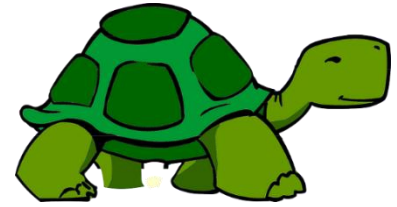




Friends of White's Woods Monthly Newsletter



New Data Confirms: Citizens Still Say “Leave White’s Woods Alone!”

A June 2022 research project designed to investigate how the public uses White’s Woods, along with citizen views on potential White Township changes to the park, such as selective timbering and bow-hunting, both expands and affirms 27 years of previous public-input data about our community forest.

The recently gathered data indicates that citizens use the park for “passive” recreation including hiking, walking, and spending time with family - activities consistent with the original goals for this Project 70 property. These woods were identified by over 80% of respondents as important for nature conservation, air quality, stormwater control, and wildlife preservation. The large majority of those surveyed (67.6%) were opposed to even selective timbering of the area.

Approximately 57% of respondents were opposed to limited-season bow hunting, with 51% indicating that in-park bow hunting would limit their use of the woods, presumably due to concerns about safety.

The research project, titled “*White’s Woods Community Interest Study*,” was led by Dr. Susan Boser of IUP’s Sociology Department, who worked in collaboration with doctoral students Adam Jones, Joseph Fetzer, Richard Patterson, Noura Agbere, and Amal Alqahtani. A 32-question survey was distributed to a large, diverse sample of the Indiana community with the assistance of 10 different community organizations. The survey was completed by 278 residents. The research team also conducted a series of qualitative semi-structured interviews. Concern about a lack of transparency in White Township planning processes regarding White’s Woods was emphasized by interviewees.

The complete results of this study were presented at a July 28, 2022, FWW webinar that can be viewed at friendsofwhiteswoods.org (“Events”).

UPCOMING EVENTS AND WEBINARS

August 18: 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?” Greg Czarnecki, Director of Applied Climate Science, PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources.

Oct. 14: “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.

AUGUST

MEMBER RENEWAL

It’s time to renew your membership. Our membership year expired in April. So, if you have not donated to support this campaign in 2022, please consider a donation now by visiting the FWW website or by sending a check made payable to FWW to FWW, P.O. Box 1271, Indiana, PA 15701.

In addition, we need your volunteer time as well.



Please recruit a new member for FWW. If even half of current FWW members could ask a friend or family member to show their support by formally joining FWW, it would make a big difference. Please help this way if you can.



Remember: For a donation of \$100 or more, as supplies last, you will receive either the 2022 print by Beth Wheeler called “Sunlight’s Dance” (top) or one of Chuck Olson’s limited edition, signed print of the woods (below).

Same holds for new members. New members should include their name, street address, email address and phone number with their check as well as the print choice.

For more information, visit: friendsofwhiteswoods.org

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Township Stewardship Committee: One Step Forward, Two Steps...

At the opening of the July 21, 2022, White Township Stewardship Committee meeting, Dr. Susan Boser presented a quick overview of the research project soliciting public input titled "White's Woods Community Interest Study."

The Township committee had considered Dr. Boser's offer to work with them last Spring, but felt that their own timeline could not be adjusted to fit the schedule of the graduate student class that was to undertake the project.

FWW, instead, offered to lend the class the necessary support.

Committee Chair Barbara Hauge offered a succinct thank you when the timer sounded to indicate that Dr. Boser's three-minute limit for individual Public Comment had expired, cutting this speaker off mid-sentence. At the urging of committee member David Dahlheimer, Dr. Boser was allotted additional time.

Copies of the "*Final Report: White's Woods Community Interest Study*," which gathered input from a large, diverse community sample, were distributed to the committee. Later on in the meeting, Committee member Sierra Davis expressed her appreciation for the data collection efforts of Dr. Boser's class and thanked FWW for stepping in to support this project.

Township Manager Chris Anderson reported that the White Township solicitor had indicated that the committee could send out informational emails but could not work on a committee project online and out of public view.

Working from a list of possible consultants assembled by committee members Sierra Davis and David Dahlheimer, the committee decided to meet with two IUP forest experts who are familiar with White's Woods and forester Mike Wolf, who conducted a 2020 assessment of the health of White's Woods, in the next few weeks. Other possible consultants lined up for committee consideration include two additional experts who have completed White's Woods inventories of plants and trees; three that could assist in long-term planning; two with expertise in deer management information; and three generalists/foresters who care for a forest, according to Hauge, and have expertise in timbering.

Hauge then turned the committee's attention, again, to gathering public input. Dr. Susan Dahlheimer provided an overview of the 2020 FWW Survey design and distributed a summary of the large-scale and repeated public input gathered regarding White's Woods since 1995.

Hauge requested that the committee host a booth at the Northern Appalachian Folk Festival to get public feedback by presenting a map of White's Woods and asking booth visitors to attach a red, green, or blue sticker to indicate their own forest management preferences.

(article continued, column right)



Dr. Dana Driscoll, IUP English Department, at the June 13 FWW Medicinal & Edible Plant Walk. This walk featured discussion of wild food foraging practices, ethics, safety, tools, and resources. Driscoll has been teaching wild food foraging, herbalism and sustainable living for over 10 years.

One Step Forward cont.

Township Recreation Director Ryan Shaffer volunteered to contact the IUP School of Business to assess their interest in getting more public input for the committee. Hauge asked Dave Dahlheimer to contact Sociology to see if that department's faculty might help.

FWW President Sara King explained that Sociology Professor Dr. Boser had just given the committee a report of extensive data collection. Hauge responded that "she did not do it with us" and asserted that committee public input should be obtained by relying on an East Pike Recreation Complex email database compiled by Shaffer.

Stewardship mission statements from other Pennsylvania forests that fall under DCNR administration, and others, will be reviewed at the August committee meeting.

**For more information, visit: friendsofwhiteswoods.org
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