

# State legislators should revise definition of 'forests'

An open letter to Sen. Don White and Rep. Dave Reed:

As you well know, White Township is caught in a dispute over the timber management plan generated by Mr. David Babyak at the request of the White Township Board of Supervisors.

The very fact that a controversy exists is due largely to the negligence of the Pennsylvania Legislature when it passed the most recent Municipal Codes.

The existing codes blandly

refer to "forests" without defining the term.

Clearly, the supervisors followed a traditional concept that a "forest" equals trees, nothing more, nothing less.

The public discussion on June 11 made it clear that there is a more scientific and realistic definition:

- 1.) A forest includes woody plants such as trees and bushes;
- 2.) A forest is a habitat for wildlife;

3.) A forest includes a broad spectrum of other flora;

4.) A forest is used by humans for recreation, sport, and economic development.

Sen. White, Rep. Reed: You would do White Township and the county and other local governments a great favor by ensuring that all pertinent municipal codes are changed to meet a more accurate definition, more scientific definition of a forest.

Local governments would save

weeks of stress, anxiety and turmoil with their constituents by incorporating all four aspects of the life of a forest into the management plans.

One-dimensional plans, such as that prepared by Mr. Babyak, would no longer be possible. He prepared an excellent document as specified by his charge; unfortunately, it left out three key components.

Lawrence J. Turton  
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