

# 2023 Fair

The Wyoming County Fair was held over the Labor Day weekend with another great showing by the Conservation District along with our booth partner, Bureau of Forestry.

Two informative "Who Am I???" banners decorated the walls giving fair goers the chance to identify woodland mammals & fish. Along with the banners, we had our mounts & infamous pond with plant life & fish. The District & Forestry provided stickers, posters, wildflower pollinator mix & canvas backpacks for the kids to decorate with stencils & markers. This has been a huge hit over the years for young & old alike.



Many thanks go out to our Staff & Director's who took shifts working at the booth. We had a great time talking to the fair patrons & answering as many of their questions as we could. Plenty of informational pamphlets were there for the taking.

It was great to see so many people out to enjoy the fair & planning has already started for the 2024 Wyoming County Fair.

## EVENTS:

2023 Banquet  
Thurs. 11/9/23 @  
Keystone College. Contact Katie  
for more details!

## LOCAL RESOURCES:

Bureau of Forestry: 570-945-7133  
DEP: 570-826-2511  
Game Commission: 570-675-1143  
PA Fish & Boat Commission:  
570-477-5717

## Conservation Comments July - September 2023

Wyoming County  
Conservation District  
6052 SR 6  
Tunkhannock, PA 18657  
Phone: 570-836-2589  
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## DISTRICT STAFF

Doug Deutsch - District Manager Ext. 404  
Katie McClain - Admin. Assistant Ext. 406  
Bernie Scalzo - Watershed Specialist Ext. 403  
Dave Taylor - Resource Conservation Specialist Ext. 405  
Laura Anderson - Environmental Education Coord. Ext. 402  
Chris Faux- Ag. Conservation Prog. Coord. Ext. 407

## NRCS STAFF

Vacant - District Conservationist  
Phone: 570-836-2490 Ext. 3

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Dorne White - Chairman  
Neil Tague - Vice Chairman  
Butch Sands - Secretary/ Treasurer  
Commissioner Tom Henry  
Bob Robinson  
Walt Dana  
Ken Harvey

## ASSOCIATE DIRECTORS

Jill Tague  
Meeting the second Monday of each month,  
9:30am, District Office.



# Susquehanna, Sullivan, Wyoming, & Bradford Counties Master Watershed Steward Program

The Penn State Master Watershed Steward program was established to strengthen local capacity for management & protection of watersheds, streams, & rivers, by educating & empowering volunteers across the commonwealth.



Susquehanna County Master Watershed Steward (MWS) Program was established in 2022. This was made possible with assistance from our partner organizations - the Susquehanna County Conservation District & the Alliance for Aquatic Resource Monitoring.

Courses generally run annually and require approximately 40+ hours of training (primarily virtual) along with 2 to 3 field training days. These sessions are held statewide and include presenters representing numerous private and government organizations from throughout the commonwealth.

MWS volunteer project examples:

- Organizing educational events such as, rain barrel building workshops & seminars on backyard stormwater management.
- Participating in stream restoration projects.
- Sampling water quality & stream assessments.
- Coordinating & conducting stream clean-ups.
- Working with municipal officials on stormwater.
- Planning & carrying out habitat improvement projects.
- Teaching adults & children about the environment.

Contact Jeremy Leadicker at [jxl6817@psu.edu](mailto:jxl6817@psu.edu) with any questions.



# Similar Yet, So Different...

Get to know the differences between these 4 very similar trees that we have in Northeastern PA. Check out more info at [www.bplant.org](http://www.bplant.org)

## Eastern Black Walnut vs Butternut

These plants are notoriously difficult to tell apart, but mature trees can be easily distinguished by nut shape or bark, and leaf scars can usually distinguish even smaller trees. Leaf shape and leaflet count partially overlaps but can be used for identification in many cases. Due to a canker disease, butternut has become much less common where these species' ranges overlap.

### Eastern Black Walnut (*Juglans nigra*)

A widespread and common tree native to eastern North America, valued for its nuts as well as its wood.



Fruits almost spherical, not pointed.

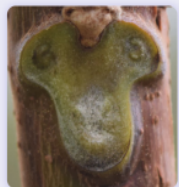
Photo © Madison Gover, CC BY 4.0.



Leaves typically have 15-19 leaflets, occasionally as few as 9 or as many as 23. Leaflets average longer and narrower, but there

is much overlap. Leaves often lack a terminal leaflet.

Photo © Terri, Public Domain.



Leaf scars distinctly notched at top. If there is any hair above, it is only at the center and not extending across the entire top. Looks like a face with eyes not as strongly pressed against the sides.

Photo © , CC BY-SA 4.0.



Bark of mature trees darker and more rugged, with narrow ridges and deep furrows. Ridgetops rough, not smooth.

Photo © Alex Zorach, CC BY-SA 4.0.

### Butternut (*Juglans cinerea*)

A tree native to eastern North America, mostly found on well-drained slopes; dying back due to a canker disease.

Fruits oblong and pointed.



Photo © Shirley Zundell, CC BY 4.0.

Leaves typically have 11-17 leaflets, occasionally as few as 7 but almost never more than 17. Leaflets average shorter and broader, but there is much overlap. Leaves usually have a terminal leaflet.



Photo © Charlie Hohn, CC BY 4.0.

Leaf scars not notched or only weakly notched at top, a wooly fringe across the entire top of the leaf scar. Looks like a goat face with eyes pressed far to the sides.

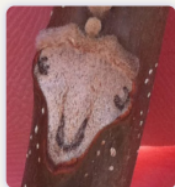


Photo © charlie, CC BY 4.0.

Bark of mature trees with longer, unbroken ridges with smooth light grey on outermost portion.



Photo © Charlie Hohn, CC BY 4.0.

## Tree of Heaven vs Staghorn Sumac

These trees are sometimes confused because of similar compound leaf shape and occurrence in the same disturbed habitats, such as along roadsides and railroads. Both tend to form colonies with multiple trunks attached to a single root system. They can be easily distinguished at any time of year by leaves, twigs, bark, and fruit. Although their ranges and habitat overlap considerably, tree of heaven ranges farther west and is more common in cities and anthropogenic habitats, whereas staghorn sumac ranges farther north and is more common in natural areas farther from human influence.

### Tree of Heaven (*Ailanthus altissima*)

A fast-growing tree, native to east Asia, and widely introduced across North America. Common in anthropogenic habitats in much of its introduced range, less common in natural areas.



Leaflets have one to a few teeth at the base, but the rest of the leaflet margin is not serrated.

Photo © Ira Gershenhorn, Public Domain.



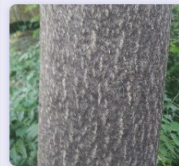
Young twigs and stems of leaves and leaflets hairless.

Photo © Jeffreyawick, Public Domain.



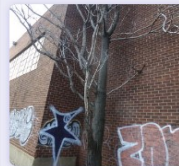
Fruit a hanging cluster of dry seeds enclosed in flat structures to allow for wind-dispersal.

Photo © Ira Gershenhorn, Public Domain.



Mature bark gray with slightly irregular vertical strips of a lighter color. Bark usually lacks horizontally-oriented features. Trunk can reach many feet in diameter.

Photo © Ira Gershenhorn, Public Domain.



Medium-sized tree, reaching 60-70 feet (18-21m) in height. Although can exhibit shrubby growth when young or in some habitats, trunk usually grows straight and tall and self-prunes, leaving

branches only higher up.

Photo © Ira Gershenhorn, Public Domain.

Foliage emits a strong and often unpleasant nutty smell when crushed.

Photo © , .

### Staghorn Sumac (*Rhus typhina*)

A thicket-forming shrub or small tree native to eastern North America; a pioneer species preferring rocky soils.

Leaflet margin is serrated along its whole length.



Photo © Charlie Hohn, CC BY 4.0.

Young twigs and stems of leaves and leaflets densely covered in hairs.



Photo © Charlie Hohn, CC BY 4.0.

Fruit a dense, upright cluster of fuzzy red berries.



Photo © Ryan Kurtz, CC BY 4.0.

Mature bark dark gray or gray-brown, with horizontal strips (lenticels.) Bark may or may not have vertically-oriented cracks. Trunk rarely reaches more than 10 inches (25 cm) in diameter.



Photo © , CC BY-SA 4.0.

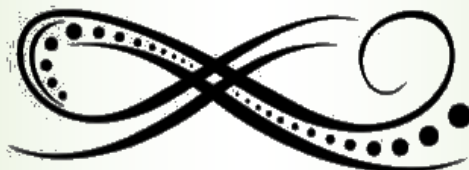
Small tree or large shrub; rarely grows taller than 40 feet (13.7m) Trunk is shorter, branching frequently. Trunks usually lean.



Photo © Ryan Watson, CC BY 4.0.

Foliage does not have a strong smell even when crushed.

Photo © , .







## Extending Your Grazing Season

The end of the growing season is rapidly approaching & pastures are nearly depleted. This doesn't necessarily mean your grazing season has to end. Many of us have hay fields with excellent regrowth, but not quite enough to make it worth while to bale or chop. Pictured above is regrowth off a warm season annual that was cut late in the season. The forage remaining here will be grazed off before a cover crop is planted. Not only do the cows have the benefit of a high quality forage, but the farmer has the benefit of manure being deposited. The below picture is cows on a field that was mowed for hay twice this season. Weather conditions this fall have made third cutting hard to put up. The cows will graze this instead. The farmer is still able to utilize the crop, but has zero machine cost associated with the harvest. Again, the farmer benefits from the animals depositing manure on the field. For about \$300 in supplies a farmer can temporarily fence in about 5-6 acres. Imagine your operation has to buy some of your hay for winter feeding. If your herd eats one round bale a day & it costs \$30 per bale to buy, 10 days of extended grazing gets your investment back & you then own the infrastructure to continue this cost saving practice. When done correctly this practice could also be quite the time saver. Lets look at the scenario above again. Say you are setting up your temporary fence for the first time & it takes 2 hours, over 10 days this would average out to 12 minutes a day for feeding. Imagine you are putting round bales out & it takes 20 minutes for you to start the tractor, get a bale out of the barn, get twine off the bale, open/close gates, put the bale in the feeder, & put the tractor away. Over the 10 days you're saving yourself 80 minutes of time & you don't need to start a machine every day. For a small investment, grazing forage on hayfields with temporary fencing could be a very profitable & time saving practice for many operations out there.





# Susquehanna County Forest Landowners Association

## Fall Bus Tour

A Fall Bus Trip is again being offered for the public by the Susquehanna County Forest Landowners Association. Usually this trip is held on Columbus Day, but this year the event will occur on Tuesday, October 10.<sup>th</sup>

The first stop will be at the SUNY Environmental Science and Forestry Department's (ESF) Lafayette Road Experiment Station located on the outskirts of Syracuse. For over 33 years, the ESF has been on a mission to restore the American Chestnut tree to our Eastern forests.

The functional extinction of the American chestnut tree has been called the greatest ecological disaster to strike the world's forests in all of history. At the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century there were approximately 4 billion American chestnut trees in the eastern USA. Then in 1904, it was discovered that a Japanese

Chestnut tree planted at the Bronx Zoo carried a blight that was killing their American chestnuts. By the 1940's the blight had spread so quickly that the American Chestnut trees were all but completely dead in its entire range. We had lost the 'Redwoods of the East' with their nourishing nuts that sustained wildlife, man and his livestock, the perfect wood that had been used to build houses, barns and furniture for over 300 years, and the forest ecology had lost a key species as one in every four hardwoods was an American chestnut.

In their long search, ESF scientists have developed a variety of our native American chestnut tree by inserting a gene that is found in wheat. This gene is eaten by billions of people around the world every day. It is a natural defense gene that helps protect wheat from diseases, and now it has been shown to protect the American Chestnuts from the blight! This variety is called Darling 58, and these trees have great potential for restoration because they retain the original American chestnut genes with added blight tolerance.

At the Experiment Station, we expect to observe the actual harvesting of Chestnut nuts. These will be nuts that are from wild chestnut trees that have been crossed with the Darling 58 so around 50% of the nuts will have the gene for blight tolerance. We will also see the Darling 58 trees. They are only 5-6 years old and some of them have started to produce flowers but most are still too young to reliably produce nuts.

We will be divided into 3 groups and walking for most of the two hour tour. As only a few chairs will be available, if you have a combination chair/cane, you may want to bring it.

**Lunch:** At noon, we will leave for the Carrabbas Italian Grill Restaurant in Fayetteville. We will have a choice of several selections from their Lunch Menu, including a variety of drinks and desserts. Lunch will be on your own. After lunch, we will drive a mile to the Stickley Furniture Museum.

The Stickley Furniture Museum in Fayetteville, which opened in 2007, explores over a century of furniture making excellence. It highlights the craftsmanship that made the Stickley company America's foremost fine furniture maker. A *Stickley Brothers Mission dining room suite won a grand prize at the 1904 World's Fair in St Louis.*

The first Stickley furniture company was actually built near Susquehanna, PA in 1883. The Stickley brothers then branched off into different parts of the country, each establishing a reputation for creativity and artisanship. At the Fayetteville Museum, there are thousands of items that stretch from Gustav Stickley's earliest work to furniture just off the shop floor. The Stickley company continues to build fine furniture today in a new factory just down the road. We will be receiving a tour from the museum director and historian, Amanda Clifford. About 3:30 to 3:45 PM, we will leave the Stickley Museum for Montrose.

Cost for the trip is **\$40.00 per person**, which does not include lunch. Meet at Price Chopper Parking Lot at 7:45 am. For more information, please call Joyce Stone #570-278-4494 or Bill Bayne #570-967-2673. The deadline to receive your payment is October 9<sup>th</sup>.

Submitted by Joyce B. Stone, President of SCFLOA



# Environmental Education

Agriculture Day 2023 included the Tunkhannock Area School's 4th Grade students, all students enrolled in the Endless Mountain Christian Academy and many of the students from the Salt-n-Light Home School Group. Some of the learning stations included: Bees & Beekeeping, Maple Syrup Production, Forestry, Veterinarian, Organic Farming & Dairy Nutrition just to name a few. Presenters shared their knowledge and expertise, while the students enjoyed interacting and learning in the outdoor classroom!





# DGR Project: Nicholson Township

This past month Nicholson Township finished up a Dirt and Gravel Road project with the placement of DSA (Driving Surface Aggregate). This project was initially awarded in the spring of 2021 with the awarding of the first phase of the project with fill and drainage improvements to the roads. This first grant that was applied for was for \$74,400 with an in-kind contribution from the Township of \$26,000 bringing the total project value up to \$100,400.00. The second grant was applied for back in the fall of 2021 and was awarded in the amount of \$106,084.90 with a Township contribution of \$34,542 for a total of \$140,626.90. This second phase was for the DSA top of the project which would give the better road surface and cap over the rest of the project.

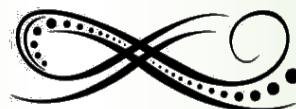
The combination of these two project reduced the amount of sediments that were flowing off the road surface and into the nearby waterways and wetlands. The benefit will not only be the environmental impact from these projects but also greatly improved the driving surface for the residents along this route and hopefully will also cut the maintenance down on this road that the road crew must do to maintain the roadway.



This project was held up for an extra year do to the rising costs of placing the DSA on the project. All the bids that the Township received for the placement of the DSA far exceeded the grant amount that they received from the District. In the end, the Township made the decision to purchase a paver & do the DSA placement themselves.



In the first two pictures you can see the road crew placing the DSA with the roller ready to compact the DSA once it has been laid down.





# DGR Project: Nicholson Township Continued...

There were some mishaps along the way that happened that took a little extra time to sort out. The first problem that we had to overcome was placing the material on a steep downhill. When the trucks are dumping the material into the box on the paver it is difficult to keep the truck close to the paver. When a truck slips out from in front of the paver large pile of material can be lost in front of the paver and needs to be cleaned up before we could continue. Luckily, a skid steer with a bucket is always kept on site for any problems like this that may arise. We had this cleaned up and back to paving within an few short minutes.

The other issue took a little longer to fix and cost us about a day of work on site. The second picture show a chain that had snapped on the auger that feeds the material out of the paver. This was a vital piece that we needed to have working correctly to properly mix and lay the DSA on the road. The Township crew did a great job getting things back up and running and able to complete the job by the end of the week.



In these pictures we have the roller standing by ready to compact the DSA down to the proper compaction after the DSA has been laid down. The second you can see the DSA after compaction showing tell tale signs of proper compaction. When the DSA is at it's maximum compaction the larger stones that are in the mix can start to shatter. This can be noted by the slightly lighter grey color at the surface.

This is the sign that we look for when we are on site that everything is turning out the way we wanted.



**UNTIL NEXT TIME WITH CONSERVATION COMMENTS...**