

Webinar: Old-growth forests and community benefits is Nov. 13

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Brian Kane, Mid-Atlantic regional manager of the Old-Growth Forest Network, will present a Friends of White's Woods webinar, "Old-Growth Forests: Ecosystems with Community Benefits," on Nov. 13 from 4 to 5 p.m.

Kane will outline the ecological qualities and community benefits of mature second-growth and old-growth forests, highlighting examples from the 41 Pennsylvania forests currently in the national network.

"Less than 5% of original forests in the West and only a fraction of 1% in the East remain standing," the OGFN website notes. "It is thus our turn to do what we can for those who will come after us and save the remnant old-growth (or future old-growth) forests across the country."

Roughly 99% of East Coast forests were logged, mostly within the last 120 to 175 years. To ensure more old growth in the future, advocates say older second-growth forests — such as White's Woods Nature Center — should be protected now.

The Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources has more than 15 forests enrolled in OGFN, including Bear Meadows Natural Area in Rothrock State Forest, added in July. In Westmoreland County, sites in the network include Bushy Run Battlefield, Duff Park, and the Otto and Magdalene Ackermann Nature Preserve.



Brian Kane, Mid-Atlantic regional manager, Old-Growth Forest Network.

Kane is a landscape architect, environmental educator, and sustainability expert. He has designed culturally significant landscapes across the Chesapeake Bay watershed, served on faculty at Virginia Tech and the University of Maryland, and worked as a sustainability director for a K–12 school.

OGFN has enrolled 300-plus forests in 39 states and aims to enroll a forest in every U.S. county. Indiana County does not yet have a site in the network; however, based on a designated forester's evaluation, the network has issued a formal invitation to White Township to enroll White's Woods. The community forest includes numerous ~120-year-old trees and scattered specimens over 200 years old. DCNR forester Dale Luthringer, Cook Forest environmental education specialist, identified a White's Woods red oak larger than any red oak now in Cook Forest, along with a tulip poplar just four feet shorter than the tallest tulip poplar in Pennsylvania.

For more information or to register, email info@friendsofwhiteswoods.org.

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