

Women and Their Woods

Information for Women Forest Landowners
Issue 11, Fall 2013

The Pollination Project and Halfmoon Hollow

By Elle Morgan, PA landowner and 2012 WaTW graduate

The word “pollination” holds a lot of meaning for me as I reflect at this harvest time. On our property in Clearfield County, the bees could actually pollinate in our once fallow fields, and the Pollination Project “seeded” our new primitive campground.

A nonprofit, the Pollination Project gives away \$1,000 each day to worthy applicants--\$365,000 this year to help get something off the ground that will bring compassion to the world! <http://thepollinationproject.org/>

After reading about this inspiring idea in Parade magazine, I immediately wrote the grant and prepared a YouTube video which explained my project--a primitive campground located on a 7-acre parcel of woodland, where I could hold retreats for adjudicated youth, women, and outdoor enthusiasts.



My husband Terry and I have enjoyed our 36 acres of land over the course of our marriage, but lately I have had the desire to share with others. In my former career as a wilderness counselor, I enjoyed helping people sort out their lives while being supported by the beauty and innate wisdom of the natural environment. I have always found solace and comfort in our woods and I knew that others would also.

However, preparing our site to host visitors seemed a daunting task. We don't have water or sewage. We have electricity, but only in the cabin, which is not yet finished.



We do have a lovely piece of woods bordering a meadow, with two creeks, and an abundance of wildlife. So, in my grant proposal I asked for a water filtration system, to have potable water on-site, a huge lodge tent, and materials to build an outdoor shower. My son, Sean, graciously donated a

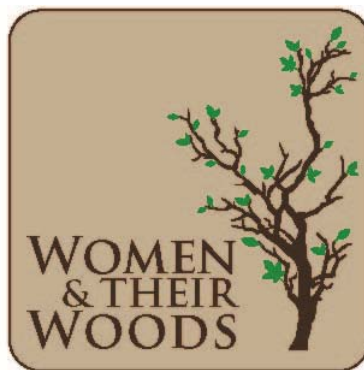
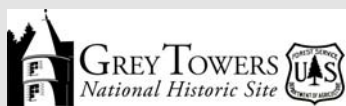
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The Women and Their Woods program is administered by Penn State Forest Resources Extension and the Delaware Highlands Conservancy with support from the Pennsylvania Forest Stewardship Program, US Forest Service at Grey Towers, and PA DCNR Department of Conservation and Recreation.

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Throughout our region, women are increasingly responsible for the stewardship of private forestlands. Women landowners require accurate information and relevant knowledge about available options for managing their properties.

Women and Their Woods is a dynamic, fun, and informative program that teaches women to effectively care for their lands. **Women and Their Woods** emphasizes conservation stewardship and the value of intact forestlands and instills in women landowners a sense of confidence in their abilities to meet the challenges of forestland ownership.

We hope you find this newsletter helpful. Please contact us for further information on how to be involved.

We need your Email Address!

As conservation-centered organizations, we want to conserve resources by communicating with you through email.

Please send your email to conserve@delawarehighlands.org and specify if you would like to receive our mailings electronically or continue to receive hard copies in the mail.

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compostable toilet. With the main needs covered, it looked like a campground was possible--if we were funded! And we were! You can read about it on their website. I was a February recipient.

But pollination is just the beginning, as this description explains: When a pollen grain lands on or is carried to the receptive tissue of a pistil known as the stigma, the flower has been pollinated. But this is only the first step in a complicated process that, if successful, leads to fertilization.

The Morgan family had to jump in for the rest of the process. We used a walking brush hog to clear the land, careful to leave the Witch Hazel standing so that her graceful arching limbs could create canopied areas for tents.

We built a wooden bridge over the creek and set up an outdoor sink

with the Lifesaver Jerry Can filtration system. We hung a skychair on a tall beech and a porch swing between two oaks. We placed four poles in the ground, wrapped them in privacy canvas, installed a propane heating system and called it a shower! We weed whacked, but were careful to leave as many maidenhair fern as possible.

We unearthed stones--more like boulders (!), in order to have level walking paths, and the most beautiful fire ring was produced by using them. By August, we were ready for our first "retreat." What power there is in beginnings! I am so grateful to the Pollination Project!

Meanwhile, on the "top 30" acres, some of the land was cleared and prepared for a big planting through the USDA. By summer's end, we had at least a few acres in our EQIP pollinator program already flowering in beautiful yellow "snaps."

My adult children live out of the area, but they have been involved through photos and texts, and weekend visits to the campground, which we now call Halfmoon Hollow. It is my hope that there is continuing pollination with the next generation in whose hands will be ongoing preparations, enjoyment and conservation of this land in the coming years.



2013 Women and Their Woods Fall Retreat



The third annual Women and Their Woods Educational Retreat was held this September 26-29 at Camp Susque in Trout Run, PA.

In four days of workshops, indoor and outdoor sessions, field trips, and hands-on learning, attendees connected to a network of forestry professionals and resources; got the tools they need to manage healthy forestlands; and became mentors to friends, neighbors and family members.

"How do I plan to use what I have learned? My first impulse is to shout it from the highest mountaintop, but I know that I need

to effectively communicate the valuable information I learned over the four days," landowner Jo Spigler discusses. In one session, participants learned to use Forest Story Cards to discuss goals for their land with their families.

"I told my husband about the cards. Then I told him that I was going to call the forester to find out about the Golden Winged Warbler. He said, 'Aren't you going to use the cards?' So that question brought me back into the realization that I needed to slow down my pace to include my family with the picture cards in order to find out their wants," Jo explains.

In addition, participants attended sessions in forest ecology, tree identification, silviculture, forest hydrology, wildlife habitat, forest measurements, forest health, agroforestry, estate planning, and options for land protection.

The friendly, peer-learning atmosphere of Women and Their Woods fosters connection to the land and to each other, and participants return home as inspired forest stewards, ready to share their knowledge and experience.

It is hard for me to believe how differently I view my woods after our four days together.

In addition to loving my woods, I feel a strong responsibility to care for it in a purposeful way. The network of support available is wonderful. I am embarked on a new, beautiful, and heretofore unexpected relationship with my forest. -Christine Foland, PA Landowner and Retreat Graduate



A field trip to Greenwood Hunting Lodge featured a visit to a wind farm as well as a timber harvest site to learn about the process.

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Jane Swift (right), Environmental Education Specialist with DCNR, teaches participants to identify trees using a dichotomous key.



Landowner Kenna Levendosky discusses her property in a cognitive mapping exercise led by Nancy Baker.



Forester and forestry professor Beth Brantley assists attendees in taking forest measurements to calculate the timber value.



The wide variety of topics presented in the classes gave me many options toward the maintenance of my forestland for the future. **Also, the wakeup call to have a meeting with my adult children to learn what their thoughts are as to the future of our forest is now impacting the need for a family conference.**

-Jennifer Schoonover, PA Landowner and 2013 Retreat Graduate

Save the Date!

Mark your calendars for next year's retreat, September 25-28, 2014. Visit www.DelawareHighlands.org/watw for updates and details, and to find out about more events and workshops for forest landowners throughout the year.



Growing Your Peer Learning Network

Tools and Tips from the Women Owning Woodlands Network

This toolkit, available for free download at

http://extension.oregonstate.edu/catalog/pdf/em/em9064_toc.pdf, is designed to engage women woodland owners with an empowering, peer-learning approach. Peer-learning alternatives will be conducive to open, problem-based, learner-driven exploration. Confidence, engagement in learning, development of mutually supportive personal relationships, and basic technical skills will all increase, leading to more informed land stewardship decisions.

This toolkit focuses on the nuts and bolts of designing, forming, holding, and maintaining a peer-learning group, whether the group you want to reach is women woodland owners or any other group of people who have similar goals for learning. You'll find in this toolkit templates and worksheets for you to use, with samples to make clear how to use them.

If you are:

- An educator or association leader involved with forest and rangeland communities in the United States,
- A woman who owns forest or rangeland and who is not currently engaged in your respective forestry or range communities,
- A woman who owns forest or rangeland and who stands to serve as a mentor or facilitator of a peer network, or
- A woman who may not currently be managing but who stands to inherit or otherwise acquire forestland,

Then this book is for you.

Growing Your Peer Learning Network

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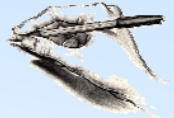
Allyson Smith, Penn State University; Amanda Subitz, Delaware Highlands Community College; EB Sejas, University of Minnesota; Heidi Strong, Oregon State University; and Susan Wallengrass, University of Arkansas



Forest Landowner Perspective

This newsletter is **YOUR** space! Share your connections to the forest with other WaTW newsletter readers. Send Amanda an email at conserve@delawarehighlands.org with your photos, journal entries, drawings, other artwork, or stories, and we'll share it here.

We're looking forward to hearing from you!



WomenOwningWoodlands.net

Find information applicable to your forest landownership, connect through nearby events for women landowners, and let us know if you have ideas for future content. www.WomenOwningWoodlands.net



Working the Land, Conserving the Land

Written by Nicole Faraguna and Andy Loza of the PA Land Trust Alliance
Reprinted from Volume 23, No. 2, Autumn 2013 issue of Forest Leaves

Thousands of Pennsylvania properties have been conserved using conservation easements. Since 1966, landowners have partnered with private land trusts to conserve over 230,000 acres of farms, forests, and other special places with this tool. County farm preservation programs have conserved another 450,000 acres.

A conservation easement is established by mutual agreement between a landowner and a private land trust (or government). The easement limits certain uses of the land for the purpose of achieving particular conservation objectives while keeping the land in the owner's control. The conservation easement will continue to be in force no matter who owns the land in the future.

When looking to create a conservation easement, the land trust and owner first must decide upon its conservation objectives. These objectives will be shaped by the character of the property, the mission and goals of the land trust, and the wishes of the owner. For example, objectives might include ensuring that forestry or agricultural practices are sustainable, maintaining and improving water quality, improving wildlife habitat, or protecting scenic views.



Association publishes a standard form for this purpose, the Model Grant of Conservation Easement (found online at: <http://conservationtools.org/model-documents/model-conservation-easement>).



Once the owner and land trust agree on the objectives, they then discuss the restrictions that will be necessary to achieve the objectives. Such restrictions might include no subdivision or no timber extraction without a management plan.

The owner and land trust also discuss what activities and improvements the owner wants or needs to allow on the land. For example, for some owners it is important to allow for one or more home sites for their children.

The conservation objectives, restrictions and permitted uses that the owner and land trust agree to are then put into a legal document. The Pennsylvania Land Trust



...Continued from page 7 of deeds office. With this action, the owner grants to the land trust the right to uphold the conservation objectives and enforce the terms set forth in the granting document.

The land trust is now responsible for ensuring the conservation objectives are respected by all future owners. Proper stewardship for conservation easements includes annual site monitoring visits, building relationships with new owners, ensuring easement violations are resolved and responding to landowner requests to exercise rights that require land trust approval. All of this takes time and money. For this reason, it is a standard practice for land trusts to arrange with the owner commitments for stewardship contributions from the owner and/or future owners.



Most conservation easements are donated by landowners who wish to protect a beloved place. In some narrow circumstances (for example, county agricultural preservation programs), easements are sold at a bargain price or fair market value. Donations and bargain sales may result in federal tax benefits.

To locate a land trust or learn more, visit ConservationTools.org.

Photos by David B. Soete



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