



# Friends of White's Woods Monthly Newsletter



May

## TIMBERING STILL ON THE TABLE FOR WHITE'S WOODS

The discussion of timbering is still on the table for White Township.

At the March meeting of the White Township Stewardship Committee, member Sierra Davis suggested that the committee needs to communicate to the public that timbering is not the committee's goal. However, in the discussion that followed, committee members suggested that, perhaps, they could identify a quantity or limit to the amount of timbering that they would consider as well as the need for public education about the meaning and value of "selective timbering" and "select timbering."

At this meeting, Chair Barbara Hauge also urged the committee to "think beyond what is happening now," and be open to new ideas and new ways of seeing the woods. Among the new suggestions offered were creating a fort-building area for kids, using felled trees from a sustainable timbering management project to teach young people how to build wood structures, and giving felled trees to Habitat for Humanity. The chair also noted that she believed that it would be a disservice to fail to note "the sale of lumber, or timbering" as one of the possible uses of the woods, though she did not believe that anyone in the room would support that idea.

Hauge emphasized that going forward the committee should keep in mind the need to balance enjoyment of the woods and protec-

tion of habitat, noting that "sometimes we have to sacrifice a bit of habitat to get people to appreciate it." It is a "no brainer," she continued, "we want people to love the area, even if we have to sacrifice habitat."

Other committee discussion included concern about walking dogs off leash in White's Woods and a suggestion by the chair that the public could be educated about the Getty Park "dog park" as an option for people who want to have their dogs unleashed.

The April 21st WTSS meeting included discussion of potential liability issues for White's Woods, including ticks, hazard trees, and roots or rocks on trails. The committee's discussion regarding timbering, as well as the selection of an external agent to manage future public input, was postponed until the May meeting.

Committee member David Dahlheimer has urged the committee to follow DCNR guidance and to model stewardship plans for White's Woods on existing [natural area/Project 70 plans](#), with input from experts in forest ecology, natural area management, and old growth.

It is of note that White's Woods, as the Project 70 requirements indicate, was never intended to be a groomed park. Those who use White's Woods love it because it is a natural area - and want it to remain as it is.

Attend Stewardship Committee meetings. Let them know that you care.



FWW Board members Jessica Joff, Sara King and Susan Dahlheimer staffed a table.



Indiana artist Chuck Olson, Indiana attorney David Serene and Dan Murphy provided the music.

photos by Cheri Widzowski Photography

## EARTH DAY 2022

More than 150 people of all ages -- and their dogs -- attended the April 22nd Earth Day Celebration at White's Woods.

Good weather and numerous organizations spreading the word about climate change and the need to preserve our forests contributed to the camaraderie.

FWW distributed close to 300 tree seedlings, obtained from the national organization "One Million Trees," which is promoting the planting of trees to save the planet.

Other participating organizations included: Evergreen Conservancy, Federation of Democratic Women of Indiana County, First Unitarian Universalist Church, Indiana Community Garden, Indiana County Humane Society, Indiana WalkWorks, IUP Coalition for Christian Outreach, IUP Sustainability Studies, Keystone Progress, League of Women Voters of Indiana County, Delaney Subaru and the Sierra Club.

We will do it again next year. Mark your calendars for Saturday, April 22, 2023.

### UPCOMING WEBINARS AND EVENTS

**May 21:** Plant Walk with Cindy Rogers of The Evergreen Conservancy, (12th Street entrance), 10 a.m.

**June 13:** Edible & Medicinal Plant Walk by Dr. Dana Driscoll (12th Street entrance), 5:30 to 7:30 p.m.

**Sept. 22:** "*Climate Change and Penn's Woods: What Does the Future Hold?*" webinar by Greg Czarnecki, Director of Applied Climate Science, Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, 4 to 5 p.m.

The webinars, offered via Zoom, are free and open to the public. To register for a webinar, send an email to [info@friendsofwhiteswoods.org](mailto:info@friendsofwhiteswoods.org).

For more information, visit: [friendsofwhiteswoods.org](http://friendsofwhiteswoods.org)

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## Which lens? Timber-production vs. Ecological Forestry

Here are some of the terms (in bold) that continue to pepper White Township consulting foresters' documents and Township Stewardship Committee meeting conversations, along with the definitions of these terms provided by industry experts.

**“Sustainable forestry** is about caring for and managing forests to provide the natural resources, such as wood and clean water, we need now and in the future...Sustainable forestry involves forward thinking. It's just as important to think about which trees will be left after a harvest as which trees will be cut.” Smith, S.S., Finley, J.C., & Jacobson, M.G., 2016, Sustainable Forestry, Penn State Extension.

**Selective Cutting:** “A common form of timber cutting in Pennsylvania and many other states is known as high-grading. This practice is sometimes called ‘**select,**’ or ‘**selective**’ cutting as it removes only the most valuable timber and leaves the rest in the woods.”

**Thinning:** “Sound forestry practices control tree spacing and species composition, to allocate site resources, and encourage remaining selected trees, known as ‘*crop trees,*’ (italics added) to grow and lead to natural regeneration.” Sanford S. Smith, Ph.D., July 27, 2020, “Thinking of Selling Your Timber? Beware of ‘High Grading’” Penn State Extension.

**Selection cut**—“The removal of trees singly or in small groups for the purpose of regeneration. A well-designed selection cut removes trees of *lesser quality* (italics added) and trees in all diameter classes along with merchantable and mature, high-quality timber.”

**Regeneration harvest** - “The predominant challenge for sus-

tainable forestry in Pennsylvania is prompt reforestation with desirable species.” Dr. Susan Stout USDA Forest Service

**“Silviculture** is the science and art underpinning forest management. Silviculture is analogous to agriculture in that it involves working with an understanding of how trees in a forest establish, grow, and compete. Unlike agriculture which deals with short rotations, forests grow and require management over much longer time. Like agriculture, forest management involves weeding, thinning, harvesting, and ‘planting’ to ensure a continuous flow of products—from habitat to timber.” Forest Management and Timber Harvesting in Pennsylvania Information for Citizens and Local Government Officials, 2019, Penn State Extension.

As is apparent from the terms above, traditional, or “production- forestry,” generally relies on timbering, of one sort or another, for forest management. But an ecological perspective provides a very different view. “At the most fundamental level, ecological forestry and production forestry lead to different conclusions about what ecosystem components we wish to conserve, the approach to risk and maintenance of options, the value of heterogeneity, and the integration of land-owner and social goals,” [according to forestry experts.](#)

**Ecological forestry incorporates natural disturbances into their long-term management plans,** instead of harvesting trees before they might be damaged.

**Ecological forestry focuses intervention on maintenance of multiple forest ecosystems -- flora and fauna and the habitat that sustains them,** not just on the crop timber.

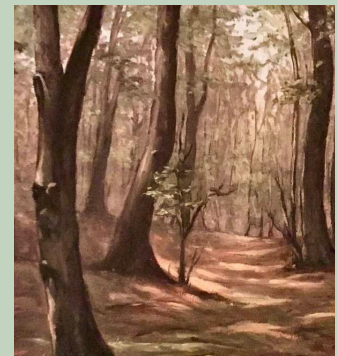
**Ecological forestry regards climate change as a central concern,** traditional forestry take little notice of climate impact.

**Ecological forestry acknowledges that stewards of public forests have different obligations,** both for protecting plants, animals, and ecosystems and for protecting [what people value most about public lands:](#) old growth, water, wildlife and the opportunity to be in natural spaces.

Does one have to timber to have a healthy forest? Of course not. Nature has a much better track record at managing forests, said forest ecologist Jess Riddle, than human beings do.

Even “selective” timbering introduces substantial collateral damage. One study of the impact of selective cutting reported that “[on] average, 9.8 trees were damaged for every tree extracted, including eight trees destroyed or severely damaged.”

“Natural canopy gaps are sufficient to regenerate every tree species native to the area,” forest ecologist Jess Riddle underscored.



### NEED A PRINT?

“Sunlight’s Dance” by Indiana artist Beth Wheeler, which was selected by the Friends of White’s Woods Board of Directors as the 2022 print, is available for a \$100 donation. To reserve a print, please send an email to [info@friendsofwhiteswoods.org](mailto:info@friendsofwhiteswoods.org). The Framing Hut Gallery, 1502 Oakland Ave., is offering a 20% discount on the framing of this print.

For more information, visit: [friendsofwhiteswoods.org](http://friendsofwhiteswoods.org)

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