WE NEED YOUR VOICE!

Help Move Pennsylvania Deer Management in the Right Direction

Many Pennsylvania Forestry Association (PFA) members, Pennsylvania Tree Farmers and other forest landowners are impacted by deer over-abundance issues. The PFA/PA Tree Farm Deer Impact Task Group has identified the following concerns:

- Deer over-browsing consumes much of our desirable commercial hardwood reproduction.
  - This has the potential to be a huge economic loss in the future.
- Overbrowsing by deer results in the proliferation of deer tolerant, less desirable, competing, and invasive plants.
- Deer over-browsing negatively impacts other wildlife species.
- Deer are “actively” managing the forest at the expense of plant and wildlife diversity.
- In many cases, landowner efforts to be responsible forest stewards are overwhelmed by the high impact deer are having on our forests.

In August the PFA/PA Tree Farm Deer Impact Task Group had the opportunity to represent PFA at a meeting called by the Pennsylvania Game Commission (PGC) deer management staff. Among the other organizations represented at the meeting were the PA Forest Products Association, Allegheny National Forest, DCNR Bureaus of Forestry and State Parks, PA Farm Bureau, and the PA Vegetable Growers Association.

The purpose of the meeting was to review both the PGC Deer Management Assistance (DMAP) and Red Tag programs, and to let PGC staff know what was working as well as additional suggestions for change that the groups might have. Our Task Group, based on feedback from our members, has drafted the following suggested changes:

DMAP: Suggestions for Change

- Move application deadline later to allow more time for agencies to compile field data and complete application process.
• Change the “online” DMAP system to match the regular antlerless system. That is, hunters receive one tag the first round and then can apply during successive rounds for unsold tags up to a maximum of four.
• Increase the season length for DMAP tags on private lands, similar to what is currently done in urbanizing areas of the state.
• Allow hunters the ability to transfer DMAP tags to other adults and to mentored youth. Current policy does not allow DMAP tag transfer to another adult and “mentors” can only transfer one to a “mentored youth.”
• Reduce forest acreage requirement to qualify for DMAP to 25 acres.
• Change the standard allocation to one antlerless tag per 25 acres of forestland. DMAP coupons are currently allocated at one per 50 acres of forestland.
• Increase the number of DMAP coupons a landowner can hand out to an individual. Currently a hunter can only receive two DMAP coupons. This change would allow more tags to go to “alpha” hunters with a better harvest success rate. Recommend four per hunter as max.
• Allow leased properties the opportunity to participate in DMAP.

RED TAG: Suggestions for Change

• Allow private forest landowners to enroll in the Red Tag program. Red Tag permits can be filled by taking antlerless deer only from February 1 – September 28 (except from May 16-June 30).
• Waive the requirement to enroll the property in the Game Commission’s “Public” Access program in an effort to interest more landowners to enroll.
• Increase the number of tags allocated to hunters. Currently a hunter can only receive one permit/red tag. It was suggested to increase it to four to match DMAP suggestion.
• Waive any waiting period before red tags can be issued and filled.

Our Task Group is committed to finding the best solutions to assist all Pennsylvania forest landowners dealing with deer over-abundance. They encourage anyone interested in healthy, sustainable forests to communicate their concerns to the PGC Commissioners. The next Board of Game Commissioners meeting where public comments are heard is Saturday, January 25, 2020. If deer overabundance impacts you, we ask that you attend the meeting and use the above suggested changes in your comments.

If you are unable to attend the meeting but would like to be part of the effort, please contact the Commissioners in writing. A listing of the Board of Commissioners is at: https://www.pgc.pa.gov/InformationResources/AboutUs/Commissioners/Pages/default.aspx
If you feel so inclined, invite them to visit your property to see the damage first-hand.

Change will only be brought about by making sure our voices are heard. Help us find a solution, contact your PGC Commissioner and voice your support for a solution to deer over-browsing in our forests.

For additional information contact the PFA through Caleb Wright, Chief Operating Officer at Versant Strategies, 300 N Second Street, Suite 1002, Harrisburg PA 17101, Cell: 717.319.4638, Office: 717.635.2320, or CWright@versantstrategies.net.

Photo Credit: Lilla Frerichs
JOIN US!
Become a Certified American Tree Farm System Inspector

Help the American Tree Farm System get more good forestry on more private acres by becoming a Tree Farm inspector.

2020 Tree Farm Inspector Certification Training Session

Wednesday, February 26. 1:00 PM - 4:30 PM.
Wyndham Garden State College, Garden Room C
310 Elks Club Road, Boalsburg, PA 16827
(Note: This training is being offered as a special pre-conference session prior to the Allegheny SAF Winter Conference)

Sponsored by: The Pennsylvania Forestry Association, Tree Farm Committee and Penn State Extension

Trainings are open to anyone interested in becoming certified by the American Tree Farm System to inspect family owned forestland to the Tree Farm Standard. The minimum qualification to become an inspector includes a 2 yr. or 4 yr. forestry degree from an SAF accredited program. All those wishing to inspect and certify Tree Farms must attend an initial face-to-face training class. There is no charge for taking the class.

Prior registration is required.
Register by email or phone:

Contact the Pennsylvania Forestry Association
Phone: 1-800-835-6065
Email: thePFA@paforestry.org
The Pennsylvania Forestry Association

2020 Conservation Banquet
“Raising funds for forestry education”

Saturday, March 7, 2020 | Genetti Hotel, Williamsport, Pennsylvania

Activities start at 3:00 p.m.
Refreshments – Silent Auction – Card Games – Raffles— 50-50 Cash Drawing – Chainsaw Drawing – Door Prizes

At 5:00 p.m. Live Auction Starts
Come and bid! Great items for a worthy cause!

6:30 p.m. – Dinner Served

After Dinner - $10,000 Draw Down Raffle
This is the evening’s high point! Only 350 tickets are available!
Your chance of winning is outstanding! Don’t miss this great time!

Each $100 ticket includes your choice of a Prime Rib, Chicken Cordon Bleu, or Vegetarian dinner and door prizes. In addition, you have a chance at $10,000. A limited number of Guest Tickets are available for $45. Guests are eligible for door prizes and a special raffle drawing. (See prize list on reverse side.)

The Pennsylvania Forestry Association depends on this event to finance its forest conservation mission and invests these dollars directly back to forestry education in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Your support is important! To facilitate event planning, please purchase tickets and donate auction items early. All donations are GREATLY appreciated. This event is open to everyone, you need not be a PFA member to join the fun and have the possibility of winning $10,000. A ticket would make a great gift for family members or outstanding employees. Join with a few friends on a “pool” ticket. Ticket holders need not be present to win. Tickets go FAST, get yours today! Come and join the fun!

Complete the reservation form and send it to the PFA Office by February 15, 2020.

$100 Ticket Holder Prizes
1st—$10,000 cash
2nd—$1,000 cash
3rd—$500 cash
4th—$300 cash
5th—$200 cash
6th–30th Prizes $100 cash and a ticket to the 2021 Dinner

Ticket Holders need not be present to win

Overnight accommodations are available at the Genetti Hotel.
For room reservations, call the hotel directly at 1-800-321-1388
Ask for the PFA Conservation Dinner room rate!

Download the Registration Form
Sponsorship opportunities are available! Contact the PFA Office (thepfa@paforestry.org | 800-835-8065) to sponsor this annual event! Please note the following levels:

- Chestnut Sponsorship - $1000 - includes five banquet tickets
- Black Cherry Sponsorship - $800 includes four banquet tickets
- Sugar Maple sponsorship - $600 - Includes three banquet tickets
- Red Oak Sponsorship - $400 - Includes two banquet tickets
- Hickory Sponsorship - $200 - includes one banquet ticket
- Friends of PFA Sponsorship - ($25 - $199)

Forestry News You Can Use

Grant to fund workshops on conservation-based forest land estate planning

Project is intended to ensure the long-term protection of woodlands

UNIVERSITY PARK, Pa. — A Penn State project aimed at advancing conservation-based estate planning for forest landowners in two key regions of Pennsylvania is the beneficiary of an $80,000 grant from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation.

The award — announced today (Dec. 10) — from the foundation’s Central Appalachia Habitat Stewardship Program, will be matched by an $80,000 allocation from the University to fund a targeted workshop series in the Pennsylvania Wilds and the Laurel Highlands regions. The project is intended to ensure the long-term protection of woodlands at the time of ownership transfer.

According to project coordinator Allyson Muth, assistant research professor specializing in private forests management, the sessions are intended to increase awareness and implementation of evolving legal and financial tools used by planning professionals, forest landowners and consulting foresters to achieve conservation-based estate planning.

"With significant acreages of forestland changing ownership over the next 10-20 years as baby boomers divest or pass assets on to their heirs or beneficiaries, there is an acute need to make the legal, financial and conservation tools more accessible and available to forest landowners," said Muth, interim director of the Center for Private Forests in Penn State’s College of Agricultural Sciences.

Enhancing conservation-based estate planning by empowering landowners to identify, prioritize and achieve their long-term stewardship and legacy objectives, Muth explained, will improve opportunities to maintain contiguous core forest blocks across the landscape.

"By making available for the next owner — whether known or unknown — the largest intact parcel of working forest possible, we will enable the restoration of key forest habitats and achieve the outcomes identified within the Central Appalachian Habitat Stewardship Program," she said.

For more information about the workshops, contact Muth at 814-865-3208 or abm173@psu.edu.

Urban Forestry Career Pathways Survey

From American Forests:

You may have received this email already from a colleague, but I wanted to be sure you all got this email from me. I'm delighted to share with you all an update on American Forest's Tree Equity: Career Pathways Initiative. If you haven't heard the full spiel, the abbreviated version is as follows: Urban forestry and our allied professions face a serious skilled labor shortage at the moment. The number of folks graduating from pre-employment programs is not nearly high enough to meet today's demand for workers, let alone the demand
projected for positions as tree trimmers/pruners, pesticide applicators, landscaping technicians, forest conservation workers, equipment operators, and more.

American Forests is working to make the case for significant national investment into pre-apprenticeship programs that prepare and place opportunity youth, veterans, low-income people of color, re-entrees to society, and others facing barriers to employment into entry-level positions in the field. We began to make the case with BLS data via the first draft of our Career Pathways Action Guide, and through proposing the Climate Stewardship Act, but realize we will need much more specific and in-depth data to diagnose gaps along the urban forestry career pathway, and provide targeted assistance to those already doing this work.

We need your insight! Sharing this 10-question survey would be a stellar way to help us map the workforce development needs within our field. Please share it far and wide. The last question alludes to an extended survey; one that, upon being filled out, doubles as a grant application for $20K in capacity-building funding for existing urban forestry workforce development programs. That survey (unlike the 10-question one) may take up to 30 minutes to fill out. Those who have given their emails in the 10-question survey will be sent the link to the extended survey, so be sure to have pre-employment program stats handy while filling it out. The deadline to fill out the Career Pathways Extended Survey is Wednesday, January 29th.

Thank you to those who have already filled out the 10-question survey. Your answers are much appreciated! If you have other datasets that could help us make the case for supporting workforce development efforts in our field, please do send those my way!

Stay tuned for more updates as the year progresses, and thank you for your tireless efforts to grow our field equitably and inclusively. We appreciate your leadership!

Best,
Sarah Lillie

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**US-China Trade Announcement**

*From the Hardwoods Federation:*

**Hardwood Lumber Included in US-China Phase 1 Trade Deal**

[Last week] President Donald Trump and Chinese Vice Premier Liu He signed into effect the Phase 1 Trade Agreement between the U.S. and China.

In the White House fact sheet that was released at the signing ceremony, hardwood lumber is specifically called out as part of the Chinese purchasing agreement of U.S. manufactured goods. The fact sheet may be found here.

In the actual trade agreement text, which can be found here, hardwood lumber products are again highlighted in the table on Page 6-3 under “Other Manufactured Goods.” In addition, the table on Page 6-11 includes all of the of 400 level Harmonized System Codes for hardwood lumber.

Details about how the Chinese will facilitate purchases (tariff reductions, exclusions) are still to be announced.

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**ATFS Launches Public Comment Period on AFF’s current Standards of Sustainability for Forest Certification (Standards)**

The American Tree Farm System® (ATFS), a program of the American Forest Foundation (AFF), launched a 60-day public comment period on AFF’s current Standards of Sustainability for Forest Certification (Standards) and announces the 13 members of a new Independent Standards Review Panel (ISRP). The Standards are the benchmark for all ATFS forest certification, which are third party audited. The ISRP will also
be responding to evolving international requirements while ensuring the Standards are a good match for the constraints, abilities, and resources of family forest ownerships in America. During this first of two public comment periods in 2020, interested members of the public are invited to participate by submitting comments and suggestions here, http://www.tfaforms.com/330231. Submissions will be accepted January 2, 2020 through March 2, 2020. For more information about the Standards revision process visit: https://www.treefarmsystem.org/standards-process-overview or contact Leigh Peters at lpeters@forestfoundation.org.

State Recreation, Conservation Grant Opportunities for Municipalities, Local Organizations

Application Period Opens Wed., Jan. 15th

Counties, municipalities and municipal agencies, per-qualified land trusts, non-profits and other eligible organizations interested in applying for conservation, recreation, trail, and riparian buffer grants through the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) may do so beginning January 15th.

An application webinar will be held on Wednesday, January 29th, 10AM-11:30AM. Participants will learn about eligible project activities, funding sources, matching requirements and strategies on how to create a competitive grant application. To sign up, applicants may visit DCNR’s ‘Calendar of Events’ page on their website, https://events.dcnr.pa.gov/.

Penn State Extension program to help private forest owners use prescribed fire

UNIVERSITY PARK — Pennsylvania state agencies that manage public forest lands increasingly have employed prescribed fire as a management tool, but significant challenges exist for private landowners to do the same. Now, Penn State Extension is launching a program to help them use prescribed fire, too.

Using low-intensity fire to help manage forests offers many benefits, according to Jesse Kreye, assistant professor of fire and natural resources management in Penn State’s College of Agricultural Sciences. Among those benefits are promoting desired tree species such as oak, spurring new growth that provides food and cover for wildlife, controlling invasive plants, and suppressing ticks, which often carry pathogens such as the one that causes Lyme disease.

"In a number of states, such as Florida, hundreds of thousands of acres are burned in a controlled way each year to manage private forest land," said Kreye, who is spearheading creation of the new extension initiative. "We believe that forest landowners in Pennsylvania could have that option."

Fire was used historically in Pennsylvania, Kreye pointed out, and the state’s forests have changed a lot over the last century because of a lack of fire. Because there was considerable interest in bringing fire back to help restore the landscape, the General Assembly in 2009 passed legislation called the Prescribed Burning Act.

The law changed liability statutes and essentially gave land managers in the state who observe a suite of specified precautions the ability to use prescribed fire as a forest-management tool. "But even though agencies such as the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources and the Game Commission have been burning on their properties over the last 10 years, private landowners have largely been unable to use the tool," Kreye said. "And there are still a lot of people in Pennsylvania who aren’t aware of why they should be using controlled fire and what benefits it provides."

Initially, the extension program will focus on public education. Kreye is developing publications, to be offered both online and in print, that will explain the benefits of using prescribed fire and precautions that must be followed in Pennsylvania. He also is planning prescribed fire education videos for private landowners.
While some aspects of the Fire and Natural Resource Management program have yet to be finalized, Kreye sees Penn State Extension’s role as organizational, such as working with the Pennsylvania Prescribed Burn Council to help private landowners form burn associations common in other states, offering training to those groups and helping them make arrangements with certified burn bosses required by state law to conduct controlled burns.

Another important role of the program would be to provide training to increase the number of certified burn bosses. In addition, training will be needed on how to write prescribed burn plans and actually conduct a burn, monitor weather, and so forth.

“Extension might organize landowners to work together with a burn boss to conduct a prescribed fire on several properties that would be too small to feasibly be burned alone,” he said.

Kreye’s research, which he has conducted for about a decade in Florida and California, is aimed at quantifying how fire benefits forest landscapes. He believes the upside in Pennsylvania is huge, for both public and private landowners.

“Controlled fire offers the opportunity to restore important ecosystems here such as the oak forest, and the need to reduce tick populations is compelling,” he said. “Pennsylvania has the worst tick and Lyme disease problem in the country — and burning can reduce that. Prescribed fire also may prove to be an important tool in the fight against invasive plants.”

Chris Houser, Penn State Extension assistant director for natural resources programs, noted that it will take some time for the new prescribed fire program to gain traction, but that extension is committed to helping forest landowners.

“Our hope is that we can help increase the capacity of people trained to conduct prescribed fire on private lands in Pennsylvania,” he said. “Right now, it is extremely difficult for private landowners to use fire on their own properties.”

College of Agricultural Sciences forest technology wins $10K pitch competition

UNIVERSITY PARK, Pa. — Innovators from Penn State’s College of Agricultural Sciences upheld a winning tradition recently at the TechCelerator pitch competition hosted by the Ben Franklin Technology Partners of Central and Northern Pennsylvania. The team was awarded a $10,000 investment for their fledgling enterprise, RealForests. Their victory makes RealForests the sixth team from the college to win one of Penn State’s most prestigious pitch competitions.

RealForests adapted LiDAR, a mobile laser sensing technology, to accurately measure and inventory mixed hardwood forest stands. To demonstrate the need for this technology, Brennan Holdeman, a forestry researcher leading the project, held up a tape measure during his pitch to show how foresters typically estimate the timber in a stand of trees.

This labor-intensive method has not changed for over a century. With a large margin of error, this conventional method can lead to an over- or under-valuation of timber values by tens of thousands of dollars. A typical census of a one-acre forest stand usually takes a forester 2½ hours to complete. The RealForests technology, however, can inventory the same stand in 60 seconds.

According to the Pennsylvania Forest Products Association, the state produces about $5.5 billion in forest products each year. The technology could have significant impact by allowing for better inventorying and management of its 16.9 million acres of forestland.

In his pitch, Holdeman noted that the RealForests technology would not replace the forestry workforce but rather make it more efficient and effective and allow forestry professionals to attend to other natural-resource-management priorities.
“We are going to provide more accurate, economical measurements than anyone has achieved before,” Holderman said.

With RealForests, an operator would carry a portable unit with sensors. While walking through a forest stand, a 3D map of the stand is built in real time, allowing operators to identify tree species, which is important to forest management and timber value. That physical inventory with labels will allow RealForests to build an extensive and valuable database which may ultimately be able to leverage machine learning to identify the tree species.

“This was the most competitive and most exceptional cohort in my three years here,” said Bob Dornich, who leads the TechCelerator program, “we’ve had some great companies and great competitors come through — but these guys were a notch above. Every single one of them was a standout.”

“Brennan’s win validates the college’s entrepreneurship and innovation effort,” said Maria Spencer, the John and Patty Warehime Entrepreneur-in-Residence in the college. “Our discoveries address real and important problems, and that makes us tough to beat in these business pitch competitions. I am absolutely thrilled, and so proud of Brennan and his team.” Spencer worked with Holderman to help him develop the business pitch.

Five other College of Agricultural Sciences teams also have taken top honors at the Ben Franklin's TechCelerator, and another team topped Invent Penn State’s Tech Tournament. Both TechCelerator and Invent Penn State are sources of competitive funds to help a startup reach and realize market success.

The college’s winning teams were recipients of funding and support via the Research Applications for Innovation (RAIN) program, which is a source of funding for researchers who are ready to take steps toward commercializing their research. RealForests won a $25,000 RAIN grant in 2019, and those funds were matched with $12,500 from the Penn State Research Foundation.

Other RAIN grant recipients have included entomologist Nina Jenkins, who developed Aprehend, a natural biopesticide for the elimination and prevention of bed bugs; food scientist Greg Ziegler, developer of AvoColor, a natural food color derived from avocado seeds; and agronomists Corey Dillon and Greg Roth, who conceived the InterSeeder, a piece of equipment designed to allow farmers to seed cover crops into an existing field crop such as no-till corn. All have gone on to launch successful startup companies.

Holderman, whose RealForests work grew out of his master’s thesis in forest resources management, would likely be the co-founder of a startup company that further develops and markets the RealForests technology. The innovation has applications in other industries, but the team is starting with forestry because of the team’s background, relationships and that industry’s need for innovation.

The RealForests team also includes Marc McDill, associate professor of forest management, Doug Miller, research professor and director of the Center for Environmental Informatics in the College of Earth and Mineral Sciences, and Jeff Hershey, graduate student in biorenewable systems.

The college’s RAIN program will open for applications later this month and researchers are encouraged to contact The Office for Research and Graduate Education for more information, and to visit the RAIN website to apply.

Read the full article as published here.

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The passing of Dr. Ernest C. Aharrah
Dr. Ernest C. “Ernie” Aharrah, a.k.a General, my friend, advisor and a force of nature at Clarion University passed away on November 29, 2019. His obituary as published in ExploreClarion.com follows.

Ernest C. (Ernie) Aharrah, died November 29, 2019 at the Clarion Health Care; born in Millstone Township, Elk County, Pa. on April 24, 1927. He was the son of the late Carl G. and Faye C. Hidinger Aharrah.

On June 10, 1950 he married the former Margaret A. (Peggy) Behringer at Plumer, PA and she preceded him in death on January 8, 2018.

He attended the Melzer School, a one room school in Heath Township, Jefferson County for the first eight grades. He graduated from Brookville High School in 1944.

He matriculated at Clarion Teachers College in September 1944 but his college education was interrupted by a stint in the U.S. Marine Corps at Parris Island, SC. Returning to Clarion in September 1946, Ernie graduated in 1949 with a B.S. in Education. He also holds a M. Ed in Biology from the Penn State University and a M.S. and Ph.D. from the University of Pittsburgh. He had additional credits from Wayne State University.

He taught at Ashland Township High School, at Kossuth, Pa and at Chief Logan Joint Schools at Yeagertown, PA before returning to Clarion. While a demonstration teacher at Clarion State Teachers College he taught in the Clarion Area School District.

For many years he wrote the "Naturalist's Notebook" which appeared regularly at the Clarion News. He also contributed to other publications.

During his college days and while teaching at Ashland he was active in the Boy Scouts of America as an adult leader. While at Ashland he coached both athletics and dramatics. At Chief Logan and Clarion Area he coached dramatics.

He completed his career as Professor of Biology and Science Education at Clarion University. He was the first director of Alumni Affairs at Clarion and wrote the initial draft of by-laws for the Clarion University Foundation.

During his teaching career he was honored as Conservation Educator of the Year by the Pennsylvania Association of Conservation Districts. He was named a distinguished faculty member on the Clarion campus. In 1985 the Clarion Alumni Association awarded him the Distinguished Alumni Award.

He was a member of the First Presbyterian Church of Clarion where he was an ordained deacon and elder. He is a past Sunday School teacher and has served as a lay minister in the church.

His memberships included Pennsylvania Forestry Association, American Society of Surface Mining and Reclamation, Association of Pennsylvania State College and University Retired Faculty, Pennsylvania Outdoor Writers Association, American Legion (Craig E. Fleming Post 66) of Clarion, Clarion Historical Society, Clarion Conservancy and the Clarion County YMCA.

He had served on the governing boards of the Clarion Hospital (Treasurer), Clarion University Foundation, Clarion Alumni Association (vice-president and president), the Clarion Conservation District (secretary, vice president, and president), Penn Soil Resource Conservation and Development (vice-president, president, and treasurer), and Clarion Community Theater (president).

He enjoyed his home, teaching, hunting, fishing, traveling.

In addition to his wife, he was preceded in death by a daughter Cheryl (Cheri) Aharrah Reid who died September 1980, a brother and sister-in-law, John D. and Marie Aharrah.

He is survived by a nephew and his wife, Steven J. and Peggy Aharrah and their sons Steven J. Aharrah II and wife Amy, and Gary A. Aharrah and wife Kelly, his wife’s brother and sister-in-law Fredrick W. and Patricia Behringer.
Memorial donations may be made to the Clarion University Foundation, Peggy and Sheri Aharrah’s scholarship.

But the obituary does not tell the entire story of the Ernie Aharrah I knew.

I first met Dr. Aharrah as an 18-year-old freshman at Clarion State College in 1972, when he was appointed as my advisor. With some trepidation I walked into his office, where a tall lanky balding man in a lab coat sat at his desk, looking over the top of his glasses as he graded papers. I had no idea what I wanted to do or which way to go. Ernie quickly put me at ease. I was a biology major, but beyond that I had no clue which way to turn. He set me on a life-altering track.

In the summer of 1974, feeling slightly more certain of my direction toward a degree, I signed up to go with Ernie and Dr. John “Jack” Williams on a trip across the country to Yellowstone National Park for Clarion’s Summer Field Study Program. We travelled in a commercial bus and camped our way to and from the Rocky Mountains. We, I believe there were 32 of us, learned first-hand about the biomes we travelled through, studied prairie grasses, counted alpine buttercups, collected aquatic invertebrates, watched prairie dogs, elk and all sorts of birds, and even managed to get a little trout fishing in.

Ernie had a habit of rousing a bunch of college students from their tents who were sometimes (I’m not admitting anything here) hungover, at the crack of dawn. His exhortations to get us organized and moving quickly earned him the nickname “Sarge.” Someone found a Sargent Snorkel patch at a truck stop and we presented it to him. He pinned the patch on his field pack and I wouldn’t doubt that it is still there. He was proud of that patch. But being a mere sergeant didn’t last long and within the space of a day or two he earned a promotion and we began to call him “General.” He said it was the fastest promotion he ever got, even in the Marine Corps.

Those of us on the trip called him General for the rest of his life.

Some of the guys on the trip began reciting a mantra of sorts as we headed west. As the bus pulled out there was a shout, “To the top of the mountain!” When we crossed the continental divide the entire bus shouted the cheer.

The following summer, with one semester to go, I again signed up for General Aharrah’s and Jack Williams’ Summer Study Program, this time landing in Indian Arrow Campground in Atlantic Beach, North Carolina.

We counted sea lettuce, barnacles, and sandworms. We slogged through brackish estuaries, ran trawls and counted beach grasses on dunes. And we got in some time for fishing. We ate fish, shrimp, mussels, clams, and had so much fun that it did not seem that we were constantly learning. That was part of the joy of those trips. We were always on the clock.

Around the campfire at night Ernie would regale us with stories about green headed flies, his field experiences, and how he hit a bear across the ass with a pick handle while a summer ranger in Smokey Mountain National Park. On our return home we crossed the Chesapeake Bay via the Bay Bridge-Tunnel. I have literally traveled with General Aharrah from the top of the mountain to the bottom of the ocean.

His classes were hard. There were no easy A’s even for the good students. I must admit he challenged me to do the best I could.

I graduated that December, uncertain about the future but confident, thanks to Ernie, that I could deal with whatever came my way. We later joked with him that my time at Clarion from 1972 to 1975 was the longest “seven” years of his career.

My career found me working for the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Resources (DER), first with the Bureau of State Parks and later the Bureau of Mining and Reclamation and then Abandoned Mine Reclamation. Throughout it all we kept in touch, by Christmas cards, phone and e-mail, with him encouraging me to continue to learn. But earning a masters degree just never happened for whatever reason.

When I was in DER’s (which later became DEP) mining programs a great deal of work involved reclaiming “old law” mining sites, some covered with Japanese knotweed. Once when we got together, we were talking about mine reclamation, the subject of his doctoral dissertation. He grudgingly admitted that he had advocated for planting knotweed on mine spoils as a quick way to provide vegetative cover and prevent erosion, create a layer of organic material to allow trees to take root, and provide cover for game and non-
game animal species. I told him that at least the first part of his theory worked, too well! He just kind of grimaced, ordered another martini and changed the subject.

Another thing he did with his students, and was in turn reciprocated by us, was he would walk up us in a store or restaurant or other place away from the university and ask, “Didn’t I see you in Red Lodge, Montana in 1974?” The replies were all over the place from, “Why yes you did,” to, “No, I believe it was at the Sanitary Fish Market in Moorhead City, North Carolina in 1975.” In fact, that was how my wife first met him. My wife, daughter and I had arranged to meet Ernie and Peggy for dinner in Clarion on evening. As we drove up Main Street, the Aharrahs crossed in front of my car. I stopped and rolled down the window. “Hey didn’t I see you in Cooke City in 1974?” I shouted out the window of my car. Ernie stopped in the middle of the street while Peggy continued across to the safety of the sidewalk. He turned and looked at me and replied, “I think it was Fort Macon a year later.” My wife and daughter were amazed if not outright startled by the exchange. Peggy had seen it all before.

Following my retirement from state service I took a part-time gig editing *Mid Atlantic Fly Fishing Guide* magazine. In order to broaden my horizons and better learn the trade I sought out membership in the Pennsylvania Outdoor Writers Association (POWA). I needed a recommendation and who better to ask than my college advisor, who was also retired but now writing a column for the *Clarion News*.

Ernie readily agreed. At the first POWA meeting I attended I thanked him and mentioned that I would have bet he would have never thought he would be still advising me forty-some years after I graduated. He replied, “When I became someone’s advisor I never thought it was just for their time at Clarion, but for life.”

Through his career he has taught thousands of students and advised hundreds. I think I can speak with some certainty that he reached us all in a positive way.

Always the botanist, if there is a garden in heaven, General Aharrah is leading Saint Peter and the rest of the saints around, identifying plants, counting flowers, and doing botanical measurements, all while wearing his pork pie hat and a field pack with a Sargent Snorkel patch, and telling the story of how he hit the bear in the ass with a pick handle.

-Mike Klimkos

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**PLT Online Short Course**

Project Learning Tree (PLT) and The Society of American Foresters (SAF) are pleased to announce an online short course – Teaching Youth and Communities About Forests – to help you strengthen your outreach and education efforts to youth and adults. Registration is now open.

**Register Now!**

This self-paced online course is intended for foresters and natural resource professionals and provides access to some of PLT’s most popular hands-on activities and training to effectively implement with your audience. No prior knowledge, education background or teaching experience is needed.

Following the course, you will be able to:

- Incorporate easy-to-do PLT activities into your outreach and education efforts.
- Focus on learning outcomes important to you and your audience.
- Adapt PLT activities for your audience and context to suit and engage participants.
- Connect to resources such as relevant online tools, supplemental content, and PLT in your state.

This short course is approved for 4.0 Category 2 Continuing Forestry Education (CFE) credits. Upon successful completion of the course, CFEs will be automatically added to your CFE records.

**Pricing:**
- $49 for SAF members
- $79 for Non-members

SAF and PLT are delighted to help you go beyond words and use hands-on activities to strengthen your outreach and education efforts!

Go to the short course on ForestEd - https://learn.eforester.org/products/teaching-youth-and-communities-about-forests

Please contact Naomi Marcus, SAF Director of Professional Development and Certification at cf@safnet.org with any questions about this short course or other ForestEd learning opportunities.
2020 Log a Load for Kids Pheasant Shoot Donor Form

The jointly sponsored Pennsylvania Forestry Association/Pennsylvania Forest Products Association Log a Load for Kids Pheasant Shoot is scheduled for March 14, 2020. This event, along with the events at the bi-annual Timber Expo, and the Log A Load Sporting Clay Shoot hosted in the fall each year raised $23,500 for Children's Miracle Network Hospitals in Pennsylvania in 2019 alone. Donations for the program are accepted all year. Use the donation form, linked below, to support this great charity.

Log a Load Donor Form

In the news

01-17-2020 Spotted lanternfly a $50M drag on Pa. annually, study finds
The spotted lanternfly, an invasive pest from Asia that is wreaking havoc on valuable trees and vines, is costing the Pennsylvania economy about $50 million and eliminating nearly 500 jobs each year, according to a Penn State study released Thursday... - AP

01-17-2020 3 great birding spots in Berks County
It's no secret that Berks County has some prime bird-watching locations, thanks to its observant birding community. A list from the Pennsylvania Game Commission of the 100 Best Birding Locations highlights three. For more information, check out Scott Weidensaul's 2009 "Eastern... - Reading Eagle

01-17-2020 Sawmill fire forces furlough of 87 workers in Clarion County
A catastrophic fire at a Clarion County hardwood sawmill Jan. 4 has resulted in the indefinite furlough of 87 workers. The fire broke out at 2 a.m. at the Allegheny Wood Products Inc. sawmill in Washington Township, causing extensive damage. AWP, which is based in Riverton, West Virginia, operates nine saw mills and... - Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

01-16-2020 Causer Introduces Forestry Bills
(Press Release)
From PFA's Perspective:

One Bill would establish several requirements that must be met when public funding is involved in an easement purchase. Among the proposed requirements are public notification that an easement is proposed, compliance with a sustainable forest management plan, availability of the land for outdoor recreational activities such as public hunting, and approval of the easement by the Hardwoods Development Council within the Department of Agriculture.

The second Bill would expand membership on the Hardwoods Development Council within the Department of Agriculture. This bill would add a logger and a forester to the council, provide for representation from all three hardwood utilization groups (HUGs), and guarantee representation on the council by the largest HUG, the Allegheny Hardwood Utilization Group.

01-13-2020 How a grant helps build a couple’s dream of a woodland learning center in Robeson Township
When Amelia Giangiulio stepped into Rock Hollow Woods her heart changed. She didn’t understand it entirely. She was just 11. But the woods in Robeson Township have called to her ever since. They might have even saved her. “The most distinct part of it felt like a wonderland of forest,”... - Reading Eagle

01-10-2020 New way of identifying state game lands
Pennsylvania Game Commission — responsible for managing all Keystone State’s wildlife for all residents, yet funded solely by hunters, trappers and shooters — is tweaking the names of its state game lands. Signs on the properties will still identify them as “game lands.”... - Beaver County Times
DCNR: PA State Parks, Forests Offering Visitors a Winter Playground
(Press Release)