

# Women and Their Woods

Information for Women Forest Landowners  
Issue 8, Winter 2013

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## A Room with a View of the Woods

*By Elle Morgan, Pennsylvania Landowner*

The day has finally arrived! I am writing this article for the Women and their Woods newsletter in my “writing room,” inside a cozy log cabin in a winter forest of Clearfield County. The snow is drifting; the woodstove is burning; thoughts and memories surface, both pleasant and unpleasant. The word endurance seems important and makes me feel a kinship with our woods.



*Happy Bear welcomes all who visit the Morgan land.*

It’s been a long time coming, this “writing room”—28 years. When my husband and I got married in 1984, Terry’s parents deeded land to us. With no time or money, a dream was born: to build a log cabin on a pretty little seven-acre parcel, part of our 36 acres total.

This piece of land has always been special to my husband. When he was growing up on the Morgan farm, one of seven children, he found both escape and solace in the little hollow where we laid the foundation for the cabin. When I was a

little girl, I too walked this land, gathering a ground cover called Crow’s Foot each December to use for Christmas decorations.

Due to life circumstances, we never lived on the land and the cabin project has been a sort of haphazard endeavor. You can tell just by looking at it! Log siding covers only half of the house. Various areas on the interior have been completed based on the “sale of the month” at Home Depot. The little spring that feeds Hartshorn Run is still our only water supply and although there are several toilet fixtures on the property, none are functional.

Still, no matter what our jobs, or where we have lived, the land has been a draw. When we settled in the Harrisburg area, we traveled three hours north on a regular basis to the cabin in the woods. This is when a new design element entered the picture—my “writing room.”

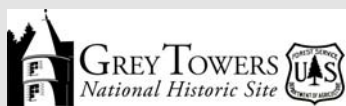
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The Women and Their Woods program is administered by Penn State Forest Resources Extension and the Delaware Highlands Conservancy with support from the Pennsylvania Forest Stewardship Program, US Forest Service at Grey Towers, and PA DCNR Department 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](mailto:conserve@delawarehighlands.org) and specify if you would like to receive our mailings electronically or continue to receive hard copies in the mail.

### ...Continued from front page...

I think it may have been a ploy to get my approval for the time Terry would be away from the family to work on it!

Regardless, it was an inspiration to both him and me. As I looked out over the fields from that little window room in the back of the cabin, I began to envision possibilities I had not thought of before. This cabin and these woods could welcome writers and artists. It could be a place of peace, and beauty, and inspiration—a retreat center.

With this interesting possibility tucked in the back of our minds, the family joined Terry in “work” weekends. The kids have grown up on this land—pitching tents, four wheeling, fire building, hiking in summer and cross-country skiing in winter.

In 2008 my husband had a heart attack. Everything stopped. No more trips, no more loving attention to the “writing room,” or any room. In fact, during this period, the floor joists gave way. Just as Terry was ailing, so was his cabin.



*Elle at her desk  
in the writing room.*



*View at dusk from the cabin.*

We have always wanted to be closer to our land. It seemed like the right time to make the move, so we did. We now live just 45 minutes away. We take nothing for granted. The stands of maple, the laurel bushes along the trail, the old growth hemlock, and the oaks on the perimeter of the field, our marriage, and my husband—all have endured. The floor boards are sturdy and the view from my “writing room” is good. When it comes to land, it’s best to stay connected and keep planning for the future.

This past September, I took the opportunity to spend four days at the Women and Their Woods educational training and retreat. It was there that I gained knowledge on how to care for the woodlands that surround our cabin and a new-found appreciation for all that happens *outside* my writing room window. In the coming years as we

work to improve our cabin and land, I’m looking forward to sharing this knowledge with my family members so we can continue to enjoy this land through future generations. Our focus has always been on the cabin; now I feel we can focus on stewarding the land.

## **SAVE the DATES!**

### **Women and Their Woods Spring Event May 9, 2013 Blair County Convention Center, Altoona, PA**



Come join Women and Their Woods members for a day of forest stewardship education prior to the May 10 & 11 Private Forest Landowners Conference in Altoona, PA.

Agenda in brief\*:

10am - 12pm: Connecting through Women and Their Woods (classroom time)

12pm: lunch

1pm - 4pm: Guided Field Tour of managed forestlands

\*The agenda is currently being developed and will be confirmed with registrants as details are made available.

### **2013 Women and Their Woods Annual Retreat September 26-29, 2013 Camp Susque, Trout Run, Lycoming County, PA**

Women who own, manage or plan to own forest land in the mid-Atlantic region are invited to attend the 3rd annual Educational Retreat and Training in the scenic Pennsylvania Wilds.

Attendees will learn from professionals about forest ecology, silviculture, forest hydrology, wildlife, financial and estate planning, setting goals for your land and connecting with other forest landowners and resources.

For more information about the retreat or to find an application online, visit <http://extension.psu.edu/private-forests/women-and-their-woods>. If you've already attended a retreat, consider nominating someone you believe would be interested in attending.



For more information or to register for these events call or email Amanda Subjin (570-226-3164 or [conserve@delawarehighlands.org](mailto:conserve@delawarehighlands.org)) or visit the Delaware Highlands Conservancy's website: [www.DelawareHighlands.org](http://www.DelawareHighlands.org).

# Using Your Skills and Passion to Promote Good Forest Stewardship

By Allyson Muth, Forest Stewardship Program Associate, Penn State University

With the second class of *Women and Their Woods* volunteers joining the ranks, we're proud that so many of you are taking the opportunity to learn more about good forest stewardship and hope you have lots of opportunities to share what you've learned. But sometimes that request to help us spread the word causes problems. "What can I do?" people ask. "I don't know enough." But the answer is, in reverse order, "You do know enough" and "share what you enjoy."



If you like writing, consider putting together an article for us to use in the *Women and Their Woods* newsletter. Other publications include the quarterly *Forest Leaves*, monthly news releases, regional or community newsletters, woodland owners associations newsletters – there are myriad outlets. Talk about your experience on your land – things you've tried, things that have worked, things that haven't.

If you're more of a face-to-face kind of person, look for opportunities to engage your friends and neighbors, other landowners, members of the public. Start the conversation with something along the lines of "I was intrigued to learn..." and let the conversation go where it may. Learn about the "forestry" things your friends and neighbors like or are concerned about. Share what you've tried or learned.

If you're looking to engage with a group of other landowners, think about existing woodland owners associations, or start your own group. We can help you find others who've been through a peer volunteer training who might be looking for ways to share what they've learned. Consider engaging *Women and Their Woods* volunteers (there are forty-two volunteers out there), PA Forest Stewards (over 450 of them), Master Naturalists (several hundred), and/or Master Gardeners (thousands!) to help pull together a group of fun people who would enjoy learning more about the natural world together.

Play to your strengths. If you don't enjoy it, you won't do it. If you're artistic, create a display or a logo, show off your poems, photos or art within a stewardship context (Help us less creative people out! (speaking for myself here – I work with a lot of very creative people)). If you're a people-person, staff a display, volunteer at an event. Wear your hat, shirt, and/or pin. Make yourself available so that people can ask you just what it's all about. One of the new PA Forest Stewards volunteers proposed making a button that said something along the lines of, "Ask me about good forest stewardship!" as a way to let other landowners know she was available for help or to point them in the right direction. I liked



# There's an App for That!

By Amanda Subjin

This Christmas, my partner, Geoff, made me the proud owner of an iPad. With mixed emotions, I've been exploring the curious world of being a Mac user. As the way-too-cumbersome laptop (compared to this new, sleek machine) sits idle on the dining room table, I've been feverishly searching for apps to download, all geared toward making my life simpler, more educated or just to provide a ten-minute block of technology enhanced entertainment for our 18-month-old son.



This past weekend while out on a sunny winter hike with a friend on his newly acquired piece of wooded property, I brought along the iPad to determine the coordinates for a future building project. Using the standard map application, I could view our location on an aerial image as we navigated through the forest and along a stream. Along



the way, I 'dropped pins' at locations my friend thought would be good for various projects he had in mind - clearing a pasture, building a yurt, creating a planting of native specimen trees. I used the iPad to take a couple of photos at these locations and of our little hiking group, including Geoff with our son in the pack on his back.

Back home next to the warm woodstove, I used the iPad to overlay a topographic map, import the boundary for the property and send the photos along with the coordinates for his building project by email to our friend.

It seems like the more I search and play, the more useful (and sometimes worthless) apps I find out there. And most of them are free and pretty intuitive.

Some apps to try:

- Leafsnap - Browse through stunning photos of leaves, flowers, bark and fruit of local tree species. You can even use it to help you identify a tree!

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- Trimble Outdoors - View, navigate and store topo, aerial and street maps.
- Peterson's Guide to Feeder Birds - Just like the hardcopy guide, but in a digital format—PLUS the ability to tap on the bird to hear its song!

To some of you out there, this is all probably old news. Others may be on the cusp of exploring this new technology, and yet others may just want to stick to good old paper maps, hard copy tree ID guides and a journal and pencil. To that I say, "Whatever helps you connect with your woods!"

*If you've used some of this technology during the course of your woods explorations, we'd love to hear about it and share ideas with other landowners. Please email [conserve@delawarehighlands.org](mailto:conserve@delawarehighlands.org).*

## PLAN TO ATTEND THE 2013 PRIVATE FOREST LANDOWNERS' CONFERENCE

May 10 & 11, 2013

Blair County Convention Center, Altoona, PA



Penn State's Center for Private Forests and partners are hosting the first-ever comprehensive conference for private landowners in Pennsylvania, **whether you own, manage or plan to own 5 or 500 acres**. Explore topics on forest finance, woods wildlife, forest legacy, making your woods accessible, forest history, forest health, wood products, aesthetics and biodiversity, forest policy and

advocacy, and visit informational and resource displays and demonstrations. To learn more or to register for the event, visit:

<http://ecosystems.psu.edu/private-forest-conference>

## Women Owning Woodlands.net Posts New Content

Recently the WomenOwningWoodland.net website has been updated with new content relative to **leaving a legacy, financial and estate planning, a gift giving guide and much more**. We invite you to check out the site, 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. Visit:

[www.WomenOwningWoodlands.net](http://www.WomenOwningWoodlands.net)



**...Continued from page 5**

the idea so much, I plan to have buttons made for all the peer volunteers who come to the landowner conference in May.

If you haven't already done so, reach out to natural resources professionals with an educational mission. Talk with your service forester or your county extension agent or specialist. Let them know you're out there, trained, and have an interest in sharing what you've learned. In a time of many organizations doing more with less, an offer of help in spreading the message is greatly appreciated.

The biggest thing we ask of you is to share your passion for good forest stewardship and your experience with trying to see it happen on your own land or across the region. You have an entry point into conversations that we don't have because we wear different kinds of hats. Your hat is one of experience. You came to this program because of your love for good forestry and your desire to learn more to help care for the land. Share that love with the world!

***If you are interested in sharing an article, news item, story or artwork about your connection to your forestland, please contact Amanda Subjin at 570-226-3164 or email [conserve@delawarehighlands.org](mailto:conserve@delawarehighlands.org). We currently have over 300 readers of the newsletter who would be interested to hear about your experiences as a forest landowner.***



- **INSIDE**
- Forest Landowner Perspective: A Room with a View of the Woods
- Using Your Skills and Passion to Promote Good Forest Stewardship
- 2013 Women and Their Woods Events
- There's An App for That!

**Women and Their Woods Newsletter**



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