

Women and their Woods

Information for Women Forest Landowners
Issue 3, Autumn 2011

Website Aims to Assist Women Forest Landowners

Excerpted from *Forestry Notes*, Volume 20, Issue 2, National Association of Conservation Districts

During the March 2010 Women and Working Lands symposium in Washington D.C., Pennsylvania landowner Nancy Baker addressed the challenges facing the nation's growing number of female forest landowners today. More importantly, Baker offered ideas for how the U.S. Forest Service could more effectively connect with those landowners. USDA leaders took note.

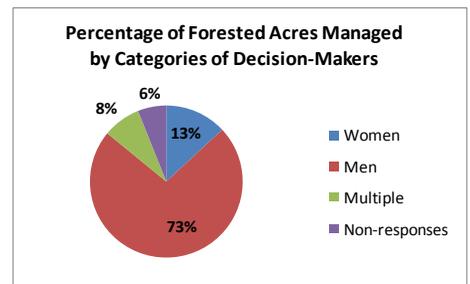
After much discussion, it was decided that the most effective method would be to build a website to act as a "clearinghouse" for all the relevant information available to female woodland owners across the nation.

According to Paula Randler, Forest Stewardship Program Specialist for the Forest Service, USDA has made efforts to recognize agricultural issues for women, "but we haven't yet had an effort toward working with women in forestlands."

The Forest Service is using its cooperative agreement with the National Woodland Owners Association to co-create a site that will launch late in 2011. For the past several months, the two groups have collected and categorized publications and other educational tools they've been made aware of. The clearinghouse aims to accomplish a few basic objectives:

- Provide a local and national practitioner network where information and ideas are shared
- Support a basic forest language so the laywoman can easily communicate with her forester
- Support women in finding assistance for their forest management objectives
- Provide estate planning resources
- Provide contact information for women to find peer learning environments and training

According to the National Woodland Owner Survey (Butler 2008), female decision-makers manage 13% of the acres of family forests in the U.S. By contrast, male decision-makers manage 73%. Another 8% of family forest acres are managed by



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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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This publication is also available electronically.



Women and their Woods

Throughout our region, women are increasingly responsible for the care and stewardship of private forestlands. Faced with the need to make decisions for their lands, these women should be knowledgeable about options available for their property.

In addition to providing information about their options, the *Women and their Woods* program seeks to instill a sense of stewardship and knowledge about the value of intact forest land.

We hope you find the information in this newsletter helpful for managing your forestland.

We need your E-mail Address!

Like so many other conservation minded organizations, we are hoping to conserve resources by communicating with you through e-mail. 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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respondents who indicated multiple decision-makers, including at least one female and one male (6% of respondents provided no answer). At the same time, women outlive men on average by about five years, leaving many women woodland owners without a partner in management, and often unexpectedly. “We want to make contact with women before they feel they are in an emergency situation,” says Randler.



Providing a place for women woodland owners to find information can increase a family’s enjoyment of the land regardless of who the primary decision-maker is, and can increase its economic gain from harvesting or other forest uses. All landowners face tough decisions about inheritance, conservation values, and economic assets.

Says Darrel Pendris, executive director for the National Woodland Owners Association, “The key is aggregation of high quality information and people.”

Randler and Pendris are now hoping conservation leaders from around the country will identify and share existing materials with the clearinghouse’s list of resources. Conservation leaders are encouraged to contact Randler or Pendris with suggestions (contact information below).

The site will be interactive and easy to navigate. When users visit the homepage, they will find a map which will allow them to click on their state. There, users will find a list of resources to assist with a number of potential issues. Those resources will also allow users to connect with a local face. “I think having it be geographically-based is important,” says Randler. “People appreciate having someone they can meet and talk to face-to-face.”

The Forest Service and National Woodland Owners Association plan to market the site with the help of their partners. For the site to be effective, says Pendris, it must reach out to those women not looking for help. “The challenge for us is to get to those women not tapped into their woodland owners association or other networks.”

For more information on the website, or to recommend materials for the clearinghouse, contact Paula Randler of the U.S. Forest Service at pbrandler@fs.fed.us, or Darrel Pendris of the National Woodland Owners Association at pendris@nwoa.net.

Paula Randler will be presenting during the *Women and their Woods* October Retreat.

What's Your Acorn Potential?

Excerpted from Forest Leaves, Volume 7, Number 2, Fall 1997

The following information will give you all the information you need about how to measure the acorn potential on your land. It's a project you might find interesting, and the results will give you a good idea how well much of the wildlife on your land will fare this winter. You'll need paper and pencil, something to measure 60 feet on the ground, and a diameter tape or regular tape measure to determine tree diameters.

An important food source for many animals from late fall through early spring is *hard mast*. Mast is food, and hard mast is hard food such as acorns, hickory nuts, beech nuts, and other hard seeds or fruits. Landowners concerned about woodland wildlife frequently ask how they can assess the amount of mast their land could produce. Although there can be great annual variability, there is a way to judge a particular stand's overall potential to produce acorn mast.

| BASAL AREA TABLE | |
|------------------|------------|
| DBH | Basal Area |
| 10" | 0.55 |
| 12" | 0.79 |
| 14" | 1.07 |
| 16" | 1.40 |
| 18" | 1.77 |
| 20" | 2.18 |
| 22" | 2.64 |

Step 1: Make Plots

Walk through your woodland and find three or four areas that seem to best represent the average condition of your forest. In each of these areas, mark off a circle with a 60-foot radius. (Each circle approximates a quarter-acre plot.)

Step 2: Find and Count

Within each circular plot, find and count all the oak trees with a Diameter at Breast Height (DBH – 4.5' off the ground) of 10 inches or more. (Remember, diameter = circumference/3.14.) We use a DBH of at least 10 inches because oaks usually do not begin producing substantial acorn crops until they are that size. On a tally sheet, separate your count of oaks into 2-inch diameter classes (e.g., 10-11.9", 12-13.9", 14-15.9", and so forth).

Step 3: Calculate

Using the Basal Area Table provided, calculate the basal area for each DBH class. For example, if you counted 6 oaks in the 12-inch DBH group, multiply 6 by 0.79 ($6 \times 0.79 = 4.7$). Calculate separate DBH class values for each circular plot. Do not add similar classes from all circles together.

| ACORN POTENTIAL | |
|------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Basal Area Score | Potential |
| Below 40 | Poor |
| 40-60 | Fair |
| 61-80 | Good |
| 81-100 | Excellent |
| Over 100 | Excellent, may benefit from thinning |

Step 4: Add, Multiply, and Compare

Finally, add the basal area totals for all DBH classes within each circle and multiply by 4 to estimate the potential per acre. Compare the figure to the Acorn Potential chart to determine the quality of your stand. You can average the totals you get for each circle to assess overall condition of the forest, or you can use the individual totals for each plot to compare one area of the forest with another.

What Does the Index Mean?

It is important to understand that this procedure will provide only an index to the acorn potential that exists in your forest. Whether you actually realize that level of production depends on many site-specific and environmental factors. If your calculated acorn potential came out poor to fair, but you saw many oak trees smaller than 10 inches DBH, you simply need to wait until the trees mature to realize the potential. An exceptionally high rating might be a clue that the stand has reached its potential. In fact, production might begin to decline unless you use silvicultural practices to reduce competition or crowding as well as to ensure proper regeneration for future crops. That's when you'll want to call in your forester.

The original version of this article appeared in "Forestry Notes." The information on estimating acorn potential was obtained from *Trees for Wildlife*, Publication PB 1446, available from the Tennessee Extension Service, P.O. Box 1071, Knoxville, TN 37901.

BABY STEPS—MENTORING BEGINNERS

Nancy G.W. Baker

I spent most of yesterday teaching a new bride how to make a pie; we had a great time! We made and rolled out pie crust; we made a double crust raspberry pie – spectacular! – and an open-faced French blueberry tart that was elegant. We had a lovely lunch of smoked Cornish game hens, ratatouille, and green beans; we literally stole ice cream from my cousin’s house for topping the pie. We toured our woods with her forester husband while the pies cooled and created a formidable pile of dishes! I, the bride of 43 years, was mentoring the bride of 3 months; it was very satisfying.



Mentoring: It made me think of following my dad up our hill to the woods as a 3 year old... trying ever-so-hard to match his 6’2” frame footsteps. My father was an accomplished woodsman in addition to being a professional, and he began to share his love of the woods as soon as I was able to go with him. A walk was an invitation to collect mosses and lichens for the terrarium, worms for the pet turtle, or leaves to press for ID. I was given and carefully taught to use a rifle at 10, cleaned any quarry for supper, tied flies to the hatch, camped from a canoe, and was taught to use an axe ambidextrously: “Never walk around the tree!” I loved our big old woods with the hollow beeches you could hide in, the hemlock bee tree that hummed with activity, the fast falling streams with native brook trout where you could play in the cold water. I knew that the fence posts were American chestnut; that the sawflies were defoliating the red pine plantings (they recovered!). In the summer, it was exciting to go huckleberrying on Briskey Mountain, to watch for the rattlers under the bushes, and to understand that those red spruce swamps had only recently been timbered and burned.

My grandmother told me stories about working in an 1890 logging camp when she was 16. Every day the women cooked an incredible amount of food to stoke the 40 loggers employed there. Four meals a day, working seven days a week, among other things they set two batches of bread every night and baked every day. My grandmother rolled all the sugar cookies and her sister-in-law, Mag, made all the pies (berry or dried apple). I’m sure it’s Mag’s pie crust recipe that we used yesterday, but Mag made 8 to 10 pies a day in a wood stove. My grandmother, gone by the time I was 10, taught me her technique; she mentored me.

As a child, I read voraciously about nature and about women who lived and worked in the natural world. Eventually an extraordinary librarian made it possible for me to use State Library books for whole summers to identify aquatic and riparian plants from the Susquehanna River valley. In sixth grade, asked by my guidance counselor what I wanted to be when I grew up, I replied “A Forester!” and was told in no uncertain terms that women could not be foresters. I was devastated. My dad told me I could be anything I wanted to... that was the end of those appointments.

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Women Forest Landowner Educational Retreat

October 13-16, 2011

PRESENTER PROFILES

We're excited to have nationally-known presenters join us at the Women and Their Woods Educational Retreat, October 13-16 at Camp Susque outside Trout Run, PA (Lycoming County).

Nancy G.W. Baker (*Program Organizer, What Is Forest Stewardship?*) is a Pennsylvania forest landowner; she and her husband own and continue to manage the acreage from which her great-grandfather cut the original timber in the 1860s. She is a Pennsylvania Forest Stewards Volunteer, is active in her local woodland owner organization, and is the representative for all 29 PA Forest Landowner Associations to the Pennsylvania Forestry Association. A forest ecologist by training, she is a long-time advocate for women and their woods; she recently represented the nation's women who own forests on a 2010 USDA Women and Working Lands Panel, showcasing the challenges and opportunities which shape women's passion and commitment to the land.



Jim Finley (*What Is Forest Stewardship?, Forest Ecology*), Professor of Forest Resources, conducts research and extension education programs on people and sustainable forest resource management focusing private forestland. In this position, he leads Pennsylvania's Forest Stewardship outreach program, helps coordinate a 450 member volunteer program, and serves as the Penn State School of Forest Resources Associate Director for Outreach. Major research efforts include oak regeneration, human dimensions of natural resources, and sustainable forestry.

Sarah Gustafson (*Forest Hydrology*) is pursuing a Master's Degree in Forest Resources at Penn State. She is currently studying hydrological influences on nutrient transport in a mixed land-use watershed. Generally she is interested in how human activities and environmental variability influence water quality and quantity.

Allyson Muth (*Program Organizer*) is the Forest Stewardship Program Associate at the Penn State School of Forest Resources. Allyson has worked for the timber industry and consulting foresters, and, since 2004, has coordinated the statewide PA Forest Stewards volunteer program, served as editor of *Forest Leaves*, and dabbled in research and outreach focused on private forest landowner education and the interactions between landowners and resource professionals.

Paula Randler (*National Women Forest Landowner Website*) is a Program Specialist for the Forest Stewardship Program of the USDA Forest Service. She works with State forestry agencies and National non-profits to assist with delivery of the Federal landowner assistance programs and initiated the Women Woodland Owners information clearinghouse project. Paula was previously a Presidential Management Fellow in Urban and Community Forestry and has a special interest in improving communication and collaboration across the natural resource programs.

Cecile Stelter (*Working with Resource Professionals*) is the District Forester for the Cornplanter Forest District - Bureau of Forestry, in Warren, PA. She is involved in the Pennsylvania Forestry Association, Society of American Foresters, International Society of Arboriculture, Tree Farm Program, the Penn State School of Forest Resources Alumni Group and is a lifetime member of the Girl Scout organization. Cecile and her husband Jim live near Titusville in northwest Pennsylvania.

Susan Stout (*Reading Your Forest, Basics of Silviculture*) is a research forester with the United States Forest Service in Warren, PA, where she has worked for 30 years. She leads a team of 13 scientists in four states who share the privilege of reading the forest daily. The team works together to integrate their understanding into tools for forest managers and landowners to sustain the values and benefits that forests provide. Susan's own special interests include deer/forest interactions, forest growth, and forest renewal. Susan and her husband live in Warren and have one son, a lawyer.

Nicole Strong (*Stories from Oregon's Women Owning Woodlands Network*) lives in Bend, Oregon and gets to travel throughout the state, working with family woodland owners and ranchers as part of the Oregon State University Forestry and Natural Resources Extension Service. Nicole founded and is statewide coordinator of the Oregon Women Owning Woodlands Network, and is very grateful for the opportunity to share with and learn from the women of Pennsylvania. Although she now calls Bend home, Nicole hails from "Eriesistible" Erie, PA.

Amanda Subjin (*Program Organizer*) is the Stewardship and Education Coordinator for the Delaware Highlands Conservancy. A native resident of Dingmans Ferry, PA, Amanda has been interested in conserving the local natural resources of the Pike County area for over 20 years. At the Conservancy, Amanda collects field data for property baseline documentations. She provides support for the annual monitoring on properties with conservation easements. Amanda assists the Conservancy by organizing programs for local woodland owners and has assisted in developing the first *Women and their Woods* program in northeastern Pennsylvania.

Jane Swift (*Forest Plant Identification*) has worked as an Environmental Education Specialist for the DCNR Bureau of State Parks since 1998. Committed to creating outdoor connections for both young and old, Jane has initiated preschool gardening programs, Junior Forest Steward day camps, and women's backpacking adventures at Worlds End State Park. She is an avid gardener and finds delight in exploring the rich diversity of native plants along woodland paths near her home in Sullivan County.

Lisa Williams (*Wildlife in the Forest*) is the PGC species specialist for ruffed grouse, woodcock, mourning doves and webless waterfowl (coots, rails, snipe, moorhen, and gallinules). Recently, Lisa coordinated the production of the Pennsylvania Game Commission's Wildlife Action Plan, a comprehensive document designed to identify conservation needs for the Commonwealth's imperiled wildlife. Her particular interest lies in the restoration and management of young forest (early succession) habitats because of the critical role these areas provide as habitat to many declining species.

If you would like more information about the Women Forest Landowner retreat, please contact Allyson Muth, Phone: 814-865-3208 or Email: abm173@psu.edu, or Amanda Subjin, Phone: 570-226-3164 or Email: conserve@delawarehighlands.org

“Baby Steps—Mentoring Beginners”, continued from page 5...

Forestry was indeed high on the personality/career matching tests that I took as an undergraduate and, in graduate school I finally got to take the UGA Warnell School of Forestry courses that I wanted. I loved them; the professors taught me to chew tobacco. Invited to the National Tall Timbers Fire Ecology Conference in 1967, I was the only woman among the 161 attendees... and I had a wonderful time setting the prescribed fires in “virgin” long-leaf pine forests (The guys were pleased that I knew how to spit). Although I worked on theoretical forest ecology rather than the practical forestry side, I loved being in the woods and learning more about them.



I married a biologist; I inherited the land; I am so pleased that I had wonderful mentors to guide my baby steps, to hone the passion and knowledge that it takes to be a true steward of the land and to pass that knowledge on to others. Each day I discover new things that I don't know; every forester and forest landowner in my acquaintance has, at some point, been my mentor. Each day I'm still learning and taking baby steps. And each day, there's also the wonderful chance to mentor someone else; even if you do the dishes.

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