



Friends of White's Woods Monthly Newsletter



TOM MILLER HONORED FOR HIS VOLUNTEER SERVICE:

Having performed more than 800 hours of volunteer service, Tom Miller (center) received the Presidential Volunteer Service Award. Those present to award the honor are (left to right): Jessica Jopp, Friends of White's Woods; Beth Finnegan, president, Indiana County Humane Society Board; Carolyn Trimarchi, Friends of White's Woods; Sara King, Friends of White's Woods President; Dave Dahlheimer, Friends of White's Woods; Deborah Fleming, disaster program manager for the American Red Cross, Chestnut Ridge chapter; Susan Dahlheimer, Friends of White's Woods; Allen Lockard, director of Indiana County Veterans Affairs; Kate Geiger, Indiana Free Library Director; and Linda Meckley, Disabled American Veterans secretary.



FWW Board Member Receives Presidential Award For Volunteer Service to the Indiana Community

FWW's treasurer performed more than 800 hours of volunteer service last year, earning him the top award of the President's Volunteer Service.

Thomas S. Miller of Station Ave. exceeded the 500-hour minimum for the Gold Award, which was established in 2003 "to recognize the important role of volun-

teers in America's strength and national identity."

Miller, who was nominated by Friends of White's Woods, has performed volunteer service for the Red Cross, the Indiana Free Library, the Disabled Veterans of America, the Humane Society, WIUP-FM, and FWW, among others.

FWW Shares Survey, Plan for White's Woods With Indiana Free Library

In an effort to provide the Indiana community with information about White's Woods and attitudes of area residents about the woods, Friends of White's Woods donated two key documents to the library.

"White's Woods Nature Center: Current Value and Future Care" details ecologically sound methods for effectively managing a natural area with minimum intrusion. "White's Woods Community Interest Study" is the latest survey report of area residents conducted by Dr. Susan Boser of the IUP Sociology Department and her doctoral students this summer.

"While both these reports are available on our website (friendsofwhiteswoods.org/future-possibilities) and under 2020-2022 Issues," FWW President Sara King said, "we understand that many county residents do not have reliable internet access. The hard copies of these documents at the library increase our outreach to all users and lovers of White's Woods."



FWW Board Members Jessica Jopp (left) and Tom Miller (right) present two documents about White's Woods to Indiana Free Library Director Kate Geiger (center).

UPCOMING EVENTS AND WEBINARS

Sept. 9-10: Northern Appalachian Folk Festival, Downtown Indiana, Friday, 11 a.m., to Saturday, 10 p.m. Stop by to support our efforts.

Sept. 15: White Township Stewardship Committee meeting, 6:30 p.m., White Township Building.

Sept. 22: "Climate Change and Penn's Woods: What Does the Future Hold?" A webinar by Greg Czarnecki, director of applied climate science, Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources.

Oct. 13: "Deadwood, Fungi & Introduction to the Ned Smith Center for Nature and Art." Jerry Hassinger, PA Game Commission (Retired).

Nov. 10: "Engaged Passive Management Strategies for Massachusetts Forestlands." Tom Lautzenheiser, Regional Scientist, MA Audubon.

The webinars, offered via Zoom from 4 to 5 p.m., are free and open to the public. To register for a webinar, send an email to info@friendsofwhiteswoods.org.

For more information, visit: friendsofwhiteswoods.org

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Items Discussed at August Stewardship Committee Meeting:

Deer Fencing, Invasive Plant Removal by Volunteers, Consultant Visits, Public Input, No Timbering Statement, Tulip Poplars' Role in Natural Succession

At the August 18th White Township Stewardship Committee meeting, Dr. Ellen Yerger presented a talk titled “Biodiversity of Herbaceous Plants and the Animals that Depend on Them.” Because insects are host specific, she said, if the plants they depend on for survival are eliminated by deer browse, those insect populations, essential to convert plants into food for other animals, decline or even disappear.

Yerger showed a three-minute video of the deer enclosure fencing installed on her own property and explained its success in eliminating deer browse and promoting growth of native plants and seedlings within the enclosure. Yerger also suggested that the deer population can be reduced through hunting, as at Duff Park, or with contraception. White Township Recreation Director Ryan Shaffer noted that deer fencing is expensive.

Yerger suggested that volunteers could be organized to remove the most consequential invasive plants, citing the success of a model volunteer program at Duff Park.

Efforts to schedule both forester Mike Wolf and IUP Professor Mike Tyree for committee consultation were continued from previous meetings. Committee chairperson Barbara Hauge expressed concern that a committee walk in White’s Woods with these consultants might inappropriately exclude people and suggested that the meetings could take place in a more accessible treed area other than White’s Woods. Acceptable “work-arounds,” such as reliance on FaceTime, that had been suggested at previous meetings were not mentioned.

FWW provided the committee with a draft “Mission and Goals of the

WWNC Stewardship Plan.” The document was received without comment. The committee discussed a draft mission statement co-written by Township Manager Chris Anderson and Public Relations Specialist Chauncey Ross.

Notably, committee member Sierra Davis suggested adding language to the draft statement indicating that the committee had no intent to timber. Hauge said that she was not ready to say that.

Shaffer reported that the IUP Small Business Institute might be able to help with public input next spring. Dave Dahlheimer reported that Adam Jones, the lead researcher on the research team directed by Dr. Susan Boser, had indicated a willingness to help the committee with additional public input. There was no discussion of the 2022 public input data that Boser had presented to the committee at the July 21st meeting.

Hauge mentioned that the subcommittee plans to have a booth at the upcoming Northern Appalachian Folk Festival. An activity to inspire public engagement will involve the display of a large map of the woods. People will then be given colored dots so that they can indicate on the map where their favorite places are in the woods to do favorite activities. There was a discussion of stickers to indicate park use, as well as the number of colors that might be used. There was no explanation, however, of how the colored dots would translate into data.

During Public Comment, Carolyn Trimarchi urged the committee to define timbering as “cutting down trees” and emphasized that the Tulip Poplars in White’s Woods are precisely the trees we should have at the current stage of natural succession. Tom Miller called the committee’s attention to the available 27 years of public input demanding that White’s Woods be left as a natural area.

Watch WCCS Video!

Did you miss the Aug. 11th Todd Marino show on WCCS?

His Indiana in the Morning interview featured Dr. Susan Boser of IUP’s sociology department and FWW Board member Susan Dahlheimer. The duo answered questions on the recently completed survey of Indiana residents on their usage of White’s Woods and what they envision for the future of the woods. The resultant report, “The White’s Woods Community Interest Study,” can be read in its entirety at friendsofwhiteswoods.org and select 2020-2022 Issues.

You can also listen to the 15-minute interview at <https://www.wccsradio.com/indiana-in-the-morning-interviews-august-2022>.

Key points in the interview include:

- an overwhelming majority of survey respondents are against any kind of timbering in the woods
- many feared any disturbance of the woods will have detrimental impact on the ecosystem, including increased stormwater runoff with major impact on Indiana Borough
- lack of communication with residents by the supervisors on this issue has generated distrust
- White’s Woods serves as a community focal point.

Deer Hunting in White’s Woods, East Pike Recreation Center Still a Go?

White Township Recreation Director Ryan Shaffer announced at the August 10th Board of Supervisors meeting that deer hunting is in “a good position to go” in White’s Woods and East Pike. No specific dates or safety arrangements were provided. The township’s website lists only a draft plan from last December. Contact the White Township Office (724-463-8585) or the Rec Department (724-465-2665) for more information.

For more information, visit: friendsofwhiteswoods.org

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