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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Species</th>
<th>Size</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Price per 1000</th>
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<td>Seedlings</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tulip Poplar</td>
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<td>Seedlings</td>
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<td>Seedlings</td>
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<td>18-24&quot;</td>
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<td>Black Chokeberry</td>
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<td>Seedlings</td>
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American beech (Fagus grandifolia) is a shade-tolerant species found throughout Ohio’s woodlands. Besides its brilliant yellow fall color, beech is known for retaining leaves well into the winter. The smooth, light-colored bark and long, thin, pointed buds make it easy to identify. American beech is closely related to the oaks, and like oak, the seed is valued by wildlife due to the fat and high-protein content. Larger hollow trees provide dens for a variety of wildlife. Trees reproduce readily from seed or root sprouts. Beech leaf disease is a concern in northern Ohio (see OWJ Summer 2019).

Beech is a climax tree in moist, mature forests, found with sugar maple, oaks, hickories, and Canadian hemlock. Photo courtesy of Sue Berger
This is my final *Out in the Woods* article as your Ohio Tree Farm Committee Chair. It has been an exhilarating two years and I have had the opportunity to work with a lot of great people! My understanding of the Tree Farm Program has grown immensely. For example, through personal experience, I’ve been able to learn about the inspection process which is a key part of the program.

The American Tree Farm System and in turn the Ohio Tree Farm System are programs of the American Forest Foundation that include the main elements of fostering Wood, Water, Recreation, and Wildlife. This program of sustainable stewardship for our state’s woodlands is guided by eight standards:

- Commitment to Practice Sustainable Forestry with a Management Plan
- Compliance with Laws
- Reforestation and Afforestation
- Air, Water, and Soil Protection
- Fish, Wildlife, Biodiversity, and Forest Health
- Forest Aesthetics
- Protect Special Sites
- Forest Product Harvests and other activities

If you are actively managing your woodlands or would like to do so, you need to become an Ohio Certified Tree Farmer! Ohio ought to be leading the country in managed hardwood woodlands. I would encourage any landowner with 10 or more acres of woodlands to actively manage them, because through active management, *money does grow on trees*.

We have been busy on our family farm. The fields have been mowed and we are looking at stabilizing the foundation of the house. In August, I began redoes on girdling of some trees, using herbicide where the girdling alone wasn’t working quickly enough. We also treated a lot of honeysuckle this fall, and we have a lot more to do. We are also getting into some timber stand improvement work on 18 acres. The focus is eliminating invasive woody plants to set this stand up for oak regeneration. It’s great to be...

---

**This isn’t your average Smokey Bear!**

ODNR Engineer Gus Smithhisler carved this fantastic pumpkin on the last day of the Ohio State Fair to help commemorate the famous Bear’s 75th anniversary of helping us *Remember...Only You Can Prevent Wildfires!* Gus has carved giant pumpkins professionally since 2002, and places that have featured his work include the Columbus Zoo & Aquarium, Bellagio Hotel & Casino in Las Vegas, Garfield Park Conservatory in Chicago, and the Cincinnati and Indianapolis zoos. Another of Gus’ Smokey creations graced the Fall 2014 cover of the OWJ. Smokey’s 75th birthday was August 9.
out in the woods!

The Ohio Tree Farm Committee has had a lot going on. We had a very successful Ohio Tree Farmer of the Year Tour in September at Paul and Joanne Mechling’s Snowy Oak Tree Farm in Ashtabula County. In October, the Ohio Forestry Association held their annual Paul Bunyan Show. The Tree Farm Committee “Flapjacks for Lumber Jacks” did well and was a lot of fun. Thanks to Cotton Randall, Paul and Joanne Mechling, Gene Sipos, Alex Kindler, and Abby Kindler for their leadership with these activities. I appreciate the efforts of all involved.

As this year comes to a close, I want to say thank you to the entire Ohio Tree Farm Committee and those who have been a part of it during my two-year term. I also want to congratulate Randy and Koral Clum one more time for being selected the 2018 National Tree Farmers of the Year! What an exciting thing to have happen for Ohio. It’s been a great two years that I have really enjoyed. Thank you one and all!

◆

Woodland Interest Groups in Ohio

OPPORTUNITIES:
Interesting Forestry Programs • Knowledgeable Speakers
Monthly Newsletters • Training Sessions • Field Days

Central Ohio Small Woodlot Interest Group
Jason Van Houten
ODNR Division of Forestry
2045 Morse Rd., Building H-1
Columbus, OH 43229
(614) 265-6703
jason.vanhouten@dnr.state.oh.us

East Central Ohio Forestry Association
Jeremy Scherf
ODNR Division of Forestry
2050 East Wheeling Ave.
Cambridge, Ohio 43725-2159
(740) 439-9079
jeremy.scherf@dnr.state.oh.us

Killbuck Valley Woodland Interest Group
Bob Romig
3511 Clearview Pl.
Wooster, Ohio 44691
(330) 345-5077

Muskinglea River Woodland Interest Group
Tim Mason
(740) 404-8592
tim@naturalftoa.com
www.mrwig.org

Northeastern Ohio Forestry Association
James Elze
2145 Merle Road
Salem, Ohio 44460
(330) 337-8974
neofa1972@gmail.com

Northwest Ohio Woodland Association
John Mueller
ODNR Division of Forestry
952 B Lima Ave.
Findlay, Ohio 45840
(419) 424-5004
john.mueller@dnr.state.oh.us
Joe Pupieri
Advanced Tree Health
joe@advancedtreehealth.com

Southeast Ohio Woodland Interest Group
Perry Brannan
ODNR Division of Forestry
360 E. State St.
Athens, Ohio 45701
(740) 589-9915
perry.brannan@dnr.state.oh.us
seowig.weebly.com

Southern Ohio Forestand Association
Jim Meacham
4332 St. Rt. 776
Jackson, OH 45640
(740) 998-2073
OhioSOFA.org

Southwest Ohio Woodland Owners Association
Pat Migliozzi
ODNR Division of Forestry
8570 East State Route 73
Waynesville, Ohio 45068
(513) 897-1082
pat.migliozzi@dnr.state.oh.us
Gary Kaster

Gary Kaster significantly advanced commercial, private, and public forestry in Ohio by being instrumental in developing and implementing successful improvements to forestry practices that can be used at all levels of forest management. Many of Gary’s achievements involved extensive experimental tree planting methods on American Electric Power’s surface mine reclamation sites. He also served multiple terms on Ohio’s Forestry Advisory Council, including significant time as Chairman of the Council.

Dave Apsley

Dave Apsley’s name is synonymous with forestry education in Ohio. His outstanding leadership and innovation are based on his tireless hard work and ability to network to accomplish well thought-out goals. He is the primary coordinator and leader of the very successful “A Day in the Woods-2nd Friday Series” programming, now in its 8th year at Vinton Furnace State Forest and other southeastern Ohio locations. Under his leadership, more than 100 presenters and partners have collaborated to teach and sponsor 70 programs to more than 3,000 woodland owners and enthusiasts representing the 125,000 acres of woodlands they own.

Ohio FFA Camp Muskingum

Located in Carroll County on the banks of Leesville Lake, FFA Camp Muskingum has been offering unique outdoor experiences since 1942. The forests, hillside, and lake offer prime opportunities for nature studies. When Camp Canopy (formerly “Ohio Forestry Association Forestry and Wildlife Conservation Camp”) needed a new home, FFA Camp Muskingum rose to accept the opportunity in the mid 1990’s. They have been very accommodating and bring a high-quality staff to work with the high schoolers who attend Camp Canopy to learn about natural resources stewardship.
Joe Puperi is familiar to those who have served on the Ohio Tree Farm Committee (OTFC) over the past 20 years. As the OTFC Program Administrator for almost two decades from 2000-2018, Joe was the cambium layer that enabled the OTFC trunk to expand and add many healthy growth rings.

Joe hails from West Canton, Ohio and attended Virginia Tech for his bachelor’s degree from the Industrial Forestry Operations Program. He began working for the ODNR Division of Forestry in the fall of 1998, serving woodland owners as their state service forester in several northwestern Ohio counties until the spring of 2017. He enjoyed helping his many different landowners with their many different goals, especially the more engaged folks who took special interest in their woods. The Ohio Forestry Association recognized Joe for his valuable work with landowners with their Outstanding Individual in Government Service award in 2017.

Joe was interested in the OTFC from the beginning of his forestry career in Ohio and began his involvement as Tree Farm Area 1 Chair. Not long after that, his interest (and his computer skills) led him to begin his role as OTFC Program Administrator, a position he held from 2000 until late last year. Along the way, Joe served as OTFC Chair for two years.

Early on, Joe as Program Administrator had to enter every tree farm inspection from across the state on the computer. At the time, each Ohio Certified Tree Farm was inspected every five years—so he was glad when the foresters were able to eventually enter their own inspections. Another change he appreciated was the formalization of the Tree Farm Certification process, especially the landowner management plan requirement. He notes that a sampling of tree farms is now inspected instead of all being done every five years, easing the burden on the tree farm inspectors.

The best change, Joe noted, is the composition of the OTFC itself: “It went from a couple of landowners and a bunch of foresters, to shifting the other way to landowners running their own program with some foresters helping.” This is what Joe believes to be the strength of a very healthy Ohio program.

Joe now spends his days self-employed as he puts it: “an arborist with forester roots.” He finds plenty of work in the Findlay area—ranging from residential tree pruning, pest management, and emerald ash borer treatments to woodland management plans, timber stand improvement, and timber sale administration. Joe operates as Advanced Tree Health, Ltd., and maintains his Certified Forester accreditation with the Society of American Foresters, as well as his qualifications as Board Certified Master Arborist with the International Society of Arboriculture. The Puperi family lives in Findlay, where his wife Jessica is the children’s director at their church. Together they are raising their two sons Andrew (12) and Matthew (10).

The Ohio Tree Farm Committee is grateful for Joe’s exemplary service to the Certified Tree Farmers of Ohio, the committee leadership he provided for many years, his expert knowledge and services he provides, and his continued involvement on the Editorial Board of The Ohio Woodland Journal!
CALENDAR 2020

FEBRUARY 25-26
TF National Leadership Conference
Baltimore, MD

MARCH 4
Ohio Woodland, Water, & Wildlife Conference
Mid-Ohio Conference Center
Mansfield
woodlandstewards.osu.edu

MARCH 4-5
Ohio Forestry Association Annual Meeting
Marriott University Area
Columbus
www.ohioforest.org

MARCH 28
Ohio River Valley Woodlands and Wildlife Workshop
Burlington, Kentucky
tristatewoods.ca.uky.edu

JUNE 14-19
Camp Canopy
FFA Camp Muskingum
Carrollton
www.ohioforest.org

Tree Farm Inspectors are available to help with your Tree Farm goals.
For more information, contact
Ohiotreefarm@ohioforest.org

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phone 888-388-7337

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Address _______________________________________________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________________________________________________
Ohio Forestry Association is dedicated to strengthening and expanding the wood products industry for the benefit of Ohio companies, employees, customers, landowners and the general public.

OFA provides information and services to members through:
- Networking Opportunities
- Financial Benefit Programs
- Educational Programs
- Trade Shows
- Legislative Representation

www.ohioforest.org  888-388-7337
All too often, the decision to harvest is made in response to an offer to buy timber without much thought about the long-term consequences of a poorly devised or ill-timed timber harvest. Before you make the decision to harvest your timber, ask yourself these two questions: How will the harvest influence the long-term health and the capability of your woods to achieve your goals? And; Does it make sense financially? If you don’t know the answer to these questions, it is probably time to slow down and do your homework before moving ahead with a timber harvest. Let’s explore each question in more detail.

How will the harvest influence the long-term health and the capability of your woods to achieve your goals?

Another way to ask the question could be Will you have an adequate number of desirable trees after the harvest to meet your goals into the future? Unfortunately, most harvests in Ohio are so-called “select cuts,” and the factor that determines which trees are “selected” for harvest is their current dollar value or their ability to “pay their way out of the woods.” Usually select cuts result in a negative change in species, quality, and health of trees that dominate the woods afterwards. Consequently, there is often a corresponding reduction in the potential for the woodland owner to receive the benefits that they desire from their woodlands well into the future.

An alternate approach would be to select the trees to keep for the future and remove other trees that contribute less to your goals or that compete with the trees being kept for the future. This type of harvest is sometimes called an
improvement cut. Improvement cuts often result in less short-term income than a select cut, but in the long-term, your ability to earn a periodic income and other benefits from your woods can be greatly enhanced.

If there will not be an adequate number of desirable trees to meet your woodland goals after a harvest, it may be time to consider an alternative type of harvest that favors the regeneration of desirable seedlings and saplings for the future. These types of cuts are known as regeneration harvests. There are many types of regeneration harvests and the type of harvest that meets your needs depends on the ability of the desired species to tolerate shaded conditions.

Harvests that remove all or most of the canopy tend to favor sun loving species like yellow-poplar, black cherry, and bigtooth aspen. On the other extreme, lighter harvests or no harvesting tend to favor more shade loving species like red maple, sugar maple, or American beech. Heavier partial harvests that result in partial shade can benefit species like oaks and hickories. However, there must be sufficient numbers of oak and hickory trees already established and they must be large enough to compete for space.

Additionally, other vegetation below the main canopy can greatly reduce light levels and diminish the likelihood that oaks and hickories can survive and dominate your woodland in the future. It is often necessary to implement intermediate treatments that reduce the interfering vegetation that produces low, dense shade to allow desirable regeneration like oaks and hickories to become competitive prior to harvesting trees from the

Oak regeneration is the goal of this shelterwood harvest at Pike State Forest.
canopy.

So, let’s leave this question for a while, and we’ll attempt to answer the second question. We’ll circle back a little later with a common solution to both questions.

**Does it make sense financially?**

Whether or not a harvest makes sense financially may not be as complicated as it sounds. We could go through all the calculations to determine if the trees have reached financial maturity, but we’ll spare you those details. Simply put, trees that are financially mature are no longer increasing in value at a rate that justifies keeping them. A healthy, well-managed woods can increase in value at rates that often exceed those of alternative investments. Unfortunately, too many woodland owners harvest their trees before they reach financial maturity and miss the opportunity for a better return on their investment.

Let me explain. All live trees are getting bigger. As a tree gets bigger, it can yield more board feet of lumber. So, one of the ways that it increases in value over time is that it simply gets bigger. What is not so easy to explain is that larger trees can have much greater value because they can often be turned into products of greater value. Jacobson (2008) illustrates this in Figure 1 from *Forest Finance 8: To Cut or Not Cut-Deciding When to Harvest Timber.* Small diameter trees under 10 inches diameter breast height (DBH, diameter of tree at 4 ½ feet above the ground) are typically not large enough to be sawn into lumber, therefore they can only be used for lower valued products like firewood or pulpwood. On the other extreme, trees typically are not large enough to produce veneer—the highest valued product—until they reach at least 18 inches DBH. Each step in this figure represents significant increased stumpage prices ($/MBF is the price per 1,000 board feet of standing timber) paid for trees. Of course, not all trees have the potential to make it to the next step because they contain defects or they are low value species. But, more often, “select cuts” remove trees before they reach their maximum grade potential resulting in a missed opportunity to make very significant gains in value.

Jacobson (2008) further illustrates this using the example of a 12-inch DBH black cherry tree growing at a rate of 2 inches every 7 years (Table 1). This 12-inch DBH tree was
Unfortunately, too many woodland owners harvest their trees before they reach financial maturity and miss the opportunity for a better return on their investment.

Table 1. Volume and value for each diameter from Jacobson (2008)-Forest Finance 8: To Cut or Not Cut- Deciding When to Harvest Timber.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DBH (inches)</th>
<th>Max merchantable height (logs)</th>
<th>Volume (BF)</th>
<th>Value ($)</th>
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<td>12</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>35.52</td>
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<td>3.0</td>
<td>336</td>
<td>792.96</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
estimated to contain 59 board feet (BF, using the Doyle Log rule) and to be worth $35.52. In seven years, it was projected to grow to 14 inches diameter and be worth $67.40, nearly doubling its value. After 14 years, it is projected to become a 16-inch DBH tree, nearly quadruple the original size (223 BF) and a value that is nearly 10 times the original value. This large jump in value was largely due to a significant increase in value per BF because it became large enough to become a better grade of saw timber.

Finally, after the third seven-year period the tree increased another 50 percent in size, but once again it more than doubled in value. This is largely due to another projected increase in quality resulting in an even higher price for each BF of wood produced. The estimated rates of return from this tree for waiting 7, 14, and 21 years were 5, 13, and 18 percent, respectively. As mentioned earlier, not all trees have the potential to increase in grade or quality like the black cherry in this example, but it may make you pause before deciding to cash in on your timber investment too early.

Finally, it’s time to circle back and discuss what these two questions have in common. Admittedly, this is not rocket science, but making the decision to harvest timber should not be taken lightly. Foresters bring a unique blend of knowledge and experience to help woodland owners make informed decisions about timber harvesting and other activities in their woods. They are knowledgeable about silviculture (Dave’s abbreviated definition: the art and science of growing trees to meet the owner’s objectives), as well as the financial implications of timber harvesting. They can help make sure that you have a positive experience with your timber harvest. So remember to Call Before You Cut (http://CallB4UCut.com or 1-877-424-8288), find a professional forester to assist (http://osafdirectory.com), and consider using an Ohio based Master Logging Company (http://ohioforest.org).

Reference:

Dave Apsley was named a 2019 Forest of Honor inductee by the ODNR Division of Forestry for his significant leadership in Ohio forestry (see Perspective on page 6).
SNOWY OAK TREE FARM, ASHTABULA COUNTY

PAUL AND JOANNE MECHLING

OHIO TREE FARM OF THE YEAR TOUR

SEPTEMBER 21, 2019
SPECTACULAR!
Inspection is a key measure for the Tree Farm System. Every year, the Ohio Tree Farm Committee gets a list of required and optional inspections from the national office. Inspectors meet with tree farmers and review their management plans and forestry-related activities. Early on, most tree farm inspections were performed by foresters from the Ohio Department of Natural Resources. Over the years, we rely more on private foresters to perform the inspections.

Meet Jim Elze, who has been performing tree farm inspections since 1979 – yes, for 40 years! After studying forestry at SUNY in Syracuse, Jim worked in Florida for a couple of years, but longed to get back to Ohio and family. He came back to Ohio in 1979, working for the ODNR Division of Forestry.

He has since retired and moved out on his own, and now runs LZ Forestree Consulting in Salem, Ohio, south of Youngstown. Jim’s typical client needs assistance with management plans or timber sales, and he helps folks understand programs and practices that are suitable for their land.

Jim has worked closely with the North East Ohio Forestry Association, served on the board of the Ohio Forestry Association, and just won the President’s Award from the Society of American Foresters. Jim has been a featured speaker at numerous forestry field days and woodland owner programs.

Jim’s advice to landowners – “Get more engaged!”

The Ohio Tree Farm Committee recently received a grant from the American Tree Farm System to promote the work of private consulting foresters who have a strong track record of Tree Farm inspections and providing forest management plans to their clients. The Committee’s goal is to increase the availability of these services by encouraging Certified Tree Farmers to use the expertise offered by the consulting foresters. This is the first of four Journal issues where we will dedicate pages highlighting these foresters and their cards/ads.

Definitions from the Ohio Society of American Foresters website osafdirectory.com:

Forester - a professional engaged in the practice of the art and science of forestry. A forester typically has earned a Baccalaureate Degree in forestry from an accredited university.

Consulting foresters and technicians are self-employed or work for a private consulting company. They have no interest in a timber purchasing or procurement entity. They provide forest resource management recommendations and assistance to landowners for a fee.

Industry foresters are employed by one of the forest industries (e.g. logging company, paper mill or sawmill) and are often responsible for procuring wood fiber for their company and or managing company owned lands. They may provide forestry services to landowners such as timber harvest planning, tree planting advice, and forest resource management recommendations.
Jim Elze, in the yellow shirt, describes the finer points of woodland management at the 2014 Coldwell Family Tree Farm of the Year Tour in Columbiana County.
Virginia opossums do not have the best of reputations. Often seen as pests around the home and harbingers of rabies, opossums aren’t a species that usually elicits warm and cozy feelings. Then again, a species often described as a large rat, wouldn’t.

Personally, opossums have a soft spot in my heart. It’s important to realize that while opossums will take advantage of a free meal or burrow, they are rarely the ones causing the initial damage. An upturned garbage can, torn up patches in your lawn, or a newly dug out hole under your deck are likely the works of a raccoon, skunk, or groundhog. Don’t get me wrong, opossums are not completely innocent when it comes garbage raiding and other pesky conflicts, but they can also be quite handy to have around. Let’s explore why, and investigate a few other fascinating characteristics about opossums that might surprise you.

The life of a Virginia opossum

The Virginia opossum is Ohio’s only resident marsupial. Most of the roughly 260 species of marsupials are found in Australia, its adjacent islands, and in Central and South America. Only the Virginia opossum ranges northward from Central American into the U.S. and Canada. The Virginia opossum can be described as a Neotropical species, given their tropical origins.

With little to no fur covering their tails, ears, fingers, and toes, along with poor thermoregulatory abilities, it’s surprising that the opossum’s range has expanded so far north. Behavioral adaptations, like taking shelter during winter months, and the shelter provided by buildings and growth of urban areas has likely led to the Virginia opossum’s northern range expansion. Despite this, many opossums still succumb to frostbite, evidenced by missing parts of ears and tails.

Virginia opossums live in a variety of habitats across Ohio, where dens and adequate food are available, though they prefer deciduous woodlands with nearby streams. They have adapted well to human environments as both shelter and food are plentiful. Opossums often den in a burrow made and vacated by another animal (groundhogs, usually), but will also use tree cavities, hollow logs, brush piles, culverts, and human-made structures. Dens provide shelter from cold temperatures, protection from predators, and safe places for females to raise young.

One of the fascinating aspects of an opossum’s life is reproduction. Opossums can reproduce up to three times per year, however in the northern parts of their range they raise only one litter per year, as is typically the case in Ohio. Gestation of young is incredibly short, a mere 12-13 days, with most of the development occurring within the mother’s pouch.

A female may give birth from one to as many as 25 teeny, tiny honey-bee sized young. However, not all survive the journey from the birth canal to the pouch. Once within the pouch, each young must find and attach to a nipple, where it remains for the next 60 days drinking its mother’s milk. After this time, young begin venturing from their mother’s pouch, and remain with her for another 1-2 months.

Virginia opossums eat a little bit of everything, though seasons can influence food consumption based on what is most available. For example, nuts and berries are often eaten during fall and winter, along with small mammals, amphibians, and reptiles. In warmer months, plant material and large amounts of invertebrates are consumed. Little seems to be considered a non-food item to
opossums. Studies of stomach and fecal contents have reported bits of paper and cellophane (likely attached or stuck to another food item), venomous snakes (stay tuned for more on this!), mushrooms, and even other opossums (eek!).

Recent reports have taken notice of the amount of ticks an opossum can eat – up to 5000 per year! Much of this tick-consumption occurs during their meticulous grooming. Up to 90 percent of the ticks picked up during an opossum’s meanderings end up swallowed during grooming sessions. Given

Continued on page 24
Jennifer Heller’s 54-acre property has been a part of her life since she was five years old. Growing up, she spent weekends on her family’s land in Hocking County, Ohio. As her parents got older, they decided to sell the forest property and looked for a buyer, but Jennifer knew she couldn’t let her land go. Her father agreed to give her the property, named Wildwood, on the condition that she would continue to bring her family and spend time there. Jennifer agreed – she wouldn’t have it any other way.

“There is nothing in the world like having a piece of land to call your own,” she says. “Sometimes I go out there and am worried about work, or a family member’s health, or politics, or whatever, and I hike my beloved hills and two hours later my mind is clear and my heart is easy.”

After acquiring Wildwood, Jennifer reached out to the Ohio Department of Natural Resources Division of Forestry to work with State Service Forester Jason Van Houten to develop a management plan for her woodland. By the time she got her property, invasive plants had taken over. Multiflora rose, autumn olive, Japanese stiltgrass, ailanthus, and garlic mustard grew wild throughout the forest. She started pulling up small plants on her own, but needed help attacking larger species. She researched, networked, made phone...
calls, and wrote emails to find help. Eventually, she found Eric Hayes Jr., a forestry technician from Athens County Soil and Water Conservation District who also runs a private invasive plant removal business. He estimated some of the multiflora plants to be over 40 years old and 20 feet tall.

Using USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service’s Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) grant funding, Jennifer worked with Eric to eliminate multiflora rose and regenerate hardwoods across the landscape. Her hard work was recognized by the Hocking Soil and Water Conservation District, who presented her with the Outstanding Cooperator Award in 2017. She continues to work on removing invasive plants from her land and plans to apply for additional EQIP funding to do so.

Jennifer has big plans for Wildwood. She hopes to turn a meadow into a pollinator habitat and dreams of her woodlands becoming a place for kids to learn about nature – to play outside and have fun getting lost in the woods. She makes sure to take plenty of pictures and keeps a journal about her time at Wildwood to document the history of her land.

“Sometimes I get discouraged by the invasives and think my work is for nothing, that I’m only affecting my little 54 acres. But then I think, it’s a small step, but important work,” Jennifer says. “I am honored to be the steward of this property. I think it’s important to pass along a piece of property a little better than it was when we got it, even if it’s a small improvement.”
the concerns over tick-borne diseases, especially with the expansion of black-legged ticks in Ohio (the carriers of Lyme disease), we should all be giving a thumbs-up to opossums. Opossums have several other tricks up their furry forearms.

The first is a well-known defense mechanism – playing dead, or ‘playing possum.’ When an opossum is threatened, and other defense tactics have failed, such as hissing and growling or running away, it will enter a catatonic state that lasts anywhere from one minute to several hours. To make the feigned death even more convincing, an opossum will grimace, drool excessively, defecate, and discharge a green, foul-smelling substance from its anal glands. Now tell me, what predator would want to munch on that?

Another neat trick: opossums are largely resistant to pit viper snake venom from copperheads, rattlesnakes, and cottonmouths (the latter not present in Ohio). This explains why venomous snakes are sometimes prey of opossums. Researchers have isolated the venom-neutralizing peptide in the blood of opossums in hopes of developing a universal antivenom, but there is still much more research needed.

Interestingly, opossum body temperatures run lower than most mammals, making them resistant to certain diseases. The rabies virus, for example, has a hard time surviving in the lower temperatures of an opossum’s body, meaning they are not considered to be important reservoirs of the disease. However, it should be noted that while rabies prevalence among opossums is low, there is still some risk. They are also susceptible to other viral diseases. As with any wild animal, it is

**DID YOU KNOW?** Opossums’ prehensile tails are used to carry and grasp objects and give them stability when climbing. However, adult opossums are unable to hang by their tails as they are not strong enough to support the weight. Young opossums are a bit better at tail-hanging due to their lighter weight, but it isn’t long before they outgrow this ability!

**DID YOU KNOW?** Opossums aren’t the only animals to fake death. The strategy has also been reported in some species of frogs, snakes, insects, fish, and spiders.
best to leave them alone when encountered and no conflict has occurred. If you notice unusual signs of behavior, contact your health department or a wildlife professional for more information.

Unfortunately, opossums’ average life expectancy is only 1.5 – 2 years. Main predators of opossums include canids, bobcats, and owls, and severe winters can cause mortality. A significant amount of mortality is also human-related due to hunting, trapping, and motor vehicle traffic. Results from the ODNR Division of Wildlife 2016 Roadkill Survey Report indicate a declining trend in opossum population numbers, though the exact cause is unknown, and is likely due to multiple factors.

**Signs to look for**

Most of us have seen an opossum, especially along the side of the road as the unfortunate victim of a passing vehicle. Opossums may also take up residence under buildings, however they are nomadic and change dens frequently, sometimes on a nightly basis. During winter, use of a single den can be longer – up to a month. Still, even though the open spot under your porch may only be a temporary opossum abode, it’s best to seal it up. Groundhogs, raccoons, and skunks will also happily move in to an under-porch den.

**Wrapping it up**

Despite their reputation as a pest, the unique lifestyles and interesting abilities of opossums make them fascinating subjects to study. Given space constraints, I didn’t even mention their toe-thumb (opposable big toe), peculiar mating rituals, or their excellent swimming abilities. I encourage you to read more about the Virginia opossum as there is most certainly - as is usually the case with wild wonders in the woods - more than meets the eye!
Tree Farm Inspector Training occurs periodically to indoctrinate new foresters and provide updates in policies and procedures to strengthen the Tree Farm program—helping landowners meet and retain national Tree Farm Standards of Sustainability as well as Tree Farm Certification with the American Tree Farm System. A training was held July 29 at the historic Hocking Cabin at Hocking State Forest. Pictured (L to R) are Jerry Williams, Jamie Dahl, Max Schrimpf, Elliot Smith, Colton Frink, Brad Wireman, and Brian Young. Lee Crocker and Jeremy Scherf conducted the training. There are now 99 foresters listed on the active Tree Farm Inspector list in Ohio. For more information, contact Ohiotreefarm@ohioforest.org.

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Many years ago, when I was in forestry school, I enrolled in Dendrology, a tree identification class that all foresters must take. The botany professor teaching Dendrology was the very image of a botanist, with his tweed hat, moustache, and pleasant-smelling pipe. “Common names of trees,” he lectured disdainfully, “are for foresters.” Pointing a finger at us, he decreed, “In this class, we will use properly spelled Latin names.”

The botany professor’s lectures were predictably dry, and a good time for a nap. The weekly labs were exciting because we were outdoors where foresters belong, the autumn forest was becoming more beautiful, and we were almost experts in tree identification. Each lab day, we would board the school buses and head for a nearby woodlot.

It was the professor’s job to teach us about trees, but it was his passion to teach us about wildflowers and shrubs. He took great pride in explaining how a certain flower or shrub indicated a certain set of soil and moisture conditions in which a certain forest type could grow. Some of us foresters would hide our yawns, then heads would pop up when he said “oak” or “maple.”

By the middle of October, we had been out on five or six lab trips. Like most twenty-year-old boys, we were indestructible, and we knew it all. During the lab, several of our hands began to go up before the professor could begin asking a question. His face began to turn red and his eyes began to narrow.

Wordlessly, the professor led us to a path through a warm, breezy, sunny area. Both sides of the path were a jumbled confusion of briars, herbaceous plants, and wildflowers. He stopped near a spring and pointed to a tall plant with dainty yellow and orange flowers, waited for a moment and said, “This is wild impatiens, or jewelweed.” Without another word, he touched its seed pod. The pod sprang open like a miniature jack-in-the-box, catapulting its seeds six feet into the tangled briars.

As a class, we gaped for only a few seconds. Then the pushing and shoving began as twenty boys jockeyed for position near the fattest seed pods. The entire class grinned and cheered as we touched the pods and the seeds shot into the nearby bushes.

The professor stood back, smiled smugly, and announced loudly, “This is wild impatiens,” then stated more quietly, “but we botanists call it idiot’s delight.” Twenty pairs of hands froze in mid-touch. As he strolled away, we glanced around at each other, and finally followed in a somber single file. Next week would be another lab, the botany professor would be a week older, but we were twenty years old and we would know so much more.

This story is dedicated to Tom Berger, another West Virginia University graduate, who probably followed the same professor through the woods.

Jewelweed (Impatiens capensis). Photo copyright 2007 George Rembert; Calphotos
Once a year, the National Council of Forestry Association Executives convenes to discuss state-specific and national forest industry association issues. This council consists of most state forestry associations from around the country as well as most of the major national associations, including Forest Resource Association, American Forest & Paper Association, American Forest Foundation, National Association of Forestland Owners, and Society of American Foresters. The conference this year was held the week of July 29 on the Olympic Peninsula in Washington.

I find this conference to be one of the most valuable meetings that I attend. Learning what works and doesn’t work in other state forestry associations is helpful, and the network of available knowledge in this group is invaluable. The Forest Industries Association Council, of which OFA is a member, also holds a meeting during this conference.

Forest fire discussions were a major component of the meeting, with several speakers focusing on this subject. In fact, while the group was having dinner on the final evening of the conference, a small forest fire erupted on the hillside adjacent to the small town just a few blocks from our location. Townspeople were evacuated as I took pictures of a fire-fighting helicopter dropping water on the fire. No injuries or building destruction was reported, but the irony of the timing of this event was not lost on the group.

Fittingly, Vicki Christianson, Chief of the U.S. Forest Service, gave a great speech on Lessons in Leadership—Wildfire Policy. Other speakers and presentations for the conference focused on topics, including Smart Wood Cities of the Future, Benefits of Working Forests and Using Wood, Forest Health and Wildfire, and the Outlook for Forest Products Markets.

The most notable part of the presentation on the Outlook for Forest Products Markets was that forest economists are not seeing the hardwood industry recovering anytime soon from the effects of the China trade war. In fact, it was mentioned that even if tariffs were repealed, the Chinese people are now being urged not to purchase products made from American hardwoods because we have branded them as cheaters in this trade dispute.

One of the highlights of the meeting was our industry tour. We toured the Sierra Pacific Industries stud mill in Shelton, Washington. This is one of the newest, most productive, and automated sawmills in the country. They are currently producing over 1.5 million board feet per day in two 10-hour shifts. Their plan is to eventually be producing 2 million board feet per day. For a more in depth look at this mill, read the article printed in the October 2018 edition of Timber Processing magazine at the same address as the conference presentations at https://www.ohioforest.org/page/Presentations.
Regional Woodland Interest Groups Update

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East Central Ohio Forestry Association

Normally, we would write something that ECOFA has done that we are proud of and want to share with the readership of this splendid magazine. Usually, we submit numbers of scholarships we provided for Camp Canopy or write about the field trips we have sponsored. Of course, these are always good things, and deserve to be shared with the hope that they will inspire others to do similar things. However, this time I would like to divert somewhat from that format.

When I first joined ECOFA seven or eight years ago, the meetings were held at a very nice resort-like restaurant near Leesville Lake. It was a nice setting and there were good speakers, but attendance was kind of spotty; often there were only 8 or 10 attendees other than the five officers. When that facility closed, the meetings moved to a more central location in New Philadelphia. Attendance increased a bit and meetings were still quite interesting and educational.

Subsequently, about three years ago the meeting site changed again. Attendance increased again, incrementally, but steadily. So much so we now fill the meeting room to capacity (50). Often, there are numerous people who must stand throughout the meeting as all the seats are occupied.

I have posited several theories to understand what happened. Did the group reach “critical mass” at some point - like a nuclear reaction? Is the site that much better? Is it the charismatic leaders, or powerful speakers? Is the fact that five or six professional foresters and wildlife biologists now attend the meetings?

I contend that it’s the attendees themselves that make this sort of thing happen. I have never witnessed a more interested, and dedicated, and educated assemblage of forest landowners in my entire career. And that includes 40 years observing such things in “Penn’s Woods” (next state to the east). This is a group of individuals who really care about woodlands and want to learn what they can do to make their forests healthy and sustainable.

What an amazing thing to be a part of!

John Quimby, ECOFA

Central Ohio Small Woodlot Interest Group

In mid-July, a tree and shrub ID woodland walk was held at Chestnut Ridge Metro Park. The event was well attended despite it being one of the hottest days of the year. Attendees received a copy of the ODNR’s Trees of Ohio field guide and learned about key features for identifying different species while enjoying a 2-mile woodland hike. During the hike, over 60 different woody species were covered. The highlight was seeing the difference between a pure American chestnut and a hybrid chestnut tree.

Contact person for COSWIG is ODNR State Service Forester Jason Van Houten, (614) 265-6703, Jason.VanHouten@dnr.state.oh.us.
NEOFA officers and directors are back to work on programs and activities for the fall season after a wet but pleasant summer. Monthly programs for fall included Ron White, President of the Ohio Nut Growers Association who spoke in September on growing pawpaw trees for fun and profit. October featured Jason Reynolds, whose topic was wildlife camouflage in our woodlots. NEOFA member and CPA Greg Cecconi will speak at our November meeting on the always popular subject of woodland taxes. We will take a break in December and be back with more in January.

We are also taking a tour to the Cradle of Forestry in Pisgah National Forest, Brevard, NC at the end of October. Members Bob and Genia Friend and Susanna Pugh have put together a one-day program with the staff of the Cradle of Forestry which will include some inside classes and a hike and tour of the forest. We hope to have some local foresters spend time with us in the afternoon discussing hands-on forestry with private woodland owners, something we can all relate to. We expect about 30 members and guests to attend.

There will be a group dinner at the Sierra Nevada Brewery and Restaurant following the program. This facility was built with wood cut and milled on the site. It offers tours of the brewery, a small amphitheater for weekend entertainment, outdoor and indoor dining, and of course a wide selection of Sierra Nevada products.

Other options after the tour will include shopping in Ashville or Hendersonville, touring the Biltmore House, or hiking in the forest. We are excited to have this tour with so many members attending.

More information about the NEOFA and programs is available on our Facebook page or by contacting Mitch Cattrell, president, at mitchcattrell2@aol.com, or by phone (330) 429-9734.

Northwest Ohio Woodland Association

The NWOWA meets quarterly, and the last meeting of the year was October 12 at the Don Ruffing Farm near Bellevue, Ohio. The business meeting included the secretary, treasurer, and other committee reports along with updates from the Ohio Tree Farm Committee and the State Service Foresters.

The program was about the Don Ruffing Farm and how management plan and using qualified foresters and loggers are key to managing woodlands. Active management of your woodland is an important part of caring for your property.

We will be holding our annual meeting in January 2020 at the ODNR Division of Forestry Office at 952 Lima Ave., Findlay and rolling out our 2020 calendar.

For more details on the Northwest Ohio Woodland Association and future meetings, contact Keshia Krout at (419) 424-5004.

Seth Siefker of Siefker Sawmill discussing log scaling for NWOWA at our July 2019 meeting.
Connecting Kids to Nature

Nature is a great teacher and getting kids outside to learn and play is good for their brains and their bodies. Try this outdoor activity from Project Learning Tree® – it’s safe, fun, and educational!

The Fallen Log

It’s amazing how many things live in and on rotting logs. In this activity, kids become familiar with some of those organisms by observing fallen logs. They’ll gain an understanding of how decomposition takes place and a better appreciation for microhabitats and communities.

Take your grandchild, neighbor’s child, or others for a walk in the woods. Look for a fallen log or rotting tree stump. Conduct a thought exercise by asking, “What happens to a tree after it dies?” Investigate the answer by using powers of observation:

• How did the tree die and how long has it been dead?
• Are there signs of animals, including insects, in, on, or around the log? How about plants?
• How are they interconnected?
• Where do these living things get the nutrients they need to survive?

Be careful not to disturb the habitat as you observe. You could use a digital camera—or sketchbook—to record pictures of anything you see. Use field guides or the internet to identify and research them later. Finally, brainstorm ways in which the forest ecosystem benefits from the fallen log you examined.


Do this word search puzzle to discover some important components in this microhabitat. Look below for the answers.

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If you would like to assist in placing the Journal in your county schools or need additional information, please contact: Gayla Fleming, Ohio Tree Farm Committee, 507 Main St., Suite 200, Zanesville, Ohio 43701 • 888-388-7337 • Gayla@OhioForest.org

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