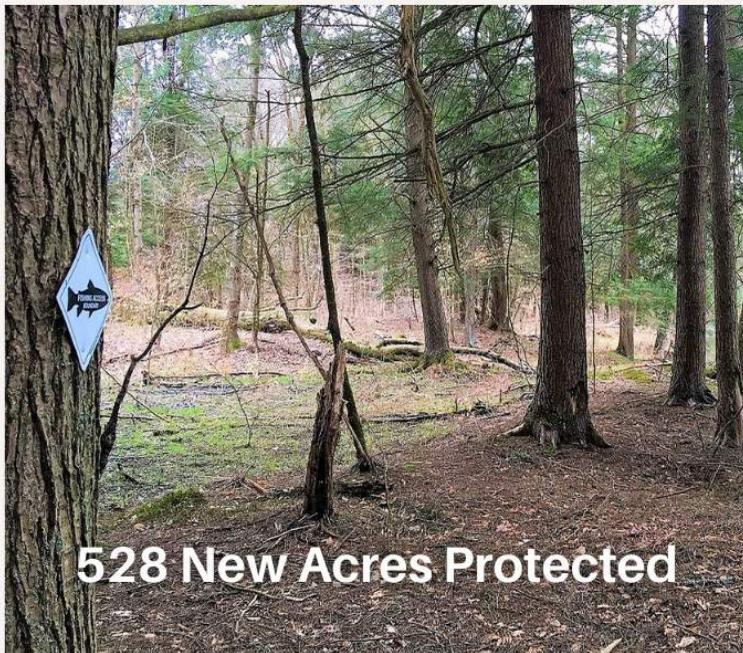
300 Tons of Gravel

For access road maintenance and erosion control



231 Members

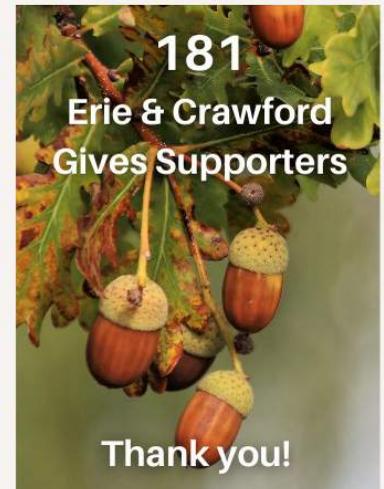
Thank you for your support!



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

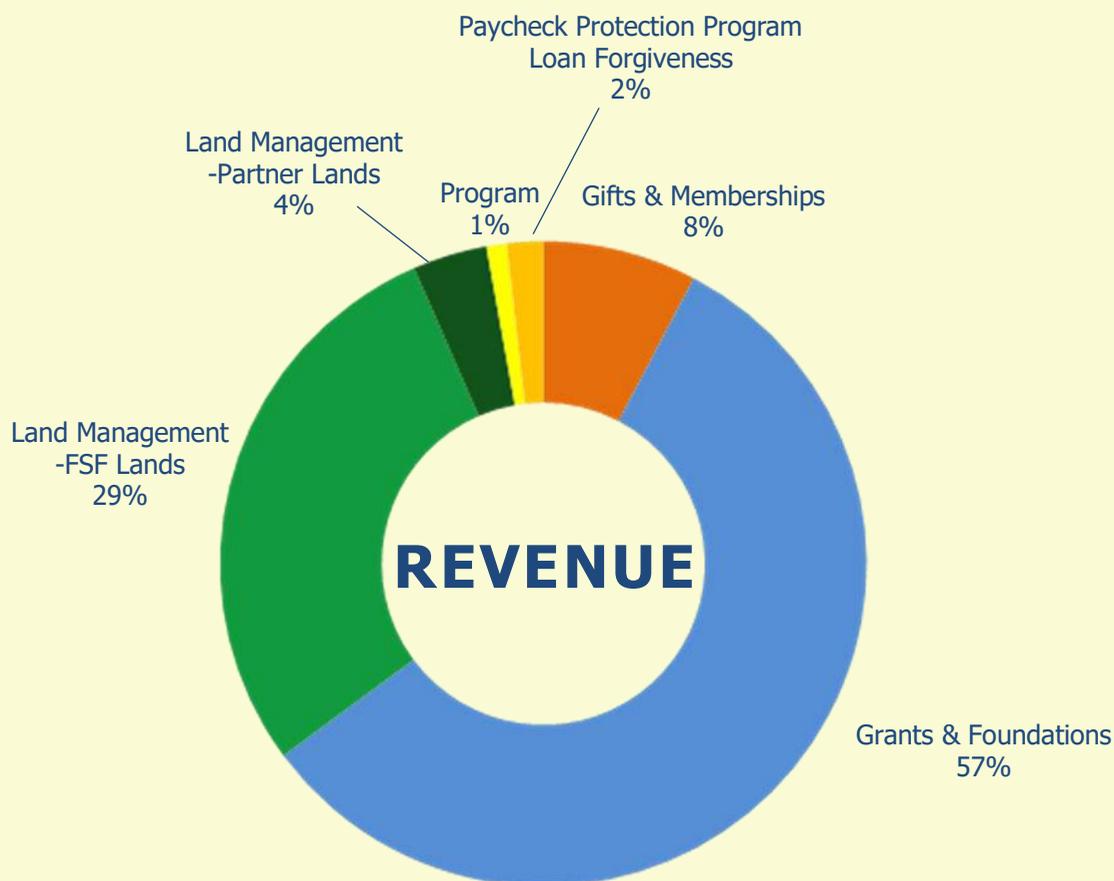
in attendance at the "Loving the Land Through Working Forests" Conference

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.

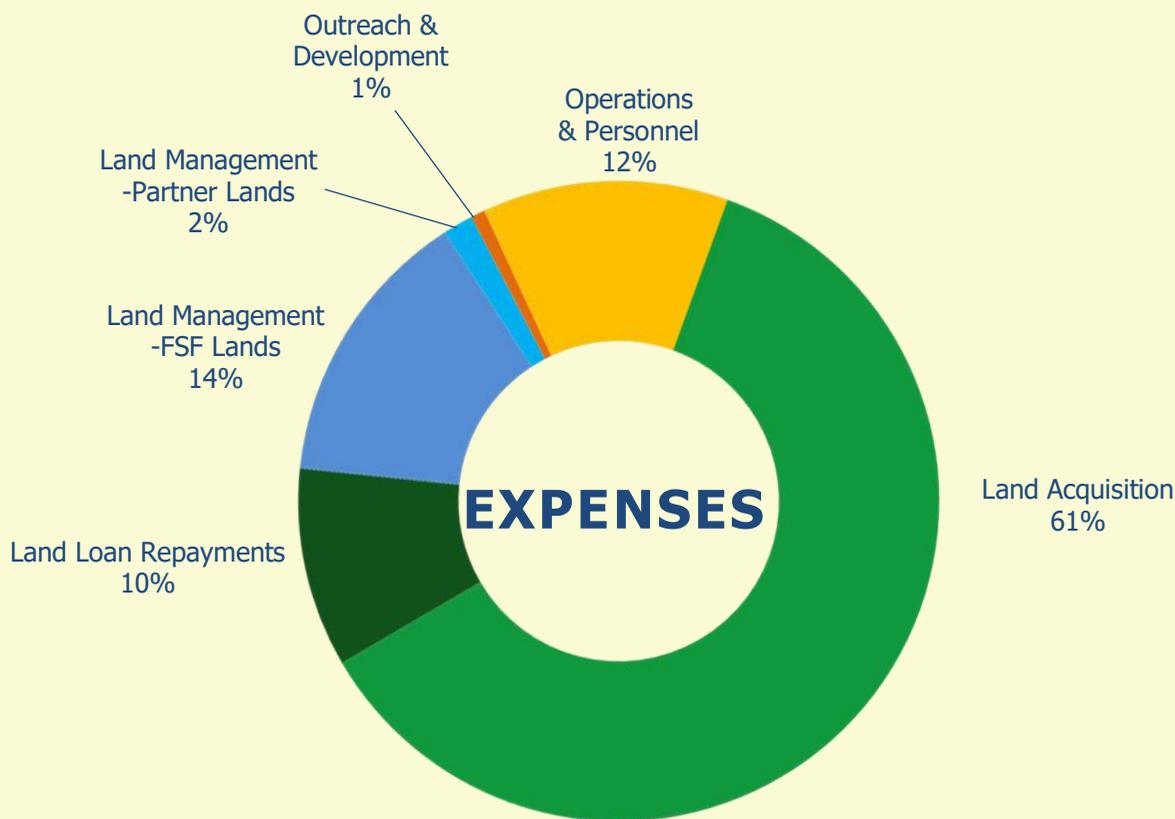
reflected below. As the organization matures, it hopes to continue to grow its capacity to assist other entities— public and private— in the management of their woodlands.

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 Heeschen 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 Soggi
Tom Soggi & Xandra Feathers
Samuel & Barbara Spencer
Carmen & Kathy Testi
Dick & Annette Thorr
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
Irison 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 Bensel
 James Bock
 Boreal Apiaries
 Aron Boros
 Bonnie Botsford
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 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 Johnstons
 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://www.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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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!