

FRIENDS OF WHITE'S WOODS.ORG

Dispelling the Myths

1. **MYTH:** There is no benefit in an “*older growth*” forest (80-100 years old) like the White’s Woods Nature Center (WWNC).

Everyone knows that “*old growth*” forests provide essential benefits for the region - and for the whole world! HOWEVER, less than 2% of Eastern United States forests can be classified as “old growth.” Experts agree that we pretty desperately need **MORE** old growth forests - particularly for carbon sequestration. *And the only way to get these is to allow our older-growth forests (such as the WWNC) to age.*

[Old Growth Forest Network](#)

[Beyond Old Growth—Older Forests in a Changing World A synthesis of findings from five regional workshops - National Commission on Science for Sustainable Forestry](#)

2. **MYTH:** Dead trees need to be removed

THE FACTS: Dead trees are an important part of the ecology of the forest, providing habitat to mammals and birds and restoring nutrients to the soil.

[The Ecological Value of Dead Trees](#)

<https://fpdcc.com/did-you-know-dead-trees-play-an-important-role/>

[Deadwood for Wildlife](#)

3. **MYTH:** Logging is necessary for a healthy forest

Many old growth forests are healthy without timbering, in fact they are healthy because timbering is prohibited.

https://www.dnr.state.mn.us/forests_types/oldgrowth/managing.html

4. **MYTH:** Natural forest successional processes don’t work.

Yes, they do! Many land conservancies, including Massachusetts Audubon and The Natural Areas Conservancy, rely almost entirely on natural forest successional processes. Some forests have been so thoroughly destroyed that active management is necessary to

facilitate forest restoration. But that is not the case for healthy forests - such as the WWNC.

<https://www.nature.com/scitable/knowledge/library/restoration-of-deciduous-forests-96642239/>

<https://www.massaudubon.org/our-conservation-work/ecological-management/habitat-management/forest-management>

5. **MYTH:** Industrial/commercial foresters are trained to manage any type of forest.

Industrial/commercial foresters are trained, first and foremost, to consider forest trees and to maximize long term timber production. Ecological foresters are focused on the complex network of interlocking ecosystems that make up a forest - and how to maintain their fundamental capacities.

A good definition of ecological forestry can be found in the 2018 textbook by Jerry Franklin, Norman Johnson, and Debora Johnson, [*Ecological Forest Management*](#):

[Forester vs. Ecologist](#)

6. **MYTH:** If you know how to manage one forest, you know how to manage them all!

There is QUITE the difference between managing a forest for commercial timber growth and managing a forest for....well, a host of different management goals. Management plans **DEPEND** on *management goals*, such as (1) preserving a natural area, (2) promoting visits by humans, (3) promoting songbird or wildlife habitat, (4) promoting older growth, (5) maximizing carbon sequestration...or trying to maximize the long-term growth of commercial timber.

Because most western Pennsylvania landowners have, for the last century, managed woods for commercial timbering, the erroneous belief that there is only one way to managing a natural area forest is not uncommon. But it's a myth!

[National Natural Areas Association](#) reforestationhub.org,

[Family Forest Carbon Project](#)

7. **MYTH:** Opening the canopy to allow sunlight to get to the floor of the forest, is necessary for a healthy forest.

THE FACTS: This is simply not true. Appalachian Forestry Consultant Mike Wolf explains in his [June 24, 2021](#) AND his [July 2, 2020](#) assessments of the WWNC and the Township draft stewardship plan:

“whatever you add light to is what you will grow... ‘if you want to know exactly what will grow back after a timber harvest it is quite simple –just look at what is on the forest floor before the harvest and you can know for sure. If there are invasives, you will grow invasives. If there are competing plants, you will grow competing plants. If there is nothing, you will make the perfect environment for increased invasives. Even if you kill all the invasive and competing plants first, you should definitely not add any light until you have an abundance of desirable, protected seedlings in place. The reason is simple...the invasives will come back much faster than any desirable native plant that is a target for deer.” And to add to this, if you plant wildflower seed and then add light, you will get both wildflowers (temporarily) and invasives resprouting or germinating. The invasives will dominate after a short term”

Millstone’s plan was written to apply to all of White Township properties, and therefore this review (below) can apply to all locations. However, White’s Woods is obviously at greatest risk for catastrophic results.”

<https://northernwoodlands.org/articles/article/tall-tree-grow>

<https://cid-inc.com/blog/forest-plant-canopy-analysis-tools-methods/>

8. **MYTH:** White Township didn’t really want to “rototill” White’s Woods.

Yes, they did!

The Township forester explained his plan in a [Hawkeye interview](#) (6.14.2020). And the [White Township Draft Stewardship Plan](#) makes this clear, as well! (see pp. 18 & 23 for plan for “mechanical treatment” of the WWNC; ENS plan for “rototilling;” p.73.)

9. **MYTH:** White Township didn’t really plan to take 30-50% of the WWNC forest.

Yes! That is what the White Township Draft Stewardship plan called for. And the documents on which this plan is based make their plan to timber as much as 50% of the WWNC even more evident. [See the documents for yourself!](#)

Check back! The list of “myths dispelled” will get longer in weeks to come!

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