

Women and Their Woods

Information for Women Forest Landowners
Issue 17, Winter 2015

Igniting the Spark

By Tiffany Fegel

“We have such a brief opportunity to pass on to our children our love for this Earth, and to tell our stories. These are the moments when the world is made whole. In my children’s memories, the adventures we’ve had together in nature will always exist.” — Richard Louv, Last Child in the Woods: Saving Our Children from Nature-Deficit Disorder

So many of the landowners I work with are eager for their grandchildren to visit their forest properties. They want so badly for future generations to love their property the same way they do. In a world where trees are competing with the Kardashians, Halo, Facetime, Angry Birds, constant texting, Facebook, YouTube, and on, and on, and on, it’s not hard to decipher why kids are not stimulated by the forest. It’s just not as exciting as all the things that they have been exposed to all their lives. The brunt of it is that nature is ‘boring’ (this is a generalization directed towards the majority of children).

I have always firmly believed that inspiring excitement is about ‘lighting a spark’ in people, especially children. If we can do something that gets them excited about being in the woods, just one time, maybe they will want to come back again. And again. And again. Maybe they will fall in love with the trees like many of us have.

I also believe that this ignition point must be intentional. It is most likely not going to happen by simply taking kids out into the forest. There is a need for a ‘hook,’ to get kids out for the first couple times. Get them excited. I have seen landowners add a pond with a rope swing for their grandkids to swim in during the summertime. Or build a relatively simple zip line through the trees. But today I would like to feature a Women Owning Woodlands member from Oregon, and her husband, who have went above and beyond to encourage their kids and grandkids to come play in the woods.

Nancy Jacobson and her husband Harlow own a little over 5 acres amidst many other forested parcels in Northwest Oregon. In their woods, near their home, they have constructed a complex tree house, deck, and tree boat. All of which are connected by a suspension bridge.



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

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GREY TOWERS
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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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“We built the tree house complex mainly for our grandkids, as a way to interest them in coming here, and it was a fun project for us as well. They had their first "camp-outs" here, in the tree house, on its deck, and also in our tent,” Nancy expresses.

“They helped us construct a fire pit, learned how to build camp fires, and have roasted many hot dogs and s'mores with us. They were introduced to many new plants, animal tracks, snakes, salamanders, tiny fish in our stream, our local deer, etc. and they had time for free, creative play in a beautiful environment. They have much more appreciation of Mother Nature now, and of caring for, protecting, and preserving our environment... **Our grandkids love to explore and play in our woods.**”

The Jacobson's also encourage friends and neighbors to bring over their children and grandchildren to explore the woods, the creek, and the tree house complex.

“It is such a great learning opportunity for kids (and adults) who often spend more time with electronic devices and don't have a good connection with nature. Whenever we have folks visit us, we encourage them to explore the woods with us,” says Nancy.

“If getting our kids out into nature is a search for perfection, or is one more chore, then the belief in perfection and the chore defeats the joy. It's a good thing to learn more about nature in order to share this knowledge with children; it's even better if the adult and child learn about nature together. And it's a lot more fun.”

— Richard Louv, *Last Child in the Woods: Saving Our Children from Nature-Deficit Disorder*



Nancy and her husband also enjoy recreating in their woodland themselves. They love to hike their trails with their puppy, “For me, being close to nature is so important,” says Nancy. “Just walking through the forest gives me a sense of peace and serenity. Seeing a family of owls or a coyote or a deer, listening to the rush of the water in the stream and the calling of the birds and the rustling of the leaves, watching the sway of the large trees in the wind, they all give me such indescribable joy.” “We feel so blessed to be surrounded by such a paradise and want to encourage others of all ages to discover, or rediscover, the joys of our natural surroundings.” 🍃



Game of Logging Trainings for Women

The Northern Tier Hardwood Association offers Game of Logging trainings in the northeast every spring and fall. To learn more, visit <http://www.nthardwoods.org/> or email Sarah Hall-Bagdonas nthapa@nthardwoods.org.

Join Us at This Year's 2016 Educational Retreat: September 15-18, Highlights Foundation Facility Boyd's Mill, Milanville, PA



In four days of workshops, indoor and outdoor sessions, field trips, and hands-on learning at the Women and Their Woods Educational Retreat, attendees will connect to a network of forestry professionals and resources; get the tools they need to manage healthy forestlands; and become mentors to friends, neighbors and family members.

In addition, sessions will include topics 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.

The cost for the retreat is \$200 and includes lodging for three nights, meals and snacks, and all workshop materials and resources. **Applications are available online at www.DelawareHighlands.org/watw and are due by August 1, 2016. You do not need to own land to attend.**

As retreat graduate Christine Foland explains, "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."

Scholarships are available. For more information, please contact Amanda Subjin at 570-226-3164 x. 2 or conserve@delawarehighlands.org.



The Highlights Foundation Facility at Boyd's Mill provides spaces to gather, learn, and reflect in a beautiful setting featuring an outdoor fireplace, poetry garden, hiking trails and more in northeast Pennsylvania.

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Photo Album



With a mix of hands-on learning and classroom time, attendees spend four days immersed in the experience of connecting to the land. For more photos, information, and quotes from past retreat attendees, visit DelawareHighlands.org/watw.



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

Join the discussion and learn more about Women Forest Landowners: June 14 at noon and 7 p.m., "Women in the Woods" webinar



In Pennsylvania, about a third of the woodland owners are women who make decisions for about 19% of the state's private forest land. Anecdotally and through research we learn of a stronger emphasis on family legacy and holding on to the land, yet, many women woodland owners indicate less willingness to attend traditionally offered programs on caring for woodlots. Join us for a webinar to learn about women forest landowners as a population and the potential for outreach and engagement opportunities.

Presented by Allyson Muth, Forest Stewardship Program Associate, Penn State Extension and Center for Private Forests at Penn State and Alex Metcalf, Research Assistant Professor, College of Forestry and Conservation, University of Montana. Live at noon and 7 p.m. at <https://meeting.psu.edu/PAForestWeb/>. To sign up for reminders or to register, visit <http://extension.psu.edu/natural-resources/forests/courses/pa-forests-web-seminar-center>).

Clear Choices, Clean Water: My Delaware River

You know that healthy forests are key to filtering rainwater and pollutants and keeping lakes, rivers, and streams clean and clear. But there are also many smaller actions you can take around the home and garden to protect and conserve clean water, from taking shorter showers to planting a rain garden or installing a rain barrel.

Visit mydelawareriver.clearchoicescleanwater.org to take the pledge to take action. With every pledge through June 27, 2016, you'll be entered to win a 9' Old Town Heron kayak, generously donated by Alice's Wonderland in Greeley, PA. You'll see how many gallons of water or pounds of algae you're preventing, and you'll see how many of your friends and neighbors have taken the pledge.



PLEDGE TO WIN!



**CLEAR CHOICES
CLEAN WATER**

MAKE A DIFFERENCE

WomenOwningWoodlands.net

You told us your favorite part is reading stories from other landowners...check it out...there are new stories! You'll also find information applicable to your forest landownership and connect through nearby events for women landowners.

www.WomenOwningWoodlands.net



Connecting Young Children With Nature

By Mary Holland

With spring about to burst, it's the perfect time to introduce your infant or toddler grandchild, son, daughter, niece, nephew or young friend to the great outdoors. A child is never too young to encounter nature — in fact, the younger the better! According to the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), recent studies document the importance of introducing children to the natural world, beginning in the early years. The development of their social, emotional, and physical health depends on this exposure.

If you can't get your infant or toddler into nature, bring nature to them! It's well known how children observe, listen, feel, taste, and take apart any and everything they encounter in an effort to become more acquainted with it. A very young child, presented with anything from a leaf to a pine cone to a snake skin (or the tail end of a snake) will engage his or her innate curiosity. Infants and toddlers do not associate nature, be it a fuzzy caterpillar, a slimy frog or a honey bee visiting a flower, with fear. Quite the opposite. Connecting young children with nature is a golden opportunity to foster curiosity and appreciation for this amazing natural world of ours.

Reprinted with permission from "*Naturally Curious with Mary Holland*,"
www.naturallycuriouswithmaryholland.wordpress.com.



Summer seems to be the easiest time to get kids out in the woods. I certainly have great memories of family camping trips, sleeping outside with neighbors and spending countless hours in the creek down the street. Now that I have kids of my own, I've learned to find numerous ways to get us outside and stay entertained. For the older one, activities have to keep us moving and provide a challenge. For the younger, I have to be sure to let her interact with nature without consuming too many rocks and pine needles!

A few years back, my colleagues and I tossed around the idea of creating a 'toolkit' that would provide parents, grandparents and other caregivers ideas for activities to connect children with nature. These ideas would come directly from you, the core of the Women and Their Woods network.

So what do you say? Would you start us off and share an activity that got your kids or grandkids into the woods? Email me:
conserve@delawarehighlands.org

Join us for the **Women and Their Woods Educational Retreat** Thursday, September 15 - Sunday, September 18, 2016

Workshop sessions, meals and lodging at the wooded campus
of the Highlights Family Foundation near Beach Lake, PA.

Learn more inside and online. Application deadline is August 1, 2016.
Find the application online!
www.DelawareHighlands.org/watw

*"It was great to be in a relaxed atmosphere and be able to tell stories and share experiences
informally as well as formally." - Helen, NY landowner and 2013 retreat graduate*



Forest Landowner Perspective

This newsletter is **YOUR** space! Share your connections to the forest with other WaTW newsletter readers. Send an email to info@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!



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Women and Their Woods Newsletter



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serving New York and Pennsylvania
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