

2026 Spring Newsletter



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Greetings from the Executive Director

One morning in April, a small group of us converged on a forest in Venango County. Some were eager to cast lines in a section of Class A Trout Stream that is normally leased for private use; we had been given permission to access the spot for a few hours that day.

Instead of fishing, I was nervously meeting with a grantor who has the potential to provide financial support for the Foundation for Sustainable Forests to acquire and conserve this nearly 350-acre forest and the creek it surrounds.

As we walked and talked, my nervousness quickly evaporated, one springtime gem at a time. Dwarf ginseng, trout lilies, and young leaves of blue cohosh caught our attention on the forest floor. A Louisiana waterthrush, a bioindicator of stream health and water quality, sang and flitted overhead. Within twenty minutes, two wild brown trout were caught (and released). We were in awe.

Amidst this picturesque scene, I couldn't help but smile widely. The fly-fishermen were eagerly exploring the creek with the same kind of

enthusiasm that my kids would have. The grant representative was impressed by the biodiversity of the site. Behind my smile I felt an overwhelming sense of purpose: the Foundation for Sustainable Forests must do all it can to conserve this land.

If successful, this forest will be protected, managed for health and ecosystem integrity, and publicly accessible so that others can experience this special place. We have a window of opportunity to make this possible, and you can help.

Whether it is to conserve this forest or another, mitigate invasive species, or support other areas of our work, your gift really does a difference.

If you plan to give during Erie Gives or Crawford Gives in August, now is the time to consider how. In addition to making an online donation, you can give by check, make a gift of appreciated stock, or direct qualified charitable distributions from your IRA if you are eligible.

On behalf of the team, I hope that you enjoy the contents of this newsletter, and that you will consider attending one of the upcoming opportunities to connect. Thank you for your support!

Annie Maloney

Cover Image: Robert Crawford, axe in hand, stands on Old State Road north of Edinboro, PA, circa 1960. See page six to learn more about the Robert Crawford Memorial Forest.



"From a small seed, a mighty trunk may grow"

SAVE THE DATES!

Erie Gives and Crawford Gives are community giving days that enhance your donation with a partial matching gift.

Make a gift to plant a seed for BIG impact!



**August
11**
eriegives.org



**August
19-21**
crawfordgives.org

Logs to Bats and Baskets

During recent harvests, FSF had an opportunity to work with a couple of niche log buyers. We sent a truck load of tulip poplar logs to Greenfield Basket Manufacturing in Erie County, PA, which were processed into woven baskets of all shapes, sizes and colors. Poplar wood is ideal for baskets because of its combination of strength, flexibility and stability.

We also sold hard maple logs to Louisville Slugger sister company, Larimer & Norton. At their Pennsylvania mill, the logs are processed into round billets before being shipped to Kentucky for shaping as baseball bats. Your favorite major leaguer could be using a bat from FSF forests!



Above: FSF Forester Guy Dunkle stands with hard maple logs, holding a baseball bat "billet".



At Greenfield Basket, tulip poplar logs are loaded into a veneer lathe (left) to make thin sheets, which are cut into strips (above), and woven into baskets.



Below: Billets have been turned into rough bats at Larimer and Norton's mill. Photo by Warren County Visitors Bureau.

FSF Receives Meadville Rotary Grant for Stewardship Tools

Thank you to the Rotary Club of Meadville, District 7280 for supporting FSF! This grant will provide our stewardship volunteers with new tools and safety equipment, including child-sized items to encourage the next generation of forest stewards. You can try out the new tools at FSF's Jim Finley Stewardship Day on August 21st.

Board member Rich Bowden is pictured below representing FSF at the Rotary awards luncheon. Thank you again to the Meadville Rotary for supporting nonprofits in the community!



Greeting spring at the Lynn Firth Wildflower Walk

Originally planned to take place at Bo's Woods in Warren County, this April offering was held instead at Sparta Sportsmen's Community Forest in Sparta Twp., Crawford County, where the flowers were further along.

Attendees enjoyed a sunny afternoon hike that included an impressive wild leek (ramp) patch, a peek at the primitive campsite constructed last year, and a variety of blooms. Flowering hobblebush (*Viburnum lantanoides*) was a highlight, as the shrub is often browsed by deer and is uncommon in this region. Thank you to Cecile Stelter, DCNR, for being our knowledgeable guide!



Pennsylvania Forestry Association Celebrates 140 Years!



Congratulations to the Pennsylvania Forestry Association, which is proudly celebrating its 140th Anniversary, marking more than a century of leadership in conservation, forest stewardship, public education, and advocacy for Pennsylvania's natural resources.

Founded in 1886 under the leadership of Dr. Joseph T. Rothrock, the Association is the oldest continuous operating nonprofit conservation organization in the country and has played a direct role in shaping the future of the Commonwealth's forests, parks, and public lands. Learn more about PFA at their website, www.paforestry.org

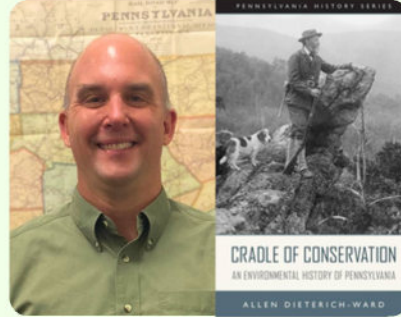
Loving the Land Through Working Forests Weekend

Annual Dinner

Friday, Sept. 18th, 5:30pm

Iroquois Club, Conneaut Lake, PA

Gather around the table with friends for an evening of food and fun! This event features a keynote by environmental historian Allen Dieterich-Ward, dinner, dessert, drinks, and a Chance Auction.



Dinner keynote by Allen Dieterich-Ward, author of *Cradle of Conservation: An Environmental History of Pennsylvania*

Forestry Walk

Saturday, Sept. 19th, 9am - 12pm

Robert Crawford Memorial Forest,
Edinboro, PA

This year's Loving the Land Through Working Forests event will scale back from its usual conference format and is offering a guided walk at a 282-acre forest acquired by FSF earlier this year.



Forestry Walk led by Guy Dunkle, FSF Forester and Director

To register, use the included envelope, scan the QR code, or visit foundationforsustainableforests.org/events/



CREATE FOR CHANGE Art Exhibition & Auction

This event has been created by the **Corry Artists' Guild** to highlight Corry-area nonprofits through art. As part of the exhibition, artist Steve Campbell is creating an original art piece inspired by the Foundation for Sustainable Forests! A portion of the auction proceeds will benefit FSF and other participating nonprofits.

Friday, August 7th: Reception & Art Preview at 4-6pm

Saturday, August 8th: Exhibition at 11am, Live Auction at 1pm

Mead Park Amphitheatre, 945 Mead Ave, Corry, PA.

For additional details, visit the Corry Artists Guild website at www.corryartistsguild.org/events/



Loving the Land - Landowners Tell Their Stories

Robert Crawford, remembered by his daughter, Susan Wellman

Robert Crawford liked to think of himself as a farmer. Although he built a career as a successful businessman, he was also a proud yet humble steward of nearly 300 acres of forested land in northwestern Pennsylvania, including a Christmas tree farm that he mostly planted himself.

Originally from Minnesota, Robert and his wife, Barbara, moved to Pennsylvania in 1946, first to southwestern Pennsylvania and several years later to Erie. He was an avid hunter, mostly of small game. Seeking a piece of Penn's Woods for him and his family to enjoy, he purchased a tract of mostly forested land with an old farmhouse north of Edinboro in 1959.

Robert purchased the property when he was still active in his career, so he would come out to the land when he could to walk the trails, maintain them, and work on other projects in the woods. He used the old farmhouse as a basecamp.

Every Christmas, the Crawfords would host a party for family and friends at the farmhouse. Robert and Barbara would let their guests pick out their own Christmas tree to take home.

These details are being shared with Guy Dunkle and me by Susan Wellman, one of Robert's two daughters, as we sit in her home on this same property. Susan was 15 years old when her father purchased it. In partnership with Susan, the Foundation for Sustainable Forests (FSF) acquired and conserved 282 acres of forest in February. At her request, the site has been named "Robert Crawford Memorial Forest" in loving memory of her father. This property will be stewarded using FSF's ecological forestry approach, and is accessible to the public for recreational uses such as hiking, hunting, and bird-watching.

During much of Robert's tenure of ownership, Tom Erdman, a Service Forester for the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) for 38 years and good friend to FSF, was an important partner in stewardship on the property. According to Susan, the two met during Tom's first year on the job in the late 1970's, and became good friends. Over the years, they completed several habitat improvement projects on the property, including small clearcuts to support early successional species.

As Robert moved closer to retirement, he was able to come out to the property more often. Eventually, around the late 1970's, he and his wife built a home and moved to the property full time. At the same time, Susan and her husband, Cyrus, built their home on the other side of the road, and the old farmhouse was razed with the help of a training exercise by local firefighters. Like his father-in-law, Cyrus also loved the woods and spent a lot of time in them.

By the time he was in his 80's, Robert had lost much of his eyesight but still enjoyed being out on the property. He would ask Susan to take him out to the woods in a small car. She recalls how "he knew every inch of the farm", talking her through the directions and using trees that he could not see as landmarks to guide her. As they rolled along, Robert would ask "What do you see?", "What do you hear?". He tried valiantly, but in vain, to teach her the names of all of the trees. Susan smiles as she shares this, and adds that it was later in her life, in retirement, that she came to discover "the magic and mystery of these woods."



Left: This tree farm sign formerly stood along Old State Road as a symbol of the family's proud care of the land.

On the cover: Robert Crawford stands on Old State Road north of Edinboro, PA. Circa 1960.



After Robert's passing, Cyrus became the primary steward of the land, with continued mentorship and assistance from Tom Erdman. Thinking about the forest's future, it was Tom who encouraged Cyrus and Susan to learn more about the Foundation for Sustainable Forests and its mission. As they began to explore their options, the conservation conversation with FSF began. After both Cyrus and Tom passed away in 2022, Susan wanted to see their vision of conserving the land become reality and reignited the conversation, culminating in the protection of the property via charitable sale in February.

This spring, FSF began its tenure as stewards of this forest. A "worst-first" thinning led by Guy Dunkle is currently underway, with thanks to the skilled work of loggers Reuben R Miller of Atlantic, PA and Daniel M Byler of Cochran, PA and their horse teams.

I hope you will join me in thanking Susan Wellman and her family for their inspirational vision and impactful partnership to conserve the Robert Crawford Memorial Forest.

Later this year, FSF is offering a couple of ways for you to connect with this place. To learn more, read below and on page 5.

Prepared by Annie Maloney in collaboration with Susan Wellman. To learn more about how you can visit Robert Crawford Memorial Forest, go to: foundationforsustainableforests.org/conserved-lands/



Left: Comprised primarily of mature forest, this site contains portions of the Conneauttee Creek and Little Conneauttee Creek sub-basins within the French Creek watershed. Right: The site contains portions of tributary wetlands and large vernal pools like the one shown above. (Photo by Alan Dilla)

Help Steward Robert Crawford Memorial Forest!

Join *Jim Finley Stewardship Day*

Friday August 21st, 9am to 3pm.

In 2022, FSF introduced *Jim Finley Stewardship Day* to honor the memory of distinguished forest educator and visionary conservationist James C. Finley. The day brings this community together for projects tied to the long-term health and resilience of the land. Together, we will tend to tree tubes, clean up an old farm building site, install property signs, and more. Lunch, tools, and materials will be provided.

To RSVP, please call (814) 694-5830 or visit www.foundationforsustainableforests.org/events/





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foundationforsustainableforests.org

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The Foundation for Sustainable Forests is a 501(c)3 charitable organization dedicated to protecting forested land and supporting forest livelihoods through practices that maintain the long-term health of the land.

Upcoming Events

**Aug. 1 - Walking Tours of Northwestern REC
Community Forest at 11:30am and 1:30pm**
at REC's 90th Anniversary Celebration
Meet at 22534 Hwy. 86, Cambridge Springs, PA

**Aug. 7-8 - CREATE FOR CHANGE
Art Exhibition & Auction**
Mead Park Amphitheatre, Corry, PA - see page 5

Aug. 11 - Erie Gives

Aug. 19-21 - Crawford Gives

Aug. 21 - Jim Finley Stewardship Day
*9am - 3pm @ Robert Crawford Memorial Forest,
Edinboro, PA - see page 7*

Sept. 18 - Annual Dinner
5:30pm @ The Iroquois Club, Conneaut Lake, PA

Sept. 19 - Loving the Land Through Working Forests
*9am - 12pm @ Robert Crawford Memorial Forest
Edinboro, PA - see page 5*

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