



# ***Burning Issues***

The Newsletter of the Pennsylvania Forest Heritage Association

<http://www.paforestheritage.org>

**VOLUME XXIV – No. 2**

**2<sup>ND</sup> QUARTER 2018**



## **President's Message**

The summer of 2018 has had a slow start, but the weather is warming and I'm sure we will have another very hot summer. So far at the Discovery Center we have had nearly 300 visitors. As in previous years they range from people who have some idea about wildfire fighting and forest conservation in Pennsylvania to people for whom this is a completely unknown topic. There is a not small number of visitors who think Pennsylvania is covered by an old growth forest, like the redwoods in California. It's always gratifying to share with them how much work and struggle has gone into saving and regenerating our forests.

For the younger visitors the Smoky Bear give-aways (pencils, coloring books, and comic books) are still very popular. I believe it was Jack Graham who had the idea of setting up a backpack pump and a target outside. This gives us a great chance to talk about the physical endurance needed to fight fires and the importance of water resources. And, on a really hot day, the kids can squirt each other!

We still have plenty of openings for volunteers. Our organization has committed to operating the Discovery Center on weekends and holidays from Memorial Day to Labor Day. Please go to our website, [paforestheritage.org](http://paforestheritage.org), to sign up. Please contact me if you have any questions. (My email is [pe12@psu.edu](mailto:pe12@psu.edu)). An afternoon at the Discovery Center is always rewarding!

(continued page 3)

## **Ellen M. Shultzabarger**

**State Forester**

**Bureau of Forestry**



Ellen M. Shultzabarger is a native of the Cumberland Valley. She has been an outdoorsperson from the beginning, a self-described "river rat" who frequented the Conodoguinet Creek. She got into mountain biking and hiking, and now with her husband and two children she is more into hiking. As part of her new job as State Forester of Pennsylvania, hiking the trails and paths of Penn's Woods takes on new significance.

Shultzabarger graduated from Ohio State University with a bachelor's degree in Natural Resources. She also received a graduate certification in Urban Environmental Planning and Policy from Tufts University. It is not the "traditional forestry" degree in forest management but rather a more holistic approach to forest ecology. She not only had to take classes in forestry but her course work covered other topics with an emphasis on sustainability.

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## **PA Forest Heritage Association**

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## **2018 Wildfire Summary to June 11**

648 Wildfires Statewide

1,817 acres Burned

7 Injuries

30 Structures Lost

Most in the State – Weiser State Forest

86 Wildfires burned 111 acres

Highest Acreage – Sproul State Forest

11 Wildfires – 739 Acres

Greatest Loss – Clear Creek State Forest

76 Fires – 111 Acres - \$301,000 Damage

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*The Scranton Tribune, July 2, 1895*

### **FISH FROM THE CLOUDS**

Half-Famished Fire-Fighters Have a Wonderful Feast.

Bradford, Pa., July 1. A strange occurrence connected with the forest fires which raged throughout McKean county is reported from the Kinzua Valley. On a day when the fires were burning the fiercest and the men were worn out and almost dead with hunger, a dark cloud suddenly overcast the sky and rain began falling. With the shower seemed to fall hundreds of fish, ranging from three to eleven inches in length. The fish were perfectly formed and in many instances where they fell upon the burning embers, they were found by the half-famished men and eaten with great relish. The people of the Kinzua Valley were greatly puzzled by this wonderful shower, but it is believed the fish were washed out of the Kinzua Creek by the fierce wind and rain storm.

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May 21, 2018

HOOD RIVER, Ore. (AP) — A teenager who started a major wildfire in the scenic Columbia River Gorge in Oregon has been ordered to pay restitution for at least the next decade, though it's unlikely the boy will ever cover his nearly \$37 million bill.

*(President's Message cont. from Page 1)*

Earlier this spring the manager of Caledonia State Park asked if they could use one of our rooms in the Discovery Center for an office. We settled on the Tower Room in the back. Many thanks to Bill Parr, who worked many hours consolidating the collections and moving the fire tower materials to the Smoky Room.

I would like to mention our amazing collections. For many years Steve Cummings collected all sorts of more or less forest history related documents. One of these that was recently found by Jack Graham and Mike Klimkos is a thank you note from Theodore Roosevelt to Allen B. Hayward at the U.S. Pension Bureau in Washington, D.C. in 1900. McKinley and Roosevelt had just won the presidential election and Hayward had sent Roosevelt congratulations. What is the connection to forest conservation of such a letter? It is tenuous, but there. Hayward was a Civil War veteran who lost his right arm in the Battle of Cold Harbor in 1864. In later years he built and lived in three tree-top houses in Washington D.C. He felt it was a more healthy environment than city living. More information about him can be found in this Park View D.C. article: <https://tinyurl.com/yc6fyxop>

I would also like to thank Jeff and Mildred Stuffle who scanned all of the issues of Forest Fire Warden News in our files from 1926 to 2007. They are now in pdf form. In the future we will find a way to make them available to everyone, perhaps on our website.

Thank you to all the members and volunteers who help make the work of the PFHA possible.

*Peter Linehan*

In the 1930's, the Forestry Service approached Council Tool about manufacturing tools to fight forest fires. That led to the development of the fire rake. Known throughout the industry as the Council Rake, the tool is still in use today.

*(State Forester cont. from Page 1)*

Before coming to DCNR in 2004, Shultzabarger served with the Massachusetts Division of Fish and Wildlife, Tufts University and several local and national non-profit conservation organizations. When she arrived at DCNR Shultzabarger worked for the Bureau of Forestry in a variety of positions, with the most recent being the Chief of Conservation Science and Ecological Resources. During her tenure at DCNR, she has led a number of highly visible projects that span all aspects of its work, including oil and gas management; restoration and monitoring; wildlife management; invasive species; and recreation planning.

Since Dr. Rothrock hired George Wirt in 1901 as Pennsylvania's first State Forester, the position has been held by men. Ellen is the first woman to hold the job. When asked if it made a difference to her, she noted, "I got here just the same as everybody else." She has confidence in her ability to do the job not because she is a woman but rather because she has the training and the knowledge to do the job. She also noted, "There are a lot more women in the field now than there were fifteen years ago when I started."

Some of the opportunities and challenges facing Pennsylvania's forests and the bureau in the coming years include addressing the impacts of invasive species and diseases; stewardship of private forest lands; assessing recreational needs and opportunities; managing activities related to energy and rights-of-ways; adaptation planning for future climate change; and elevating the values of forests and trees.

Shultzabarger noted that the Bureau is updating the 1995 plan for state forests. She noted that many of the things noted in that plan have been accomplished. With the plan set to come out in 2020 and will address if the state is set to address the needs of all the forest users. The plan will look at current and longer-term needs and what resources need to be refocused to meet those needs.

*(State Forester cont. from Page 3)*

When asked about the biggest problem facing the forests today Shultzabarger replied that invasive species, both plants and animals will have a huge impact on forests in the coming years. She wants to ensure that Pennsylvania does not lose its native species nor gain other unwanted species.

Her fire experience is limited but she said she has great people working for her and she trusts them. When asked if a 30,000 acre fire could happen in Pennsylvania today, she paused and replied, "Hmmm," she said pausing for a bit, "I don't know. Anything is possible, but I hope not."

Shultzabarger, 41 lives in Lancaster with her husband Brian and their two children.

## **Prescribed Fire**

Prescribed fire is a management tool being used more and more every year by land management professionals, be it DCNR's Bureau of Forestry, the Pennsylvania Game Commission or other land management agencies such as conservancies. Prescribed fire has many benefits, including eradication of invasive species, habitat restoration, fuel load reduction or forest management. Because of its very nature prescribed burning is highly visible to the public when thick columns of smoke are seen billowing from the woodlands.

Make no mistake about it, prescribed fire is not an unplanned carelessly thought out event. Foresters will begin by evaluating an area to determine what might be the best course of action to rid an area of undesirable plants and/or insect pests. An area might be infested with invasive plants, or the desired tree species might not be growing as they should because they are being outcompeted by other species, such as

mountain laurel. The fallen leaves (duff) might have accumulated to such an extent that tree seeds cannot penetrate the layer to establish a good root system. Dead trees may have accumulated to such an extent that the fuel load can pose significant hazards to firefighters if an unplanned fire does break out. Depending on the scenario, a prescribed fire is planned.

The plan is written, adjusted as necessary, and then approved. Only after the plan has been signed off on by all the landowners and evaluated by trained fire professionals can it be approved. Then the plan is put into effect.

One very highly visible prescribed fire was conducted by the Bureau of Forestry on May 1, 2018 on South Mountain in Cumberland County. Known as the Hairy Springs Prescribed Fire, was conducted on the Michaux State Forest and National Park Service lands in South Newton and Southampton Townships. The project area is bounded by Big Pond Road, Hogshead Road, and Ridge Road.

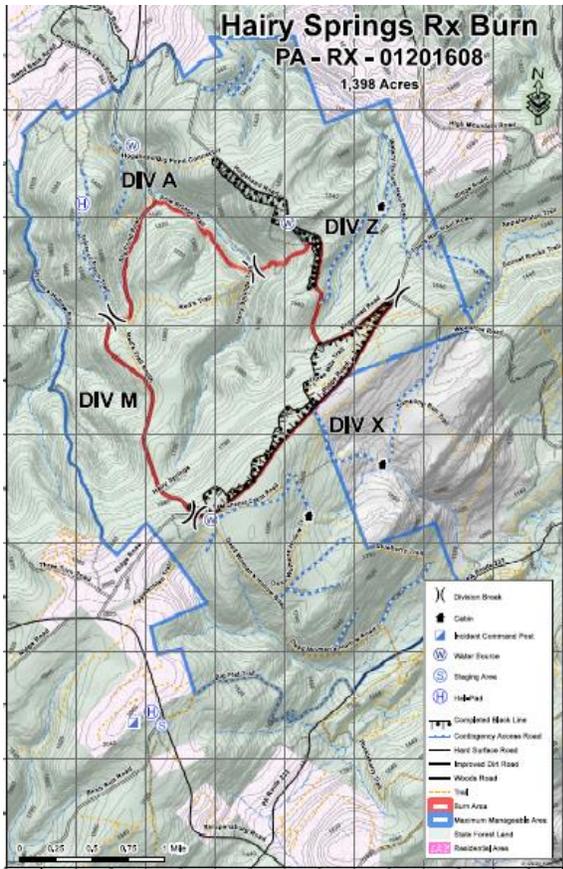
The planned size of the entire fire area was 1,926 acres. Sixty crewmembers were on the scene that day led by Mike Grainger, a Prescribed Fire Boss 1 from Montana. He was chosen because of his credentials in prescribed burning practices and the complexity of the fire was such a level 1 fire boss was needed. Assisting him was Shawn Turner, Forest Fire Specialist Supervisor from the Delaware State Forest who is a Burn Boss Trainee. The crews were staffed by Bureau of Forestry personnel as well as crews from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Prescribed fires provide valuable training to crewmembers who wish to further their careers in wildland firefighting.

There were five Type 6 engines on the scene with another held in reserve. There were 2 Type 7 engines on scene as well as 7 UTVs with water tanks and pumps. One fixed wing aircraft flew

above the fireground acting in a reconnaissance capacity and a helicopter assisted in ignition operations. When the fixed wing aircraft and the helicopter cleared the airspace a drone was used to give fireground commanders a look at what was happening. Jason Williams from the Bureau of Forestry's central office was the aircraft coordinator.

number of rapidly declining non-game species that they support; and because of the positive impact they have on increasing landscape level carrying capacity for popular game species such as white tailed deer, wild turkey, and ruffed grouse.

This area of the Michaux contains difficult terrain and dense laurel and other volatile fuels. In the event of a wildfire, it would be a difficult and dangerous area in which to conduct suppression activities. Prevailing wind patterns could also drive a wildfire occurrence in this area towards residences and structures within the state forest; making current conditions a potential liability in the event of extreme fire conditions.



Map of the Prescribed Fire on South Mountain, Cumberland County

On that day a burn of 1,398 acres was conducted. Since 2012, the Michaux State forest has been working with the Appalachian Trail Conservancy, Western Pennsylvania Conservancy, Pennsylvania Game Commission, and numerous other entities to rejuvenate and restore Pitch Pine scrub oak barrens habitats in the vicinity of Dead Woman's Hollow. Restoring these types of habitats on the Michaux is a critical ecological priority both because of the



Area one month after prescribed burn. It will take a year or more to determine if the prescribed fire met the goals and objectives

As Phil Bietsch, Fire Forester for the Michaux State Forest noted, "The prescribed burn met the goals of the plan. The burn was stopped about 500 acres short of the plan because of some sensitive species in the area. The rest of the burn may be accomplished in the fall or next spring." Evaluation of the burn will take a year to determine how the forest reacted. According to Bietsch, "We are very cautious to meet the goals and objectives of the burn. We are already seeing signs that the burn worked as planned."

### Mission Statement

The mission of the Pennsylvania Forest Heritage Association is to preserve and showcase the rich heritage of forestry and forest protection in Pennsylvania, and to inform and educate the public about present-day forestry, including forest fire protection, and its future in the Commonwealth

### Vision Statement

The Pennsylvania Forest Heritage Association is a place of discovery. Significant artifacts and interactive exhibits trace the past and point to the future of forestry in Pennsylvania. The museum is dedicated to the stewardship of all forest resources and honors the men and women who sustain today's forest. Here everyone can enjoy a variety of experiences that further an understanding of forestry and forest fires.

### Membership Application

Please enroll the following as a member of the Pennsylvania Forest Heritage Association

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ St. \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Check One:

- Student/ Youth \$5
- Individual \$35
- Family (number in household \_\_\_\_\_) \$25
- Sustaining \$35
- Non-Profit Volunteer Organization (check below) \$35
  - Forest Fire Crew
  - Volunteer Fire Company
  - Forest Fire Wardens Assoc.
  - Other Organization \_\_\_\_\_
- Corporate \$100
- Life \$300
- Contributing \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- I do not wish to join but I would like to make a donation \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Make Checks payable to:

### Pennsylvania Forest Heritage Association

Mail to:

The Pennsylvania Forest Heritage Assoc.  
6151 Route 209  
Stroudsburg, PA 18360-7039

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PA Forest Heritage Assoc.  
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