



Friends of White's Woods Monthly Newsletter



Cindy Rogers Receives Presidential Award for Volunteerism

The President's Volunteer Service Award (PVSA) provides an opportunity to honor outstanding volunteers and recognize the impact they make. This award was founded in 2003 to recognize the important role of volunteers in America's strength and national identity and to honor the volunteers who are using their time and talents to solve some of the toughest challenges facing our nation. In order to qualify for this award, an individual must perform unpaid acts of volunteer service benefitting others. The top award, the Gold Award, requires 500 hours of volunteer service within a 12-month period.

FWW is a certifying PVSA organization and gave this year's award to Cindy Rogers, who completed over 800 hours of volunteer service in one year, many more hours than the total number of hours required for this award. And much of that service is dedicated to protecting our environment and helping others to see the need to do this, too.

Cindy is director of the Evergreen Conservancy, an associate director of the Indiana County Conservation District, on the boards of the Tourist Bureau and Friends of Yellow Creek State Park, a contributing-of-her-time member of Friends of Whites Woods, Plant Patrol, Friends of the Indiana County Parks and a volunteer for Aging Services and the Chevy Chase Community Center. She assists with the organization of the Northern Appalachian Folk



ROGERS HONORED AT LUNCHEON:

Representatives from organizations in which Cindy Rogers volunteered attended the recent luncheon honoring her Gold Award for Volunteer Service. They are (front row, l to r): Tom Miller, FWW and last year's award recipient; Rogers; Sara King, FWW President and nominator; (second row, l to r): Sherene Hess, Indiana County Conservation District and Commissioner; John Dudash, Evergreen Conservancy; Carolyn Trimarchi, FWW; Becky Snyder, Evergreen Conservancy; Kate Gaudreau, Friends of Indiana County Parks; Ellen Chinn, Indiana County League of Women Voters; Joe Schwartz, Friends of Yellow Creek State Park; (back row, l to r): Jessica Jopp, FWW; Judy Holliday, Northern Appalachia Folk Festival; Vicki Burgess, Aging Services; Aaron Kovach, Friends of Yellow Creek State Park; Ed Donley, Plant Patrol; Dave Dahlheimer, FWW; Brook Russick, Indiana County Conservation District; Ken Sherwood, Friends of Yellow Creek State Park; Sue Dahlheimer, FWW.

Festival and is an active member of the Environmental Committee of the Indiana County League of Women Voters.

Cindy is a retired special education teacher.

ATTENTION: WEED PULLERS NEEDED

Friends of White's Woods is continuing invasive plant removal each Wednesday from 11 a.m. to noon. Members will remove Japanese barberry from a designated section of White's Woods. Please meet at 11 a.m. at the College Lodge parking lot.

Wear good gardening gloves and remember to protect your arms and legs from ticks.

Approved by White Township, this activity will require the completion of Volunteer Forms, which will be available at the parking lot.

Please consider this activity as a way to volunteer some time to assist FWW and protect White's Woods.

Instructions will be given on the correct and safest way to remove this invasive so seeds are not spread in the process.

We hope to see you there.



FWW volunteers remove and properly bag Japanese barberry for disposal. Come and help!

UPCOMING WEBINARS AND EVENTS

Aug. 2, 9, 16, 23, 30: Invasive Plant Removal. 11 a.m. to noon. Meet at College Lodge parking lot.

Aug. 17: White Township Stewardship Committee meeting: 6:30 p.m., White Township Municipal Building.

Sept. 28: The Land Ethic webinar by Dr. Curt Meine, Senior Fellow with the Aldo Leopold Foundation in Baraboo, Wisconsin, and with the Chicago-based Center for Humans and Nature

Oct. 2: FWW Membership meeting: 6:30 p.m., Zion Lutheran Church, Indiana.

Oct. 11: Plant Walk by Dana Driscoll. 12th Street entrance, White's Woods.

To register for FWW webinars, which are free and open to the public, please email at info@friendsofwhiteswoods.org. All previous webinars can be viewed at friendsofwhiteswoods.org/events.

Next Naturally Column in the Indiana Gazette

The seventh *Naturally* column, sponsored by FWW and the *Indiana Gazette*, will appear soon in their weekend edition.

Titled *Monarch Butterflies' Annually Flight to Mexico and Back to Indiana*, the article is written by Cindy Rogers, director of the Evergreen Conservancy.

Missed the first six columns?

You can read the six columns at <https://www.friendsofwhiteswoods.org/general-7-1>.

For more information, visit: friendsofwhiteswoods.org

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Follow us on Instagram: [friendsofwhiteswoodsinc](https://www.instagram.com/friendsofwhiteswoodsinc)

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JULY STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE MEETING DEBATES TIMBERING (AGAIN); SEEKS MORE COMMUNITY INPUT

At the July 20th White Township Stewardship Committee meeting, Rick Ritenour noted that in March 2022, the committee agreed to gain public trust by developing a document that stated the committee did not intend to timber in White's Woods. Ritenour said that document has not been created and that recent committee member action has, again, caused the public to be unsure of the committee's respect for public input regarding timbering in the Nature Center, or for the experts' warning that any tree removal would cause an explosion of invasive plants.

Committee Chair Barbara Hauge's timer sounded at the allotted three-minute mark for individual public comment. She cut Ritenour off mid-sentence and said "thank you." Ritenour requested more time to finish his remarks, but the chair said "no."

Recreation Director Ryan Shaffer informed the committee that the White Township Board of Supervisors agreed to extend the committee's deadline for six months. He also conveyed township appreciation to FWW for the ongoing hand-removal of barberry in White's Woods.

In discussion of the stewardship plan outline, committee member Sierra Davis suggested a re-ordering of topics and urged the committee to be sure that all parts of the plan flow from the (yet to be approved) goals and objectives that should be drawn from public input.

Hauge noted receipt of draft sections of the developing plan, thanking Davis for her draft of natural area management and Dahlheimer for the draft of the history chapter. Neither document was discussed.

Dahlheimer pointed out that he had begun a draft of public input as charged by the committee at the June 15th meeting. Dahlheimer thanked the chair for distributing his draft regarding public input to the committee, but noted that this item had been omitted from the agenda.

Hauge said that she wanted to use the summary of two recent public input surveys - the 2020 FWW park-user survey and the 2022 Community Interest Study - prepared by Matt Klunk.

Dahlheimer expressed his appreciation for Klunk's summary and noted that the 28-years of input that he had summed in his draft demonstrates the consistency of the data over time. He also noted that DCNR has received all of the data that he cited and that both that agency and the public need to know that the committee is working with it. Hauge replied that, maybe, that data could be put on a website and that she didn't want to make the Stewardship Plan a "tome."

For the August meeting, Davis will work on "goals and objectives," Klunk and Jeff Geesey will be drafting a section on deer management, Hauge will draft "biodiversity," and Dahlheimer will draft "Future Park Management Options," along with strategies for protecting at-risk species.

The committee was to have reviewed the 2022 Friends of White's Woods draft plan, titled Current Value & Future Care, along with an updated list of specific objectives. Although Hauge had received a copy of the updated specific objections, she did not understand that she was to have distributed this material and indicated that this discussion would have to be placed on next month's agenda.

The committee discussed the Cornell deer management study. Geesey noted that this was one of many documents that they need to review and that he will be going to the National Deer Hunting Association soon. Geesey noted that this association, along with the local Pennsylvania Game Warden, are especially helpful sources for identifying means to mitigate excessive deer populations.

Davis urged that Klunk and Geesey ground their draft for deer management in goals of the stewardship plan, such as that of protecting tree seedlings.

Dahlheimer noted that the 10-year Cornell deer management study that the committee was tasked to review made clear that recreational hunting does not successfully limit deer-browse or promote understory regeneration. He also reminded the committee that consultants Mike Wolf and Dr. Mike Tyree advised the committee that deer hunting will not successfully promote forest regeneration: fencing is necessary. (Note: *The Cornell deer management study, "Red Oak Seedlings as Indicators of Deer Browse Pressure: Gauging the Outcome of Different White-Tailed Deer Management Approaches" is available online.*)

Geesey commented that the Township is not in a position to encase the 243 acres of White's Woods. (Note: *Wolf and Tyree, consistent with advice drawn from numerous other documents, previously suggested only small-area fencing in naturally-occurring canopy gaps.*)

In discussion of community engagement, Hauge objected to comments made in a letter from FWW. The letter indicated that Hauge had been understood to say, during a presentation that she made on behalf of the committee, that she believed the committee would most likely be recommending that some trees be removed for the health of the forest. FWW expressed concern that inaccurate information, inconsistent with consultant advice or committee recommendations, was being conveyed to the public. Hauge decried that characterization of her remarks and told the committee what she had said:

"There may be good reasons to cut some trees in the future depending on the goals like biodiversity or carbon sequestration as was discussed by the experts at our meetings.I said that there may be good reasons to cut some trees in the future, that is all dependent upon community engagement and what the community says and what the goals are." (Note: *DCNR cautions that we need to [keep](#)*

the forests that we have to maximize carbon sequestration. Old trees keep growing and, according to a [United States Geological Survey report](#), "[t]his continuously increasing growth rate means that on an individual basis, large, old trees are better at absorbing carbon from the atmosphere. Cutting down big trees actually releases stored carbon back into the atmosphere. Note: [In ballots, petitions, and surveys stretching over 28 years](#), citizens have said that White's Woods should remain as a natural area and that they do not support selective timbering. Both [FWW](#) and [committee consultants](#) have made clear that the intact canopy must be protected to prohibit explosive growth of invasive plants. [Naturally-occurring canopy gaps](#) are sufficient for regeneration. DCNR emphasizes the importance of the deep-shade canopy for summer recreation.)

Hauge said that she also made clear that she was only one vote so that what she is thinking may not happen and suggested that they all heard different things from the consultants.

Dahlheimer urged the committee agree on the list of talking points that the committee had reviewed at their June meeting that included a summary of consensus recommendations by consultants. This is what should be used at community engagement sessions, Dahlheimer indicated. (Note: *The summary of [consensus of committee experts](#), proposed (but rejected for use) public engagement [talking points](#), [community organizations](#) that the committee plans to engage, and other committee documents can be found at the [White Township Stewardship Committee website](#).)*

Without responding to Dahlheimer's suggestion, Hauge told the committee that she thought the community engagement events should continue. The motion was passed (3-1). The committee did conclude that their comments to the public should be restricted to facts about such things as committee process.

Geesey then noted that "timbering" is the buzzword and that whenever the public hears the word timbering that they think the woods are going to be clearcut, thereby getting the wrong impression of what the committee is talking about. For himself, said Geesey, he doesn't think of timbering, he thinks of selective harvesting.

All those in attendance collectively sighed or laughed loudly and said to the committee, nearly in unison, that (selective harvesting) is timbering in the eyes of the public.

Hauge gavelled the meeting to order and said "we are moving on."

Hauge assigned committee members to make presentations to the organizations largely recommended by Hauge and approved by the majority of the committee.

"Humans must consider themselves as a member of the biotic community and not as the conqueror of the natural world."

Aldo Leopold, author, A Sand County Almanac
