

4-17-07

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Error made in initial plans for White's Woods timbering

The White Township supervisors are exploring a plan to log White's Woods as a way to improve the forest's "health." I think their initial planning involved a fatal error.

The health of a forest can be defined in two ways that are radically different. The first definition considers a forest "healthy" when it yields the maximum level of harvestable timber. Foresters trained in this specialty provide a valuable service if the forest is conceived as a cropland.

White's Woods was donated to our community for a very different purpose, and its management requires a different set of forestry skills. We need advice from foresters

who specialize in the recreational and ecological health of a forest. We need a perspective that includes the unique majesty of an old-growth forest, easily accessible to our grandchildren.

Our current situation is like having a friend who catches the flu but makes an appointment with a dermatologist. The supervisors hired a consultant trained for "Purpose A," and that can be harmful when White's Woods is understood as a recreational and ecological treasure.

Let's find a caring way to add professional advice that is best suited for this particular forest.

Robert H. Rittle
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