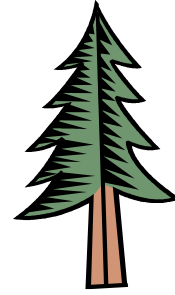


MFA NEWS



THE NEWSLETTER OF THE MICHAUX FOREST
ASSOCIATION

Spring 2023

www.michauxforestassociation.com

Editor: Judy Prescott
Web Master: Deb Rosevear



President's Column
Lyle Herr

Although it was a mild winter everyone is happy that Spring is here. Flowers are blooming, trees are budding and cabins are starting to open across the forest. It was a calm off-season with some minor weather related damage reported and no break-ins.

For the past several years your MFA has been involved in a task force with our local foresters from DCNR which has been reviewing the current lease campsite regulations. This task force is made up MFA board members, cabin owners from the Caledonia area and DCNR staff. Although we met with DCNR officials in Harrisburg last year, there has been no further action on these guidelines to this point. Our group is planning to meet again this Summer to reevaluate

the situation and focus our attention on other issues regarding leased campsites in the Michaux forest.

We are well into our second year with our Mountain Creek Buffer project. We set aggressive goals for this project which is designed to improve the riparian buffer along Mountain Creek. We have cleared invasives, planted native trees and bushes and cleared trash throughout the area. Our project coordinator and board member, Tom Reidenbaugh, as worked tirelessly to advance this project and we are very proud of his efforts. We are grateful to our funding sponsors, The Giant Corporation, Friends of Pine Grove Furnace State Park and the Cumberland County Conservation District. We would also like to acknowledge the following agencies that have provided invaluable support: Pine Grove Furnace State Park, DCNR Conservation volunteers, Cumberland County Juvenile Probation, Cumberland County Master Watershed Stewards, Cumberland County Master Gardeners, Friends of Michaux State Forest, Chesapeake Bay Foundation / Keystone 10 Million trees Partnership, Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay, Dickinson College Alliance for Aquatic Resource Monitoring, Shippensburg University Center for Land Use and Sustainability and Shippensburg Township Parks and Recreation. That is quite a list but none of this

would have been possible without the help of dozens of volunteers who have made this project so successful. It is also important to note that thanks to our funding sources, no MFA funds were spent on this project!

As cabin owners we have a responsibility to be good stewards of the Michaux Forest and the Pine Grove State Park. Educate yourselves on invasive species, maintain your cabins and leased campsite areas and follow the "leave no trace" rule when enjoying our public parks, forests and recreational areas. It all starts with you and you can make a difference!

As your out-going president I would like to thank you all for this opportunity. I've met so many great people and learned so much about our organization's rich history and our involvement with this beautiful area. A special thanks to our MFA board members for you support and cooperation! Its been very much appreciated.

I hope to see you all at our annual picnic where we will once again have live music, great food and the chance to spend time with our cabin neighbors and families.





Hello MFA members,

I am writing this note to you all from the comfy confounds of Laurel Lodge. I have a nice campfire warming my chimney's stones while leaving the front door open and listening to the soothing sounds of the peepers. To top off this magnificent ambiance, I have the first round of the Masters on the TV! Spring is here!

I am a snow enthusiast; thus, winter was disappointing from that aspect. Other than Laurel Lake only being frozen in December (I like crossing it to shortcut some of my inspections), it did make travel for my cabin duties much easier than most years. Despite the mild temperatures, we still had our usual share of high winds and storms that created havoc and damage. Most cabins escaped any major issues, though a few uprooted trees and sheared limbs did hit a few of our members'

sheds and cabins. Also, I discovered a couple former member's cabins that felled trees caused serious harm to their structure. In cases such as those, I research my old records, and leave a message with the last existing member contact I have for that site. Occasionally, someone calls me back and discusses the situation. And many times, the owners did not even realize they had overlooked renewing their MFA membership and rejoined.

In addition to the storms, we also had a few brush fires in the area this winter. Two that I know, one in the fall and the other in February, were in the proximity of our cabins. The fire that occurred during hunting season was dangerously close to destroying a cabin by Laurel Dam. But thanks to the brave volunteers of our local fire companies, they were able to control the situation before that happened. The fire did burn the steps of the cabin, but it could have been much worse! Once again, much thanks is owed to the first responders that give their time and efforts to protect our properties.

Finally, I must report that we had perhaps 3 or 4 acts of vandalism this past season. To the best of my knowledge, they were isolated incidents and, at this time, no one has notified me that any individual has been caught in any of the break-ins. Just a reminder, if you have a situation at your premises such as this, I would appreciate it if you would let me know. That enables me to know to check the neighboring cabins as promptly as I can to insure they are secure. If anyone has questions or concerns about my services, please let me know. You can leave a message at (717) 226-4959, and I will return your call as quickly as possible. Best wishes to you all for many safe and happy travels to the beautiful Michaux forest this summer.



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No Job Too Small

DCNR
Suzanne Hartley
Environmental
Education Specialist

Spring is a busy time of year in the forest! We have welcomed back our seasonal staff along with some new additions. Ryan Thrush joined the team from Tuscarora State Forest as a Forest Ranger. We also hired a second Environmental Education Specialist, Amy Shull. She joins us with 19 years of working in State Parks. A few more new faces will be joining the district office over the coming weeks.

Across the forest we have many recreation, restoration, and timber management projects planned for the coming months, including trail building and tree and pollinator plantings.

We are working to build a new sustainable trail system off Old Railroad Bed Road, known as the Hearth Tender Trail. This will connect to the existing Pole Steeple Trail. Once completed, the trail will be an easy-to-moderate trail open to hikers and bikers. Throughout the year we will be having monthly workdays to build the trail.

The second week of April we planted over 200 trees at Big Pine Flat. Big Pine Flat is a unique scrub oak ecosystem that the district works to restore with partners, such as the National Wild Turkey Federation, Appalachian Trail Conservancy, and South Mountain Partnership. Previous work in the area has included prescribed fire, fencing, and other management techniques. Later this month we will plan over a thousand pollinator plants in the Bunker Hill/Camp Michaux area. If you are interested in joining us in the planting contact us at fd01@pa.gov.

One last reminder, March through May is wildfire season in Pennsylvania. This year the wildfire season started early with a record number of fires in February. To reduce the risk of wildfires campfires and open burning, including leased camp sites, are not allowed in the Michaux State Forest from March 1 to May 25.

Litter Patrol Dates
by
Diane and Bob Shenk

April 23
June 24
August 12
September 23

If you are interested in participating on any of these dates please email dlshenk@comcast.net.

MFA Annual Picnic June 24
Furnace Pavilion
5:30p.m. Picnic
6:00 p.m. Meeting

Drinks, hamburgers and hotdogs provided.

Live music by Nuthin Ta Plunder.

Cornhole boards.

Please bring a potluck dish.

Invite a neighbor. Join the fun!



Important Emergency Numbers

Cook Township 717-486-8114
Michaux District Office, DCNR 717-352-2211
Pine Grove Furnace Office 717-486-7174
Met Ed/First Energy 888-544-4877
Century Link 800-201-4099

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Parting comments from the Editor Judy Prescott

I have greatly enjoyed my duties as Newsletter Editor over the past 8 years. It has been a pleasure reviewing articles that have been submitted. In each edition I tried my best to make the newsletter interesting and informative. When I volunteered for this duty I had no idea what lie ahead! I have experienced numerous opportunities to advocate for the preservation of a place I consider my second home...the Michaux Forest.


I am confident as I pass the duty to Andy McCrae the newsletter will continue to thrive and grow!



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**Friends of
Pine Grove Furnace
State Park**
*By Mary Soderberg,
Vice-Chair*

We are only a few months into the year and the Friends have been busy! Each January the board members of the Friends and park manager meet to determine how we can best invest in the park. Thus far, we have ordered two more bicycle repair stations, two replacement water fountains for the concession stands, new metal park maps for the kiosks throughout the park, and a replacement pump for the sewage system at the Campground. The Friends have again contributed to the MFA Mountain Creek Project to restore the natural streambank buffer along the creek and we are continuing to work with DCNR to finalize historical waysides for the Koppenhaver Trail.

Improving the look of our Friends merchandise sales area in the park Office has been a priority this spring. Stop in the Office and check out the new layout and our park souvenirs – just remember we can only accept cash or checks!

Planning is well underway for our two annual trail races on June

10. This year we are using a new company (runsignup.com) for online registration for the Iron Race half-marathon and Charcoal Challenge 5K. Although you can register right up until race day, if you register before May 18 you get a discount price and a guaranteed race shirt. All the funds that we raise are reinvested into the park for education, conservation and recreation programs and projects!

Meanwhile, Fall Furnace Fest is a year-round process of lining up vendors, sponsors and entertainers. If you know of a local business who might be interested in being a sponsor or vendor for Fall Fest, please have them contact us at pinegrove-friends@gmail.com.

A special shout out to the small team of wood splitting volunteers (most of whom are members of the MFA) who contributed a total of more than 150 hours in the first three months of this year!!! Selling firewood at the campground is our largest source of revenue and we could not do it without our volunteers!

As always, many thanks to the members of the Michaux Forest Association for the donations and volunteer efforts that you provide to both the Friends and to Pine Grove Furnace State Park!



What's Cooking in Cooke — Issues Around the Neighborhood

By Andre Weltman, Twp. Planning Committee

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 cooketwp@kuhncom.net.

TOWNSHIP MONTHLY SUPERVISOR MEETINGS

Please feel free to attend Board of Supervisors meetings, usually held the first Tuesday of each month at 7:30 P.M. at the Township building. Your attendance and participation are always welcome. Before dropping by, check for schedule changes on our website or on the bulletin board outside the Township building front door at 1700 Centerville Road, Newville PA 17241 (along Route 233, three miles north from the State Park Office).

CONSTRUCTION PERMITS

Please remember that building permits are required in Cooke Township. 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 Dept.

Continued of page 7

2023 with the Friends of Pine Grove Furnace State Park

www.FriendsofPineGrove.org and [Friends of Pine Grove Furnace State Park | Facebook](#)

Iron Run and Charcoal Challenge Trail Races, June 10, 2023: Register online by May 18 for a discounted price and to guarantee a race shirt. <https://runsignup.com/Race/PA/Gardners/IronRunandCharcoalChallenge>

National Public Lands Day, September 23, 2023: Nationally, this is the largest single day of volunteering in public lands! Support our state public lands with a few hours of volunteering at Pine Grove Furnace State Park. We will finish up the morning with hamburgers and hotdogs for the volunteers.

Fall Furnace Fest, October 21 and 22, 2023: 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.

THE CABIN BOOK SHELF

Books reviewed by
Martin Yespy

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These two books each in their own way encourage us to think beyond our narrow human interests. Whether it is the symbolism using trees or the sensory pathways of other species, these books guide us to go beyond ourselves as we sit reading on our cabin porch.

The Overstory

By Richard Powers

Richard Powers' novel, *The Overstory*, is a very wide-ranging fictional story containing countless ponderous themes. It is such that one could sit on the cabin porch this summer and spend hours contemplating Powers' many lyrical descriptions, metaphors, philosophical musings and insights. But overarching the entire story is the deep, provocative, and wondrous focus on trees, other flora, and especially old growth forests. Although this is a work of fiction the detailed discussion of tree ecology, global diversity and history of trees, and how they communicate, commune, and enrich the planet, is itself an impressive academic work. Simply put, the story changes the way we look at trees.

The novel begins with what are essentially eight short stories, introducing the various characters of the book. Each story is provocative, often tragic, and evocative of existential human issues. Each story uses trees and flora as poignant symbols of life and history. Beyond this, via ingenious and creative twists to the story many of the characters come together in futile battle against the destruction of old-growth forests and ancient redwoods.

A central theme of the novel is that humans have always been fo-

cused on themselves and especially the use of earth's resources to maximize comfort and pursue progress at all costs. Trees which existed long before humans are essential to the survival of the planet and will continue to disappear at record rates unless humans somehow can alter their drive to conquer the natural world. A short evolutionary history of the planet near the end of the story reinforces the idea that although human existence is but a blip in earth's history, it can forever alter the earth's course. Among many other themes and life lessons, this is the plea of Powers' novel.

Powers, Richard. *The Overstory*, New York, N.Y.: Norton, 2018

An Immense World

By Ed Yong

Although Ed Yong's book, *An Immense World*, is written for a popular audience, in a sense it can be considered a scholarly work. While this is not quite a biology textbook, it is easily just as informative.

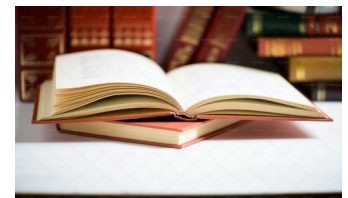
From the very first pages Yong vividly makes the case that the world humans perceive and experience is just a sliver of the entire sensory world of our planet. To make his case, Yong introduces a veritable Noah's Ark of species to illustrate how each perceives and interacts with its "umwelt" or perceptual world/ "sensory bubble". Many of the species are very familiar to cabin owners such as birds, bats, bees, snakes, spiders, dogs, insects, mice, but countless sea creatures and other vertebrates and invertebrates are also discussed.

The book is organized around the types of sensory perceptions that living species experience. In fascinating detail, along with captivating stories, Yong elaborates how various species experience the traditional five senses but also goes way beyond these categories into such phe-

nomena as echolocation, electroreception, and magnetoreception. Yong continually makes the point that even though humans can study the sensory pathways and mechanisms of various species and marvel at their complexities, humans cannot really know exactly what animals experience. Yong repeatedly reminds us that there is a huge sensory world well beyond human perception. We need to respect this world and be mindful how our actions can have grave environmental consequences for all species. (Yong's discussion of light pollution is but one example.)

An Immense World really does enlarge our human experienced world. Sitting on our cabin porch and contemplating all that goes on above and below the ground and water enriches our own lives and our marvel of the ecosystem.

Yong, Ed. *An Immense World*, New York, N.Y.: Random House, 2022



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Cook Township continued from page 5

of Labor & Industry (see our comments in the Spring 2019 MFA newsletter). 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 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.

STREET ADDRESS NUMBERS

We want to remind all cabin owners that a street number (“123” for a structure on 123 Main Street) must be posted along the road where emergency crews can see it. Using your DCNR cabin number (“1C1234”) is not helpful to emergency crews. Township Ordinance 97-1 specifies that these numbers should be at least 3 inches tall and made of reflective material. For cabins, the numbers can be on a 4x4 post between 3 and 4 feet tall, at the lane or driveway entrance to the cabin, with the numbers arranged vertically. This includes cabins behind yellow Forestry gates. If more than one cabin is behind a single gate or entranceway, the post should include the street numbers for each of the cabins. To

quote from the 15-year-old Ordinance: “The Board of Supervisors finds that the police, emergency medical services, and fire services have had difficulty locating addresses of homes and businesses on Township streets and roads due to lack of lot and building identification numbers. It is, therefore, the purpose of this Ordinance to establish a system of numbering all lots on which there is a dwelling unit or business so that police, EMS, and fire services can locate addresses in emergency situations.” The problem is quite real in our remote rural corner of the mountains. The life you save may be your own!

TAXES

Here's a quick note about the taxes you pay for your cabin, versus the taxes our Township receives. Please keep in mind that Cooke is unique in being mostly composed of State Forest/State Park lands. We receive limited funds from the Commonwealth as “payments in lieu of taxes” based on acreage of DCNR property in the Township, but the money received is nonetheless limited relative to Cooke's overall land area. The Township's rural character further means that even on private land we have no commercial de-

velopment, especially compared to our valley neighbors along I-81 – thus we don't have high-value commercial property assessments to generate large tax revenue. All in all, Cooke gets by with a very small budget.

But what about all the money that property owners pay in the two annual tax bills, you ask? Take a close look at those bills (sent around March for the county + municipality; and around July for the school district). By far the largest chunk of change goes to the local school district, not to Cooke. Another portion goes to Cumberland County, not the Township. Cooke Township receives only 7.6% of the assessed taxes you pay for your cabin.

See <https://www.cumberlandcountypa.gov/DocumentCenter/View/6869/Real-Estate-Taxes>, <https://www.cumberlandcountypa.gov/3021/When-Are-My-Taxes-Due> and <https://www.cumberlandcountypa.gov/DocumentCenter/View/8752/Local-Tax-brochure> for more info.

So, when you think about your assessed taxes for owning a cabin up here, realize that Cooke is only getting a few pennies of each dollar!



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