

The White's Woods debate

Township plan is a selective cut, not timbering, supervisor says

6/24/2007

There are many issues that need to be clarified, and I will try to take them in order.

In 1905 the federal government realized our forests were in trouble and created the Forest Service under the Department of Agriculture. During the Depression, the Civil Conservation Corps "did much to put the forests of the United States in good condition."

So, why did the White Township supervisors even bring up the subject of removing trees from White's Woods?

In 1995 a forester recommended for the health of the forest some trees needed to be removed, but nothing was done.

In 2006 the supervisors felt it was time to investigate the health of White's Woods, and, again, a well-respected forester recommended removal of dead and diseased trees, along with trees crowding healthy trees.

Approximately 50 years ago White's Woods was timbered and today we enjoy the benefits of that work.

Fifty years from now many of us will be gone, but White's Woods will be here for the enjoyment of future generations as a testament of the supervisors' good-faith efforts.

Is this a clear cut? No! Again, it will be only the removal of dead, diseased and crowding trees.

Was the cutting considered for profit? Certainly not! A recent letter to the editor mentioned the monetary value of the trees and the apparent galvanization of the supervisors to log White's Woods. At every meeting the supervisors stressed money was *not* an issue, only the health of the woods. Exactly who is not listening? Who is galvanized? Also, this is not a timbering but a selection cut.

Recently a parent wrote something to the effect that the White Township supervisors did not heed the voice of the community. She wrote also that

this was not a demonstration of democracy in action that served as a positive lesson for her children.

First, White Township, with a population of 14,034, owns White's Woods, and of the approximately 150 people who have attended the meetings, 75 were township residents. Many of these 75 citizens of White Township have indeed spoken. These 75 good citizens, who are the only citizens having a vested property interest in White's Woods, spoke with passion and sincerity against — and some in favor of — the selection plan.

This leaves approximately 13,959 citizens who may support the plan or who may be sufficiently satisfied that the elected officials will manage White's Woods as they manage the streets, sewers, the recreation parks and the removal of snow.

Of course, many citizens may just not care one way or the other. That is their right as citizens. I suggest that less than 1 percent of the population does not represent the "community."

Secondly, I did not receive one phone call regarding White's Woods until after the public meeting on June 11 when I mentioned this fact to several members of the "Friends of White's Woods" group. The following day I did receive a few phone calls, mostly from borough residents.

Thirdly, citizens had ample opportunity to speak and did so at the April 25 meeting, the May 9 and 23 meetings and for two hours at the public meeting held June 11, and a few spoke at the June 13 meeting.

Finally, I would hope that no parent would teach a child that democracy only works when the outcome agrees with his or her own position. Democracy is not an outcome but rather a process.

Gail L. McCauley
Indiana

White Township supervisor

* I find this to be so petty