

Weiser Words

Meeting the new District Forester

Tim Ladner, DF

My name is Tim Ladner. I'm the new District Forester in the Weiser State Forest. Prior to my appointment to Weiser Forest District, my career path was as Assistant District Forester for Delaware State Forest, Monroe and Pike Counties. My family and I will be relocating within the forest district in the near future. Prior to Delaware Forest District I worked in Buchanan Forest District, Fulton and Bedford Counties. There I was the Service Forester, working with non-industrial private forest landowners. It was under the watchful eye of District Forester Merl Waltz and Forest Fire Specialist Supervisor Ray Miller that I was "baptized with fire" and became a Fire Warden. Other professional forestry experience I've had includes procurement forester for Pine Creek Lumber, logger and consulting forester. I'm married and have two daughters. I enjoy hunting, angling, craft beers, woodworking and reading.

Graduating in 1993 with a degree in Forest Science from the Pennsylvania State University makes me standard issue for the Bureau of Forestry. Prior to my higher education, I spent four years in the

United States Navy serving in the "Silent Service" aboard the fast attack submarine, USS Lapon. Odd jobs in my "life-resume" include: short order cook, pallet shop employee and cashier at a mini-mart. These jobs filled in the cracks between breaks and summer vacations while attending college at Clarion University after graduating from Meadville Area High School in 1981.

Meadville is located in Crawford County, in northwestern Pennsylvania, approximately 40 miles south of Erie. Meadville is named for David Mead, early pioneer and founder of the town in the 18th century. Home to Allegheny College, Channellock tools and DAD's dog food, Meadville is located along the banks of French Creek which is a tributary to the Allegheny River. The surrounding countryside is a neat mix of hardwood forests evenly dispersed with old farm fields.

The Weiser Forest District is unique in that it isn't primarily a (you, fill in the blank) _____ forest; it can't be "pigeonholed". If you don't know it, we have approximately 28,000 acres of man-

ageable state forest on which we are actively treating stands of timber and managing recreational activities such as camping; hunting; biking; hang-gliding; hiking; boating; horseback riding; snowmobiling and more. We also have unique plants and high quality water supplies. Our Ranger personnel numbers have recently doubled so the likelihood of you meeting a Ranger is good. Rangers often assist state forest users by simply giving out maps and directions or helping change a tire. They could also be called on to lead a search for lost person or cite illegal ATVs. The seven counties that make up the Weiser Forest District include: Montour, Northumberland, Columbia, Dauphin, Lebanon, Carbon and Schuylkill. In those counties we're advising private forest land owners on the management of their forest and assisting communities with their urban/street tree needs. Our Fire Foresters and Forest Fire Specialist Supervisor are training local crews and fire companies, assisting with their needs and of course, each spring and fall, working to suppress, investigate and prevent wildfires. With maintenance facil-

ities in many different locations, trying to service eleven tracts of land and their related infrastructure and various state forest projects, we'd be nothing without our extremely competent and professional maintenance staff.

I've completed two months working in Weiser Forest District and I'm impressed. I'm impressed with the land, facilities, differences and, most of all, with our staff. I'm spending my time trying to get to know my way around, learn where things are, why they are – this or that way and I'm working on getting myself "up to speed" with our projects. I've nearly got everybody's name down.

I've been asked, "What's your vision for the Weiser Forest?" Many things come to mind: I want to continue our excellent cooperative forest management with private land owners, communities and stakeholders. I want to continue our excellent fire suppression, investigation and prevention work and our partnerships with fire companies, wardens and crews. I want to continue our excellent and diversified forest management work. I want to better understand and plan

PA Wildland Fire Crew News

(Formerly Specialized Crew)

The year 2013 will go down as having recorded over 4.2 million acres of wildlands burned. This is about half of what was lost to wildfire in 2012. Sadly, the loss of firefighter and civilian lives and homes was high. Keep those who have suffered from these great losses in your thoughts and prayers.

District 18 was able to provide 16 different personnel who served on crews on fires burning in Alaska, Idaho, and Montana. 2013 was the first year that the Bureau of Forestry had handcrews on the ground in Alaska. I am proud of the efforts put forth by all crewmembers that were able to go on an out-of-state detail this past year. I would also like to thank your employers for allowing you to participate when the need for our help arose.

Details on the 2014 program requirements and training camp course content will be forthcoming in mid-February. I will

be sending a letter out to all 2013 participants with the latest information.

There is one major change in participation requirements for NEW crewmembers that needs mentioning now. All NEW PA Wildland Fire Crew Members will need to complete the S-130 course prior to attending the Basic Crew Training camp. Options that may be available to new members are: take the S-130 if offered; take the S-130 online and complete the field day; or complete the PA-130 and then take an 8-hour supplement that will provide what is not covered in the PA-130. We are in the midst of firming up our District training plan for the next six months and will get the word out as to what options will be available in the District. Remember, this requirement is for NEW members only and it will increase basic field time at the crew camp by making the S-130 a requirement prior to attending the camp.

The annual crew training camp will be

Bob Kurilla, ADF

held at Camp K in District 7 near Laureleton, Union County. Some classes will begin on Thursday, May 29 and the camp will break at noon on Sunday, June 2.

Any new crewmembers who would like to participate on the PA Wildland Fire Crew should contact the District office at 570-875-6450. In addition to being readily available to assist with wildfire suppression in the Weiser Forest District, the S-130, S-190, IS-100, and IS-700 must be completed prior to attending the camp. A passing score on the pack test is also required. So, start your PT training now and you should be in good shape when we conduct the fitness tests.

Tentative Fitness Test Dates

Sunday March 23 @ Noon - Locust Lake State Park

Saturday March 29 @ 9 AM - Colebrook

Saturday April 12 @ 9 AM - Roaring Creek Route 54 Parking Lot

Saturday April 19 @ 9 AM - Lehigh Gorge State Park Jim Thorpe

Meeting the new District Forester

for continued unique recreational experience for all Pennsylvanians on our river islands. I want to improve or develop access to our state forest land where it's limited or non-existent. I want to conclude several mining-related projects and restore the landscape as close to its original topography and flora as possible. I want to work to reduce invasive plant species on our state forest and encour-

age private landowners to follow our lead. I want to add to our state forest where possible. I want to continue our outstanding maintenance efforts offering the public a unique outdoor experience on the Weiser State Forest. I want every one of our staff, wardens, partners, Conservation Volunteers and state forest visitors to go home safe after working, playing, volunteering or visiting.

Continued....

If you're traveling by and haven't seen our brand new (we moved mid-September) Resource Management Center, stop in. We're about a mile north of Aristes on SR 42 at the top of the mountain.

Recreation Happenings

I can't believe another year has gone by already. It seems like I just finished writing my article for last year. This year was a year of changes for the District. Our fearless commander, Mark Deibler, retired as well as our commander of state forest maintenance, timber management and recreation, Mike Mazur. Then, the District Office moved from its longtime home in Cressona to a state of the art building complex in Aristes; this office has all kinds of bells and whistles. Among all this change, the District maintenance staff has accomplished a lot. The largest project they had this year was the construction of three replacement bridges across the South Branch of Roaring Creek that were damaged during the storms of 2011. The District staff spent a lot of time and energy to get these bridges reconstructed. We also worked with the Bureau's engineer and got all the materials together on-site, except for the treated

lumber. The first bridge took the staff the longest to construct but by the third bridge they could have built it in their sleep. It took two guys eight days to go from just log stringers to a completed bridge with handrails. I have to give a big thank you to all of the staff that helped out on these projects.



Nick Zulli, Forester



One other recreational milestone in the District, is an approximately one mile reroute of Wolf Pond Trail that has been approved and marked at our Haldeman Tract. This reroute will make Wolf Pond Trail usable again for all non-motorized recreational users. The trail needs to be rerouted due to erosion issues at one location on the trail. We are working with several recreational groups to construct this reroute in the coming year.

Another busy Year

Once again, another year is gone and a new one will start. The maintenance crew had another super busy year. We only had a few projects this year, including putting stone on Second Mountain tract access road; and replacing 32 pipe crossings on White Oak Road along with spreading stone to repair snowmobile trails on the Haldeman tract. In addition, we completed the building of three walking bridges at the Roaring Creek tract; they turned out really nice. The crew did an awesome job!

Our fire season was slow this year but the maintenance crew did get to help out with a few controlled burns. They helped with the District-organized burn on the Second Mountain tract and with some burns conducted by the Game

Commission. A few of the maintenance guys went on out-of-state fire detail. That was about it for this fire season; the equipment is ready for next year.

Then we had the big move to the big new office. A few of the maintenance personnel actually started packing and loading office and shop supplies in April. In August, we got the go ahead to move. This project involved the whole crew along with additional help from Penn Forest, Bear Gap, Locust Valley and the Haldeman. To our surprise, the move went very smoothly! Since we have moved into the new office, it has become a full-time job keeping up with all the problems that have come along with the new and bigger office. Make some time and stop in and see the new office. It is a beautiful building!

Frank Mertz, FMS

In addition to all the projects and the move, we still managed to keep up with our regular seasonal maintenance which included grading the roads on every tract of land in the District. This is the first time in quite a few years that we accomplished this. We also cut the brush back off the roads, did some leaf blowing and cleaned culvert pipe.

I would like to thank the maintenance team for another productive year and everyone that was involved with the move to the new office. Hope to see everyone on the fire line in spring. Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to all!

Fire Scene Integrity

Scene integrity on any incident is often an overlooked function; this is especially true in Wildland fire. With each dispatch brings a fury of tasks to be accomplished; size up reports, resource ordering and assignments all need to be communicated to the proper people. This often leaves no one looking after the suppression tactics being employed and whether they are protecting the origin.

Take the time during training or down time to talk to the people who matter the most about scene integrity; the fire fight-

ers. Often an ounce of education on what an investigator is looking for when the wet stuff has long extinguished the red stuff; is key. Talk to the fire fighters about wetting the fuel in front of the fire to allow it to burn itself out, not walking or applying water to the black, and flagging off the coldest or general origin areas can make a big difference in determining the cause and holding the responsible party liable. We owe this training to fire fighters and the citizens of the commonwealth.

Jake Glick, Fire Forester

I hope you all have a safe and merry holiday season.



Words from Chief.....

Talk about a busy year! Talk about a lot of Change! That it has been. There is, however, one thing that has remained the same and that is the dedication of our District Forest Fire Wardens. I wish to thank all of you for your service and continued support. Without your great help in fire prevention, suppression, training firefighters, and being out in your communities letting people know about all of the good things that happen in the Bureau of Forestry every year, a lot less would get accomplished.

Friday the 13th of September was our last day working out of the District Office in Cressona. A sad day for many of us who worked there over the years but it was also a day of new beginnings as we completed the move into our new complex outside of Aristes. No longer will you hear the radio transmissions between CRESSONA and various Victor units in fire season; you will now hear our call sign as ARISTES. If you have not had the opportunity to see the new office complex, please stop by. It is always good to see you all and share a story or two.

We completed a 43-acre prescribed fire

on the Second Mountain tract this past spring. We appreciate the extra help that a number of Wardens and crewmembers provided. The prescribed fire also provided a great training opportunity as we accomplished our resource management objectives.

We also ran a combined PA-130 field day training exercise on the Roaring Creek tract in March. This was the first time this training format had been done in a number of years. A lot of planning went into this event and we hope to do it again as time permits. Inviting Wardens and their crews to assist and train with the students was a great experience for all. Our objectives to provide a safe and quality training experience were achieved with your help and we have had a few other districts inquire about replicating this format for their trainings.

Chad Northcraft has moved on to a position with the Division of Forest Fire Protection. He will be managing the Hazleton Airtanker Base and the Eastern Area Helicopter that is stationed at Penn Forest. Instead of requesting water drops Chad will now be sending them! Chad

Bob Kurilla, ADF

did a lot of good work in the District and strengthened our working relationship with our volunteer organization. I am sure we will see Chad around as he will be conducting a lot of training that the Division will be sponsoring. It was a real pleasure working with Chad.

We have received approval to fill the vacant Fire Forester position in Schuylkill County. We hope to be able to interview qualified candidates within the next month.

Wardens weekend will be held at Bucknell University in Lewisburg on June 20-22. There is a round-robin type training schedule; we will get more information out to you when we get it.

I would like to see your Warden Crew lists turned into the District Office by March 10. This will help things run smoothly on the fiscal end if we get your lists in by then.

Thanks again for all that you do and be proud of your service. Have a safe and enjoyable Holiday season.

We've Moved On Up

Well we've moved on up
To Columbia County's south side
To a deluxe office complex on
the mountain

Moved on up
To the south side
Trying to adjust to the extra miles, but
who's countin'

Lots of space, two kitchens and more
Lighting, heating and toilets that
work at will
Takes a whole lotta tryin'
Just to get up the Route 42 hill

Deibler and Mazur retired before
the move
Leaving for us logistics, headaches
and all that
Northcraft left to play in smokier skies
Tim Ladner now wears the
District Forester hat

It's done we've moved on up
Come and see us at 16 Weiser Lane
Meeting and office space galore
Moved on up to the south side
Bring the family and crew to explore
Eventually you'll adjust to the ride

Lisa LaSalle, AA1



Fighting The Fire From Below

As most know District 18 is privileged to have coal as a natural resource. Although coal is beneficial in many ways, in some areas the remains of the extraction process have created problems that remain to this day. One of which is the history of mine fires in our District. The Glen Burn Mine Fire has started wildfires for as long as locals in Northumberland County can remember. A part of the Glen Burn Fire called the Hickory Corner Fire which started in 1975 has been giving VFDs and DCNR problems during dry conditions over the past few years. The Spring of 2013 was no exception when the mine fire started a wildfire April 9th around 2400 hours. While doing the investigation in daylight it became apparent that we should not be fighting fire in this area due to numerous hazards, especially between dusk and dawn.



Photo By Jake Lee, DEP

Wes Harner, Fire Forester

The Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) was notified and an idea of isolating the hazards with a dozer line was introduced. With a great amount of leg work from DEP, cooperation from the landowners and approval from the United States Department of Interior the plan came together. In July DEP constructed a 3/4 mile dozer line to isolate the main hazards with help from DCNR employees.



DCNR Employee Joe Fishburn working with DEP Operator

Some may say, it's just a dozer line, but I see a proactive action that will keep fire-fighters safe and allow us to contain the next fire much faster. The cooperation between multiple agencies and landowners was better than I could have ever

anticipated. The next step is to get local Wardens and Fire Chiefs together and discuss the plan for future fires in this area.

Thank You for all the hard work you do on the line, in the classroom and your great prevention work. Keep safe and I'll see you on the next one.



A Day with the Rangers

It was a cold December day; the Rangers were patrolling the State Forest. The tall, good-looking, blue-eyed one was driving. They entered the frozen Port Clinton tract. Snow crunched beneath the tires of the trusty Ford Expedition. The way was filled with peril but they pressed onward and upward over the mountain with grim determination. The fire tower was their goal. They wouldn't be denied.

The tower is also a quest for numerous others, similar to pilgrimages to Mecca. Upon viewing, a primal urge to climb often arises. Described as a deep thirst this desire isn't easily quenched. DCNR has attempted to alleviate this desire. A fence was placed around the tower; it was easily circumvented by "those that climb". DCNR countered with barbwire atop the fence; this was breached by tools of "those that cut". Nothing has stopped the climbing. The Rangers would give their best effort to help.

The Expedition reached the mountain top. Standing before them was the majestic tower, a source of passion and desire for many years. Their keen eyesight spotted a pair of climbers, male and female. The pair descended the tower and,

while standing before the Rangers, claimed their innocence. Despite living nearby they'd never viewed the tower before. After staring directly at it...they became victims of the thirst. They had to climb...regardless of the defenses. The man stated he'd just asked his woman to marry him up on that tower. The woman produced the customary ring. The Rangers were used to the call of the tower... had seen it many times before. Two pieces of Commonwealth stationary were issued to the climbers. The thirst was quenched!

Several days later the Rangers were at the Haldeman tract. The tall, good-looking one was again in his customary position of piloting the trusty Expedition. Soon a pack of "those that hunt" were before them. The customary fluorescent orange plumage was in full view. The Rangers stopped. During a pleasant verbal exchange the group complained about seeing very few deer. The Rangers, with field honed senses, observed one who seemed nervous. Always friendly, the Rangers let the group walk off UNTIL...the dark-eyed Ranger observed a small drop of blood on the li-

Brian Price, Ranger

cense plate of a sedan. The tall Ranger called out as the group walking away "Who owns this vehicle?" The pack kept walking minus one...the nervous one.

Nervous walked to the Rangers with a gait slow and measured. The car trunk contained a deer. Nervous said his brother had shot it but had to quickly leave for work. The deer had no tag. Nervous had his brother's tag in his pocket. In the glory of the kill, after field dressing and placing it in his trunk, he'd forgotten to put his brother's tag on the deer. He'd forgotten to tell the Rangers about the deer. He remembered his brother's name, but had forgotten his phone number or place of employment. The Rangers had seen this temporary amnesia before in "those that ride ATVs on State Forest land," but this cross infection with the related "those that poach deer" is truly alarming. The Rangers decided to contact the Center for Disease Control and the Game Commission. The sun was setting as the Rangers drove away. The Expedition disappeared into the sunset. A day of public contact and law enforcement complete.

New Guy in Town

My name is Chad Voorhees and I will be joining the Weiser State Forest management team for a six month period, until about the end of June, to fill the vacant Assistant District Manager, resource manager position. In the past I have worked for the Penn State University Institutes for Energy and the Environment and the School of Forest Resources conducting research on a variety of forest health issues; the Pennsylvania Game Commission; DCNR Bureau of State Parks; DCNR Bureau of Forestry in Tioga State Forest, Tuscarora State Forest and Forest Pest

Chad Voorhees, Acting ADF

Management; and as a private consultant working on deer and forest interactions. My most recent position with the Bureau of Forestry has been with the Planning Section out of the central office in Harrisburg. There my duties included research agreements, resource management plans, interagency agreements, special resource projects and FSC forest certification.

My hope in coming to the Weiser Forest District for this period is to not only make personal improvements but also to gar-

ner a greater appreciation for the management, protection and outreach our foresters do. Coming from the Planning Section I view this experience as a great opportunity to see how the practices we put in place affect management on the ground and to see how we may better improve our state-wide State Forest Resource Management Plan and the subsequent State Forest District Plans. I also very much look forward to working with all of our stakeholder groups and local communities.

What is a Fire Adapted Community?

“A Fire Adapted Community takes responsibility for its wildfire risk. Actions address resident safety, homes, neighborhoods, businesses and infrastructure, forests, parks, open spaces, and other community assets. The more actions a community takes, the more fire adapted it becomes.” This definition was taken from the Fire Adapted Community (FAC) informational booklet.

Does this mean the NFPA’s Firewise Community Program is out or that the IAFC’s Ready, Set, Go is a no go? I don’t think so. I look at the FAC project as an umbrella for all other programs fall under. A FAC is not just a Firewise Community; it gathers the information needed from all the different programs available and houses those under the FAC title.

Passed in 2003, the Healthy Forest Restoration Act (HFRA) and development of the National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy Plan provide direction and requirements for developing a Fire Adapted Community.

One of the most important tools in your tool box is the Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP). The concept of CWPPs is not that new. Previously, we wrote Emergency Action Plans (EAPs) for our Firewise Communities and now we will write CWPPs.

Under the HFRA a CWPP has three requirements:

1. Collaboration by local, state and federal agencies and other interested parties
2. Prioritized Fuel Reduction
3. Treatment of Structural Ignitability

The HFRA requires that three entities mutually agree to the final content of the CWPP:

1. The applicable local government
2. The local fire department
3. The state entity responsible for forest management

When you read the National Cohesive Wildfire Strategy Plan you will notice there are three main categories that are addressed:

Restore and maintain landscapes: Landscapes across all jurisdictions are resilient to fire-related disturbances in accordance with management objectives.

Fire adapted communities: Human populations and infrastructure can withstand a wildfire without loss of life and property.

Wildfire response: All jurisdictions participate in making and implementing safe, effective, efficient risk-based wildfire management decisions.

Wes Keller, FFSS

A well-crafted Community Wildfire Protection Plan will address the three main categories of the National Cohesive Strategy Plan, as well as fulfill the HFRA requirements.

There are many pieces to the Fire Adapted Community puzzle, including a CWPP, but don’t let it throw you. Start with your foundation pieces and build on those; in no time at all you’ll have one FAC in place and then you can start on another.



Adding to the ranks

As the year comes to end, we would like to thank all wardens for their help this year. The following individuals joined the Forest Fire Warden ranks in 2013: **Benjamin Readinger**, Pine Grove, appointed as a Warden in January; **Mark Paul**, Orwigsburg, appointed as a Special Assistant in January; **Kevin Schaeffer**, Pine Grove, appointed as a Special Assistant in February; **Dave Razzis**, Wilberton, appointed as a Special Assistant in March; **Daniel Reis**, Jim Thorpe, appointed as a Special Assistant in November; and **Becky Kandrak**, Middletown, appointed as a Special Assistant in December. Please

welcome them the next time you see them.

Prevention is as an important part of our job as is suppression! Please remember to keep track of all your prevention activities during the year and report them! You don’t need to wait until the end of the year to submit your reports, they can be sent in as soon as each activity is complete. The funding we receive to buy prevention materials is solely based on the amount of prevention work our District does. Every WHiP program counts, so please send them in!

Hope Reser, CT3

Fire season will be here before you know it and we’ll need your up-to-date crew lists and W9’s before it starts. If you have not done so already, please send your 2014 crew paperwork in by March 10th or hand them in at the **Annual Warden’s Meeting being held in Tremont on March 8th!**



Then & Now

Some things haven't changed much over the decades but there have been some good, albeit small, changes; one just has to look for them. While cleaning out the Bloomsburg Office we came across old files from the former Shamokin Station. They detail wildfires caused by debris burning and "deliberate sets" (incendiary). There is also a report of a fire caused by children in 1966; apparently, two brothers started wildfires and were fined as well as billed for extinction costs. It's difficult to keep a positive attitude when these problems have been going on for decades. The good news is some of the arsonists have been caught but it's obvious that there are still plenty out there.

Robert Martynowych, Service Forester

As is the case with the Fire Forester today, the old files made it clear that Inspector Rohrer depended on the help of wardens in fighting fires. Many of the reports detailed work in reducing fire hazards which included taking action against, as well as fining, illegal dumpers.

Unfortunately, illegal dumping continues today. I've heard the argument "you're an elitist and don't understand impoverished folks who can't pay for trash disposal". Personally, I can't see the illegal dumpers walking out onto the mountain pulling trash on a cart. Somehow they can afford the fuel for and abuse to a vehicle to get out there and, judging by the contents of the trash piles, they are neither going hungry nor dying of thirst. Today, the illegal dump sites are often

accompanied by wildfires. On April 10, 2013, Wardens Ed Reed and Russ Feese had crewmembers who responded to a wildfire in Coal Township which was caused by debris that was illegally dumped and then burned. Local police departments are taking fire sets and dumping seriously and are coordinating with Wardens and DCNR to catch these people. Wardens continue to provide the immediate need of responding to and suppressing wildfires, along with facilitating long-term change through their prevention work. This will lead to a public with greater appreciation of our resource-blessed Commonwealth.

Pennsylvania has 2.3 Billion Trees

According to the US Forest Service, Pennsylvania has approximately 2.3 billion trees that are at least five inches in diameter at breast height. Well, that's their best guess anyway! One thing for certain is that forests dominate Pennsylvania's landscape. Nearly 60 percent or 17 million acres of forests cover the Commonwealth. We are so lucky to live among all of these trees and forests. Our trees and forests provide many benefits to us including clean air, water protection, plant and animal habitat, lumber and other wood products and recreation opportunities.

Below are more statistics and comments about our forests:

- Our forestlands are among the most productive hardwood forests in the world. Pennsylvania's hardwood industry generates about \$5 billion annually and employs 92,000 workers. Lumber and wood products are not only important economically but they provide many useful products that make our life better. Just

stop for a moment and list all of the items made of wood or wood fibers that are within two feet of you right now.

- Even though the percentage has decreased slightly since the 1950s, the amount of forestland remained relatively stable over the past two decades. However, the loss of forests is occurring within localized areas. We are losing about 150 acres of forestland per day through development and forest fragmentation.
- On a more positive note, the forest is growing twice as much wood than is being harvested.
- Our forests are aging with 40 percent of the forestlands 80 years old or older.
- The top three timber species growing in Pennsylvania are red maple, black cherry and northern red oak.
- Seventy percent of the forest acreage is owned by an estimated 738,000 private forestland owners. Two-thirds of the forests are held by individuals that are 55

Frank Snyder, Forester

years old or older. Unfortunately, many landowners consider forest management a low priority.

- Like all living things, forests are more vulnerable to stresses by insects and diseases as they mature. Insects and diseases continue to be a source of concern to the sustainability of our forests and future timber supply. Some of the pests are gypsy moth, emerald ash borer, beech bark disease, and hemlock woolly adelgid.
- Nonnative and invasive plants, by their competitive nature, are creating difficulties in regenerating new forests. These plants include Japanese stilt grass, Japanese barberry, garlic mustard, tree of heaven and multiflora rose.

If you would like to learn more about our forests, go to our website <http://www.dcnr.state.pa.us/forestry/> or **if you need help caring for your trees and forest please feel free to contact me** at frsnyder@pa.gov.

Where did the time go?

Well, I say it every year at this time, where did the days go? The pages of the calendar flew off the wall this year. I guess the old saying is right, "The older you get the faster time passes." This is a good lead into this article.

Ten years ago I spoke with Dan Kunkle from the Lehigh Gap Nature Center which, by the way, is a wonderful place to visit. I spoke with Dan about my concerns about fire on the Blue Mountain since there was a great push of vegetation along the ridge. My concerns were not only about fire, but more so about the smoke. I wondered if heavy metals would be carried aloft from the burning vegetation. In 1912, the New Jersey Zinc Company located a zinc smelting operation (what is now the West Plant) here, in order to take advantage of the anthracite coal being mined just north of Palmerton and the zinc mines in Franklin, New Jersey. Palmerton is currently the location of the Palmerton Zinc Superfund site. It was added to the National Priority List in 1983. The site is broken down into four Operable Units: the defoliated slope of Blue Mountain, the cinder banks, the soil in town, and the ground and surface water.

Over the past ten years the question remained on my, as well as Dan's, mind; what about the smoke? It so happened that a meeting was held this past year with all stakeholders involved in the remediation project, the rehab of the super fund site. We were there to look at and talk about wildfire on the mountain, which for years had been void of vegetation. Thanks to the efforts of many, many people on the ground planting trees and pilots in the air spreading seed the mountain is now lush with new plants or, in other words, an increase in fuel loading.

During the meeting I asked the same question again, what about the smoke? This time I asked the right person, Charlie Root, EPA Region 3 Project Manager for this super fund site; he was listening.

That question resulted in a project that would bring John Hom, USDA Forest Service Northern Research Station, to us to help find the answer. Along with Mr. Hom, came help from the Joint Fire Science Program; Climate, Fire and Carbon Cycle Program; and folks from Cornell and Michigan State University.

As you can see from the pictures these people were serious. They spent days installing all types of instruments all over the mountain. There were still cameras, video cameras, wind speed and direction instruments, and smoke particle samplings instruments; you name it, there was an instrument to sample it.



Then came the day of the prescribed burn, Shannon Henry of Silvixs LLC was the Burn Boss for the day. Backing him up were the great volunteer firefighters



from East Penn, Bowmanstown, and Palmerton Fire Departments; and of course the Bureau of Forestry.

The burn went off without a problem, it all worked as planned. The team of scientists was very happy with the burn; it seemed all their instruments survived and were full of data. The VFDs were happy because they got to help with the burn and we were happy that the fire stayed where it was supposed to.

Wes Keller, FFSS

So what does this all mean? From what I have been able to garner from John Hom's report, not all the data has been recovered and processed. Mr. Hom tells me that it will take months, if not a year or more, to come out with the final report.

What you can gather from the data is that smoke is a carrier of heavy metals; just how much depends on the plant.



Woody plants will produce more smoke particles and therefore carry more metals. It seems that this is a big problem with Birch.

The kind of metals being found in the sample data are: (Zn) Zinc, (Pb) Lead, (Cd) Cadmium, and (Al) Aluminum.

Listed below are "Target Organs" for the aforementioned chemicals as noted in the NIOSH Pocket Guide to Chemical Hazards:

Lead - eyes, gastrointestinal tract, central nervous system, kidneys, blood, gingival tissue; **Cadmium** - respiratory system, kidneys, prostate, blood, may cause prostatic or lung cancer; **Zinc and Aluminum** - eyes, skin, respiratory system.

This study is a start and as the scientists work on the data collected we will learn more. I have asked that the study continue and that we test a site with more woody plants.

I guess the knowledge that we have gained from this study suggests a new question, Should we be suppressing wildfire on this super fund site?

Timber Management on the Haldeman

I hope this newsletter finds you healthy and full of cheer this Holiday Season. I would like to discuss recent timber sale activities on the Haldeman Tract, and certain management tactics we've been implementing on the Weiser State Forest. Primarily, I'm going to discuss the Bear Puddles Timber Sale off of Lukes Trail.

After collecting stand data, writing a sale proposal, and marking/tallying trees, bid packages were sent out. Cedar Grove Lumber of Milroy, PA was awarded the contract for the Bear Puddles Timber Sale. This particular timber sale was comprised of a 58 acre shelterwood treatment and 79 acres of overstory removal. In case you're not a forester, a shelterwood is described as a regeneration cut designed to stimulate reproduction by removing overstory trees in a series of cuts over several years. An overstory removal or clearcut is the final step in that process. In the overstory removal areas, poor timber value and species composition were a few of the reasons we decided to cut this area. Our idea was to try and improve quality and quantity of desirable tree species such as oak, hickory, white pine, and pitch pine. Another important reason for selecting this treatment was to create some early successional habitat, and start the process of diversifying age classes on the Haldeman Tract. There are very few newer cuts on the Haldeman that would have that new growth characteristic, so this sale got us headed in that direction.



(Log Landing for Blocks # 1 and 5)

In the Shelterwood Area of the Bear Puddles Sale some of the nicest timber on the whole Tract exists. Larger sized, better quality northern red oak, black oak, white oak, and chestnut oak populate this stand of timber. Most of these higher quality trees remain, while the mid-story, shade tolerant, undesirable trees (red maple, black, birch, and black gum) were removed. The residual trees, or trees left behind, offer seed source and some value of sheltering to the seedlings in the understory. The decision to harvest this area with this particular treatment was to help established oak and hickory seedlings develop further and become competitive seedlings; ready to be released with an overstory removal someday.



(Shelterwood Treatment- Block #4)

In December of 2011 the Bear Puddles Sale was retired and the loggers moved out after a final forester inspection of the sale. Additional, post-cutting, activities attempting to ensure timber management success in the Bear Puddles Timber Sale include several herbicide treatments to control competing vegetation in the shelterwood area, and two separate tree plantings in the clearcut areas. In the overstory removal cut, some desirable regeneration existed, but supplementing the site with artificial regeneration was needed. Thus, an in-house DCNR planting happened in Spring 2012 and a contract planting occurred in the Spring of 2013. Over 30,000 white and pitch pine were planted over the course of those two plantings. Post planting inspections

Andy Brought, Forester

have revealed high seedling survival, plus additional sprouting of oak and other desirables.



(Contract Tree Planters – Spring, 2013)

Finally, I would like to thank all the folks involved with the forest management projects within the Bear Puddles Sale. Even though it took a while to get all these practices implemented, I will periodically evaluate the sale area to ensure that the new forest develops sustainably for future generations to enjoy.

Commonwealth of PA



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Weiser Salutes..... Sydney Kurtz

Syd has strong roots in the Weiser Forest District; growing up in Hershey and graduating from Penn State University with a BS in Forestry. He is an Army veteran who served in Germany; his tour ended two days before the Berlin Wall was erected. In 1962 after completing his military service Syd was hired by the Department of Forests and Waters and appointed a Forest Fire Warden. He started his career as a Service Forester in Green, Washington and Fayette counties. In 1966, Syd was promoted to the position of Assistant District Forester in Weiser Forest District and remained there until his retirement, in 1991, after 22 years of service to the Commonwealth.

If you've ever had the pleasure of meeting Syd, you will never forget him or his famous slogan "20-20-50"! Syd's experi-

ence as a supervisor in a wildfire suppression organization and years of taking fire weather for the District led him to be a strong advocate for wildfire prevention. Syd developed the wildfire prevention and suppression slogan 20-20-50, which he still teaches today. If the day's **wind is 20 MPH** or higher, **relative humidity 20 percent** or lower, and **temperature 50 degrees** or higher, it is a high fire danger day and firefighters should be prepared for wildfires.

Syd received his plaque for 50 years of service as a Warden from retired District Forester Mark Deibler earlier this year. Please congratulate Syd on his achievements and dedicated service to wildfire prevention. Remember, even if it rained or snowed overnight, when the weather presents at **20-20-50** it will **BURN!**

