

The Allegheny News



**Allegheny Society of American Foresters
Summer 2018**

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The mission of the SAF is to advance the science, technology, education and practice of professional forestry in America, and to use the knowledge and skills of the profession to benefit society.

The Allegheny News
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Cover Photo

Photo – Great Blue Heron by Jill Cherpack

Advertising in the Allegheny News

Rates:	<u>One Issue</u>	<u>All Four Issues</u>
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One third page (3 ¼" x 7 ¼" or 6 ¾" x 2")	50	150
One quarter page (3 ¼" x 4 5/8")	40	130
One eighth page or Business Card (3 ¼" x 2")	25	70

Board of Directors Report

District 7 Representative – David Gwaze



Selling Grosvenor Mansion

On May 4th the SAF Board of Directors decided to put the SAF Headquarters Building up for sale. This decision follows the 2014 sale of the land surrounding the headquarters building. Since 2008, the Board has been deliberating about selling some or all of the property SAF owns to free up asset value and allow for reinvestment in the organization.

This decision was driven by a desire to use financial resources to best serve the members and focus on mission as opposed to stewardship of property with historic preservation status.

This action comes after many months of analyses and evaluation of all aspects and implications (financial, historical, emotional, member, staff) of the building sale.

A number of consultants were invited to assess building conditions and estimate costs of restoration and refurbishments. The conservative estimates for renovations started at \$1.7 million for mostly deferred maintenance and as high as \$4 million for complete renovation.

The Board ultimately concluded that although the building suited past staff needs, projecting forward, they do not anticipate the need for anything close to the 10,000 square feet of office space in the headquarters building and associated carriage house.

The timeline for sale of the building has not yet been established. Being a unique property, the timeline is difficult to predict. National headquarters operations will continue at the SAF Headquarters Building for the foreseeable future. President Dave Lewis will provide more details in the Forestry Source after a brokerage contract with a commercial broker is secured.

Next Board meeting

The next Board meeting will be August 2-5, 2018 in Bethesda, Maryland. One of the big agenda items is to interview the candidates for the CEO position. The Search Committee has narrowed down to the final three candidates, and these three will be interviewed at the upcoming Board meeting.

The Board spent a great deal of time at the May Board meeting framing out the most pressing issues facing SAF. These issues include:

- Increase Tangible Values to Members
- Elevate Professional Status
- Grow Membership in 3 Dimensions
- Establish Financial Security for SAF
- Promote Sound Forest Science and Policy

Discussions will continue at the August Board meeting to implement specific actions on some of the above issues.

Allegheny Society of American Foresters- Summer Meeting
“Restoration Forestry of Disturbed Forests on the Allegheny Plateau”
August 8-10, 2018,
University of Pittsburgh at Bradford, Bradford, PA
Frame-Westerburg Commons

Agenda

Wednesday, August 8

1:30-8:00 PM Registration

OPTIONAL WEDNESDAY AFTERNOON ACTIVITIES (Additional information on Registration)

2:00-5:30 PM Jake’s Rocks Mountain Bike Trails: A guided mountain bike tour of the single track mountain bike trails on Allegheny National Forest. Bring mountain bike and helmet (optional but recommended), some transportation will be provided.

3:00-5:00 PM Kinzua Bridge State Park: A guided look into the stormy silvicultural past of the state park along with the new visitor’s center and Kinzua Bridge Skywalk.

2:00-6:00 PM Allegheny SAF Executive Committee Meeting

7:00-9:00 PM Icebreaker Event

Thursday, August 9

6:30-8:00 AM Breakfast at UPB Dining Hall (Frame-Westerburg Commons)

7:00-11:00 AM Event Registration

8:00-8:15 AM Welcome- Cliff Lane, McKean County Commissioner

8:15-8:50 AM “Factors Effecting Forest Stand Structure and Health on the ANF” – Andrea Hille, Forest Silviculturist, USFS and Susan Stout, Retired, USDA Forest Service, Northern Research Station

8:50-9:35 AM “Impacts of Deer on Forest Health for the PA Game Commission on the Allegheny Plateau”- Dave Gustafson, Chief Forester, Pennsylvania Game Commission

9:35-9:55 AM Break

9:55-10:40 AM “30 years of Forest Disturbance and Remediation on the Collins Pine Forest”- Ned Karger, Retired Land Manager, Kane Hardwood Div. of Collins Pine Company

10:40-11:25 AM “Bradford City Watershed Forest Condition and Restoration Attempts” John Saf, VP Generations Forestry Inc., Steve Disney, Bradford City Water Authority

11:30-12:30 PM Lunch at UPB Dining Hall (Frame-Westerburg Commons)

12:30-12:45 PM Load Buses for Bradford Watershed Tour (10 minute travel)

1:00-5:00 PM Bradford City Watershed Tour, John Saf

6:00-8:00 PM Dinner, BBQ Cookout at UPB Frame-Westerburg Commons

Friday, August 10

7:00-8:00 AM Chair’s Breakfast, Speaker Ta Enos, Director, Pennsylvania Wilds

8:05-8:20 AM Division Meetings

8:20-8:55 AM Allegheny SAF Business Meeting

9:00-9:45 AM “NRCS: Available Support for Private Landowners to Improve their Woodlots” Peter Hoagland, State Forester for USDA NRCS

9:50-10:30 AM “The Role of Herbicides as a Tool for Restoration” Bryan Rose, Vegetation Management Specialist, Arborchem Products

10:30-10:45 AM
10:45-11:55 AM

Break

“Using USFS Stewardship Contracts to supply fiber for the Kane Area School District Biomass System” Stewardship Coordinator (USFS), John Rook (Kane School District Maintenance Supervisor), Nick Byron (Kane High School Vo-Ag Teacher)

11:55-12:00 PM

Farewell/ Closing Remarks

New Jersey Forester to Receive National Award for Consulting Forester of the Year

By: Vinh Lang



On June 28, 2018 the Forest Landowners Association awarded Robert Williams of Pine Creek, a New Jersey based forest consulting firm, the Consulting Forester of the Year Award. Williams manages thousands of acres of land on behalf of private landowners across southern New Jersey.

The Forest Landowners Association is a national organization of landowners who are stewards of America’s private forests. Since its founding in 1941, members have actively managed their land with a sustainable approach and for economic returns, ensuring prosperity of their forests for future generations.

They range from large forest businesses whose land has been in their families for generations to those who have become recent forest landowners because they view forests as a long - term investment. These forests are found from New Jersey to California. The Forest Landowners Association has 4000 members who own and manage a total of 50 million acres throughout America.

“The Forest Landowners Association is proud to announce Bob Williams with Pine Creek Forestry as our 2018 recipient of the Consulting Forest of the Year Award,” stated Scott Jones, CEO of the Forest Landowners Association. “Private forest landowners own and manage over half of the forest resources in our country and are responsible for maintaining these lands for wildlife, clean water, and to provide the products that make our lives better. So their success is important to us all, and Consulting Foresters like Bob Williams help ensure that we can rely on these lands to remain healthy for generations to come.” Williams was presented his recognition at the 2018 National Conference of Private Forest Landowners in Greensboro, GA on June 28, 2018.

In response to the award Robert Williams stated, “It is an honor to receive this recognition from the private landowners who own land throughout the United States. It is a privilege to work with landowners to help them achieve both their economic and ecological objectives for their forestlands and for generations yet to come. It is important that more people begin to understand that private land owners love their land and the ecological resources their land supports.

As an example, many threatened and endangered species and their habitats are found on private land, not in spite of the owner’s management but because of their care and management of the land. I look forward to meeting more forest landowners at their annual conference in Georgia this year.”

Congratulations Bob!

Take a Bath but Stay Dry

Text and Photos by Jill Cherpack

No doubt frequent forest visitors are familiar with the capacity of the woodlands to relax, refresh and restore the body, mind and spirit. Today forest bathing, a growing evidence-based practice, is connecting health care professionals and their patients with the beneficial experience of time spent in the woods.

Translated from the Japanese *Shinrin-yoku*, forest bathing is an intentional, therapeutic immersion in the forest atmosphere to experience it through all of the senses and derive healthful and healing benefits. The practice originated in Japan, where culture, folklore and religion have long emphasized the great value of nature.

How do you take a forest bath? As the *Boston Globe* rather humorously noted in *The Un-Hike: Forest Bathing for Beginners*, you do keep your clothes on. And you don't use soap.

Enter the woods or an urban forest preferably alongside a refreshing body of water. Stash your electronic devices and walk gently or sit quietly to experience what the forest offers your senses—and your soul. Breathe deeply and set an intention to be fully present in the forest surroundings, both in body and mind.



Notice the sound of leaves rustling in the breeze, water gurgling over rocks, the call of birds or the buzz of insects. Inhale the fragrance of damp earth and fungi or the invigorating scent of pine or cedar.

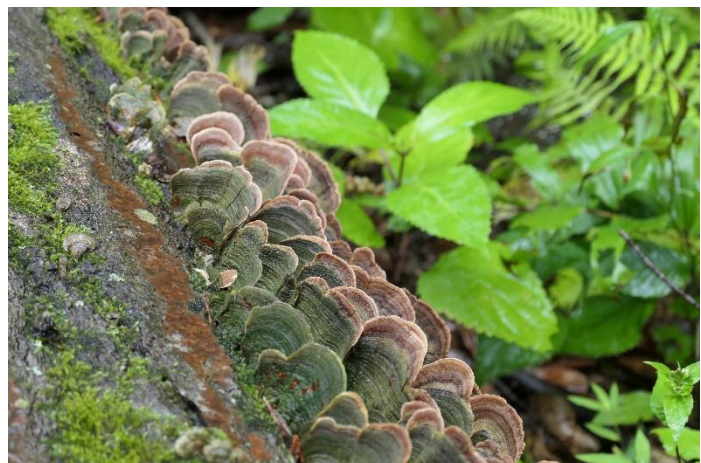
See patterns of light when you look up at the canopy or down on the forest floor. Notice glints of light reflecting off a stream. Feel the air on your skin and sense the temperature and moisture changes from one location to the next.

Touch soil and water. Run your hands across, rocks, bark, leaves and needles. Let two, three or four hours elapse as you are enveloped in the forest environment.

At the end of your allotted time, notice how you feel mentally, emotionally, physically and spiritually compared to earlier in the day or week.

You can forest bathe on your own or seek the support of a growing number of forest therapy guides and a group setting. Perhaps your physician is familiar with forest and nature therapy and would like to discuss with you the benefits based on your particular health profile. Perhaps she or he has even prescribed forest bathing as some health providers are beginning to do.

Forest bathing improves the health of body and mind through inexpensive, noninvasive, accessible means. While skeptics might say,



“Of course a gentle walk in the woods is beneficial,” a body of research and evidence posits the specific benefits and identifies the natural agents of the forest environment that help render these values. Numerous media outlets have covered the topic and an Internet search on forest bathing will return plentiful articles.

Several commonly discussed health values are listed in ‘Forest Bathing’ Harnesses Nature to Boost Health, a 2017 article on WebMD: lowering blood pressure, boosting the immune system, improving heart rate variability by balancing the sympathetic and parasympathetic nervous systems, fighting inflammation, bolstering brain health, improving mood and more.

A paper titled, “How might contact with nature promote human health? Promising mechanisms and a possible central pathway,” published in *Frontiers in Psychology* by Dr. Frances (Ming) Kuo compiles the potential benefits and ways that connect human health and nature, including a bibliography of technical references.

Dr. Qing Li, a founder of the Japanese Society for Forest Medicine, in his seminal book, *Forest Bathing: How Trees Can Help You Find Health and Happiness*, covers forest bathing in depth including the benefits, pathways and supporting studies. Searching YouTube for “forest bathing” will surface numerous videos including ones featuring Dr. Qing Li.

Health-supporting facets of the forests beyond the opportunity to recreate, exercise and disengage from artificial light and daily stressors include:

- Higher concentrations of oxygen
- Outdoor sounds plus freedom from human and vehicular noise
- Negative air ions that may reduce depression. These ions and the microorganism mycobacterium vaccae may support immune functioning
- Fragrant phytoncides lemony D-limonene, piney fresh alpha-pinene, herbal-smelling beta pinene, and resinous-smelling camphene
- Dappled sunlight and fractals that create visual patterns

Dr. Amitha Kalaichandran writes in *The New York Times*, July 12, 2018, “Take a Walk in the Woods,” a bit of her experience on a two-hour forest bath that left her relaxed (when she was not thinking about insect bites). Her inquiries found a growing number of physicians, including in cancer care, are recommending forest therapy even if the science is inconclusive. She links to studies that challenge the value of forest bathing for reducing blood pressure and cortisol, and for improving attention and to a literature review published in 2017 in *Environmental Health and Preventive Medicine* that says more high quality studies are needed.

A Growing Constituency for Stewardship

While some question the medical evidence, others feel it is ample to recommend the practice and see it gain ground. Forest bathing is growing through ecotourism, spas and wellness centers as well as through the healthcare profession.



Whether you personally are a believer or skeptic, forest bathing will bring previously untapped audiences to the rural and urban forests, expanding the constituency that appreciates and cares about stewardship. Forest bathing is a new avenue to enhance the diversity and community that the Allegheny SAF recognizes as essential. It can also give elected officials more reasons to support forest stewardship as wellness measures gain traction in the face of rising high health care costs.

In April, the USDA Forest Service brought together an extensive forest therapy coalition for a daylong information-sharing experience, expanded via webinar, addressing the mental, physical and emotional health benefits of forests and other green spaces and the growing practice of forest bathing. Federal, state and urban forests are open for business, welcoming use near or far from home, and inspiring people to “get outside”.

Making it easier for clinicians to access information about the practice and prescribe it to patients, Park Rx America is working with public land managers and healthcare providers. Stewardship is a part of the organization’s guiding light along with its driving cause to fight disease and enhance health and happiness. Included on the Park Rx America website are several science-based information resources discussing the health benefits of time spent in nature and abundant diverse resources on their media web page.

The Association of Nature and Forest Therapy also helps engage the medical profession, develops professional standards and is especially focused on training and certifying Forest Therapy Guides. Several individuals are certified in Pennsylvania, Maryland and New Jersey. The association’s Google Map shows their worldwide location of practitioners.

Certified Forest Therapy Guides follow a standardized process and are trained to provide a supportive, gentle experience leading small groups into wooded settings and inviting them to encounter the environment with all of their senses. The walks are not hikes and follow short distances of about a quarter of a mile over two to four hours. Sessions may conclude with an offering of tea enhanced with forest plants for a gracious final measure that engages yet another of the senses.

Might some of the public land you manage serve well as a healing forest? In the aforementioned book by Dr. Qing Li, you can find out the forest characteristics that present good settings for forest therapy. *Your Guide to Forest Bathing* by M. Amos Clifford, founder of the Association of Nature and Forest Therapy, is also a helpful reference to explain the benefits and practice of forest bathing.

Ashes of an Industry

By Frank Fitzpatrick, originally published in the Philadelphia Inquirer on June 17, 2018. Reprinted with permission.

Akeley, Pa. — Alongside the roadways and power-line clearings that weave through the deep Allegheny Mountain forests here, fallen and defoliated trees lie in gruesome heaps like Civil War casualties in Mathew Brady photograph. This hardscrabble region, having earlier experienced the departures of its oil and gas refineries, its railroad yards, its steel and iron mills, must once again deal with loss. This time, the requiem is for the white ash tree, a once-abundant, now doomed resource that for more than a century provided northwestern Pennsylvania with industry and identity.

Like most of the nation's estimated 10 billion ash trees, the species that has flourished in these forests and yielded the bulk of America's baseball bats for so many years will soon virtually disappear, decimated by disease as thoroughly as American elms in the early 1900s.

The killer is a shiny green insect from Asia called the emerald ash borer. That bug, which earlier invaded Ohio and Michigan, has so infested forests here that local landowners are hastily cutting their ash trees and bringing them to mills before the borer can render them worthless. But, in a strange twist, baseball has been rapidly abandoning ash bats — perhaps just in time.

At the yard outside the Larimer & Norton mill in this tiny town between Warren, Pa., and Jamestown, N.Y., ash timber was piled high. But many of the logs, which will be made into billets and then into Louisville Sluggers, are only two thirds as round as what not long ago was standard size. "It's getting worse and worse and worse," said mill general manager Brian Boltz. "There are pockets where [the insect] isn't there yet, but people are still worried. For the last two or three years, they have been going in and cutting all their ash trees, no matter how big and no matter if they're dead or not. We tell people we don't want it, but it still comes in. So we make it into Little League or miniature bats, even low-end amateur. But we don't do any professional bats because we don't know how dead it is."

White ash bats from Pennsylvania and New York have been as prevalent and familiar in baseball as spikes. But soon, for the first time since at least the 1800s, the major leagues could be without any. And the mills that long supplied the bat makers will either disappear or convert to woods like maple or birch.

This year, only 10,000 ash billets will be produced for MLB bats at the Akeley mill, down from 25,000 in 2014, 50,000 in 2010. "And I've told Louisville, if 10,000 is the number in 2019, I don't think we can do it," said Boltz.

Futile efforts to slow the ash borer's advance have been happening here for more than a decade, ever since the insects first appeared in 2009 and began leaving their fatal, meandering scars on the prized trees. Now a rescue mission becomes a death watch. "There are treatments if you have a tree in your yard." Said Boltz. "But you've got to do it every year and each treatment is like \$50. You can't do that in the woods. We've been lucky to an extent. In 2005, a professor in Michigan told me that ash would be dead in seven years. So we got six or eight years more than we thought."

Change induced by the borers is evident throughout the great forest that straddles the Pennsylvania-New York border. Defoliated ash trees are omnipresent. Where trees have fallen, new growth maple, cherry and hemlock are poking through the earth. Limber mills that specialized in ash products are closing or converting as demand drops among furniture makers, tool manufacturers and, notably, major-league baseball players.

Louisville Slugger, the dominant as-bat manufacturer, once had six mills scattered between here and the Catskills. Now just two – one devoted entirely – feed the iconic company.

“Ash usage has been on the decline for at least 10 years,” said Louisville Slugger spokesman Rick Redman. “The majority of MLB players, 75-80 percent, choose maple. Another 10-15 percent are swinging birch. The rest, 10 percent or so, swing ash.” Soon that 10 percent won’t be able to find the quality of ash they demand. But baseball’s recent abandonment of the wood has little to do with the borer infestation. Instead, players have turned to maple for reasons that range from audible satisfaction to Barry Bonds’ example to delamination.

Louisville Slugger said it supplied no ash bats to the 2018 Phillies – though smaller, niche manufacturers might. That’s not surprising since the Phils are among baseball’s youngest teams and the ash holdouts tend to be older players reluctant to abandon a lifetime habit. Joey Votto, for example is 34. Evan Longoria 32, Jay Bruce 31.

It’s hard to estimate how many players use ash bats, because a major-league roster is always in flux. But 25 years ago, and for a century before that, virtually every professional hitter wielded white ash bats, the overwhelming majority of which came from trees that flourished in the moist soil and temperate climate of this remote region. Ash was durable, light and had a sizable sweet spot. According to a Society for American Baseball Research account, that trend began in 1884. After watching Louisville outfielder Pete Browning break his bat, a boy made him a new one of white ash. Browning responded with a three-hit game and a craze dawned.

Things remained relatively static in this “Bat Belt” until the early 1990s when Toronto’s Joe Carter started using maple. Players noticed his contact produced a sweeter, louder, more pleasing sound – “a sharp ping or ‘crack,’” Boltz said. Many switched and after 2001, when Barry Bonds hit 73 home runs with maple, the revolution was in full swing.

Not long afterward, the first ash borers appeared in the Michigan woods. The brightly colored, one-third-inch-long insect is attracted to sunlight, which is why trees along roads or in clearings were the first to perish. It burrows beneath the bark and lays its eggs. Those larvae then devour the wood, their zig-zag feeding patterns clearly delineated. But while they are extremely effective killers and propagators, experts said, a few ash trees may be spared.

“Some 90 years after the introduction of Dutch Elm Disease, mature American elms can still be found with little difficulty, but they are much less abundant,” said Kim Steiner, a forest biology professor at Penn State. “[Ash’s] days as a resource for baseball bats are clearly numbered. However, one present or so of the trees are surviving the initial invasion in healthy condition. Once most of the ash trees are killed and suitable hosts for the insect become less abundant, pressure in the remaining trees will diminish.”

At the Akeley mill, with its 17 employees, the borer’s distinctive markings could be seen on much of the ash that Boltz hoped to salvage. Once, Larimer & Norton almost exclusively milled ash trees that were 40, 50 years old. Now, amid the panic, it’s been forced to accept younger specimens. “In the good years, we probably wouldn’t have taken these,” Boltz said, fingering a log with an 11-inch diameter. “But now we’re basically taking everything and trying to see what we can get out of it. We can still salvage something from these logs, maybe three billets.

Louisville Slugger is one of the few companies still producing ash bats for amateurs, a market now dominated by metal. Those low-grade billets typically yield bats for less demanding customers – weekend warriors looking for \$30 bats. Little Leaguers, those in low-amateur leagues. Of the 700,000 bats Boltz’s

mill will produce in 2018, at least 300,000 will go there. At least as many souvenir and collectible bats will be made.

One of the other reasons major-leaguers were drawn to maple, according to Boltz, was ash's tendency to chip near the bat's sweet spot after considerable use. "We call it delamination." He said. "It's where the wood between the grain gradually chips away. They didn't like that. Maple was a little harder and didn't do that, although sometimes the whole bat would explode. That didn't bother them. They'd rather just pick up a new bat than have the bat they've been using get soft in the hitting area."

Then when Bonds set his homer record- "He could have hit 73 with a whiffle-ball bat," Boltz said – the desertion sped up among hitters, many of whom are superstitious. One superstitious ash bat customer, Boltz recalled, got three hits in a game after his bats were flown to him overnight. After that, he insisted all his bats travel by air, convinced the altitude imbued them with some special quality.

There are some areas of the Northeast the borer hasn't yet reached, like Vermont and Maine. Bat makers, however, are so sure it will, they haven't invested in any mills there. At some point, if the Akeley mill survives, it will like switch to maple and birch, as its sister facility in Galetton has. Those woods are also plentiful here and smaller bat-producers have been milling them nearby.

Louisville Slugger, meanwhile, having anticipated ash's demise long ago, has been experimenting with yellow birch as well as poplar. "This is the first year we're actually going to sell more yellow birch than we are ash in the major leagues," said Boltz.

But as with ash, the sound of a birch bat striking a ball clearly isn't as mellifluous as with maple. "The first time we made some birch bats, [ex-major league slugger] Adam Dunn used them and he hit some bombs. But he gave it up, said it just didn't sound right," Boltz said.

Despite the upheaval, things seemed little changed on a recent morning at the Akeley mill. The big saws whined. The sawdust sprayed. And the smooth round billets of Pennsylvania white ash that emerged were stacked, graded and readied for shipping. "As long as we can find ash, we're still going to be doing it," said Boltz. "The questions is how long are we going to be able to find it?"

Save the Date

***Allegheny SAF Winter Meeting
February 20-22, 2019
Lakeview Resort
Cheat Lake, WV***

Allegheny Society of American Foresters

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Coming Events

August, 2018

8-10 Allegheny SAF Summer Training
Northern Hardwood Chapter
Bradford, PA

November, 2018

14-16 Allegheny/NY/NE SAF Leadership
Academy
Grey Towers National Historic Site
Milford, PA

February, 2019

20-22 Allegheny SAF Winter Training
Cheat Lake, WV

Summer, 2019

Allegheny SAF Summer Training
Western Gateway Chapter

February, 2020

Allegheny SAF Winter Training
Rothrock Chapter

Future SAF National Conventions

2018: Portland, OR Oct. 3 – 7

2019: Louisville, KY Oct. 30 – Nov. 3

2020: Providence, RI Oct. 28 – Nov. 1

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