

2023 ANNUAL REPORT



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



Greetings from the Executive Director

To summarize what defined FSF's year in a handful of words, I choose "gratitude", "momentum", "dedication", and "honing".

If I have done my job well, then my choice of "gratitude" should come as no surprise. As FSF's supporters and champions, you made impactful gifts and planned donations that will have ripple effects for years to come. There has never been a more exciting time to embrace a form of conservation that checks so many critical boxes – habitat diversity, economic sustainability, climate-smart forestry, and more. Thank you to all of you who gave in 2023, as these boxes truly could not be checked without you.

"Momentum" is also a fitting word, given the major grant awards that were announced this year by USDA and DCNR. Together, they are to conserve nearly 1,000 acres in northwestern Pennsylvania. This work is far from complete; many steps remain before the acquisitions can move forward, including funds to raise. If you have ever been on the fence about making a major gift to FSF in support of sustainable forest conservation, now is the time! Your added momentum will bring these projects to the finish line.

The **dedication** of FSF's community was so evident this year. We struggle at times to

adequately convey the importance of *working* forest conservation, and FSF's organizational model is easy to misunderstand. Together, we overcame hurdles built upon those misunderstandings, in large part because of the dedication of our community.

Lastly, I included "**honing**" to describe the year because of how the conversation about FSF's model and future sustainability became more finely focused. We engaged in conversations surrounding succession planning, financial sustainability, and tactical conservation. We deepened our understanding and assessment of FSF's so-called "timber endowment", the concept that our growing conserved land base, if wisely used, can sustain the organization now and into the future as it simultaneously protects critical forest ecosystems. With each forest acquired, FSF assumes the burden of responsibility of stewarding that land, preserving its conservation values, and supporting the local timber economy. FSF's ability to assess a potential project through these lenses improved significantly this year, always keeping conservation impact at the forefront of the conversation.

The Financial Summary within (pages 6-7) describes an organization poised to enter its 20th year with more momentum and a honed vision than ever before, and for that I am so grateful. None of this could be accomplished without your dedication to FSF's mission.

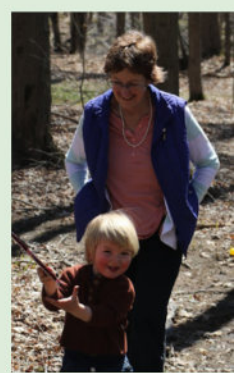
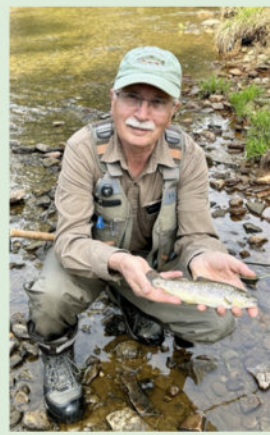
Thank you! *Annie Maloney*

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Cover Image: Attendees at our 2023 *Loving the Land Through Working Forests* Conference, which took place in Woodcock Twp, Crawford County, PA. Blooming Valley Forest is FSF's first acquisition, and has been managed using uneven-aged (gap) silviculture since the mid 1980's.

FACES OF WORKING FOREST CONSERVATION



Your Impact in 2023



231 Acres Conserved



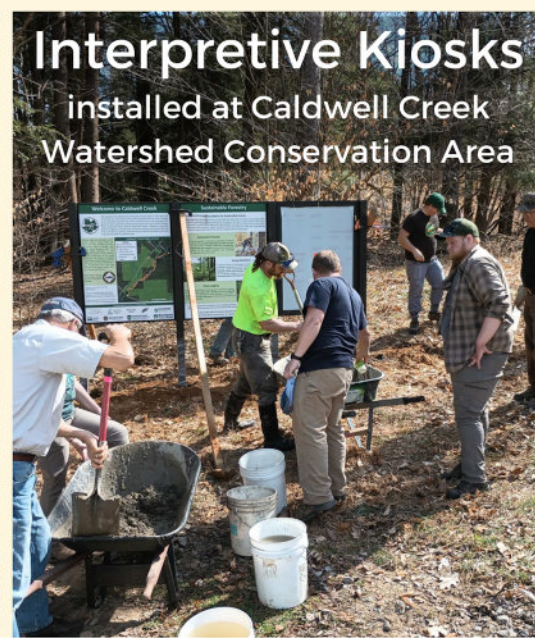
14 Outreach Events



363,037 Board Feet
Sustainably
Harvested



259 Member
Households



Interpretive Kiosks
installed at Caldwell Creek
Watershed Conservation Area



142 Acres
Treated for
Invasive
Species



**New Films
Created**
to educate and inspire



**592 Birds
Surveyed**

in FSF's woods
by the National Aviary
Photo by Cassie Ziegler



Stony Hollow Trail
opened for recreation



38 Livelihoods
supported in part by FSF lands



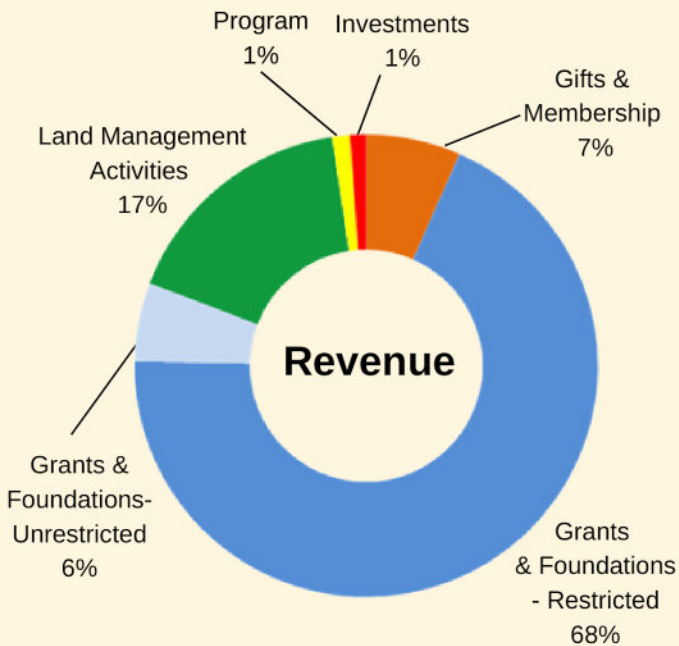
**Surveys of Critical Stream Habitat
on FSF Lands**

by the Watershed Conservation Research Center

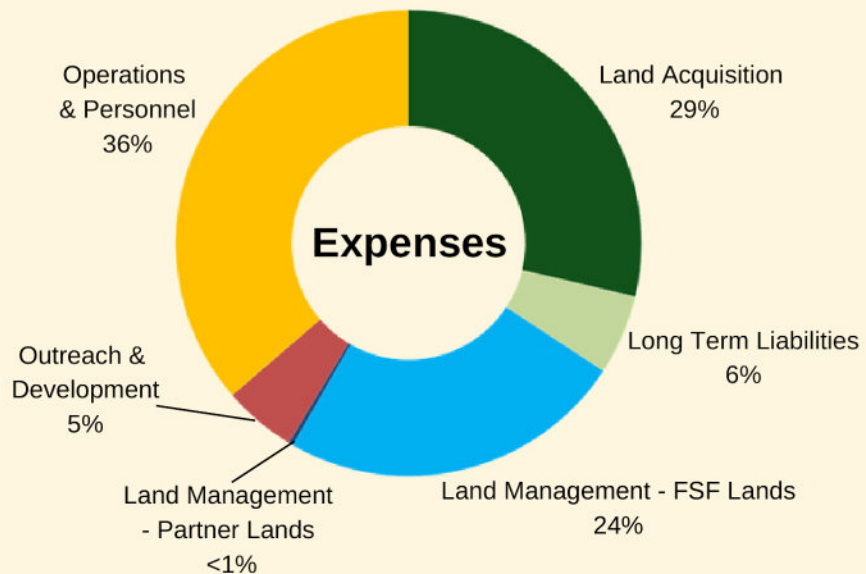


**23 Saving the Land
through Working Forests**
**Fungi
Species**
found during
annual
conference

2023 FINANCIAL SUMMARY



Total Revenue: \$941,000



Total Expenses: \$472,000

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

Platinum
Transparency
2023

Candid.

Hubbel Hill, which contains headwaters to critical wetland habitat in the French Creek watershed, was conserved by FSF in 2023.

2023 saw another year of measured growth of the Foundation for Sustainable Forests' operations, with the mid-year addition of Guy Dunkle as forester, part-time. Prior to this, FSF's foresters' time was fully donated in-kind. This addition carries a significance as FSF expands its personnel capacity to be able to self-support the responsible stewardship of its conserved land in the future.

Land management activities in 2023 included understory invasive plant management, (partially grant funded) and small harvests on FSF's Clear Forest and Moxie Woods, properties. On partner lands, FSF oversaw a small salvage harvest after a storm, and a "worst-first" style harvest in 2023.

In 2023, FSF was the grateful recipient of land conservation grant funds from Richard King Mellon Foundation and the Foundation for Pennsylvania Watersheds, and stewardship grant funds from USDA's Natural Resources

Conservation Service and Pennsylvania Society for Ornithology, the latter of which also provided funds for outreach. A significant portion of grants received for land conservation will be applied to acquisitions in 2024/25.

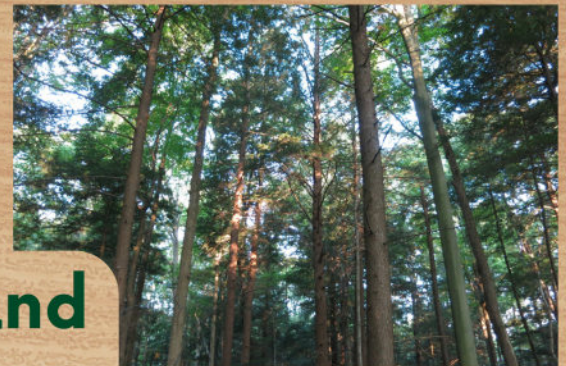
Land acquisition expenses during the year include the purchase of the Hubbel Hill parcel, and due diligence and acquisition expenses for both Hubbel Hill and Fisherman's Cove (donated) properties, which together comprise 231 acres of conserved lands. Long-term liabilities support past acquisitions of nearly 700 acres of conserved land and a federal SBA loan.

FSF will be seeking to increase revenue from gifts and membership in the year ahead. This revenue will support our increased personnel capacity and the direct conservation of nearly 1,000 acres or more of forestland in 2024/25.

Field Conference



September 21, 2024



Loving the Land Through Working Forests



2023 Membership & Support



Welcoming new members of the Lynn Firth Giving Society!*

Ron Kustra

J. Robert Jaworski

Cheryl and Frank Zalik

*The Lynn Firth Giving Society recognizes donors who have made a single cash gift of \$1,000 or more to FSF, and is distinct from supporters who have donated land.

Welcoming new supporters!

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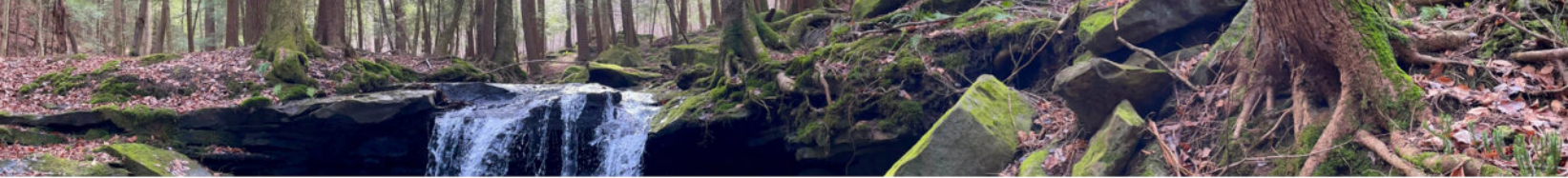
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* Lynn Firth Giving Society

[^] Includes Memorial Gift

[^] Includes In-Kind Gift



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Craig & Monica Schwegman
Bob & Jane Slagter
Jim & Connie Thompson

In Memoriam

The Foundation for Sustainable
Forests community lost the
following friends and supporters
in 2023.

Barry Bonnell
Connie Jantzi

We thank these individuals for
their commitment to healthy
forests and communities.

Introducing Fisherman's Cove

In December 2023, the Fisherman's Cove Preservation Foundation (FCPF) donated their Fisherman's Cove property to the Foundation for Sustainable Forests, the latest steward in a long line of caretakers dating back some 10,000 years. Situated at the confluence of Big Sandy Creek and the Allegheny River south of Franklin, PA, Fisherman's Cove is a property rich in history, recreation, and beauty. Of its 207 acres, about a quarter are level river frontage, quickly met with a steep, wooded hillside rising up to a flat plateau. The view from atop the boulders looking out over both river valleys is well worth the hike up.



The confluence of Big Sandy Creek and the Allegheny River at Fisherman's Cove

In 2003, Fisherman's Cove was listed for sale, placing its future in jeopardy. Passionate neighbors came together to purchase and protect the property from development. When the resulting Fisherman's Cove Preservation Foundation was incorporated in 2004, it set precedent as the first community-organized foundation in Pennsylvania established

to conserve culturally and historically significant land. By 2007, FCPF had raised the needed funds. When purchased, the property was placed under a conservation easement with both the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy and The Archeological Conservancy to ensure protection of the property's natural and cultural resources, respectively. To further solidify the property's future, FCPF chose to donate Fisherman's Cove to the Foundation for Sustainable Forests.

"Generations of family have considered Fisherman's Cove a rare and special area along the Allegheny to be their retreat. The Kerr Family, one of our friends that collected the parcels of land donated by FCPF, protected the land under their ownership and was later involved in the decision to gift this land to FSF, knowing their forest would become healthy and beautiful under the organization's ownership." Says Cathy Kentzel, FCPF President.

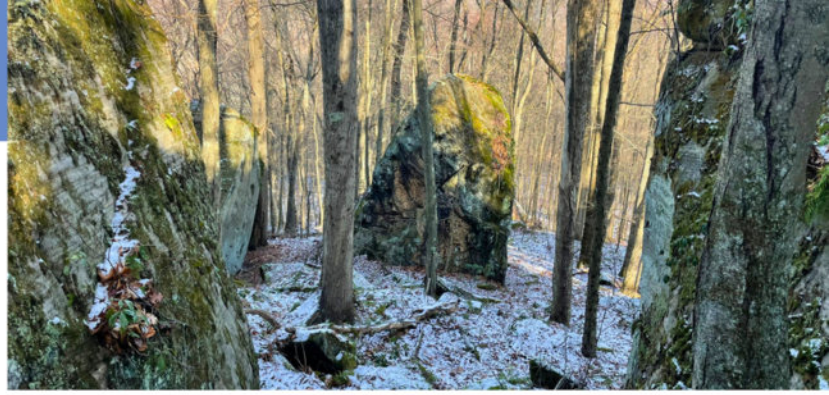
"We are humbled and grateful for the donation by FCPF. We have been entrusted with the great responsibility of caring for an ecologically and culturally rich site which carries a great deal of meaning to many." says Annie Maloney, FSF Executive Director. FSF will continue to protect the cultural resources of Fisherman's Cove and will manage portions of the property as a sustainable working forest. Fisherman's Cove remains open to the public for passive recreation, hunting, and fishing.



Artifacts from the Early Archaic through Late Woodland periods have been found at Fisherman's Cove, indicating occupation of the site as far back as 8,000 BCE. Just a mile upriver sits the famous petroglyph-covered "Indian God Rock." The property falls within the traditional territory of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy, who stewarded the land for generations. The property features a flat floodplain along one of the most steeply dissected, narrow stretches of the Allegheny River valley, and meets with the mouth of Big Sandy Creek. This unique site could have played an important role in trade and travel routes up and down the Allegheny and Ohio River Valleys for several Native American groups, including the Haudenosaunee, Shawnee, Lenni Lenape, Algonquin, and Miami people. More than a navigational tool, the river was a plentiful source of sturgeon, smelt, eel, and beaver.

More recent industrial history is also evidenced on the land. Post-colonization, the Allegheny played a critical role in the movement of goods such as timber, salt, and oil down to Pittsburgh. In the late 1800's, Fisherman's Cove was owned by a mining company holding rights to moor and ship coal and minerals on the river. The property once housed an early iron furnace, as well as the New York Central Railroad. Perhaps most interestingly, some old maps point to a "nitro pit" where a nitroglycerin storage facility once exploded, leaving behind a crater that is now a small wetland.

Fisherman's Cove overlook of the Allegheny River



These industrial relics have given way to recreational amenities in the present day. The old rail line has since become the Sandy Creek Trail, part of a network of rail trails throughout the region. A public boat launch next to the property, donated during FCPF's ownership, provides easy access for boaters and anglers to enjoy the river.

Fisherman's Cove reflects a complex narrative of human presence on the land that is characteristic of the region. The property is loved by many – from residents of the neighboring Fisherman's Cove community, to weekend travelers looking for a respite from the city, to archeologists finding pieces and clues to the many stories the land has to share.

We invite you to explore the property with us during the upcoming Lynn Firth Wildflower Walk on Sunday, May 5th as we search for spring ephemeral plants. Additional details about the event can be found at foundationforsustainableforests.org/events/

More information about the property can be found at foundationforsustainableforests.org/conserved-lands/ Please note that archeological exploration of Fisherman's Cove is by permission of The Archeological Conservancy only.



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



**P.O. Box 146
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The Foundation for Sustainable Forests is a 501(c)3 charitable organization dedicated to conserving and stewarding working forests, and promoting forestry practices that enhance health, resilience, and habitat diversity across the region.

Upcoming Events

May 5 - Lynn Firth Spring Wildflower Walk
Fisherman's Cove, Polk, PA - 1:00-4:00pm

Aug. 13 - Erie Gives - 8:00am-8:00pm

Aug. 24-27 - Crawford Gives

Sept. 20 - Friends of the Foundation Dinner
Location to be announced

**Sept. 21 - Loving the Land Through
Working Forests Conference**
Location to be announced

Oct. 6 - A Walk in Penn's Woods
Location to be announced

Nov. 2 - Jim Finley Stewardship Day
Subagh Preserve, Mayville, NY

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