



# Friends of White's Woods Monthly Newsletter



## *Fungi, Dead Wood Topic of Oct. 13 Webinar*

The importance of dead wood and fungi in maintaining forest ecosystems will be the focus of the Thursday, Oct. 13th webinar sponsored by Friends of White's Woods.

Jerry Hassinger, retired Pennsylvania Game Commission biologist, will present the free webinar from 4 to 5 p.m. He will address the questions related to the benefits of forest dead wood for numerous wildlife species, the overall risks versus the benefits of forest dead wood, the nature of fungi, the importance of fungi in the forest ecosystem, as well as the ongoing initiative to urge the Pennsylvania Department of

Conservation and Natural Resources to develop an adaptive action plan for the conservation of fungi in Pennsylvania.

Webinar attendees will also be introduced to the Ned Smith Center for Nature and Art, a 500-acre facility in Millersburg, dedicated to the celebration of the work of wildlife artist and naturalist Ned Smith, as well as to art, nature, and conservation education. Hassinger is a former president of the Pennsylvania Biological Survey, an association of "scientists, wildlife managers and policy makers working together to sustain biological diversity" and is the current chair of this organization's Mycological and Protists Technical Committee. He is the author of numerous articles and books that address topics including the essential role of dead wood in forest ecosystems, community bat management, and "wood crafting for wildlife" - ways to invite wildlife onto your property. His recent presentations have focused on the role of fungi in keeping Pennsylvania forests healthy.

To register for this webinar, send an email to [info@friendsofwhiteswoods.org](mailto:info@friendsofwhiteswoods.org).



*Jerry Hassinger, retired PA Game Commission biologist, will conduct Oct. 13th webinar.*



*FWW Tent at NAFF: For the second year, FWW was a presence at the Northern Appalachian Folk Festival.*

## ***FWW at NAFF***

Over 102 people visiting the FWW Sept. 10th Northern Appalachian Folk Festival booth signed the new petition calling for the protection of White's Woods in perpetuity. The petitions specifically asks for (1) a mission statement for WWNC that stipulates that no timbering will be part of the stewardship plan; (2) enrollment of the WWNC in the Old Growth Forest Network; (3) use of the existing public input data to design the stewardship plan; and (4) use of the park exclusively for Project 70 approved purposes, including "passive recreation" (hiking, walking, running, etc.), conservation, historical preservation. [Please sign the petition here!](#)

The FWW booth also featured data. One poster listed all of the public input about White's Woods gathered since 1995. Nine surveys, ballots, petitions, and email requests over the last 27 years have provided a consistent pattern: Leave White's Woods alone. In fact, citizens have told White Township 4,829 times that there should be no timbering in White's Woods. Other posters displayed the data from the 2022 IUP Community Interest Study, 2022 interviews of community stakeholders, and a list of confirmed sightings of mammals in White's Woods. Thanks to the NAFF for a great time and a great opportunity.

## ***UPCOMING EVENTS, MEETINGS, WEBINARS***

**Oct. 13: "Deadwood, Fungi & Introduction to the Ned Smith Center for Nature and Art."** Jerry Hassinger, PA Game Commission (Retired).

**Oct. 20: White Township Stewardship Committee meeting.** 6:30 p.m., White Township Municipal Building.

**Oct. 27: Membership Meeting,** 6:30 p.m., Zion Lutheran Church

**Nov. 10: "Engaged Passive Management Strategies for Massachusetts Forestlands."** Tom Lautzenheiser, Regional Scientist, MA Audubon.

**Jan. 26: "Climate Change."** Dr. Steven Hovan, Interim Dean of Natural Sciences and Mathematics.

The webinars, offered via Zoom from 4 to 5 p.m., are free and open to the public. To register for a webinar, send an email to [info@friendsofwhiteswoods.org](mailto:info@friendsofwhiteswoods.org).

**For more information, visit: [friendsofwhiteswoods.org](http://friendsofwhiteswoods.org)**

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## ***Items Discussed at September Stewardship Committee Meeting:***

### ***Bow Hunting, Black-Legged Ticks, Schedule for Consultant Visits, Mission Statement,***

Bow-hunting (see related article) and black-legged ticks dominated the Sept. 15th White Township Stewardship Committee meeting.

During the first Public Comment session, Will Radell called committee attention to a Sept. 13th article in the *Indiana Gazette* about the necessity of using blood trails up to 150 yards to track injured deer --often wounded rather than killed by a bow-shot. Radell also emphasized that the Township's plan seemed aimed to push hundreds of people out of the woods to allow just 15 others to hunt. Also in Public Comment, Sara King noted that, according to Stewardship planning guidelines and DCNR advice, a mission statement draft should be released for public review prior to official committee action.

Dr. Tom Simmons, IUP biology professor, made an hour-long presentation about black-legged ticks. Though frequently mislabeled as "deer ticks," more than 150 different species (mammals, birds, reptiles) serve as hosts for black-legged ticks. Deer do not get infected with Lyme and do not infect ticks, though they do serve as hosts. The population of ticks infected with the Lyme pathogen has skyrocketed in the Eastern United States in the last 20 years, as has the incidence of Lyme disease in humans. Simmons did note that there appeared to be a significant decline in the tick population across Pennsylvania this year, though reasons for this drop are unknown. The "Lyme Disease Control Toolbox" introduced by this speaker pointed to removal of dense clusters of Japanese barberry and, most of all, personal protection measures that nature-lovers should take: wear repellent, check for ticks daily, shower soon after being outdoors, call your doctor if you get a fever or rash.

Dr. Joan Maloof, founder of the Old Growth Forest Network, will meet virtually with the Township's Stewardship Committee at their Oct. 20th meeting.

Plans were discussed for future committee meetings with foresters Mike Wolf and Calvin Norman, as well as Dr. Mike Tyree, IUP professor of biology (Forest Ecosystem Health).

Chair Barbara Hauge handed out seven mission statements, mostly from land conservancies (three provided previously by Committee member David Dahlheimer). Both Sierra Davis and David Dahlheimer offered revisions of

***“. . . over 50% indicated that they use the woods (White's) for walking . . .”***

the committee mission drafted by White Township Manager Chris Anderson and Public Relations Officer Chauncey Ross: Davis' revision emphasized the importance of public input, of the value of White's Woods to the Indiana region, and the importance of limiting removal of trees. Dahlheimer's suggested revisions pointed to the value of White's Woods' multiple interlocking ecological systems, as well as the importance of public input and commitment to no timbering. All drafts can be found on the Committee's webpage.

Hauge reported that 65 people visited the Committee's booth at the Northern Appalachian Folk Festival and that 84 stickers were placed on the White's Woods map display. In this first committee "public engagement" event, over 50% indicated that they use the woods for walking, 20% are there for serenity, and 14% said that they visited with friends.

Davis asked that the Committee consider the Township's bow-hunt plan and inquired about existing data on which the plan is to be predicated. Recreation Director Ryan Shaffer said that the data had not yet been assembled. Davis noted that it does not appear that the public has had the chance to review a final bow-hunting plan.

## ***Deer Hunting Update***

Approximately 45 citizens attended the Sept. 28th White Township Board of Supervisors meeting to express concerns over the start of deer hunting in White's Woods Oct. 1. A statement after the meeting indicated the hunting signs will be removed, and hunting will not begin Oct. 1.

Citizens were alerted to the hunting date when the recreation director posted hunting signs at White's Woods on Wednesday, Sept. 21. The signs read that deer hunting will take place Oct. 1 through Nov. 12 and again from Dec. 26, 2023 (*sic*) through Jan. 16, 2023. No hunting times were listed on the sign. The signs also did not list that Sunday hunting is prohibited except for Nov. 13.

The signs were in conflict with the statements of WT Supervisor Sandi Gillette at the Sept. 15th Stewardship Committee meeting where she stated: "The plan is not cut in stone just yet . . . Perhaps we're just going to go with days . . . We talked briefly after the meeting (Sept. 14th Board of Supervisors meeting), and no decision has been made. But, perhaps, might take the Dec. 26 to Jan. 28 (*sic*). That's a slower time, I think, in the woods. We haven't decided yet."

### ***A little history:***

On Jan. 8, 2020, White Township adopted a "No Hunting on Township Properties" ordinance (No. 1086), based, in large part, out of a concern for public safety.

Seventeen months later, the township began to consider a deer management program for White Township properties that was limited to hunting (fencing provides the best solution for deer browse of the understory, according to forestry experts).

The township had a public meeting on the draft plan last Oct. 21 where attendees could speak individually with deer management experts. No open discussion was held. In addition, the township solicited feedback on the draft program via letter or email. The responses were two-to-one against hunting in White's Woods.

At the Dec. 1 supervisors' meeting, the recreation director stated that he provided the second draft of the Deer Management program, and that it includes comments received from the public, professionals and experts and the addition of a Hunter's Code of Conduct. Those comments from the public are not evident in the final plan adopted by the Board of Supervisors on Dec. 15.

Thanks goes to FWW members -- and others -- who attended the Sept. 28th WT supervisors meeting to voice safety concerns and ramifications of a bow hunt in White's Woods. You made a difference!

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