

# MFA NEWS

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE MICHAUX FOREST  
ASSOCIATION

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**Spring 2019**

[www.michauxforestassociation.org](http://www.michauxforestassociation.org)

**Editor: Judy Prescott**



### President's Column

This will be my last Newsletter column as I approach the end of my final year as President of the MFA – a position which I have been honored to hold. I remember my friend Jim Walters inviting me to join the board during his Presidency. I informed Jim, at the time, that I would commit to just two years, but here I am six years later and now ending my own term as President. As time moved along, I witnessed the value and accomplishments of the MFA and gained an appreciation for the dedication of all of those who donate their time to serve the MFA both at present and in the past. I have forged many relationships and made many friends. I am grateful to work with such a

group of smart and talented people. What more can I say - I'm a lucky guy! Gerry Ahnell will be assuming the role as President at the end of June. Gerry has been a board member for several years before taking on his current role as Vice President. We can all be confident Gerry will continue to do a great job!

We want to thank John Strine and David Dowling for their time and contributions to the MFA during the past eight years. John and David will be leaving the board at the end of June and will be missed. Both gentlemen were instrumental while the MFA navigated the water well issue with the state. If you have been able to drill a well at your cabin over the past few years, please say thank you to John and David for all their efforts! John also served as MFA President.

Mike Romano, MFA webmaster, is busy updating our new website which continues to be a work in progress.



The changes/additions will include:

- A Link to upload photos
- A link to download our Membership application
- A link with requirements for buying/selling a cabin
- A link to view our Newsletters

Additionally, we will be uploading the MFA Archives which were digitized a few years ago. These will be accessible to the Board of Directors. If you are a regular user of the website and have any suggestions on how to enhance it, please let us know. The goal of this website is to be a go-to resource for our members.

The MFA annual picnic will be held at the Furnace Stack Pavilion on June 29<sup>th</sup> at 5:30 PM. Our guest speaker will be Marci Mowery, President of the Pennsylvania Parks and Forests Foundation. I hope you can attend. As a reminder, you will have the opportunity to pay your membership dues at the picnic. Those who are unable to attend the picnic, as always, can mail your checks to:

Warren Hardman, MFA Treasurer  
1109 Rana Villa Ave.  
Camp Hill, Pa 17011

Continued on page 2



**MFA  
Patrol  
Report**  
*By Richard  
Baish*

### Greetings!

As I start this message, I have just completed my March inspections. It is 70 degrees! Hard to fathom that halfway through the month I still had to park my truck and trample through the snow to inspect your premises. In fact, for the last couple months inspections were challenging due to snow. Most entrances and roadsides were plowed high and frozen; thus limiting places I could park and hike in to do my inspections. While time consuming and tiresome, it was great exercise and oh so beautiful to enjoy. We are so lucky to have get-always in the awesome Michaux forest!

Unfortunately with the wintry snows and blustery winds our trees were severely tested. Many oaks were uprooted due to heavy saturation of the soil. In addition, many white pines were sheared and large oak limbs were snapped at quite a few of your lease locations. Over the course of my winter inspections, sad to say, I discovered at least 6 or 7 cabins that had a significant amount of damage as result of the trees and limbs landing on them.

The good news is that other than some isolated incidents with wondering bears or intrusive squirrels, vandalism was not an issue!

When I do find any reportable issue, I try to contact the owners as quickly as I can. Often

I have to leave messages. Many times voicemails are generic; therefore, I am not positive I am reaching the proper person. Occasionally, due to ownership changes and ever-changing family contacts, my information might be outdated. For these instances where I must leave a message, I really appreciate a return call or text confirming the notification was received by the correct party. It really helps to insure the member's cabin issue involved can be addressed as promptly as possible.

Well, that about sums up my winter inspections. I know it is brief, so if you have any questions or concerns, please contact me at (717)226-4959 and leave a message.

Hope you all safe and wonderful visits this year to your mountain retreats.

### President's Message Continued

Your board met on January 27<sup>th</sup> and voted to increase our annual membership dues to \$50.00 and raise the cost of advertising in the newsletter to \$100.00 for the two newsletters. Even with this increase the MFA membership is still an incredible value. We felt the increase was necessary because of rising operational costs. The increases will take affect on June 1<sup>st</sup>.

Roy Brubaker, Forester for District 1, shared that they are discussing the start up of a Friends Group for the Michaux Forest. They held a meeting on January 30<sup>th</sup> with a turnout of more than 50 people represent-

## MFA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

### Officers

**President: Mark Colucci**

Mark.colucci@centurylink.com

717-649-3817

Vice-President: Gerry Ahnell

Treasurer: Warren Hartman

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Newsletter Editor: Judy Prescott

### Directors

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David Dowling

John Strine

William Forrey

John Rovigno

Mike Romano

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*Sharon L. Spencer, Owner*

ing several groups. If you're interested in learning more about their efforts, please reach out to the office of The Pennsylvania Parks & Forests Foundation (PPFF) at 717 236-7644 or [parksandforests.org](http://parksandforests.org)

Again, thank you for allowing me the opportunity to serve as your President and I look forward to seeing you all at the picnic in June.

Until then, enjoy the Spring weather and all the wildlife the Michaux has to offer.



Roy Brubaker  
District Forester

In this dynamic forest, in this dynamic time, it's a constant challenge trying to figure out how much of our energy we need to invest in sustaining work cycles and expectations of the past, and how much we need to invest in trying new things and charting new approaches to our forest management work.

At times, Mother Nature challenges our plan! In 2018 we received 50% more rain than average. Our roads froze in a satu-

rated condition, leading to one of the worst freeze thaw cycles we've had in a long time. In addition, for the first year in many decades, we fell slightly below our annual harvest acres for commercial timber sales.

I am pleased to report that all district staff received training on sustainable trail layout and design; and even began building a short section of connector trail near Long Pine Reservoir.

We also conducted one of the largest prescribed burns in state forest history in the Hairy Springs area in order to restore fire dependent forest communities and enhance forage production and landscape level regeneration potential. We conducted numerous small sales and habitat projects in very specific areas to enhance grouse nesting and

brook trout habitat and are seeing some phenomenal results from these efforts.

Trying to create opportunities for the public that we serve to meaningfully engage in that thought process is also a challenge. To that end, we also spent much of last year working on updating our district resource management plan, an effort not significantly undertaken since 1985. We are deeply grateful to MFA for their board members' participation in our management plan open house meeting, and for the continued engagement our forest campsite leasees have with our work both individually and collectively.

We are currently trying to create additional organizational structures to encourage greater participation in our work by forming a Friends Group of the Michaux. Voting is currently underway for board members and officers for this new group, and I encourage you to participate with us as a Michaux Friend in any way you can as we move forward.

## MFA Annual Picnic

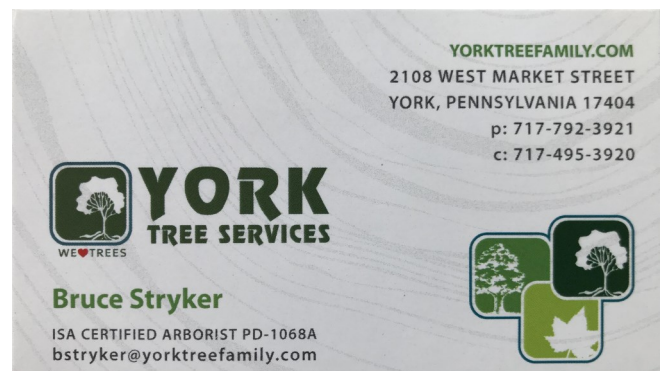
June 29

5:30 pm

The Furnace Stack Pavilion

Guest speaker will be Marci Mowery, President of the Pennsylvania Parks and Forests Foundation.

The Board provides hamburgers, hot dogs, rolls, condiments, drinks, plates and plastic ware. Just bring you family and a delicious dish to share with everyone! Please bring a side dish, salad, fruit or dessert.







What's Cooking in Cooke:  
Issues Around the Neighborhood

Andre Weltman, Twp. Planning  
Committee

As a reminder, Cooke Township ordinances, resolutions and other information are available on the Township's website [www.timberhilltech.com/Cooke/index.html](http://www.timberhilltech.com/Cooke/index.html). Questions may also be emailed to [cooketwp@kuhncom.net](mailto:cooketwp@kuhncom.net).

Please feel free to attend Township Board of Supervisors meetings, usually held the first Tuesday of each month at 7:30 P.M. at the Township building, 1700 Centerville Road. Your attendance and participation are always welcome. (Before dropping by, check for schedule changes on our website or on the bulletin board next to the front door).

### ROADS

We have published this in the past, but thought it would be a good idea to run it again as everyone assesses the impact of unending rains over the past year. Sometimes cabin owners call Cooke Township about their cabin "access road" washing out or needing other repairs. Whose responsibility is it to repair the roadway?

Please note that Cooke Township only repairs and maintains

officially designated Township roads. Other roads in Cooke -- mainly those servicing cabins -- belong to either Parks or Forestry (depending on your lease). All maintenance for those roads is a responsibility of cabin owners themselves, or DCNR. In addition, the major thoroughfares (Route 233-Centerville Road and Pine Grove Road) belong to PENNDOT.

Cooke Township roads are: Bendersville Ln., Bendersville Rd., Bunkerhill Rd., Cold Springs Rd., Deer Dr., Dogwood Dr., High Mountain Rd., Ice House Rd., Ice House Ln., Iron Run Rd., Leaf Rd. (first 200 feet off Rte. 233), Leeper Farm Rd., Marie Dr., Michaux Oaks Rd., Michaux Rd., Murphy Rd., Oak Dr., Old Railroad Bed Rd., Old Shippensburg Rd., Peach Orchard Rd., Pine Tree Dr., Pinebrook Dr., Quarry Rd., and the section of Ridge Rd. between Rte. 233 and High Mountain Rd., for a total of 22.45 miles.

The following roads do not belong to Cooke Township: Appalachian Trail, Black Swamp, Camp Lion, Collier Ln., Herr, Ice Cutters Path, Ice Spring, Mechanics Row, Ice Spring Ln., Mountain Creek, Iron Ore Lane, Old Carlisle, Old Forge, Old Orchard, Old Water Race Ln., Old Water Race, Pine Grove, Rocky Ln., Toms Run Ln. and Woodrow.

Please remember that cars, hikers and bikers all use our roads. Everyone needs to safely "Share the Road"! Per State law, give bicycles at least 4 feet of room as you drive by. Be careful when driving anywhere, but especially on Old Railroad

Bed Road (behind Laurel Lake) near the busy Pole Steeple parking lot.

### UCC CABIN EXEMPTIONS

So to repeat information shared in this newsletter a few years ago: the statewide Uniform Construction Code (UCC) is Act 45 of 1999, which went into effect in mid-2004 with several amendments since then. The UCC requires building permits and professional inspections for new construction and many but not all other building activities, in order to meet a standardized engineering code. This is a State law not the Township's, but we must administer it locally.

State legislators created an exemption from inspections for "recreational cabins." This involves a formal attestation to the Township using the law's specific definition of such a cabin. To apply for an exemption, download PA Dept. of Labor & Industry form "UCC-13" at <https://www.dli.pa.gov/Individuals/Labor-Management-Relations/bois/Documents/UCC/ucc-13.pdf>. After you submit the "UCC Recreational Cabin Affidavit" to our Township, the application must be approved: exemption from inspections does not take effect until your completed application is accepted at the next regularly scheduled Cooke Township Supervisors meeting.

If you are considering work on your cabin and want to circumvent UCC safety inspections using this process, we suggest you first discuss it in detail with your insurance company and with the electric company.  
Cont.' page 6

## **Friends of Pine Grove Furnace State Park**

*By Mary Soderberg,  
Vice-Chair*

Mary Soderberg  
(Vice Chair, Friends of Pine  
Grove Furnace State Park and  
Board Member, PA Parks and  
Forests Foundation)

### **Infrastructure Needs in our Parks and Forests**

Did you know that the acreage of our state parks and forests is twice the size of the state of Delaware? We are very fortunate to have an amazing network of parks and forests in Pennsylvania - about 40 million people visit our parks every year.

Last year, out of concern, that our parks might be being “loved to death” the PA Parks and Forests Foundation (PPFF) compiled a report on the infrastructure needs of our parks and forests. According to the report, “The Legacy of Pennsylvania’s State Parks and Forests: The Future is

in Our Hands”, the infrastructure associated with our parks and forests system is massive. Within the 2.5 million acres of parks and forests there are 3,000 miles of roads, 8,000 miles of trails, 864 bridges, 3,912 boat slips, 6,537 camp sites and more than 30,000 picnic tables!

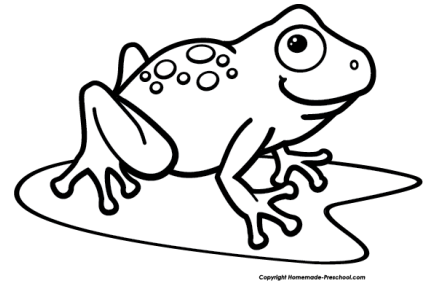
Even our own Pine Grove Furnace State Park has infrastructure issues. The staff works very hard to keep the park clean and welcoming for everyone to enjoy, but like many state parks some of the infrastructure is old and requires constant maintenance. The water main for the park has broken several times in the last two years. The six-inch cast iron pipe is more than fifty years old and serves the entire park, a serious break would force the closure of many of the park’s facilities.

There are a number of historical buildings and structures in the park which require constant upkeep. Just this winter a portion of the ceiling in the Ironmaster’s Mansion collapsed.

This all takes time and money. Today there are less staff working in our parks and forests than in 1970 when there were 44 less parks. The backlog in maintenance of infrastructure projects is estimated to be \$1 billion. Funds that had once been used for maintenance are now being used to supplement operating expenses. According to the PPFF report, DCNR needs about \$100 million per year of regular and predictable investments in its infrastructure and sufficient staff to maintain its facilities.

PPFF has shared the infrastructure report with the Governor and the General Assembly. Please reach out to your state elected officials to let them

The full report is available at the PPFF website: <https://paparksandforests.org/initiatives/infrastructurestudy/>



### **Key 2019 Dates for Friends of Pine Grove Furnace State Park**

May 18: Woodsy Owl Weekend. Two nights of free camping in exchange for a morning of volunteering.

June 8: Annual Friends fundraiser races, Iron Run half-marathon and Charcoal Challenge 5k run/walk.

August 25: Pennsylvania folk musician Van Wagner will present a one-hour program at 1:00pm.

September 28: National Public Lands Day. A morning of volunteering followed by a potluck lunch.

October 19 and 20: Fall Furnace Fest. A family weekend with food and craft vendors, entertainment and historical demonstrations. Saturday night will feature the annual pumpkin parade and the legend of the Hairy Hand

### Cook Township cont.'

Even if your project does not require a UCC permit under Commonwealth of PA regulations, you may nonetheless need a Cooke Township Valuation Permit if the work costs more than \$500 or involves a structure more than 500 square feet in area. Please check with our Township before beginning any work. It is ultimately your responsibility, not your contractor's, to make sure all necessary permits are obtained.

Finally, please note that the Pennsylvania Home Improvement Consumer Protection Act 132 of 2008 requires all contractors to display their official registration number on all contracts, estimates and proposals. The registration number is required to be noted on the Cooke Township Valuation Permit.

### BLACK BEARS

Bear populations in Cooke Township (and the South Mountains more generally) have increased in the past couple decades. Black bears are now awake and active: several trash cans in widely separated corners of our Township were raided by the end of March.

Please take a look at the Game Commission brochure "**Living with Pennsylvania Black Bears**"

<https://www.pgc.pa.gov/Wildlife/WildlifeSpecies/BlackBear/Pages/LivingwithBlackBears.aspx>.

Note the suggestion to avoid leaving any food outside, including bird feeders overnight, and (if possible) do not put garbage cans outside until the morning of collection. Bears can be active any time but especially seem to enjoy opening garbage cans or knocking over bird feeders at night. Some local residents have had success

pouring a little supermarket ammonia over their garbage bags, or securing garbage can lids with bungee cords, but none of that will guarantee you won't find a mess to clean up in the morning.

Please don't attract bears to your cabin! It's not good for us nor for the animals.

### COMMUNICATING WITH COOKE TOWNSHIP

Please note that our tiny rural Township is staffed by part-timers. We do not have regular office hours, and are open by appointment only.

The best way to reach Cooke Township is by email at: [cocketwp@kuhncom.net](mailto:cocketwp@kuhncom.net) or less efficiently, leave a voice message at 717-486-8114. When leaving emails or voicemails, always please tell us if you are a seasonal cabin owner (and specify State Park vs. State Forest), and provide your Cooke address as well as relevant contact info to return your message. This will help us respond correctly and will reduce extra back-and-forth communications.



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## Cabin Bookshelf



### Digital Minimalism – Choosing a Focused Life in a Noisy World By Cal Newport

The cabin newsletter reader must surely wonder what a book on “digital minimalism” has to do with cabin life. Well, in an indirect way this book highlights a threat to our enjoyment of the forest and our cabins. It is not as ominous as termites, vandals, or forest fires, but rather a danger of the digital age. Specifically, our obsession with social media can interfere with enjoyment of our cabin life by diverting our valuable time to endless scrolling and meandering down “rabbit holes” of social media sites. So rather than enjoy a walk in the woods or reading a good book on our cabin porch we spend time on social media. Or worse yet, out of fear that we would not have a strong signal we think twice about even going to our cabin or into the forest.

The author of the book, Cal Newport, is no anti-tech crusader. In fact, he teaches computer science at Georgetown. The book is a very detailed discussion on why we need to specifically attend to and limit our use of social media. At the outset he surmises that Steve Jobs, founder of Apple, never intended the smartphone to dominate our lives. Instead it was to be a device that we used periodically for utilitarian purposes and limited enjoyment. Newport has long been concerned how social media is so addictive resulting in so many people – especially young persons- spending inordinate amounts of time on-line. According to Newport we need to recognize this and begin to divert our time and attention to more rewarding activities.

Newport defines digital minimalism as “.... focusing your on-line time on a small number of carefully selected activities that support things you value and ignore the rest.” The book is easy to read – not technical – and tightly structured and written. Much of the book details specific protocols along with anecdotes of how we can use social media in very “intentional ways” to meet our individual needs and values. Newport explains how software engineers use basic principles of psychology to craft their algorithms to subtly “addict” users to use their sites. Newport (and many other researchers) are especially concerned how social media negatively impacts our real world social relationships by making us think that superficial messages and texting (“social fast food”) satisfy our brain’s basic need for genuine human connections. He cites data that the recent rise in teen anxiety and depression is certainly related to the negativity, magnified peer pressure, and 24/7 messaging that teens engage in. Noting that many people spend an average of two hours a day on social media (for teens it is nine hours a day) and check their devices eighty-five times a day Newport states that it is time to step back and consider “decluttering” our technical lives. Newport says, “We are not wired to be constantly wired.”

Along the way the author discusses our need for quiet and solitude and how Thoreau used solitude at Walden Pond but still remained socially connected. Newport suggests getting outdoors (without our devices), building things, reading a book or old fashioned newspaper, journaling, and playing in-person games. His discussion of the “Dunbar number”, “likes”, and the social media business model are especially interesting.

Even if the reader is not concerned about being addicted to their smartphone and social media – or is already using it “intentionally”- the discussion of the psychological and neurological aspects of how digital media is affecting our world and social relationships is worth the reading.

Well, put down your phone and go for a walk, enjoy the view from your cabin porch, read a book, fix or build something, or actually go visit someone. And, according to Newport, there is no need to check your phone eighty-five times a day.

Reviewed by Martin Yespy



## MFA Litter Patrol Spring

We're looking forward to our 24<sup>th</sup> year of participation in the Cumberland County Adopt-A-Highway Program. Our amazing group of volunteers maintain the stretch of Pine Grove Road from Laurel Lake to Fuller Lake by picking up trash four times a year. Our 2019 dates are: April 27, June 29, August 10, September 21

If you would like to join us, we meet at 9 am at the parking lot beside the entrance to Fuller Lake. We'll have gloves, vests, and trash bags. Please email us if you have any questions: [dlshenk@comcast.net](mailto:dlshenk@comcast.net) with "MFA" in the subject line.

Special thanks to all who helped in 2018:

Jim and Patti Deppen  
Laurel Falkenstein  
Blaise Falkenstein  
Hannah Borkenhagen  
Mike Rish  
Mary Soderberg  
Pat Bolden  
Tom and Linda Reidenbaugh  
Rick Ward  
Corrin Ward  
Kason Ward  
Gerry Ahnell  
David Dowling  
Warren Hardman  
Apologies if we missed anyone.

Bob and Diane Shenk





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