

THREE WHITE TOWNSHIP TIMBERING PLANS

At their May 12th meeting, Supervisor Gemmell accused FWW of lying about the amount of timbering proposed in WWNC during a presentation to the Federation of Democratic Women. And at a previous White Township meeting, Supervisor Gallo complained that Friends of White's Woods (FWW) had brought negative attention to the Township by claiming they intended to timber White's Woods Nature Center (WWNC), and Supervisor McCauley claimed that none of the 'stewardship plans' were about timbering. So, let's look at the facts:

I. The 1995 (8 March) plan by David Beale is titled "Timber Cruise and Appraisal and Timber Sale Recommendations."

- Cover letter: "We look forward to your further instruction regarding the initiation of the **timber sale** as proposed."
- P 2: Estimated volume and value summary by forest type
- P 3: Number of trees per acre by species and diameter: **Sawtimber size trees 12'+ dbh:**
total 44.5 trees
 - Red oak 18.5 avg DBH
 - Mixed oak 16.6 avg DBH
 - Yellow poplar 18.7 avg DBH
 - Red maple 14.5 avg DBH
 - Misc 14.5 avg DBH
- P 4: Mixed hardwood: This type is overstocked and it is recommended to thin these stands, removing approximately 2,850 board feet/acre
- P 4: Yellow Poplar: This type is very much overstocked. It is recommended that 3000 board feet/acre be removed in the proposed **timber sale**
- P 4: Mixed oak saw timber: about one half of this type is considered to have heavy Gypsy Moth mortality.
- P 5: Mixed oak – poletimber: this type is not recommended to be thinned except to remove the **marketable moth killed sawtimber**
- Proposed **Timber Sale Prescription** (total: **remove** 114 trees/acre, 8350 board feet/acre)
 - P 11: Mixed hardwood: **remove** 44 trees/acre; 2,850 board feet/acre
 - P 13: Yellow Poplar sawtimber: **remove** 37 trees/acre; 3,000 board feet/acre
 - P 15: Mixed oak: **remove** 33 trees/acre; 2,500 board feet/acre

Summary: The supervisors tried to spin the timbering as 'for the health of the forest' and "removing dead and dangerous trees." However, it is clear that the only trees to be cut are regarded as "marketable timber," and diseased/dead trees will not be cut.

Note: This timbering plan rejected by a 2-1 vote by WT citizens.

II. The 2007 (April) plan by David Babyak, “Forest Stewardship and Management Plan,” was rejected by DCNR because it recommends removal of 21% of the trees.

- P 2: Table of Contents: Section III **Timber harvest** schedule; **Revenue projection** and Harvest volume
- P 5: Method of Inventory:” **Timber prices** are based on prices paid for standing timber (stumpage) on a competitive bid basis...”
- P 9: “Sustainable forest management should: Sustain the potential for long-term **economic return** to the landowner.”
- P 10: “...selective marking of over mature, mature, dead, and damaged and suppressed or over crowded saw timber and pulpwood trees.”
- P 24: **Timber Harvest** Schedule: % of total timber volume for removal: 21%
- P 25: **Revenue** for 10 year cycle: \$166,000

Summary: The supervisors tried to spin the timbering as protection from the emerald ash borer, which is not mentioned in the report. The report does place emphasis on health of the forest and maintaining habitat and recreational value; however, this is clearly an attempt at sustainable forestry, i.e. a timber farm.

NOTE: This plan rejected by DCNR because “The plan is not consistent with the Project 70 Land Acquisition and Borrowing Act in that the amount of timber harvesting it calls for is not consistent with the definitions of recreation and conservation in the Act.” April 10, 2008 letter, Greg Gove, Director, Bureau of Recreation and Conservation.

III. White Township Stewardship Plan prepared by Michael Lawer. Also listed on cover page: DCNR District Service Forester: Chris Fatzinger. Undated.

- P 13: “In February 2019, a total **timber** volume and **value report** ... for the timber standing in Whites Woods was submitted to the supervisors...”
- P 19: **Select Timber Harvest** “Grade timber was assessed and valued at a minimum of 12.5 inches at diameter of breast height (DBH), or 4.5 feet and up to a minimum 10-inch top. Pulp and firewood materials were assessed and valued starting at a 10 inch DBH and down to a minimum 4 inch top. Wood products were individually assessed and valued based on species, quality and merchantability. The grading system used determined each individual tree into log specific log length sections and assessed individually for quality and then valued.”
- P 20-21: Timber Sale Projections: Total standing value: \$61,329.00; net revenue: \$39,965.44; consultant cost: \$15,300.
- P 23: Management Recommendations... White’s Woods #2 **Sustainable objective timber harvest**
- P 27: Recommended Schedule: Summer/Fall 2021: WW tract 1 **Removal of selective timber**

IV. The 2020 “stewardship plan” was developed over a multi-year period and consists of four documents as follows:

- A. White Township, Sustainable Forest Management Overview, undated
- October 2018: Preliminary assessment report prepared and submitted.
 - February 2019: “...a **total timber volume and value report** for the standing timber in White’s Woods was submitted to the supervisors
 - May 2019: “Michael Lawer...(?) Chris Fatzinger to discuss the proposed land management plan and the Sustainable Forestry Initiative Program.”
 - March 2020: “...Millstone’ consulting scope of service were approved for 50 acres of Whites Woods...”
 - Millstone has begun to **mark, scale and tally trees...**”
- B. White Township Parks Project: Preliminary Assessment (hand-marked revised 12-13-18)
- White’s Woods: 228.9 acres
 - Sustainable Objective **Timber Harvest**
 - On site amphitheatre constructed of and **paid for by trees harvested in White’s Woods**
 - Old benches and sign posts and benches can be replaced using **lumber** from the **sale** within the park
- C. White’s Woods **Timber Valuation** (hand-dated 2/13/19)
- P 1: Table 1: Timber **valuation** prior to cut/skid/haul and roadwork deductions. Volume: 5,509,901 (no units; may mean board feet); Total: \$2,529,536.05
 - P 2: “This would involve **taking about half** of said volume.”
 - P 2: “Table 2 shows the approximate volume to be harvested through the multiple first harvests and the possibly current day **revenue** that would be generated. ...include the deductions of approximate road work cost, cut, skid and haul.” Volume: 2,754,951; Total: \$727,552.68
 - The volume in table two is, in fact, **50%** of the volume of table one (see statement above).
- D. Exhibit “B” Whites Woods – Tract #1 – 50 Acres (hand written: approved 3/11/20)
- Consulting Services costs

Summary: As with the previous two plans (1995 and 2007-08), health of the forest is a stated goal, but the repeated quotation of timber valuation reveals the true purpose of the plan. In addition to the higher timbering goal, this plan is also problematic because the incompleteness of the plan (as pointed out in the DCNR Bureau of Forestry technical review, March 23, 2021) and the unscientific, unsupported methods for forest management proposed.

NOTE: This plan rejected by DCNR March 25, 2021 in part because “Timber harvesting cannot reduce the recreational opportunities, detract from the educational experience, nor disrupt the ecological function of the site.” Tom Ford, Director, Bureau of Recreation and Conservation. (The “plan” was also rejected because it was incomplete and proposed mulching the entire forest - a practice “unfamiliar” to DCNR and one that DCNR feared would result in significant unintended consequences.)