



Newsletter

Fall/Winter 2017-18

Forests and People (.org), musings by Guy Dunkle

We grow tired of directing people to our long-winded web address:

foundationforsustainableforests.org,

or of trying to give someone our email address over the phone, “send it to

gdunkle@foundationforsustainableforests.org

please”. In the modern world of emojis and tweets, our web address, while logical, is a tongue twister.

So, we recently registered a second web domain:

forestsandpeople.org.

I realize that this isn't exactly front page news, but pause for a second and think about how that relates to our identity. *Forests and People*. Those two things, in that specific order, very precisely define us. Yes, we are devoted to the conservation of forests, but there are lots of groups who say the same. Yes, we serve the people who live, work, learn and play in our region, but many nonprofits do that too. What makes us special, I believe, is that **we seek a sustainable intersection between vibrant forest communities and vibrant human communities**.

My wife and I were both raised in Crawford County, Pennsylvania, and after school we made a conscious decision to live close to home. Why? Yes, it's nice to have nearby grandparents for cheap babysitters on a date night, but what really draws us is the rural nature of the region. We love being able to walk out our backdoor to go hunting. We love the slower paced lifestyle, the ability to raise and grow some of our own food, finding wildflowers or flipping over creek rocks with our kids.

But, I don't for one moment take this way of living for granted. I was able to find a good job here that

involved working in the forest, a livelihood that was tied to the vibrancy of the local land. But what happens if forests decline? We would lose the businesses and jobs that rely on healthy forests. We would still be living in Crawford County, but the land would no longer be our economic foundation. And when we stop respecting the land as a source of sustenance and livelihood, we often mistreat it. If a local forest is the source of the maple syrup we feed our families, a community will probably try to protect that sugarbush from becoming a housing development. If a community includes loggers and truck drivers who make their living from the forest, those people are more likely to take action against invasive plants that threaten native tree species.

Anytime you look at a forest you will see evidence of humans: understory plants that belong on another continent, wildflowers missing because they relied on fire (now suppressed) for their seed dispersal, entire tree species gone due to disease or selective logging. Forests and people have developed together over thousands of years. As the Foundation for Sustainable Forests continues its mission of forest conservation, it only makes sense that the solution must include people. And so, our new internet domain reflects our formula for success:

Conservation = Forests + People

The success of each depends upon the vibrancy and support of the other.

Guy Dunkle, *Forest Manager & Board Member*

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We thank Terrence Bensel for 13 years of dedicated service

Board Member Terrence Bensel, PhD, of Allegheny College, stepped down from the Board of Directors in July after 13 years of dedicated service. A founding Board Member since the inception of the Firth Family Foundation in 2004 (which became the Foundation for Sustainable Forests in 2009), Terry provided vision, organizational professionalism, enthusiasm and grassroots support to the Foundation for Sustainable Forests. When I asked fellow Board Member Guy Dunkle about the time he shared with Terry on the Board, Guy replied “Terry is very good at knowing when to challenge [the Board] whether as individuals or in a collective conversation. His well thought-out points of view ultimately shaped the Foundation into what it is today.”



Photo: Allegheny College

While his decision to step down from the Board is a sadness for the FSF, his presence, support, and his thoughtful perspective for the good of the organization is certainly not lost. In our time of overlap, I came to value his integrity, sincerity, and focused commitment to our mission. I thank him for his service to the organization and the community we serve. If you run into Terry around Meadville or on Allegheny’s campus, please be sure to thank him too! All the best to you Terry, *Annie Socci*

Welcome to the FSF’s Newest Board Member, Richard Bowden PhD

In July, Richard Bowden, PhD of Allegheny College was elected to the FSF’s Board of Directors, and is now serving as the Chair of the Education & Outreach Committee. Rich has long been interested in forests and forestry. Much of his early involvement in forests came during his Boy Scout days, attending field trips and going camping and hiking. “I never had to undergo any angst about what to study in college, or what my career field would be,” he commented. “I always knew it would be outdoor-oriented,” he added.

Rich attended Northland College, in the Great Lakes Forests of northern Wisconsin, where he majored in biology and environmental studies. He went on to receive his master’s degree in aquatic ecology at Michigan Technological University, spending his time traipsing through the forests of Isle Royale National Park, and then returned to his home state of Connecticut to obtain his Ph.D. in forest ecology from the Yale School of Forestry and Environmental Studies, founded by Gifford Pinchot. Rich claims to have been good friends with Gifford, but many of us are skeptical. After graduate school he completed a post-doctoral position at the Ecosystems Center in Woods Hole, MA, studying links among acid rain, climate change, and forests. From there he came to Allegheny College, where he is a Professor of Environmental Science.

Rich teaches a variety of courses at Allegheny, including a freshman seminar course that examines sustainable forestry, a research methods course that often studies forests, and a forest ecology course for upper-level students. Along with former FSF Board member Terry Bensel, Rich was involved in helping to form the Northwest PA Woodlands Association. In addition to his teaching, he has been involved in long-term studies of acid rain impacts on forests. He also works on links between forest soils and climate change, as part of a collaborative study with sites across the country as well as globally.

When not teaching or working on his research projects, Rich spends a good deal of time in the woods. He says that his love of the forest is important to him as a golfer, since he spends as much time among the trees as he does on the fairway. He told us that “One of my favorite places to be, in autumn, is hanging twenty feet up in a tree, watching the life of the forest, as I hope and pray for venison to walk by. Occasionally the latter does occur, but ALWAYS, the forest is full of life that can be greatly appreciated during those quiet times in a tree.” The FSF is lucky to have Rich aboard— please join us in welcoming him to the team!



Rich (left) with his students at a recent field research campaign; he is a dedicated educator and mentor

Loving the Land— Landowners Tell Their Stories

Contributed by Carrie Bail

Trees figure prominently in my earliest memories of our father, Richard N. Bail, Sr. Outside the kitchen window of our family home was a sturdy ash which I was encouraged to climb as a toddler, and into whose branches I enticed my 86 year-old grandfather, Archie Bail. Sunday afternoons were my special alone time with Dad at area parks. At the town park, a special cluster of tree trunks with a hiding place inside “belonged” to Daddy and me. Encouraged to take up the challenge of scaling the mature maples in our front yard as soon as I could, it was around the same time he began to teach me the difference between leaf shapes, barks and deciduous and evergreen trees.

My love for trees began in the suburbs of the South Shore of Boston but continued in earnest during our summer vacations in the Rangeley Lakes region in the wilds of northwestern Maine. My father shared his love of hiking in the mountains with me, often along sections of the Appalachian Trail, and the “tree” teaching accelerated. My brothers and I suspect the North Maine woods were his favorite place on earth. His ashes are interred there, along with our mother’s, and a blue spruce planted on top.

Getting away in the woods by himself (or sometimes with me or one or two others) was probably his favorite activity. He equipped himself with a hunting knife, waterproof matches, camera, tripod, and topographical map and set off to explore the deep forest. On his solitary journeys, even into his eighties, he left a written description of his intended destination to ease my mother’s mind. Solitary communion with nature was his favorite way of being in touch with the Divine.

Dad told my brothers and me about his early love for the woods in Conneautville on the acreage originally purchased by Archie, reminiscing about hours hiked through that forest, sometimes hunting squirrels, sometimes just walking. Interestingly enough, upon his father’s death, it was the only one of the properties he inherited that he wanted to keep.

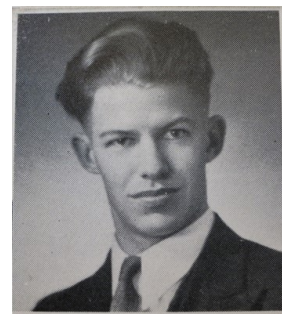
I may have visited the land during the one trip I made to Pennsylvania before my grandmother died, but if so, I was too young (age two) to recall it. Many, many years later after my father’s death, I went there with my own teen-aged son to see where his beloved grandfather had grown up. The property had been logged a few years before our visit, but we could still see the scars on the land and the most mature trees were, of course, gone. The man who had logged it showed us around, and explained why it would be hard to develop the property residentially. Hiking around on that land that day made



The Bail Family alongside FSF and Allegheny College representatives at the dedication of the Bail Family Forest in August. Carrie Bail and her brother Richard N. Bail Jr are pictured in the front row holding the sign

me think about my father as a boy and teenager reveling in its natural beauty. A few years later I visited with my daughters as part of our college exploratory trip to Allegheny College.

Dad bequeathed the land equally to his three children: Richard Jr., Fred, and me. Our own lives have taken us in many directions, to many far-off places of natural beauty, and into families that literally span continents. None of us lived anywhere near western Pennsylvania and in truth, were basically lazy about determining its future. It was not until we heard about the Foundation for Sustainable Forests that we found a solution that fit the values and the vision our father had taught us. I had heard about land trusts that preserved farm land in perpetuity conjunction with community-supported agriculture. But I did not know there were trusts that would hold woodlands in perpetuity and log them sustainably. Not only will the land be cared for by people who love and respect it, but it will also be connected to our father’s alma mater, Allegheny: the place that established him as a Phi Beta Kappa student and a world citizen.



Richard N. Bail Sr, Allegheny College, Class of 1935

Dick, Fred and I are pleased and grateful to gift this property to you now, on August 30, 2017, one day before what would have been our parents’ 77th wedding anniversary.

Caroline (Carrie) Bail is a retired minister and lives in Winooski, VT with her husband. She invites you to e-mail her if you have questions: mLAY@twcny.rr.com

Furthering Our Mission Through Student Engagement

Each of these students is engaged in a project about forests or the people who steward them.

Foundation for Sustainable Forests Story Project

My name is Ellis Giacomelli, and I'm a junior at Allegheny College majoring in Environmental Science and minoring in Environmental Writing. I grew up in Erie, Pennsylvania with a brother who taught me to care about all the world's inhabitants and a father who inspired me to find meaning in nature's calls and silences. I will be interviewing members of the FSF community to curate stories about people and their land.

I am excited to work with the Foundation this year, to share in its vision, and to hear your story. Talk to you soon!

Would you like to tell your story?

Please e-mail amsocci@forestsandpeople.org or call (814) 694-5830



Allegheny students at Moxie Woods.
Photo: Emilce Vallejo

Monitoring Invasive Species for Future Management

The Environmental Research Methods class at Allegheny College is partnering with FSF and with the Erie National Wildlife Refuge (ENWR), to quantify invasive plants (multi-flora rose, grapevine, barberry, and honeysuckle) that can interfere with forest management activities.

The class, taught by Board member and Allegheny professor Rich Bowden, is looking at the Foundation's Bail Family Forest and Moxie Woods. Both the properties, as well as two locations at the ENWR, will be undergoing forest management activities, and knowing the abundance of invasive plants is critical to crafting successful management plans.

A Bird's Eye View of Forestry



When you walk through a forest you may note its lush, green beauty, but do the birds agree? In a nutshell, do birds see a 4-star hotel or a rundown shack?? Allegheny College student, Carl Pohlman (left), piloted a research project this summer in an attempt to answer that question. Carl examined how different forest management approaches affect bird abundance, distribution and diversity.

Carl compared bird abundance and diversity in three forests, the FSF's Blooming Valley site, managed as an uneven-aged forest using small group selections, a high-graded site in which individual trees of the greatest size and economic value were removed, and a third type of even-aged forest.

In his initial results (many more repetitions and sites are needed to confirm), **Carl found that our Blooming Valley site had a higher average forest quality score, more birds and bird species per count, and a greater average number of priority species** as described by Audubon Pennsylvania, such as the wood thrush, scarlet tanager, ovenbird, and eastern wood pewee.



Two of the three study sites, a high-graded stand (left) and the FSF's uneven-aged stand at Blooming Valley (right). Note the understory structure and light penetration through the canopy at right.



Your generosity made this one-day giving campaign on August 8th our most successful yet.

The Foundation received \$15,933 in Erie Gives Day donations, *and* received matching grants in the amounts of \$696.48 from the Erie Community Foundation and \$2,400 from the Corry Community Foundation, a new partner in conservation! Both grants are awarded in proportion to donor gifts, and so your gift of any amount that day was greatly appreciated by the Foundation and further magnified.



Thanks for your support and the great phone conversations our volunteers had with many of you that day!

\$1000+

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foundationforsustainableforests.org

The Foundation for Sustainable Forests is a 501(c) 3 nonprofit land trust and outreach organization dedicated to conserving forested land and protecting sustainable working forests. Through direct ownership and active forest management we promote the protection and stewardship of healthy, resilient forests.

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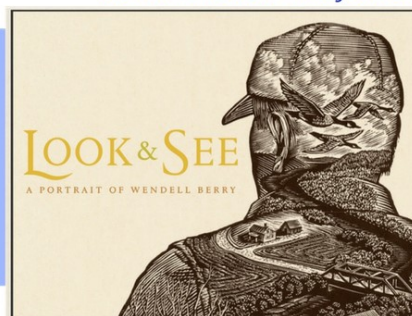
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UPCOMING EVENTS

Our Woods & Waters Film Series

*A Joint Offering of the Foundation for Sustainable Forests,
the French Creek Valley Conservancy, and Allegheny College*



A Portrait of Wendell Berry

Friday, Jan. 12 @ 7pm

*at the Vukovich Center
Allegheny College
Meadville, PA*

and on February 23rd-

*Join us for an evening of selected short films! Details to be announced.
All events are free & open to the public*

Save the Date! Saturday, May 19, 2018

***Loving the Land Through Working Forests
Conference***

Girard Township, Erie County, PA