



# Friends of White's Woods Monthly Newsletter



## MARCH WEBINAR: OUTDOOR RECREATION IN PENNSYLVANIA

Pennsylvania's Director of Outdoor Recreation, a division of the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR), will discuss the many benefits of outdoor recreation, why they are vital to Pennsylvania's future, and the effort underway to establish Pennsylvania's Office of Outdoor Recreation at the March 23rd webinar.

Dr. Nathan Reigner will discuss the economics of outdoor recreation as well as the other benefits such as green infrastructure, health and wellbeing and community connectedness.

"The tree of outdoor recreation grows in Pennsylvania," Reigner said. "It grows uncultivated like an old fruit tree of a forgotten homestead reclaimed by nature, and we pick only the fruit that hangs low while we happen by it. To realize the full benefit of outdoor recreation Pennsylvania needs to tend the tree, fertilizing the soil and defending it from pests, systematically harvest the fruit and distribute it fully and equitably to all Pennsylvanians."

Reigner is a PhD social scientist with extensive experience analyzing, planning for, managing, and building collaboration to support outdoor recreation at every level from the local to the international.

Throughout his career he has served as a policy analyst, consultant, business owner, university professor, conservation commissioner, and trail club leader, all with a focus on helping communities, parks, trails, and tourism destinations deliver outstanding experiences while protecting their essential character.

Reigner has worked in and with more than 100 parks, forests, trails, historic sites, and heritage areas in more than half the states and territories in the union and overseas in Europe, Asia, and the Middle East.

A native of Pennsylvania, Reigner has a bachelor's degree in anthropology and sociology from Gettysburg College, a master of science in forestry from Virginia Tech, and a doctorate in natural resource management from the University of Vermont.

According to the DCNR website, outdoor recreation is a significant economic driver in Pennsylvania, one that:

- Delivers direct economic benefits to rural communities;
- Provides jobs that connect passion and profession;
- Brings income into the state from visitors; and



Dr. Nathan Reigner

- Merges community quality of life with long-term sustainable returns.

Pennsylvania has the sixth largest outdoor recreation economy in the country.

According to the U.S. Department of Commerce Bureau of Economic Analysis (PDF), outdoor recreation adds \$14 billion to the Pennsylvania economy. This activity creates 150,000 full time jobs which earn Pennsylvanians \$6.8 billion in wages and salaries.

See below to register for this webinar, which will be held from 4 to 5 p.m.

### Next *Naturally* Column in the *Indiana Gazette*

The second *Naturally* column, sponsored by FWW and the *Indiana Gazette*, will appear in the March 4/5 weekend edition.

Titled *Christmas Bird Count 2022 Continues 30-Year Event*, the article is written by Margaret Higbee, newsletter editor of the Todd Bird Club. Read about the bird species spotted during this annual event and learn about the decrease in the bird population since 1970.

Missed the first column?

The first column appeared Jan. 28th. If you have a subscription to the digital version of the *Gazette* (or if you haven't used up your free articles for the month), you can read the first article at [https://www.indianagazette.com/opinion/king-white-s-woods-a-doorway-to-a-new-world/article\\_4afb6f40-71d1-5c2c-94f1-456ad-ce7eb32.html](https://www.indianagazette.com/opinion/king-white-s-woods-a-doorway-to-a-new-world/article_4afb6f40-71d1-5c2c-94f1-456ad-ce7eb32.html).

### UPCOMING WEBINARS AND EVENTS

**March 16: White Township Stewardship Committee meeting.** 6:30 p.m., White Township Municipal Building.

**March 23: "The Tree of Outdoor Recreation."** Nathan Reigner, PA Director of Outdoor Recreation.

**April 20: White Township Stewardship Committee meeting.** 6:30 p.m., White Township Municipal Building.

**April 22: Earth Day Celebration.** White's Woods. 1 p.m. to 3 p.m.\*

**April 27: The Pennsylvania Natural Heritage Program.** Dr. Scott Schuette, Botany Program Manager, PNHP.

**May 25: "Tree Diversity Study of White's Woods."** Dr. Marion Holmes, University of Pittsburgh's Kuebbing Lab.

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](mailto:info@friendsofwhiteswoods.org). Recordings of all webinars are available at [friendsofwhiteswoods.org/events](https://friendsofwhiteswoods.org/events)

\*Note time change

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

Issue 33  
March 2023

## FEB. STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE MEETING HEARS ASSESSMENT FROM FOREST CONSULTANT; TWO IUP STUDENTS

The Stewardship Committee hosted three presenters at the Feb. 16th meeting: Appalachian Forest Consultant Mike Wolf, along with two IUP students. Wolf was added to the agenda by committee agreement. Committee Chair Hauge added the two IUP students without committee consultation.



Wolf affirmed the findings that he had presented in his 2020 assessment of White's Woods: The overstory is healthy, the soil is rich, the big trees will live for hundreds of years, and deer are a very big problem in that they significantly interfere with forest regeneration. If the tree canopy in White's Woods is disrupted, then the likely result is the explosion of invasive plants. There is no need to do anything with the overstory, he said. "Letting light on the understory now would be a tragedy," he added. Get the understory to a healthy state with control of deer and invasive plants, Wolf advised, then there is the option to extend management decisions for a long time, and we will have a forest that can last for generations.

Wolf expressed his strong opinion that hunting would not have a significant impact on the deer-browse problem in White's Woods, noting that deer have a 600-acre range, and they will simply retreat to adjacent lands if hunters are active in White's Woods. Only deer fencing will work, Wolf said, though he noted that it is expensive and is likely to cost at least \$6 per linear foot.

White Township Recreation Director Ryan Shaffer indicated that he did not believe that the White Township Supervisors would be likely to support significant expenditures for deer fencing. Wolf didn't believe grants would

be available to municipalities for deer fencing, although Hauge mentioned that DCNR has supplied the township with numerous grants related to its outdoor space. Hauge and Shaffer both insisted that deer hunting works at other parks, including those in Murrysville. Wolf replied that success is not typically measured by the number of new seedlings, but by the number of kills instead, and repeated his conviction that hunting would not successfully solve the problem of forest regeneration.

IUP student Joece Lynn provided an overview of her preliminary study to assess the density of Japanese barberry on three White's Woods trails, along with a map of the three dense patches of this invasive plant. Aaron Capouellez reported on his efforts to locate frogs, toads, and salamanders in White's Woods, as well as results from a fall trail camera survey.

In other matters, Dalheimer suggested to the committee that climate change's impact on forests is a very important concern for any stewardship plan. Greg Czarnecki, DCNR Director of Climate Science, indicated his willingness to participate in the committee's May meeting, but his offer was met with committee hesitation, due to some members' worry about time constraints.

The committee approved asking Dalheimer to reach out to Tom Lautzenheiser, specialist in forest management relying on natural succession, to confirm his ability to meet with the committee at a future meeting. It is not clear if Lautzenheiser will be invited to meet with the committee, however.

The committee decided to put their invitation to Dr. Susan Boser, director of the 2022 Community Interest Study, on hold. As directed at last January's meeting, committee member Dalheimer did invite Boser, first to the February meeting and then to the March meeting, as subsequently requested by Hauge. Boser graciously accepted both the first, as well as the revised committee invitation. At the February meeting, Hauge urged the committee to reconsider their invitation. The committee decided to rescind the invitation(s) that they had issued in January and, possibly, invite Boser again, should they see a need, to speak with her in the future.

In a brief discussion of the committee's mission statement, Hauge noted that, in response to a request from Dalheimer, all committee drafts of the mission statement will be made available in one document. Dalheimer had objected to Hauge's revision of his December mission draft, which Hauge relabeled the

"Dalheimer-Hauge" draft. He had not been given the opportunity to explain the thinking behind his original draft, nor had he seen or approved the new draft that Hauge had distributed, Dalheimer explained. Some of the accumulated committee draft mission statements are available on the White Township committee website. The draft mission statement submitted by FWW is not included in the assembled document.

Hauge asked that committee members travel individually to visit the Westmoreland County Ann Rudd Saxman Park in March, even though, as Will Radell noted in Public Comment, this park is nothing like White's Woods. One-third of the park is devoted to manicured lawn and a substantial section is devoted to demonstration gardening plots.

The various committee mission statements will be considered at the March meeting. At that time, the committee will also review public input regarding White's Woods that was emailed to White Township in July 2020. These emails were provided to the committee by Sara King, who filed an Open Records Request to get copies of this public input.



photo by Cheri Widzowski

### Earth Day 2023

More than 150 people attended last year's Earth Day celebration in White's Woods (photos above), organized by 12 local and statewide organizations.

Plan to attend this year's celebration from 1 to 3 p.m., Saturday, April 22, at the 12th Street entrance to White's Woods.

Take a step for the environment and plan on walking to the event.

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

We welcome feedback. Email us at:

[info@friendsofwhiteswoods.org](mailto:info@friendsofwhiteswoods.org)

Issue 33  
March 2023