

7-1-07

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

# Whatever one calls it, timbering is still timbering, residents say

On behalf of the Friends of White's Woods, we need to clarify some points raised in White Township Supervisor Gail McCauley's June 24 letter.

Selective timbering did not occur in 1995 because — in a scientific, mailed survey of all White Township voters, conducted by the township manager — the vote was 2-to-1 against it (62 percent to 31 percent), at which point the supervisors voted unanimously against the proposal. A total of 1,527 township voters voted against it.

The Gazette's recent survey found that 69 percent of respondents oppose the logging plan. Petitions signed by well over 500 White Township residents were submitted to the supervisors on June 11. These include many residents who live several miles away from White's Woods Nature Center, but agree just as strongly as those living near it that it should not be logged.

Township voters expressed their opposition to the plan well before the supervisors' recent hearing and vote. In April so many opponents of the plan came to their meeting that they could not fit into the room, instead having to stand outside, which is why the supervisors moved the June 11 hearing into the large S&T Arena.

Several voters spoke individually with Mrs. McCauley after meetings. In May one of them even took the trouble to meet her at the entrance to the woods, where a professional forester with 50 years of experience explained to her that the woods are in excellent health.

On April 18 one township voter mailed a letter and a packet of published articles explaining why selective timbering is bad for nature preserves to the homes of the supervisors, and to the township manager and solicitor — but he received no reply from any of them.

We trust that our children are taught that democracy is based on the will of the majority, as emphasized in the U. S. Constitution. The people of White Township have expressed their will

many times in this case, loud and clear and by an overwhelming majority, but their will was ignored by the supervisors on June 13.

Many borough residents have a strong stake in this issue, too, especially since part of the woods is in the borough. Earlier the borough manager sent the township officials a detailed letter of concern.

Mrs. McCauley describes the proposed logging as merely a "selection cut." Timbering is timbering, whatever one calls it. If you ask the barber, "Don't take too much off," it's still a haircut, even if you try to call it something else. In this case the supervisors invited only one forester to give them a pro-logging plan — which does not limit itself to "dead, diseased, and crowding trees," as she writes, but also (quoting the proposal) trees considered supposedly "over-mature" and "mature" and "suppressed and stressed."

It's a tree-farm model in which the big trees are cut to speed up the growth of smaller trees beneath them and thus generate more "board-feet." The report calls for logging the "maximum commercial (diameter) limit," "providing a monetary return" estimated at \$160,000 — across 10 years in which inflation would drive that figure up, with trucks and chainsaws disrupting the woods every year.

We are now trying to work with the supervisors, at their manager's suggestion, to find other solutions that would not involve logging. We hope they will work together with us, and we invite area residents to support these joint efforts.

David Dahlheimer  
Christine Wilson Kesner  
Michael Kesner  
White Township

■ **EDITOR'S NOTE:** This letter was also signed by township residents Gail Berlin, Cathy Lambert, Robert Lambert, Abbey Morris, Pamela Rogers and Clara Trimarchi.