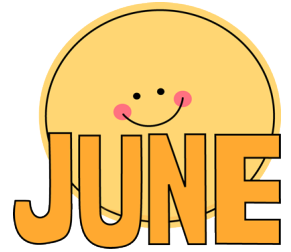




# Friends of White's Woods Monthly Newsletter



## *Rainy Walk in White's Woods Reveals State's Larger Trees*

Dale Luthringer, DCNR Education specialist at Cook Forest, was joined by seven people for a 75-minute hike in driving rain May 9th to see some of the big trees in White's Woods. No one's rain gear could withstand the barrage, and everyone had a wonderful time!

The hikers learned how to measure both the width and height of big trees. The group walked to various parts of White's Woods to see and learn about big chestnut oaks, tulip poplars, and Northern red oaks. A few trees in the forest that Luthringer found he guessed to be around 200-years-old, including one chestnut oak on the top of one ridge and a tulip poplar on one of the boundary lines.

On our hike, our group spotted one Northern red oak that Luthringer had not seen during his previous walks in White's Woods: a Northern red oak nearly 118 feet tall and 13.4ft CBH (circumference at breast height). This tree, said Luthringer, is about as big as the biggest living red oak at Cook Forest. Our group spent time with big tulip poplars in the Natural Heritage Area and northern red oaks along the Spring Trail and in the Old Grove near the Stephenson Trail. One of the White's Woods tulip poplars measures 9.6ft CBH x 145.8ft tall and is comparable to the tallest known tulip poplar in Cook Forest, which is 8.1ft CBH x 148.1ft tall. The tallest known in the state is 11.7ft CBH x 167+ft tall at Longwood Gardens!

Luthringer will be doing an FWW webinar on Nov. 7, titled "Big Trees of Pennsylvania." In this webinar, he will talk about the big trees in White's Woods, a woods that he described as a "very special forest." Very few Pennsylvania forests, he said, have been allowed to mature in this way. FWW will also be scheduling follow-up big tree walks in White's Woods so that we can show other FWW members where some of our biggest trees are and how to measure them.



*Pennsylvania Chestnut Oak*



*Tulip Poplar*



*Northern Red Oak in Fall*

## *Birds and Climate: Inextricably Linked*

Thanks so much to the citizen/scientists who are recording their White's Woods bird sightings on ebird. In May, Jeremy Castle verified 28 bird species in our woods, including five that had not been previously recorded: Ruby-throated Hummingbird, Eastern Wood-Peeewe, Acadian Flycatcher, Red-eyed Vireo, and Least Flycatcher. Cheri Widzowski documented nine different bird species, including three that are widely recognized as at-risk: Oven Bird, Chimney Swift, and Wood Thrush. In late April, Tyler Hodges documented 30 species, including the at-risk Chimney Swift and Oven Bird, along with some once-common birds whose populations are plummeting, such as the Black-capped Chickadee and Red-winged Blackbird. Isabel Allerheilige documented bird species in White's Woods in late April.

We owe our thanks to these citizen/scientists who are taking the time to document the extraordinary birds in White's Woods! They are doing important work. Bird populations have dramatically declined in the United States, according to the Cornell Ornithology Lab. We now have nearly 30% fewer birds than we had in 1970. Habitat loss and climate change are two of the biggest factors in the avian population decline.

To keep track of birds recorded in White's Woods or to register your own list of sightings, go to [ebird.org](http://ebird.org).

## **Climate Forests**

Climate Forests, a coalition of over 120 organizations nationwide, is working for permanent protection of old and mature trees on federal land and is now gathering signatures on a petition to the U.S. government. The petition calls for the preservation of mature and old-growth trees in national forests (which has historically served the forest industry) and notes that "millions of Americans care deeply about mature and old-growth trees and forest conservation across all national forests. The severe loss of biodiversity and the worsening impacts of climate change require solutions that match the magnitude of the threats we face. We need transformational change, not the status quo or incremental steps toward future outcomes. Done properly, this nationwide forest plan amendment could have a meaningful, near-term impact on confronting the climate crisis and on addressing the loss of biodiversity, and we look forward to seeing this potential realized." If you would like to sign, visit the Climate Forests website: <https://www.climate-forests.org/>

## **UPCOMING EVENTS**

**June TBA: FWW Big Tree Walk**

**June TBA: Bird Walk**

**June TBA: Plant Walk**

Please check [friendsofwhiteswoods.org/events](http://friendsofwhiteswoods.org/events) and/or your email for up-to-date information on June events.

**For more information, visit: [friendsofwhiteswoods.org](http://friendsofwhiteswoods.org)  
Like us on FaceBook: Friends of White's Woods, Inc.  
Follow us on Instagram: [friendsofwhiteswoodsinc](https://www.instagram.com/friendsofwhiteswoodsinc)**

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# Stewardship Plan Headed to Supervisors for Approval

The White Township Stewardship Committee noted the overwhelming public support for the draft plan at the May 2 meeting, including support for enrolling White's Woods in the Old Growth Forest Network (OFGN), leaving it as a natural area, relying on least-intrusive intervention, and using the woods as an area for passive recreation.

After almost a three-hour meeting, the committee voted to send the edited plan to the Board of Supervisors before June 30.

Here is what transpired:

Committee member Sierra Davis noted that the majority of respondents clearly supported the plan and its goal to leave White's Woods as is and let it mature. Davis said there was support for an ongoing stewards committee and that there were differing opinions on the same topics that sparked committee discussion. For example, the conversation about deer should continue to be rooted in public involvement with much support for deer fencing.

Committee member Matt Klunk thanked the public for the feedback, indicating that everyone who wanted to comment had the chance to do so. It was nice to hear, Klunk added, that the majority support the plan. Geesey remarked that he found the feedback enlightening and observed that there was little divergence on key topics. Committee chair Barbara Hauge said she was both surprised and pleased at the large public response, which she characterized as a testament to the hard work of the committee and White Township.

Vice chair David Dahlheimer noted that if the draft plan was significantly revised by the committee, it would need to be re-posted for public review. Hauge did not agree that significant changes by the committee at this point would require additional public review. But she stated that she did not anticipate substantial changes to the plan.

Klunk thanked FWW and Chauncey Ross for providing the aggregate data summaries. Davis said that she thought the aggregate data provided by FWW was very helpful and accurately presented.

The BOS, Hauge noted, has not had the front row seat to the information provided by experts, research and public input. She said the committee must review input to see if there is any that would justify or require revision of the plan.

Discussion on a strategy for reviewing the 220 comments submitted by the public ensued. Ninety-five percent of respondents supported the plan and 59 people provided individual suggestions. Dahlheimer said it was important to consider any individual comment

in the context of the aggregate data. Noting that the committee had worked with public input, consultants, and research in developing the plan and, in light of the overwhelming public support, the committee could probably approve the plan without any additional changes.

Hauge suggested that the committee review each of the 59 suggestions one-by-one. Dahlheimer suggested that comments be grouped into three categories: (1) suggestions consistent with the publicly-supported plan and committee consultants that could be helpful in implementation; (2) the small percent of feedback contrary to both expert and public input received; and (3) suggested factual and editorial corrections.

Davis, Klunk, and Dahlheimer emphasized that the committee and the township need to rely on aggregate data and that all individual comments be considered within the context that data. Davis underscored that there is a foundation in the draft plan to deal with all of the public's individual suggestions regarding native and invasive plants, deer management, and more, in the future. She also expressed her hope that the township can see that if only one person makes a suggestion, a picnic table, for instance, then there really is no need for that.

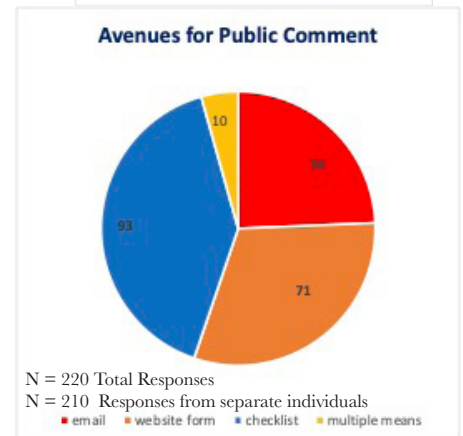
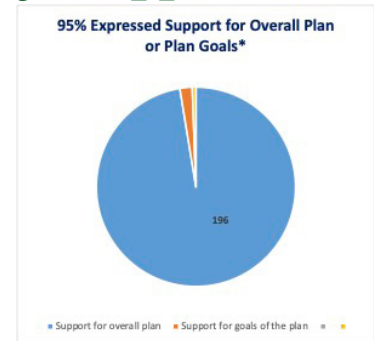
The committee agreed to address potential factual errors and assemble a list of individual comments regarding suggestions for implementation or disagreement with plan goals. Individual suggestions for implementation could be considered by the recommended "Stewards Committee."

Hauge emphasized that a plan is a "living document" that evolves with public input.

The committee discussed factual/clarification edits on items such as information about the Natural Heritage Inventory, the remote risk of fire, the age of various parts of the forest, misrepresentation of the township animal ordinance, and emphasis on public review in the development of any policy regarding deer.

Geesey moved that the motion be amended to recommend that the township develop a policy on ebikes. The committee briefly discussed and approved the amendment to acknowledge the need to protect sensitive trails and rely on public input.

Hauge suggested that the supervisors be provided with the aggregate data prepared by FWW, rather than providing a narrative context for these items in the committee's letter to the BOS. After some discussion, Hauge suggested that the letter note the individual comments, suggest a Stewards Committee, and reference a numerical context for the individual comments. Hauge will write the letter and distribute it to the committee so that the commit-



tee members can individually make comments and revisions.

Numerous citizens spoke at the meeting on agenda items. Dr. Will Radell underscored that neither deer browse, Lyme disease, vehicle-deer collisions, nor Chronic Wasting Disease will be solved by allowing hunting in White's Woods and urged the committee to be cautious with advice offered by an established deer hunting lobbyist. Any benefits of deer hunting in White's Woods, Radell noted, will be outweighed by the costs. Dr. Gail Berlin emphasized that the checklists developed by FWW to facilitate public feedback were a great tool for facilitating conversation and further investigation of the posted draft plan. Rick Ritenour noted that over 200 people had provided public input and the conclusion was clear: Respondents overwhelmingly supported that plan and declared that the woods should be left essentially in its natural state. Alphonse Borowski criticized FWW for the organization's efforts to investigate the potential for a carbon sequestration contract (which was supported by multiple experts) for the Nature Center. Borowski also criticized FWW's efforts to support public attendance at the Stewardship Committee meeting and to encourage public input. Two citizens, Dr. Kim Hatcher and Dr. Dave Sparks, spoke to supporting mountain biking in White's Woods, with Dr. Sparks urging, particularly in light of limitations that may arise with aging, that ebikes be allowed.

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

We welcome feedback. Email us at:

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