



Spring/Summer 2022 Newsletter



Fog rises above LeBeouf Creek into the hemlocks. Photo by Monica Schwegman

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Greetings from the Executive Director

As I write, northwestern PA is experiencing a soaking rainfall. The raindrops are a welcome sound after a long dry spell that was apparent from the browning and crunch of the forest floor beneath my feet in recent weeks.

As much as our region's forests depend on the rain, they also urgently need your help. The need is greater than ever to conserve and steward woodlands, so that they can forever remain the community assets that they are. This is the essence of the Foundation for Sustainable Forests' work and thankfully it is embodied by so many of you, as shown in these pages.

This edition of the newsletter provides an authentic snapshot of FSF, which recently added Bennett Gould as the new Conservation & Outreach Coordinator. Welcome to your new role, Bennett! His new email address is bgould@forestsandpeople.org; I invite you to reach out to introduce yourself and welcome him to the team. I also want to express continued gratitude to Richard King Mellon Foundation, whose support made this growth possible, and to the talented candidates who applied for the position.

Also highlighted here are recent activities on the land. These include a cleanup at Thompsons' Wood, a riparian planting at Caldwell Creek, a soggy wildflower walk, and the second year of a bird study in FSF's forests, to name just a few. Most emphasize the fact that when a parcel of land is conserved, the real work is only just beginning!

For more ways to support forest health and connect with this community, mark your calendar for the Friends of FSF Dinner on September 16th and the first annual Jim Finley Stewardship Day on October 1st. The latter is offered with the blessing of Jim's wife Linda and family. We hope that this event will honor his memory and that of other forest stewards that we have sadly lost this year (see pages 6-7).



Annie Maloney, Bennett Gould and Guy Dunkle on a visit to a vernal pool in early spring; forests provide critical habitat for the region's amphibians.

Two more key events are featured below. On Erie or Crawford Gives, I hope that you will join me in making a gift to support several high-impact conservation projects in early stages. Your donation and the pro-rated matching funds that it will unlock will help to see them through.

These pages are hardly enough to convey my thanks and excitement for the work that you make possible. Instead, I invite you to contact me at (814) 694-5830 or amaloney@forestsandpeople.org. I am always happy to hear from you or, better yet, take a walk in the woods!

Sincerely, *Annie Maloney*



Two great ways to support resilient forests!



Aug. 9th
8am-8pm
eriegives.org



Aug. 29th-30th
48 Hours!
crawfordgives.org



Above left: Allegheny College's Phi Delta Theta fraternity (front) and FSF board member Pat Maloney with son Rowan (rear) after an April day's work cleaning up an abandoned spring house at Thompsons' Wood. Above right: Dr. Steven Latta (center) and his National Aviary research team at Florarose Forest, where they continue to observe bird diversity in multi-layered canopies; left to right: Oliver Jankosky, Nancy Ransom, Shaina Hodgson, and Cassie Zeigler



Left: Volunteers maintain a streamside tree planting along Caldwell Creek, Center: DCNR's Cecile Stelter guides the Lynn Firth Wildflower Walk at Harwood Family Farms in Wattsburg, Right: Troy Firth and Bennett Gould stroll in Blooming Valley Forest (background), while a red eft salamander looks on (foreground)

Photo courtesy of Western PA Conservancy



Friends of the Foundation for Sustainable Forests Dinner

Friday, Sept. 16, 2022

Iroquois Boating & Fishing Club, Conneaut Lake, PA

Social hour begins at 5:30pm | \$35/person | RSVP by Sept. 9

For information and RSVP, visit: foundationforsustainableforests.org/dinner

Keynote Presentation by Steven Latta, PhD "Using Forestry to Increase Bird Diversity for Conservation"

Dr. Latta and his team at the National Aviary are working in FSF's woodlands to understand the impacts of our uneven-age forest structure on forest songbirds. His presentation will summarize the work to date and share preliminary observations of how FSF's forestry affects bird diversity and nesting habitat.



Loving the Land —Landowners Tell Their Stories

Craig and Monica Schwegman live in Waterford, PA. Craig serves on the FSF Board of Directors and works as a financial advisor in Erie, PA. Monica is an artist working in photography, painting, and mixed media. Both are nature lovers and champions of our region's forests. Written by Bennett Gould

Craig and Monica Schwegman's love of forests began by chance on a Sunday drive in 2013. The couple departed from their downtown Erie home, with its postage stamp yard and no trees of its own, to explore the region and take in the sights. As they went along, Craig was leafing through a *House to Home* real estate book when a listing for "Waterfront in Waterford" made him chuckle. He and Monica agreed; other than Lake LeBeouf, there surely wasn't any waterfront to speak of in Waterford. But, curiosity got the better of them. Craig called the listing agent, who confirmed the property is indeed waterfront and gave an address. Rerouting their driving tour to the property, Craig and Monica were left scratching their heads. When they arrived, there was no house to be found, just a driveway into the woods. Craig called the agent back. "Yep, its there. Just drive on in. I'll meet you in 20 minutes." was the realtor's reply. Craig protested – this was just a Sunday drive with no intent of stirring up a realtor, let alone thinking of buying property. Undeterred, the realtor was on his way.

Two hours later, Craig and Monica got back into their car. They sat in silence for many minutes, both having the same thoughts, but hesitant to admit what was on their minds. Craig broke the quiet with "Well, Monica, are we tearing down the house or gutting it?"

The pair had stumbled into a twenty-acre parcel, divided down the middle by LeBeouf Creek. On one side of the creek are lowlands with springs, sinks, and a vernal pool within a stand of red maple, sugar maple, and hickory. On the other side, the ground dries out and the home is nestled within a grove of hemlocks. Adjacent to the north are nearly 2,000 acres comprising State Game Lands #109. To the east, Benson Run, a Class A Wild Trout Stream, empties into LeBeouf Creek where it creates a choice fishing hole. In the proper-

ty's microcosm of woods and water, wildlife abounds from turkey to bear to songbirds. The house had fallen into disrepair, but was alluring as a renovation project. The Schwegmans couldn't resist and closed on the property as fast as they could.

Prior to Craig and Monica, the Erie County property had been owned by the late Jean Stull Cunningham, an accomplished and widely-published ornithologist, founder of the Presque Isle Nature Club (since renamed the Presque Isle Audubon Society), and champion for Presque Isle State Park. In 1973, Jean and her husband James built the LeBeouf Creek house with an ahead-of-its-time design incorporating large windows, porches, decks, and skylights, allowing the outside world to flow into the living space. Wanting to ensure protection of her stretch of LeBeouf Creek in perpetuity, Jean partnered with French Creek Valley Conservancy (FCVC) in 2001 to establish a conservation easement for the property.

As new owners of twenty acres of forest, the Schwegmans realized they had a lot to learn. They started by examining a notebook left in the house by Jean that cataloged all species of flora and fauna she had found on the property. While familiarizing themselves with the surrounding wildlife, Craig and

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Craig & Monica Schwegman in their woods near Waterford, PA.

Monica met with FCVC to learn about the property's conservation easement and how Jean's conservation goals might align with their own. Monica took the lead on renovating the house with her own Frank Lloyd Wright-inspired touches, and Craig turned his interest to the forest. He scheduled a consultation with Tom Erdman, the DCNR Service Forester for Erie County. *(Tom was a valued FSF member who recently passed away this spring. You can read a remembrance of Tom on page 7.)* Tom developed a forest management plan for the property and Craig and Monica began to make positive changes by removing invasive plants, converting a small pasture back to woodland, and building a network of walking trails throughout the woods. Recognizing the Schwegmans' enthusiasm and curiosity for forest management, Tom encouraged them to connect with the forest landowner community in northwest PA and they soon learned of the Foundation for Sustainable Forests at an event.

Craig and Monica quickly became FSF members and attended one of the first Loving the Land Through Working Forests conferences. Their involvement has grown exponentially since and, in 2016, Craig joined the Foundation's Board of Directors. Craig has been instrumental in helping the organization to grow, not just in conserved acreage, but also in membership engagement and community presence. Along the way, the Schwegmans have worked with numerous organizations to learn more about sustainable forestry and implement projects to improve the health of their woodlands. Most importantly, Craig and Monica are passing along what



Craig & Monica's granddaughter, Cara, enjoying a piggyback ride through the woods.

they have learned to others.

At the urging of the late Jim Finley, fellow FSF board member and founder of the Center for Private Forests at Penn State, Craig and Monica both enrolled in the Pennsylvania Forest Stewards Volunteer Program. This program trains partici-

pants in a host of topics – including resource management, forest ecology, biodiversity, and much more – such that they may become ambassadors of forest stewardship for others. In addition to his involvement with FSF, Craig now serves on the steering committee for the Pennsylvania Forest Stewards program and the board of the Center for Private Forests, helping to provide resources for those who care for our region's forests. Monica educates others through her art, which she creates in her studio in their LeBeouf Creek home. Monica will be quick to point out, however, that the studio isn't just a room, but the whole ensemble of the property from trees to stream, soil to songbirds.

Why do Craig and Monica devote so much time to caring for their forest and helping others do the same? "It's simple," says Craig, "we want people 50 years from now to say 'thankfully the Schwegmans owned that property because it is so healthy today.'" Monica chimed in, "and we want our baby granddaughter to enjoy the trees we've planted when she and the trees are both grown up."

Special thanks to the Schwegmans for sharing their story. Would you like to share your story? If so, we would love to listen! Please contact Bennett Gould: bgould@forestsandpeople.org or (814) 694-5830.



Springtime along one of the Schwegmans' creekside trails.

You are invited to the 1st Annual
Jim Finley Stewardship Day

To honor the memory of distinguished forest educator and visionary conservationist James C. Finley, the Foundation for Sustainable Forests is introducing this new annual event. Jim was a leader in the conservation and careful management of forests, and he valued hands-on work in the woods. Join us in carrying his legacy forward by working side by side to steward our woodlands.



Saturday, October 1, 2022, 9am-3pm
at Moxie Woods
157 Linn Tyro Rd, Greenville, PA

Projects for the day include cleanup of materials and waste from former buildings, sign installation, and invasive plant management.

FSF will supply lunch, beverages, necessary tools and supplies, and restroom facilities. Please dress for the weather, but also to work in brambles, muddy terrain, etc.

In order to scale the projects to the group size, **please RSVP by September 23** by calling (814) 694-5830 or via the event webpage at: foundationforsustainableforests.org/events

A Tribute to Joanne Kleinhanz

Several conversations over the years have taught me that something folks value most about this organization is the people who are a part of it. I wholeheartedly agree with this, and for me, Joanne Kleinhanz was one of those people who embodied the heart and soul of the Foundation for Sustainable Forests. Sadly, Joanne passed away at the age of 71 in late May.

In my early years with FSF, I came to appreciate Joanne's steadfast presence- along with that of her husband, Bob Jaworski, at events (weather, mud, bugs, and all!). A longtime FSF member as well as a woodland owner and steward in her own right, Joanne was no stranger to the hard work it takes to care for and cultivate a piece of land; for decades she planted and tended several different species of trees on their property near Union City, some of which stand over 50 feet tall today.

Unbeknownst to many of us, Joanne was also an outdoorswoman – a paddler in Canada's Northwoods, a cross-country and downhill skier and instructor, a gardener, and naturalist. She had a genuine love for natural outdoor spaces, especially woodlands.

At the next Potluck or Loving the Land Through Working Forests Conference I know that I will feel Joanne's absence, but

I also know that I will carry inspiration from her life and good work forward on behalf of FSF's important mission. Together, we can honor her memory by getting our boots muddy at the 1st annual Jim Finley Stewardship Day (*see above*), and by leaning into critical conservation efforts across the region.



From left: Joanne Kleinhanz & Bob Jaworski, Margaret & Wayne McCartney, and Carmen & Kathy Testi at the 2018 Loving the Land Conference, Florarozze Forest, Girard Twp, PA.

Tom Erdman: A Life in Penn's Woods

Contributed by Dick Thorr

President, Northwest Pennsylvania Woodland Association

The Foundation for Sustainable Forests is saddened by the loss of Tom Erdman. Tom passed away unexpectedly on June 6, 2022.

Tom worked for the PA DCNR Bureau of Forestry for 38 years, retiring from the position as Erie County Service Forester in 2016.

Tom was a founding member of the North West Pennsylvania Woodland Association (NWPWA), a great promoter, an active board member, and served as President after his retirement. He worked within NWPWA guiding its direction, setting up and participating in programs and woods walks. With the belief that there is always more to learn for himself and others how to care for our woods.

Some achievements Tom was proud of included: working with Envirothon students and teaching them about forestry and preparing them for competition; tree planting projects with the Boy Scouts and others; his woods and how much he enjoyed working in it and improving it; being a lifetime blood donor; working to contain forest fires while on the firefighting crew; walking with landowners and teaching them and having an impact on them and their forests.

While listening to other landowners that have worked with Tom it is clear what a profound impact he has had on us and our communities. Because of his knowledge and guidance, we have developed an appreci-



Anyone who walked in the woods with Tom knew that his commanding presence came from a place of experience and passion for his work. Photo by Cecile Stelter

ation for the woods, how it works, how to care for it, an interest in learning more, and the enjoyment that comes from working in our woods and sharing our experiences with others. The benefits of his lifelong work will continue long into the future.

Tom enjoyed hunting and fishing. He had a well-known love/hate relationship with deer. He enjoyed seeing them and hunting them, but hated that they are in direct conflict with his work as a forester, and all the extra work (sometimes unsuccessfully) it took to keep them from eating everything we are trying to grow. "Those damn deer," was a common refrain of Tom's.

Tom spoke often of his family and how much he enjoyed spending time with them. He will be missed by them and all of us who have known him.



Tom understood the importance of sweat equity to ensure that our forests could thrive now and in the future.

Photo by Cecile Stelter

"Tom was a longtime member and friend to FSF who played a significant role in the growth of our organization His initial introductions between FSF and landowners have led to some of our most significant land conservation projects.

He understood that the labor and care that an owner put into her land was only as significant as the plan to carry that stewardship forward into future generations. He will be deeply missed."

- Guy Dunkle



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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 healthy, resilient forests.

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UPCOMING EVENTS

August 9 - Erie Gives Day

Visit eriegives.org

August 29 & 30 - Crawford Gives Days

Visit crawfordgives.org

September 16 - Friends of the Foundation Dinner

Iroquois Boating & Fishing Club, See page 6 for more details

October 1 - Jim Finley Stewardship Day

Moxie Woods, 157 Linn Tyro Rd, Greenville, PA

9:00am - 3:00pm, Lunch Provided

October 2 - Walk in Penn's Woods

Hosted by Northwest PA Woodland Association

Greendale Cemetery, 700 Randolph St., Meadville, PA

1:00pm - 4:00pm

October 15 - Presentation Hosted by Cook Forest Conservancy

Resilience & Habitat Diversity Through Sustainable Forestry

Shelter #2, Cook Forest State Park, Cooksburg, PA

11:00am - 12:30pm, Lunch Provided

**For more information, call (814) 694-5830
or visit Foundationforsustainableforests.org/events**