



Roots & Branches

WOMEN AND THEIR WOODS

2020 has certainly brought many challenges and changes to our daily lives. It has also provided opportunities for many of us to adapt and consider alternate ways to approach our responsibilities.

For the Women and Their Woods educational retreat planning team, this meant re-envisioning the concept of our 4-day event as a virtual educational program. For our presenters, it meant recording themselves presenting material that would otherwise be provided to a live audience and then separately fielding a host of questions during live virtual meetings several weeks later!

And for our participants, the women who own, manage, and care for forestlands, it meant a dedicated focus for approximately three months to learning the course material, connecting to an online community of their peers, and

reflecting on the opportunities available to accomplish their goals of caring for forestlands.

The Women and Their Woods initiative strives to provide the tools and knowledge necessary to manage forestland as well as cultivate a peer-learning network supported by forestry professionals. Thanks to support from the Highlights Family Foundation, all of the course materials for this year's virtual retreat were organized on a teaching platform additionally complimented by a "community space" where participants could converse, post links, photos, and otherwise connect to one another.

The retreat planning team is grateful for the participation of over eleven professionals who provided the following presentations and attended at least one of the six live Zoom sessions:

- Developing Goals and Objectives presented by Nancy Baker, PA Forest Steward and Landowner
- Tree ID presented by Annie Maloney of the Foundation for Sustainable Forests
- Forest Measurements presented by Kimberly Bohn, Assistant Teaching Professor of Forestry, Penn State Mont Alto
- Creating a Dynamic Plan presented by Nancy Baker
- Legacy Planning presented by Karen Hackman, Managing Member of RHP Law Group
- Forests and Water presented by Bryan Swistock, Senior Extension Associate with Penn State University
- Wildlife Habitat presented by Kristi Sullivan, Extension Associate in the Dept. of Natural Resources at Cornell University
- Forest Ecology presented by Allyson Muth, Ed.D., Director, The Center for Private Forests at Penn State
- Silviculture presented by Sarah Wurzbacher, Forestry Extension Educator with Penn State University
- Forest Health: Invasive Plant ID and Control presented by Beth Brantley, Northeastern Technical Support Specialist with Bartlett Tree Experts
- Virtual Field Tour presented by Amanda Subjin, Delaware Highlands Conservancy; Craig Olver, consulting forester, Forest Care, LLC; Sarah Wurzbacher, Penn State University; and Aaron Rutledge, logger.

At the close of the virtual educational retreat, participants were tasked with reflecting on the knowledge they gained and outlining for themselves a path forward. They also took time to discuss with one another the opportunities they have to share this knowledge and connect to their family members, natural resource professionals, and others who play a role in the care of their forest lands.

Interested in what we learned together? Check out our Virtual Timber Harvest Tour to learn from a consulting forester, a silviculturalist, and a logger. <https://youtu.be/pOP9hdkKHQ8>

Stay Tuned! We are planning a Women's Chainsaw Safety Class in partnership with the Northern Tier Hardwood Association for Spring 2021. Class size will be limited to 12 participants. More information will be distributed to the Women and Their Woods mailing list as program details are finalized. Sign up at www.DelawareHighlands.org/watw/.

This year's Educational Retreat sponsors include the Penn State College of Agricultural Sciences, the US Forest Service at Grey Towers National Historic Site, the William Penn Foundation, the Pennsylvania Forestry Association, the Northern Tier Hardwood Association, and the Wayne County Community Foundation.