



MFA NEWS

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE MICHAUX FOREST
ASSOCIATION

Fall 2018

www.michauxforestassociation.org

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Editor: Judy Prescott



The President's Column

By Mark Colucci

As I write my third installment of the President's newsletter on this October 14th, we finally have cooler weather for the first time since the beginning of fall. It gives me the opportunity to reflect on the busy summer I've had. Aside from biking and the usual cabin work, one of the more exciting trips I had taken was backpacking the Chuck Keiper trail in July. One of the nicer trails I have hiked in PA but lots of nettles... The Chuck Keiper Trail is a very rugged and remote 48-mile loop located on the Allegheny Plateau, near Snowshoe. I was fortunate enough to see a huge bear and only one rattlesnake, which posed no threat to me. The bear I saw was crossing a road. I would highly recommend hiking the CKT if you enjoy backpacking and solitude.

Speaking of remote, I've often wondered what the Michaux must have been like back in the 1700s and 1800s when the furnaces were in operation. How did they settled on these remote areas for

their operations when so much equipment was required. After doing a little research it turns out that all furnaces, prior to the Revolutionary War, were contraband and the owners were subject to the full force of the British Law if detected. This would certainly account for the isolated places they were built. What an undertaking it must have been to transform this area, we now know as the park, into an operating Iron furnace and village.

I recently took a two-day, hands on trail design and construction workshop called "Trail Bed & Tread workshop." We learned the basics of trail building and layout. We began working on a new trail for the Michaux State Forest which will connect Long Pine Reservoir to Greenwood Rd. I would highly recommend taking advantage of these programs if you like spending time in the forest and meeting new people. Soon you'll have an opportunity to hike the trail and see for yourself all the challenging work that goes into a well-planned trail. I've gained a new appreciation and I'm glad to know that I had a small part in building that trail and will most likely continue volunteering there if afforded the opportunity.

I hope by now you all have had an opportunity to look at the new MFA web site since it was announced during the annual June membership picnic. The most correspondence I receive from our membership is "how do I renew my membership?" We'll be adding that to our web site with a downloadable form you can print out and mail in. Additionally, we will be including a copy of the application with the spring newsletter. Many prefer to pay at the annual picnic, if able to attend. If you still have not renewed and wish to do so, please make your check payable to the Michaux

Forest Association in the amount of \$40.00 and mail to:

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

Your board met on October 14th and discussed many issues. One item I want to mention was our decision to donate a second cellular camera to the Forest Service. After donating the first camera, three years ago, they have experienced significant success and have arrested individuals for littering and graffiti. We're now hearing reports of the Buz-zard Rocks and other remote areas being targeted with the same activities, so this additional camera will aid the rangers in tracking down these vandals and help stop these acts. Let's all try to support our Rangers by reporting suspicious activities we see taking place in the Michaux.

In closing, remember to read your lease guidelines and notify the township, Forest, or Park depending on your location, for the proper permits and permission. Permits are a requirement in Cooke Township and should be obtained prior to beginning any work on your structure.

Enjoy the nice weather and have a very happy Holiday season!





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

Wet, wet, wet...best way to summarize my summer inspections! The biggest challenges I experienced were washed out driveways and slippery porch steps. I had my truck in four wheel drive almost as often as I do during my winter adventures. I did many of my inspections on foot to avoid damaging your lease site lawns. In addition, the soggy summer literally had spiders and mosquitoes coming out of the woodwork. I think I am still pulling cobwebs from my hats and legs and my arms are still sporting recovering scabs from all the insect bites!

The saturated soil from the summer rains provided unusually moist conditions that many trees simply uprooted. I discovered quite a few cabins that had issues due to fallen trees. And when storms came through, of course, it made matters worse.

Our neighborhood bears seemed to keep to themselves this summer. I noticed minor disturbances, mostly hummingbird feeders and an occasional overturned grille. As you know, with less human activity during the coming season, the more the bears will venture around your cottages. Don't forget to clean your grilles, secure your bird and deer feed, and always take your trash home with you for proper disposal.

The biggest nuisance I saw more of this year compared to the past several years was the construction of hornet nests on cabins and adjacent structures. When I would come upon an active nest, I would try and leave a note on the member's door to advise the location of the nest and hopefully prevent anyone from getting stung.

In closing, just want to add the good news that I didn't discover any break-ins since my last report. Hopefully this trend will continue in the upcoming fall and winter season.

As always, I appreciate any comments or concerns regarding my inspections. My email is rich-baish@gmail.com and phone number is 717-226-4959. Please leave a message

stating you are a MFA member and I will get back to you.

Best wishes to you all for safe and happy visits to our beautiful mountain retreats!



Winterizing You Cabin

Adapted from an article on
CabinFreedom.com

Why do I need to Winterize my Cabin?

There are a few major problems that can happen if you don't take the proper steps to winterize your cabin.

- Pipes freeze causing expensive damage
- Ice builds up on the roof causing expensive damage
- Your summer tools and toys won't start in the spring
- Pests find a winter home inside causing expensive damage
- Food spoils attracting pests that cause expensive damage
- Leaves, pine needles, and firewood left too close to the cabin create a fire risk which can lead to total loss or at least expensive damage
- Pilot lights and gas left on lead to fires causing total loss or expensive damage

Spending time at the cabin is one of the best ways to spend time. Throughout the year it's a fun and relaxing

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place to be. In fact, the winter is one of the best times to get away to the cabin. If you have a cabin, you need to take some important steps to get it ready for winter. That's true even if you're planning to use your cabin during the winter.

There are really two different ways to winterize a cabin. Whether you're planning to be back throughout the winter or planning to leave it until spring, you need to take some steps to prevent damage and minimize energy usage while you're away. However, there are some things that might differ a bit if you plan to visit throughout the winter or lock it up until spring.

How do you winterize a cabin for the whole winter?

A lot of people have grown accustomed to what they call a 3-season cabin. It's a cabin that gets used in the spring, summer, and fall. In the winter, this cabin gets completely shut down and buttoned up for the season. If that's how you handle your cabin, then you need to make sure that when late fall comes around, you take the time to do a full winterization on your cabin.

My recommendation here is that you create your own detailed checklist of all of the things you need to do. Make a checklist, print it out, and actually check each item off when you winterize your cabin. Missing even one thing could be costly.

Continued on page 6



Roy Brubaker
District Forester

From a Soggy Forest. . .

The beautiful thing about forests is that something always seems to find a way to thrive no matter what the weather throws at it. For me, this has been the year of the mushrooms! Chantrelles and oysters were flushing every week through July and early August and now the hen of the woods are cropping up everywhere (if you know where to look. . . and if you don't, I'm not telling!) Our freezer is full of what we couldn't eat fresh, waiting for the accompaniment of venison. Other pluses: Trout didn't have to worry about low base flow in our streams; and the abundant fungal diversity has knocked back what seemed like a burgeoning gypsy moth population.

Of course, there are a few downsides, too. The chestnut oak and a few other tree species are coping with anthracnose. Band-aiding our roads (and trying to keep ahead of the mudders!) has been full time work for our maintenance crew this summer; putting us well behind schedule on our major road projects. Trying to find days dry enough to let marking paint adhere to tree trunks have been a few of the downsides to the year of wet. Hopefully the weather didn't keep MFA members from enjoying their camps and some of the upsides of a saturated Michaux.

Big news on our end is that we were lucky enough to hire a seasonal forest tech to help with our recreation programs this season. Trenton Bechtel, a recent Mont Alto grad, will be assisting Recreation forester Matt Puchalsky and Assistant District Forester Michelle Blevins on everything from cabin inspections to trail inventory and post event monitoring. Trenton has an Associates degree in forestry from Mont

Alto, is an avid forest recreational user, and is enthusiastic about improving the recreational opportunities in Michaux. Hopefully you all get a chance to meet Trenton in the coming years. In a district already well populated with can-do, energetic folks; Trenton has been both a natural fit and a real shot in the arm where we needed it most.

Other news includes a reminder that we are still enrolled in the Pennsylvania Game Commissions Disease Management Area for CWD. If you or others using your campsite this hunting season are going to be hunting on the Michaux or in the surrounding vicinity, please make sure you are familiar with the PGC regulations regarding these special management areas. There is a lot of information on the PGC website <https://www.pgc.pa.gov/Wildlife/Wildlife-RelatedDiseases/Pages/ChronicWastingDisease.aspx>.

There will be two dumpsters on the Michaux for disposal of high-risk parts. The closest one to MFA members is just off of 233/Pine Grove Road. Going south on 233 from 81, turn right on Old Orchard Road. Dumpster is immediately on your left. Other information on parts and testing collection services and participating taxidermists and processors is located at <https://pagame.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=cf5aa9463b464dcebefaff06b451edd0>

We have had ample opportunity this year to again appreciate the presence and engagement of the Michaux Forestry Association on this forest. MFA members and board directors were present at our forest management meeting open house in August, and we received numerous pages of thoughtful

and helpful comments from your ranks; not just on our administration of the leased campsite program, but on the full range of our work as forest managers and public servants. For those of you who have not had a chance to review the plan or provide comment, it can be found on-line at http://www.docs.dcnr.pa.gov/cs/groups/public/documents/document/dcnr_20033649.pdf.

While there is not a large focus on the leased campsite program itself (most relevant language is on pp. 42-43), we do try to lay out some of our key objectives in sustaining the campsite program on the Michaux moving forward; and will continue to look to MFA members and leadership to figure out the effective strategies that work for all of you.

One small change we would like to make immediately to enhance our administrative efficiency and service effectiveness is to have current camp lease contact us when they are planning to list their camp structure for sale. Being notified that an ownership and lease transfer process is likely for a leased campsite will allow us to proactively conduct the required inspection rather than have it become a delay at the point of closing on the transaction with a prospective buyer. This notification is not required in our guidelines or lease contract, so we are simply asking folks to help us out so that we can help them out a little more effectively. Thanks for considering doing that if you plan to sell your camp this coming year.



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**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. Questions may also be emailed to 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

Replacement of the Route 233 bridge across Tom's Run in front of the State Park office is completely finished. The road closure in June was inconvenient but necessary. We are pleased at how efficiently the Penn DOT contractor worked, considering that weather was not cooperative for several days. The contractor and PennDOT also responded quickly when extra detour signs were needed to clari-

fy the road closure. Hopefully the new bridge will last even longer than the one it replaced, built in the 1930s. Per the contractor, "The new crossing is longer and wider than the one it replaced and is designed with a 100-year lifespan."

The Cooke Township road crew struggled, like everyone in this part of the country, with a remarkably wet summer. The crew has been busy addressing repeated road washouts, holes and fallen limbs/trees, as well as adding more gravel that would then get swept away by the non-stop downpours. Under-road drains were clogged by the unusual volume of debris. All in all, a tough time.

Our aging 1999 pickup truck has been replaced. We are looking to sell the old one, a GMC pickup, once a few repairs are completed. It is roadworthy but showing its age!

CELL TOWER ORDINANCE

In September, the Supervisors approved a new "Wireless Communications Facilities" Ordinance to regulate the size, location and appearance of any future cell towers and related installations. Ordinance 2018-01 is available at <http://www.timberhilltech.com/Cooke/Ordinances.html>, along with other Cooke Ordinances passed beginning in 2001.

**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 cooketwp@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.

CONSTRUCTION PERMITS

Finally, once again 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, and includes those overseen by the State Park or State Forest. Don't assume your contractor has taken care of this legal requirement – it is your responsibility to follow the law. Failure to comply can

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**Friends of
Pine Grove Furnace
State Park**

*By Mary Soderberg,
Vice-Chair*

Volunteers

One of the most wonderful things about Fall Fest are the number of volunteers who step up to make it a fun experience for everyone. This year, including the day before and day after Fall Fest, volunteers put in about 700 hours. And, to keep our volunteers happy, Agin Cajun, one of the vendors, donated meals to the volunteers. In preparation for Fall Fest, some of the key volunteer contributions included Melissa Peterson who designed the Hairy Hand shirt; Kara Shindle who created a computer-generated vendor map; and Steve Knight of WHP CBS 21 who created the new recording of the Hairy Hand Legend. Fall Fest could not happen without these wonderful people!

Friends Merchandise

We have new Friends merchandise available in the park office for your holiday shopping. At Fall Fest we introduced the Hairy Hand long sleeved shirt. Youth sizes are priced at \$10 and adult sizes at \$15. Sales were so good that we have already sold out of the small and large sizes, but there are plenty of other sizes left. In addition, we have some beautiful new slag pendants along with new styles of fleeces and sweatshirts in adult sizes small to 2X. All items are for sale in the park office during the week.

A Second Trail Bridge

DCNR staff has been working on the permit for a second trail bridge across Mountain Creek Trail. The plan is to expand the park's trail system by connecting the Mountain Creek Trail to the Kopenhaver Trail with a trail bridge. We are still in the early planning stages, so stay tuned for updates.

Kayak Launch

The free kayak programs offered by both staff and volunteers have been very popular this summer. Although you don't have to have a lot of experience kayaking for any of the programs, one of the challenges for everyone has been getting into the kayaks. To provide a little extra help, the Friends have purchased a kayak "EZ Dock" launch for Laurel Lake. Park staff will be installing the "EZ Dock" in time for next season.

Memorial Donations

Earlier this year, another memorial contribution was made to the Friends of Pine Grove Furnace State Park. The donation allowed the Friends to purchase additional white porch furniture for the Ironmaster's Mansion. The Mansion now has two benches and six matching rocking chairs on the porch.




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Leasa Craver, a cabin owner

Key 2019 Dates for Friends of Pine Grove Furnace State Park

- January 1: First Day Hike at 1pm. Meet at the Fuller Lake Bath House and be sure to dress for weather.
- April 17: Earth Day, 9-noon. A morning of volunteering, meeting others and giving back to the 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.
- June 21 – 23 and August 16 -18: Family Campout Weekends. An easy way to introduce your family to camping. Loaner equipment is available on request.

Winterizing Your Cabin

continued from page 2

Let's start with things to do outside

Rake up all leaves, sticks, and pine needles within 30 feet of the cabin. This is the area around your cabin called the defensible zone. Keeping it clear of combustible materials on the ground is important for keeping your cabin safe from fires.

Gather up all of your outside toys, furniture, and appliances and store them for the winter. Grills, outdoor tables and chairs, anything that gets used outdoors around the cabin should be packed away if you don't want it getting snowed on and frozen. Having snow accumulate on these things and then thaw and freeze can cause damage forcing you to replace these things much more often than necessary.

If you have a lawn, give it one final mow.

Winterize outdoor lawn equipment, transportation, and toys. Lawnmowers, chainsaws, dirt bikes, whatever you have. Anything that's powered by a battery should have the battery removed. Put these batteries on a trickle charger to keep them charged up. Otherwise you'll find yourself replacing them in the spring. You should remove the fuel or put an appropriate amount of fuel stabilizer in and fill the gas tank with fresh gasoline. These two steps will make your stuff easy to start up in the spring. Neglect to do this and you may end up needing repairs come spring.

Clean out gutters and inspect the roof shingles. Look for broken shingles and raised edges.

Look for cracks or openings in your foundation, between the foundation and the walls, and around vents. Any openings like these are like neon welcome signs for pests. Fill any small cracks with caulk. For larger cracks, you can fill them with a wire mesh or even steel wool and then some expandable foam. The metal will keep pests from chewing through.

If you notice damage to siding, you probably have larger animals chewing on the wood. If this is happening, spray the lower siding all around your cabin with an anti-chewing spray. While you're at it, spray some bug barrier both outside and inside all

the way around and around any openings like doors and windows to keep insects and spiders out.

Turn off the breaker to the outside water pump and any other powered outdoor things.

Now let's move to what needs to get done indoors

If you have a thermostat and enough electricity and gas to power your heat source all winter, then just set your thermostat low, but not lower than 55°F. This will help keep pipes from freezing. Before you leave for the winter, clean or replace your furnace filter to keep your furnace running efficiently.

Shut off other power to your cabin. Turn off any breakers to things like the refrigerator, oven, lights, and electrical outlets.

Remove everything from the refrigerator. Leave the refrigerator door and freezer door open at least slightly to allow them to air out. Leaving a refrigerator closed at room temperature all winter will cause it to smell musty when you return.

Close your blinds and/or curtains. This will protect the inside of your cabin from sunlight and also help keep potential intruders out.

Turn off your water heater and drain it. Also drain all water lines by finding the lowest faucet in your cabin (maybe an outside hose bib if you have one) and open it. With the water pump to the house turned off, this will drain out the water in the system. Open all other faucets in the house as well until water stops flowing anywhere. You don't necessarily have to drain water lines if you can keep your cabin at 55°F or warmer all winter. But if you can't, you should definitely do this step.

You can take this a step further by installing a fitting for your air compressor where the water comes into the cabin, somewhere easy to get to, and then using an air compressor to blow out the water lines after draining the water. This will help get any pooled water out of your water lines.

Use RV-grade antifreeze to pour down the drains in your cabin. You don't need a ton, just enough to fill the P-traps so that water doesn't pool in them and freeze causing your drain lines to burst.

Continue on page 7

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Winterizing Your Cabin

continued from page 6

This includes the toilets. You don't need to fill the water tanks on the back of the toilet with antifreeze. Just pour some down the toilet and it will do the job.

If you have an attic space, make sure it's vented so that it can stay cold. If your attic space is too warm, it will cause any snow on the roof to thaw and then refreeze over and over again. This leads to ice buildup which can be very damaging. It's better to keep your attic space cold.

Do I need to winterize my cabin if I'm going to use it during the winter?

The answer is still yes. If you leave your cabin and shut off the heat, even for a few days in the winter, your pipes can freeze and cause all sorts of damage. All of the outdoor winterization should still get done in the winter. Even if you're sticking around or planning to visit throughout the winter, your outdoor gas-powered tools need to be winterized.

If you'll be visiting throughout the winter, then the list above can definitely be adjusted. In fact, if you'll visit most every weekend and have access to enough power and fuel to keep your cabin heated while you're gone, then you can get away with not draining out all the water lines. But if your cabin is heated by a wood-burning stove while you're gone, then you absolutely need

to drain out all the water.

Here are some other things you can add to the list above or potentially remove if you plan to visit throughout the winter.

If you'll be using it regularly, you may not need to put away all your outdoor furniture, grills, fire pits, etc. Just store them where they are covered and protected from ice, snow, and the sun. But make sure they're easy to get back out to use when you go back to the cabin.

You don't need to shut off all the breakers like we talked about above. Just do what you normally do when you leave the cabin and shut off appliances.

Back to water lines, if you can't keep the cabin warm, you should still empty and even blow out water lines before you leave. Same goes for putting antifreeze down the drain pipes. But if you can keep the inside of the cabin warm, you can skip this step.

Everything else as outlined above and as applicable to your cabin. Even if you'll be coming back throughout the winter, the fall is a good time to clean up the area around your cabin and make sure everything is in good order to keep pests out. Even if you're only gone a few days, insects and animals will find their way inside if you let them. It gets cold outside and your cabin offers protection from the elements.

Changing Times?

By Judy Prescott

While at one of the wonderful cabin parties that occur in the summer I was listening to some 'ole timers' talk about the history of their cabins in Pine Grove and Michaux Forest. Although not official... it seems that the first cabins were built in the 1930's. Cabins continued to be built up into the 1960's. Initially there was no phone service, limited electricity and indoor plumbing was unheard of! Gradually modernization came along and electricity and phone services were added. Of course the phones were a party line and served as entertainment for many children who listened in on other people's conversation! Indoor plumbing was still a rare luxury for many more years. Families made regular trips to local springs to collect water running from pipes.

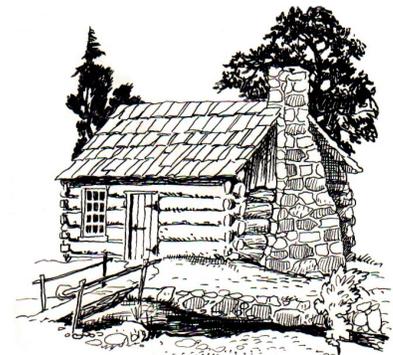
Cabin leases were transferred from one generation to the next and rarely left the family tree. Laurel Lake and Fuller Lake were local hangouts and 'too far out of the way' for most folks. The Pine Grove Store hosted sock-hops with music from a juke box on the front porch. Kids were encouraged to roam the woods for fun, ride bikes to neighboring cabins and not come home till dark!

Fast forward to 2018... Cabins are leaving the family tree on a regular basis. It is unheard of to NOT have electricity, indoor plumbing is a common luxury, and phone service can now include internet access! Wow!

In spite of all the change I believe that the appreciation and pride that one has for their cabin is just as strong as it ever was...and hope this is one thing that will never change!



Family Archive Picture
1940's





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