

Let second-growth forests keep growing

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Less than 1 percent of the “frontier forests,” or old-growth forests, still exist in the lower 48 U.S. states. How can we get more old growth? Let the second-growth forests — forests (like White’s Woods) that are now 80 to 100 years old — keep growing!

Dr. Joan Maloof, executive director of the Old Growth Forest Network, recently explained the network’s mission, along with the work of community groups from around the world and in towns across the eastern U.S. to protect their own town forests.

In her recent public webinar, sponsored by Friends of White’s Woods, Dr. Maloof reported that Thailand monks save their trees by ordaining the trees as monks and wrapping them in saffron robes. One group in Maryland turned their forest into a memorial for victims of the Sept. 11, 2001, attack on the World Trade Center. Groups of citizens all across the U.S. have rallied to underscore the importance of their own town forests to the health and vitality of their communities — and to the well-being of future generations.

Dr. Maloof pointed out that one of the most persistent mistakes that municipalities make in trying to manage their forests is that of turning to the wrong experts.

Most of those who do work in forests are trained in timber production forest management techniques. These foresters’ experiences lead them to think of timbering as a ‘forest management tool’ because it is a technique to maximize timber production in a commercial forest. But natural succession still works! One does *not* have to timber to have a forest (just as logic might suggest). And there are forest ecology experts that look at forests in a very different way and who rely much more on tools other than timbering to keep a forest healthy.

The Old Growth Forest Network documents and publicizes protected old growth and second-growth forests.

Their website provides a list of old forests, along with information on how to find them. You can listen to Dr. Maloof's recorded webinar at the Friends of White's Woods website:

friendsofwhiteswoods.org.

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