

2025 Summer Newsletter



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

Greetings from the Executive Director

Please accept my heartfelt thanks to all who supported the Foundation for Sustainable Forests during our recent Erie Gives & Crawford Gives campaigns. Together, your gifts raised nearly \$43,000, which will be enhanced with partial matching funds! There are hundreds of charitable organizations, each addressing critical challenges and needs in the community, participating in these campaigns; I know from personal experience what a challenge it can be to select where to direct your resources. Thank you for choosing healthy, intact forests now and for the future with your donations!

As the summer winds down and our thoughts (and outside temperatures) turn to fall, it is so fitting that this newsletter honors core work of the Foundation for Sustainable Forests: to actively manage forests for ecosystem health and a resilient future. You will find evidence of this commitment on every page – a recent gathering with the PA Forest Stewards (page 3), a feature of Ellery Troyer, whose work supports landowners across the region in caring for their woodlands (page 4), and

another summer of stewardship projects with the Pennsylvania Outdoor Corps (page 5).

Page 7 is devoted to our upcoming Annual Dinner and Loving the Land Through Working Forests Conference. The Dinner (Sept. 19) will feature a keynote by Vermont forester Ethan Tapper, author of the aptly named *How to Love a Forest*. Our *Loving the Land Through Working Forests* Conference (Sept. 20) will begin with opening remarks by Ethan before moving into a rich array of breakout sessions. We hope you will join us in and near Titusville for these events; we will provide detailed directions for those who are not familiar with the area!

Sincerely,

Annie Maloney

Annie (right) pictured with Allyson Muth, Director of the James C. Finley Center for Private Forests, at a recent gathering of the PA Forest Stewards in Cambridge Springs.

Photo by Grace Lewis



Thank you!

Together, you are building a healthy forest future!

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Cover Image: View from below of a canopy opening created during a recent “worst-first” harvest at Northwestern REC Community Forest. The gap was created with the aim of allowing sunlight to reach a diverse mix of native seedlings below.

Bob Slagter is retiring after 10 years of Board service

Bob Slagter is retiring from FSF's Board of Director after ten years. Bob first showed his commitment to the organization's mission years before, when he partnered with FSF to see his woodland along Caldwell Creek in Warren County conserved.

Embodying the English proverb "From a small acorn a mighty oak will grow," what began as a 50-acre project has since grown to over 1,200 forested acres conserved in the Caldwell Creek valley. These lands encompass a natural reproduction trout stream and a publicly accessible catch-and-release fly-fishing corridor. More recently, Bob donated a 1.7 mile section of former railroad grade, now established as Stony Hollow Trail, for the public to enjoy.

"It was my joy to be a part of this wonderful organization and its mission" states Bob,



Bob (right) and his wife Jane (not shown) received the PA Outstanding Tree Farmer of the Year Award in 2018 for their commitment to stewardship.

referring to himself with a smile as "The Duke of Dotyville".

Please join us in thanking Bob for his unique impact on working forest conservation. We look forward to continuing to tend and nurture the many seeds for conservation that he has planted over the years!

If you would like to thank Bob as well, email your well wishes to info@forestsandpeople.org and we will pass them along!

Scenes from the Field



Clockwise from top left: Troy Firth leads PA Forest Stewards and friends at Northwestern REC Community Forest during a recent gathering; Allyson Muth, DCNR Forester Mark Lewis, and FSF Director Rich Bowden; Annie and Troy describing the history and features of Northwestern REC Community Forest; Richard Gosnell leads a twilight gathering at Blooming Valley Forest; Cheryl & Frank Zalik viewing the first stars at dusk; Carmen Testi enjoys one of the Leopold benches recently constructed at NWREC forest.

Loving the Land - Landowners Tell Their Stories

Ellery Troyer

Ellery Troyer and his family live near Waterford, PA. Ellery manages a third-generation farm and operates Ecological Field Services and French Creek Nursery.

Farmers and foresters have a lot in common. Though the crop may be different, they share a strong place-based identity and a sense of responsibility to balance human needs with ecosystem health. As a third-generation farmer and owner of a business providing services to land managers throughout our region, Ellery Troyer embodies a strong land ethic and inspires others to intentionally invest in the long-term health of their natural lands through active stewardship.

In the late 1930s, Ellery's grandfather, Glenn Troyer, moved from Nebraska back to the Troyer Family's native Pennsylvania to escape the dust bowl and continue farming. Glenn went into business with his brothers and acquired farmland throughout LeBeuf and Waterford Townships in Erie County. If you live in the region, you probably associate the Troyer name with potatoes and potato chips. "Chipping" potatoes were a large portion of the Glenn Troyer Farms crop - along with wheat, soybeans, and pick-

your-own strawberries - though the famous Troyer potato chip plant was a different branch on the family tree.

Ellery grew up on the family farm, but moved to Indiana and Michigan to attend school, where he studied biology and botany. He then remained in Michigan, where he worked as a botanist for an environmental consulting firm, married his wife, Kelly, and started their family. In 2009, they moved back to PA to be closer to family and raise their kids on the farm. Reflecting on their four children - Nathan, Mara, Audra, and Hayley - Ellery says "It was important to raise our kids close to the land, learning how to work the land, and to know that the work they do is valued with people counting on them."

While operating Glenn Troyer Farms, Ellery continued to do botanical consulting work on the side and was encouraged by his dad to pursue his passion of helping others manage their land. He did so by establishing a business, Ecological Field Services (EFS), which has expanded over the last 15 years to provide invasive species control, timber stand improvement, planting and restoration, and many other consulting services with a crew of eight full-time and twenty seasonal staff. As the business grew, Ellery made the difficult decision to scale back his agriculture operation, though he still grows asparagus and leases the remaining fields to local farmers.

Our region's forests face a variety of health threats, from development and fragmentation, to climate change, to abundant hungry deer, and invasive species. Invasive species control is the largest component of EFS' work and how the Foundation for Sustainable Forests has come to know Ellery. Invasive plants such as multiflora rose, Japanese barberry, hay-scented fern, and Japanese stiltgrass, all spread prolifically over the forest floor, blocking sunlight from native tree and shrub seedlings that would otherwise grow to make up the future forest.

Continued on page 6.





FSF teams up with the Pennsylvania Outdoor Corps once again!

It was a pleasure to team up with the Meadville crew of the PA Outdoor Corps and additional volunteers to complete a number of projects over a two-week period this summer. We are grateful for their work!

PAOC is overseen by PA DCNR and the Student Conservation Association with teams around the state performing conservation and stewardship work on public lands.



Photo by Frank Zalik

Northwestern REC Community Forest

Trail maintenance and construction of Leopold benches, picnic tables, and a new section of trail



Sparta Sportsmen's Community Forest

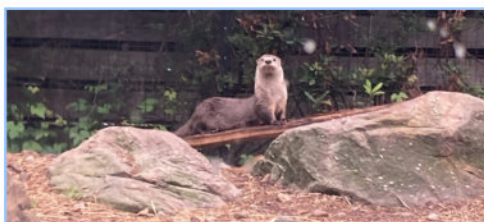


Site cleanup and construction of a tent platform for a primitive campsite



A creative partnership with the Cleveland Museum of Natural History

The Foundation for Sustainable Forests recently shared slabwood with the Cleveland Museum of Natural History to use in their wildlife center's animal enclosures. The CMNH team made a "hide box" for screech owls, perches for turkey vultures, and ramps for river otters!



Ellery Troyer, *continued from page 4*

For the past five years, FSF has worked with EFS to mitigate invasive species with chemical treatments on many of our conserved lands, primarily to ensure that the next generation of trees can begin to grow.

Ellery finds that FSF's perspective on forest management aligns well with his outlook. "Both [FSF and EFS] are about getting things done. I appreciate that FSF is on the ground, not just acquiring land, but doing active management to better the property for long term benefit."

When asked what advice he might give private forest owners regarding invasive species on their lands, Ellery says "There is value in landowners getting out and doing active management. Herbicide application is hard work, but beneficial. You need a long-term view to be willing to make the investment." The investment in mitigating invasives, he explained, is one of physical effort, time, and money. Landowners should be prepared for a multi-stage process; effective mitigation often requires more than one year of treatment, and "touch-ups" in subsequent years. Acknowledging the financial investments required to take this approach, Ellery highlighted federal programs, such as USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service's Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) and Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP), that can provide financial assistance and creative solutions to a variety of land management challenges.

More recently, Ellery is continuing to make long-term investments in the region's efforts to mitigate invasives and build resilience in our forests through his latest project, French Creek Nursery. The nursery grows and sells native bare-root tree and shrub seedlings, all of which are raised from locally collected seed. Ellery explains that sourcing seed from local seed collection zones, determined by a combination of plant hardiness zones and ecoregion, ensures that the seedlings are genetically appropriate



An EFS crew uses backpack sprayers to target individual multiflora rose plants at an FSF property near Platea, PA.

and adapted for the region's climate and other factors that affect plant growth and survival. Locally sourced trees, for example, are better synchronized with important seasonal events such as bud opening, flowering, and the production of seed. Andrew Harris, who manages the nursery, has been growing inventory for the past two years, largely focusing on hard mast species for wildlife such as black walnut, oaks, and hickories, in addition to cherry, maples, and sycamore.

Ellery Troyer's persistence to "get things done" draws on his balanced vision for the forests and lands of northwestern Pennsylvania. A steady commitment to this vision has allowed him to innovate and fill much-needed gaps in regional land management services. Thank you, Ellery, for all you do to support landowners and managers in fostering regional forest health and resilience.

Prepared by Bennett Gould in collaboration with Ellery Troyer. Would you like to share your story? If so, we would love to listen! Please contact FSF at info@forestsandpeople.org or (814) 694-5830.

Loving the Land Through Working Forests Weekend

Annual Dinner

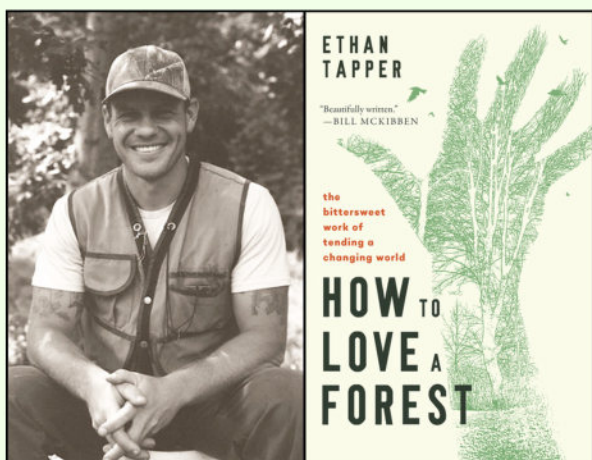
Friday, Sept. 19th, 5:30pm at The Titusville Mill, Titusville, PA

This event features a keynote by Ethan Tapper, dinner buffet, cash bar, and a chance auction.

Field Conference

Saturday, Sept. 20th, 8am to 4pm at McLaughlin Run Forest, Rome Twp., PA

This conference is all about forests and how to care for them for long-term resilience and overall health. Field-based presentations and walks will cover critical and emerging topics related to forest stewardship and conservation. Lunch is provided.



Featuring forester & author Ethan Tapper!

**To register, use the included envelope,
scan the QR code, or visit**

foundationforsustainableforests.org/events/

Conference Highlights:

- Opening Address by Ethan Tapper
- Land Use History & Management at McLaughlin Run (Troy Firth)
- Horse Logging Demonstration (Lester Byler, David Byler, Pat Maloney)
- Protecting Stream Health During a Harvest (Watershed Conservation Research Center)
- Legacy and Estate Planning for Woodland Owners (Thomas Hoffman, II, Esq.)
- Forest Resilience: What and How? (Susan Stout, Ph.D.)
- Aldo Leopold's Enduring Land Ethic (Lance Irving)



Thank you to our conference sponsors!

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



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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

Sept. 19 - Annual Dinner

The Titusville Mill, Titusville, PA
See page 7 for details.

Sept. 20 - Loving the Land Through Working Forests Conference

Near McLaughlin Corners, Rome Twp,
Crawford County, PA
See page 7 for details.

Oct. 5 - A Walk in Penn's Woods

Sparta Sportsmen's Community Forest,
Spartansburg, PA

TBD - Look for upcoming details about a
spring Jim Finley Stewardship Day!

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