



MFA NEWS



THE NEWSLETTER OF THE MICHAUX FOREST
ASSOCIATION

Editor: Judy Prescott
Web Master: Debra Rosevear

Spring 2021

www.michauxforestassociation.com



President's Column

We made it! After a cold, snowy winter, punctuated by Capitol unrest in January and the ever-present Covid-19 issues, Spring has arrived. Throughout the winter months our cabin inspector, Mr. Richard Bash, faithfully trudged up and down often unplowed driveways and trails on his route to make sure our cabins were secure. While nearly all his monthly visits noted only a few minor problems here and there, at least one unfortunate incident was reported regarding a member's cabin along Pine Grove Road outside the Park. A fire during a dry period before Thanksgiving destroyed the cabin and likely a lot of good memories. Fortunately, no one was hurt during this incident, but it stresses the need for vigilance when dealing with Mother Nature and the elements.

Over the next few months, Park and Forest Service employees will be busy with various projects slated for this year with ever shrinking budgets and manpower. Volunteers are always welcome but check with officials at the Park and Forest Service before engaging in any pet projects in your area. For several years now Diane and Bob Shenk have been coordinating roadside clean-up events between the two lakes but only after approval from PennDOT and others to ensure the safety of the volunteers. Check out the MFA's recently updated webpage which includes links to other area groups looking for volunteers. While on our new webpage, this may also be a good time to re-familiarize yourself with DCNR's "Guidelines for Leased Forest Campsites" located under the Information tab. As the name implies, the *Guideline* document outlines many of the dos and don'ts associated with your purchased cabin structures and, just as important, the leased ground it is situated on. To help avoid costly mistakes,

During my short tenure with the MFA, I have become aware of several non-compliance issues associated with some of the leased sites which have required considerable time and effort on behalf of DCNR staff to correct. We all need to remember that owning a cabin on State leased ground comes with a

certain amount controls that we all need to abide by.

Speaking of short tenure, this will be my last President's Column as my position on the MFA Board ends on June 30th. I have enjoyed the last two years as your President and especially working with all the other Board members who work hard to keep the MFA a valuable resource for our little community. Thanks to all those who have contacted me over the past two years with information, comments, or suggestions. Hope to see you all in the woods. Enjoy!

MFA Annual Meeting
June 26
5:30 pm

NO PICNIC

All CDC restrictions will
be imposed.

At the Furnace Stack Pavilion
Guest speaker
Michael Wright, DCNR



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

Greetings!

Wow, I just finished my March inspections and what a difference in the conditions of the weather!

As this month comes to an end, temps are in mid -60s. Last month at this time, I was still trekking through up to 12 inches of snow and needing to shovel paths just to be able to park along the roads!

One positive aspect of all the snow (other than its obvious beauty and priceless opportunity for the many wintery activities it provides) is that it might have prevented would-be acts of vandalism and theft that often occurs during the dormant days of winter. Fortunately, not many thieves want to hike through deep snow and work that hard to act out their shenanigans.

Additionally, the melting snows and resulting saturation of

the soil and groundcover, may have helped a brush fire that occurred in mid-March. It happened on Orchard Road, in close proximity to several cabins. Local volunteer fire companies did a wonderful job containing the blaze; thus, all the cabins were spared any damages.

On the topic of fires, I must sadly report an unfortunate catastrophe that happened to one of our fellow cabin owner's mountain retreats along Pine Grove road. It happened in November when high winds came through the PGF area. A tree fell across a power line that caused a surge that found its way to the cabin's electrical panel, which started the fire. While the cabin was consumed rather quickly, brave firefighters were able to contain the area and thwart the fire from spreading through the surrounding forest.

The cabin had been built in 1953, and was completely destroyed. In speaking with the owners (whose grandfather purchased the cabin in 1976), there were many irreplaceable items

lost as well. The one thing they said the fire couldn't destroy was the wonderful memories they have of their time spent there. They hope to examine their options and to be able to rebuild in the near future. I am sure that the entire MFA family shares my sympathy and heartfelt best wishes for the family at this challenging time.

In closing, I look forward to seeing you all out and about in the coming months as I do my inspections. In the meantime, feel free to contact me with any questions or concerns. My email is richbaish@gmail.com and my phone number is 717-226-4959. Due to my cell reception be sure to leave a message and I will get back with you.

Take care,
Richard G. Baish

Litter Patrol Report
By Diane and Bob Shenk

Due to continuing COVID concerns the number of volunteers will be limited until further notice. If you are interested in participating on any of the dates below please email us at the address below with MFA in the subject line.

- June 19
- August 14
- September 25

Thank you!
Diane and Bob
Shenk
dlshenk@comcast.net



IMPORTANT CHANGES TO MFA DUES

The annual year will CHANGE TO January 1 to December 31 pending approval at the June meeting starting in the 2023 membership year.

For the 2021-22 membership year annual dues will be effective from June 2021 until December 2022, providing you with an extra 6 months. Dues for the 2023 will be DUE December 31 2022.

Michaux Forest
DCNR
Nate Yocum

Hello again everybody and welcome to another spring season on the Michaux! The red maple buds are starting to bloom, thousands of childhood memories are being made from trout fishing and the pursuit of the ever-elusive, yet delicate morel mushroom, and somewhere, a child is standing at home plate with a full-count and runners in scoring position, their parents and grandparents biting their nails nervously while watching from the stands. Personally, a lot of my favorite childhood memories were made in the spring season. It's hard to feel down with absolute perfect weather finally emerging after months of ice and snow. This is especially true this year, given the metaphorical ice and snow storm we have all been through via the COVID-19 pandemic.

I'm sure we've all heard the phrase "April showers bring May flowers". This phrase works well for many different examples in nature. A lot of seeds have been lying dormant in the soil all winter, waiting for the temperature to rise and a

little bit of rain so they can begin their lives. Farmers have planted their fields, keeping their fingers crossed for ample amounts of rain, and thus maximizing their yields in the months to come. Somewhere, a farmer is telling their child, next in line to take over the operation someday, "Remember, rain makes corn..." and well, you all know the rest. Come to think of it, the "April showers" phrase pertains to our staff here in the Michaux as well. We are spending a lot of our time knocking back unwanted vegetation, clearing way for trees to be planted at Camp Michaux, wildflower and wildlife-friendly mixes to be spread onto our retired haul roads and log landings on our various completed timber sales, and for traveling crews to plant 35,000-40,000 trees per day on multiple state forests. The "April showers" we receive this year will be an investment into our state forest for months, years, decades, and even centuries to come.

We, at the Michaux, thank the MFA for your continued support and much-needed feedback. We're truly lucky to have an or-

ganized, intelligent, and fair group within our borders. Thank you, and it's an honor to have a section in your newsletter. We also want to thank our FoM (Friends of Michaux) group, which has become a powerful and helpful force over the years. Without you, a lot of the outdoor projects we have completed together would still be sitting in the "pending stage". I would encourage anyone who hasn't met with, or heard of them, to check them out at their website

<https://friendsofmichaux.org>.

Through the pandemic, it would have been easy to write off 2020 as a "down year", or simply try to forget it ever happened, but both groups "grabbed the bull by the horns" and continued to operate at a high capacity, and progressing when times got tough. If we can get this much work completed during these trying times, I can't even imagine how successful we can be when everything gets back to normal.

Thank you, and I look forward to seeing everyone in the near future!



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**What's Cooking in Cooke
Issues Around
the Neighborhood
By Andre Weltman**

As a reminder, Cooke Township ordinances, resolutions and other information are available on the Township's website www.cooketwp.org. Questions may also be emailed to cocketwp@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).

BLACK BEARS

Our local black bears are awake and they're hungry. We've commented in previous newsletters that there's a robust bear population in Cooke Township (and the South Mountain region more generally). This is another reminder to be mindful of garbage cans, bird feeders, outdoor pet feeding areas, grills with dripped cooking grease, and any other source of interesting smells. Don't attract bears to your cabin! It's not good for us nor for the animals. 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>.

BRIEF TIDBITS

• **Solicitation Ordinance:** As noted in the previous newsletter,

Cooke Township ordinance 2020-1 requires peddlers to be registered. This does not apply to government or utility workers, non-profit groups, political activities, or Halloween-related trick-or-treaters. If you encounter a violation, please safely collect as much information as possible (including license plates) and let us know. You can read this and other ordinances on our website www.cooketwp.org -- click the "document library" on the left.

• **New Garbage Service:** Though it isn't relevant to most cabin owners, FYI there will be a new contractor handling trash collection in Cooke and nearby townships beginning July 1.

• **Paving on Old Railroad Bed Road:** We will be paving a section of this road behind Laurel Lake at an undetermined date before mid-October 2021. Access to Pole Steeple parking and the roadway near the dam will be temporarily blocked. Brief closures will be announced online and by signs; cabin owners on that road will be informed directly. Stay tuned.

CONSTRUCTION PERMITS

Please remember that building permits are required in Cooke Township. In many instances work will also invoke the State-mandated Uniform Construction Code inspection process. Don't start any building work unless you have checked with the Township directly. This applies to all properties, including those overseen by the State Park or State Forest, and applies even to cabins that have been granted an exemption from construction inspections under the UCC-13 process as allowed by the PA Department of Labor & Industry (see our comments in the Spring 2019 MFA newslet-

ter). Don't assume your contractor has taken care of this legal requirement – it is your responsibility to follow the law. Failure to comply can result in stop-work orders and fines.

COMMUNICATING WITH COOKE TOWNSHIP

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 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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**Friends of
Pine Grove Furnace
State Park**

*By Mary Soderberg,
Vice-Chair*

First, I want to say thank you to all of the members of the Michaux Forest Association for the financial and volunteer assistance that you provide the Friends of Pine Grove Furnace State Park. Your support makes a big difference in our ability to give back to the Park!

2020 was a busy year in Pine Grove Furnace State Park. Park visitation was more than 379,000, a 29 percent increase over the prior year! Based on the heavy use of our trails, campsites, and picnic areas this spring, it is clear that Pine Grove Furnace continues to be a popular outdoor escape for many.

Last fall the Friends completed two large projects, paving the new entrance to the Campground and installing the connector bridge between the Koppenhaver Trail and Mountain Creek Trail. Both the trail bridge and the entrance have helped the Park to improve visitor experiences and respond to

the increased usage. As of now, we don't have any major investments planned for 2021. Most of this year's Park support will be for ongoing trail maintenance and making routine purchases such as hanging flower baskets for the office, educational supplies and replacement trees.

Although we had to cancel our primary fundraisers in 2020, firewood sales to campers doubled last year and sales continue to be good in 2021. To meet the demand, we have been using a combination of purchased split firewood and volunteer split wood. Thankfully, we are fortunate to have a core of about twelve volunteers who have been working hard at cutting, splitting and stacking firewood for the Campground. Our goal has been to split as much firewood as possible before the weather gets hot! Although it sounds like a lot of hard work, having sufficient volunteers has made it a manageable task and a pleasant way to spend a day!

Meanwhile, we are still finalizing plans for the rest of the year. We decided not to hold our annual trail race this year, but the smaller volunteer events like Earth Day and Woodsy Owl

are proceeding as scheduled and the Park has begun to plan hikes and educational programs. We are cautiously optimistic that Fall Furnace Fest will happen and are waiting for further guidance from DCNR before we complete our plans.

Once we are able to confirm our summer and fall schedules, we will be needing volunteers for trail maintenance and for Fall Fest. Please keep an eye on our website and Facebook page for updates at pinegrovefriends.org and [Friends of Pine Grove Furnace State Park | Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/pinegrovefriends).

[2021 with the Friends of Pine Grove Furnace State Park](http://pinegrovefriends.org)
(Please check our Facebook page or the DNCR website for updates regarding events)



Events

Woodsy Owl Day, May 15: Join us for a morning of volunteering in the Park.

Van Wagner, July 24, 1-2pm: Last summer's performance had to be cancelled, so we have rescheduled Van Wagner to come and share his stories and songs about Pennsylvania.

National Public Lands Day, September 26: Join us for a morning of volunteering in the Park.

Fall Furnace Fest, October 16 and 17: 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.

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News from Pine Grove Furnace

State Park

Chris Houck

Park Manager

My name is Chris Houck. I was appointed the Park Manager of Pine Gove Furnace State Park in August 2020. I grew up in State College, PA and was introduced to the woods at a young age hiking, camping, hunting and fishing with my dad. As I grew up, I enjoyed a variety of outdoor recreation and exploring in near-by Rothrock State Forest. I graduated from PSU with a degree in Recreation, Park, and Tourism Management. Outside of the occasional hikes or fishing trips, my first real experience with DCNR was as a conservation volunteer at Black Moshannon State Park building foot bridges for Earth Day. In 2013 I took a position as a Semi-Skilled Laborer at Black Moshannon, where the next season I became a Park Ranger 1. In 2017 I began my Park Manager career as a trainee in Region 4 at Lackawanna State Park and Ridley Creek State Park. In 2018 I got my first official park as the manager of Memorial Lake and



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No Job Too Small

Swatara State Parks. In 2019 I took a promotion as the Assistant Park Manager at French Creek State Park in Berks County. In addition to my typical managerial duties at the park I serve on the DCNR recruitment committee, help with prescribed burns, and provide assistance at other parks for special events and high visitation days. I have enjoyed moving

around the State and gaining new experiences and knowledge at the different parks. It hasn't taken long for Pine Grove Furnace to feel like home. I appreciate the deep and well preserved history that is found not only in the park but in Michaux State Forest as well.

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THE CABIN BOOKSHELF
Chesapeake Requiem
 by Earl Swift

It may seem like a disconnect to be sitting on our cabin porch surrounded by forest and reading a book about an island in the middle of the Chesapeake Bay. However, *Chesapeake Requiem* by Earl Swift is both a fascinating look inside a unique island culture and also a warning about what all of us can expect due to climate change.

Swift, a journalist, spent about a year and a half living on Tangier Island documenting its history dating from the 1700s, its world renown crab industry and the natural beauty of its scenery. He assimilated into the Island population and was able to provide an insider's perspective on the island's culture – the dialect, strong conservative and religious values, the sense of community and how Tangier is really a distinct society literally and figuratively apart from the "mainland".

We learn how most of the population is distantly related to one another and thus why many last names are so common. Swift recounts in great detail the backbreaking work and dangerous life of a water-

man, including the vagaries of the crab (and oyster) harvest. Throughout the book the life cycle, catching, and sorting of crabs is a central theme along with many anecdotes about Tangier's inhabitants and history.

It is well known that the island has been steadily shrinking – due to erosion, rising seas, and sinking land mass. Further, along with climate change ever more devastating storms have contributed to the pace of erosion and shrinking shorelines – in some areas by as much as 50' a year. This reality along with a steady decline in population from over 1,000 in the early 1900s to about 400 today has made it clear that Tangier both as a community and the island itself is on an inevitable trajectory to disappearance. While sea walls and breakwaters would delay the inevitable, at least in the short run, the logistics, cost and political bureaucracy have so far stymied any real progress in bringing this about. And so the title of the book is an homage to a beautiful place and special culture whose destiny is imminently threatened.

Swift suggests that in the

coming years, many coastal areas, including major urban centers, will be faced with similar hard decisions as the effects of climate change cause steady encroachment on our coasts. Which areas should be saved - at untold cost – and which ones should be left to the whims of nature will be significant political challenges in the years ahead,

Chesapeake Requiem is worth reading not only because it serves as a warning about climate change, but the book also takes us to a way of life far removed from what most of us know.

Note: Tourists are most welcome on Tangier Island. It is a 45 minute ferry ride from Crisfield, MD. We visited many years ago and still have fond memories of its quaint culture, crab industry, few vehicles, and beautiful scenery.

Citation: Swift, Earl. *Chesapeake Requiem- A Year With the Watermen of Vanishing Tangier Island*. New York: Day Street, 2018.

Reviewed by Martin Yespy



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