



Webinar to highlight Pa. Natural Heritage old growth project

April 7, 2023

Dr. Scott Schuette, PNPH botany program manager, will present the April 27 webinar.
Submitted photo

Friends of White's Woods will host a webinar April 27 focusing on the Pennsylvania Natural Heritage old growth project.

The Pennsylvania Natural Heritage Program is currently engaged in identifying second-growth forests in the state, like White's Woods, to become Old Growth Forests.

The Pennsylvania Natural Heritage Program is a partnership between the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission, the Pennsylvania Game Commission, and the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy in cooperation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. PNHP is a member of NatureServe, an international network of natural heritage programs that gather and provide information on the location and status of important ecological resources (plants, vertebrates, invertebrates, ecological communities and geologic features). The purpose is to provide current, reliable, objective ecological data and analysis to help guide conservation work and land-use planning.

According to the website, the Pennsylvania Natural Heritage Program is working on understanding the old growth character for Pennsylvania's forests, and then identifying secondary forests that are attaining this character for protection.

The program is working to map old forests in Pennsylvania and learn more about the plant communities associated with them.

The April 27 webinar will give an overview of PNHP and walk through the process of identifying, documenting and reporting the biodiversity of Pennsylvania to the public. There will

be specific examples from the latest regional natural heritage inventory project highlighting Natural Heritage Areas, which represent the primary products that PNHP provides for municipalities and organizations to make informed conservation decisions within their jurisdiction. Current PNHP projects that involve old growth forests in Pennsylvania and climate change vulnerability of the Pennsylvania's biodiversity will be covered including how PNHP is working to increase resiliency through habitat connectivity.

Dr. Scott Schuette, PNHP botany program manager, will present the webinar. Schuette has worked with the Pennsylvania Natural Heritage Program for 11 years as an inventory botanist and bryologist. He currently serves as the Natural Heritage Botany Program Manager at Western Pennsylvania Conservancy. He received his PhD in plant biology from Southern Illinois University. His projects focus on rare plant inventories, climate change impacts to plant species and bryophyte inventory and conservation.

To register for this free webinar, which will be held from 4 to 5 p.m., send an email to info@friendsofwhiteswoods.org.