



# MFA NEWS

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THE NEWSLETTER OF THE MICHAUX FOREST ASSOCIATION

Fall 2011

Editor: Debra Rosevear



## The President's Column

By Bob Shenk

Thanks to all of you who attended our 2011 Annual Meeting and Picnic this past June. Based upon member comments, our new "format" was a success and we are planning to follow the same plan for 2012. So mark your calendars for the next MFA Annual Meeting and Picnic that is scheduled for Saturday, June 23, 2012 at the Furnace Stack Pavilion, Pine Grove Furnace State Park. Details will be provided in our 2012 Spring Newsletter.

One of the things I enjoy about the Annual Meeting and Picnic is the opportunity to learn more about our members and how they came to own their cabins. While many members had no connections to Michaux prior to buying a cabin, it is amazing how many of you have been privileged to be part of a 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> generation of family members owning cabins and being a part of our association. As many of you know, our cabin has been in our family since the 1950's as it was owned by Diane's aunt and then her parent's in the early 1960's. It passed on to us in the early 1990's and has been an important part of our lives for many

years. Diane remembers going to the cabin when she was 4 or 5 years old and my first experience with cabin life was when we were dating (and that was over 40 years ago). Diane told the story at one of the MFA picnics that she thinks one of the reasons I married her was because she came with a cabin (I'll never tell) and she was surprised how other cabin owners came up to her after the meeting and said the same thing!

Although a fire in 2006 totally destroyed the original cabin structure, we rebuilt it and the family tradition lives on. For those of you sharing similar backgrounds, let's keep those traditions growing. For our new members, cabin ownership presents a great opportunity to start a tradition by sharing the beauty and enjoyment of cabin ownership with family and friends.

Over the past couple of months, you may have read articles in the news about considerations by the PA Governor's office regarding privatizing state parks. This is an issue that we as an organization are monitoring and do not feel would be in the best interest of those who use these resources. While the concept initially doesn't appear to have significant support, difficult budget times can produce unexpected results to fill funding gaps. If we need your help in the future for legislator contacts, we'll let you know. Working together on issues like this one can be an effective way to protect our cabin life.

Best wishes for the upcoming holiday season and a happy new year!

*Bob Shenk*

*President, Michaux Forest Association*

## Why the MFA is Relevant

By Bob Clark

Past President, MFA

How many of you know that in the mid-1980's, if your cabin burned down you would lose your lease and could never rebuild?

Or, that in the early 1990's there were ATV's running all over the forest and around our cabins, with little regulation (even though there were 35 miles of trails for them)? Some cabin owners had ATV parking lots beside them with these vehicles gunning their engines before dawn and after dark.

Did you know that decades ago, the Commonwealth was going to take all of our cabins and turn this entire valley into a large lake for public recreation. (much like Raystown Lake)

*Why do you need the MFA?* In addition to the cabin patrol which gives us peace of mind that our cabins are being monitored, this organization will fight to help us protect our leases. We are represented by many State Senators & Legislators. We have a direct link to them to face any threat, legislation or regulation that threatens our leases.

In the above cases, the MFA went to bat for cabin owners and won. You never know when someone or some organization will introduce legislation that will impact your cabin. There will be no more cabins built on State Forest or Park lands. These wonderful and historical cabins are ours to cherish and protect.

*This is the MFA family*, and we need to keep our organization strong and relevant. Participate whenever possible and ask your cabin neighbors to join us.



## MFA Patrol Report

By *Richard G. Baish*

### Greetings all!

Wow, the summer really went fast this year, and we certainly had our share of various weather. Not only did our area get hit with severe flooding in the spring, heat waves in the summer and heavy fall rains, but we even felt the affects of an eastern continental earthquake! Fortunately, despite the conditions our wonderful get-aways in the Michaux Forest were not drastically affected. Yes, many of you had to patch and repair your access drives, but all in all, we were spared the serious conditions that much of the rest of our state and country had to endure. And though the area lost quite a few trees, I am happy to report there were only a few incidents where the fallen trees did damages to the lease-site properties.

Other than the weather, the summer season was calm in Pine Grove Furnace. Unfortunately, that changed as fall approached. There were several acts of vandalism that occurred at the end of September and are continuing as we enter October. Cabins on Ridge Rd and Cold Springs have been the most frequented targets. In addition to broken windows and doors, damages range from rummaging through kitchen drawers and cabinets to the theft of personal items, tools and appliances. One of the incidents on Ridge Rd involved the culprits stealing a jeep from the garage during mid-morning hours while the owner was inside! To my knowledge, the jeep was recovered but the thieves have yet to be identified. In fact, though the state police and forestry officials are investigating all the incidents, I am not aware of any arrests being made at this time.

If you discover a break-in, I'd appreciate a phone call updating me of the situation at your premises, as I can quickly inspect the neighboring cabins to insure that if other properties are vandalized, owners and enforcement officers are no-

tified promptly. I can be reached through the week at 717-249-1353, or a message can be left at 717-226-4959. My email address is [richbaish@centurylink.net](mailto:richbaish@centurylink.net).

\*\*\* In case you do not have the local authority's numbers by your phone, they are: Park office—486-7174, Forestry 352-2211, Carlisle State Police 249-2121. AND OF COURSE IN AN EMEGENCY, DIAL 911!

In closing, I want to wish everyone an enjoyable fall and winter season. I hope all your adventures are safe, and your holiday celebrations are festive and fun!



## The MFA Web Site



[www.michauxforestassociation.org](http://www.michauxforestassociation.org)

Please remember to check out our website. We try to keep you up to date on legislation and events in the Michaux and Pine Grove Furnace State Park. It's updated often.

On our site you can read history, view photos, check out the bulletin board, and read past MFA newsletters. We also have links to many other interesting websites, including the Friends of Pine Grove Furnace.

*Check it out!!!*

## MFA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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**News From Michaux  
State Forest**  
*Roy Brubaker*

Water is important to just about everything we do as public land managers on the Michaux. This year has proven to be a case study on the many ways that water both impacts and is impacted by our work as a public forest agency. Intense spring rains caused significant wear and tear on the forest road and trail system and also delayed and hampered our maintenance crews' routine road maintenance efforts. This situation wasn't helped by equipment problems with our lone road grader when conditions did improve enough to work the roads. Happily, we got the grader fixed and also managed to secure funds for a new grader as well, so hopefully we will be able to keep up with water impacts to our roads a little better in the future.

Spring rains were followed by unseasonably hot temperatures in late May and June; and then drought from June through August over much of the Michaux. Drought conditions always make us more aware of the potential limiting factor that fresh water and ground water supplies can be for surrounding boroughs and municipalities that rely on aquifers beneath the Michaux. Waynesboro Fish and Game Club, a cooperater with the Pennsylvania Fish and Game Commission's Cooperative Nursery Program lost water level in their pond this summer for the first time in club members' memory. Water supply issues are particularly constraining for headwater counties like Adams county without major water through sources. Looking to the future of management on the Michaux; it's not too hard to recognize that dealing with water issues in the region will only get more difficult.

But then came Irene. She treated our mountain just right actually. The two-three inches she dropped on us before deluging areas east and North was just enough to settle the dust and start things growing again. And the seven to ten inches we got out of the following system was just enough to fill our mountain to the brim, while the additional ten to twenty inches that fell to the Northeast of the mountain qualified PA for Federal disaster relief.

Since then it's been wet, and the mushrooms are loving it! Nothing makes me more cognizant of the interconnectedness of forest systems like watching the huge diversity of mushrooms poking out of the forest floor,

or off of dead wood or even living tree boles after a late summer or fall rain. It makes me understand the words of mycologist Paul Stametz; "... that mycelium [the network of mushroom "roots," if you will, that webs together a forest soil] is the neurological network of nature." The moisture came just soon enough to give us something of a beef-steak season; and has the slightly later hen-of-the-woods producing like crazy.

Collect them while you can, as they go great with venison; and hunting season is just around the corner!





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## What's Cooking in Cooke -- Issues Around the Neighborhood

*Bill Jones: Twp. Supervisor*  
*Andre Weltman: Township Planning  
Commission*

As a reminder, Cooke Township ordinances, resolutions and other information are available on our website [www.cooketwp.org](http://www.cooketwp.org). Questions may also be emailed to [cooketwp@kuhncom.net](mailto:cooketwp@kuhncom.net).

Please feel free to attend Township Board of Supervisors meetings, usually held the first Tuesday of the month at 7:30 PM at the Township building, 1700 Centerville Rd. Your attendance and participation are always welcome. (Before dropping by check for schedule changes on our website or the bulletin board by the front door).

### TRASH COLLECTION -- SINGLE HAULER in COOKE

Let's talk trash! In June, we sent a letter to all property owners regarding the possibility of a single hauler for residential garbage collection in Cooke Township. We had initially hoped to start this cost-saving measure the first of October, but we could not move as fast as initially thought. At the September Township meeting we agreed to move forward with a Cooke Township Trash Ordinance and an Intergovernmental Agreement Ordinance with Southampton Township (they will administer the program on behalf of Cooke). We requested that our Solicitor advertise these new Ordinances as required by law, and we adopted them at our October monthly meeting. We're on track to start January 1, 2012.

We initially planned to require all seasonal residents (cabin owners) to fill out an exemption form if they did not want to participate. After our June letter, the response from many cabin owners suggested that the vast majority do not want

to sign up for garbage collection. As proof that sometimes Government does use common sense, we listened to those responses. There's good news for cabin owners. Our new Trash Ordinance says: "Recreational or seasonal residents are considered exempt unless they request a full-time or quarterly basis residential trash service".

So, if you are a seasonal cabin owner (whether on private or government-leased land), you **do not** have to fill out an exemption form if you do not want garbage service. However, **if you want trash service you will need to let us know**. We will send a sign-up form to those cabin owners who previously contacted us this summer indicating their interest. We still need to fine-tune the paperwork and will draft a letter explaining all the details in a few more weeks.

### ROADS & SNOW

This summer we were able to tar and chip lower Michaux Road (from 233 to just past Bunkerhill Road) and the Pinebrook area (Pinebrook, Dogwood, Deer and Oak). We had plans to do a small area on Ridge Road just prior to High Mountain that has a serious wash-out problem, but due to cost were unable to. Today the average cost to tar and chip one mile of road is approximately \$14,000.

Bendersville Rd is a continuing problem (from near the top of the ridge down towards the Adams Co. line). It really needs a "leveling course" but this is cost prohibitive due to materials plus the State's prevailing wage requirements. Our road crew has put down roughly \$11,000 worth of cold patch on various roads in Cooke, with Old Shippensburg getting a lot of attention.

Many of you may not know their names, but perhaps have seen and talked to our Road Crew over the years. Our Roadmaster is Gene Mentzer. Until recently the other full-time crew member was Merle Sennett, with Hank Donovan helping in the summer. These guys really deserve a pat on the back for the job they do. (Note the above mention of cold patch; that is strictly a manual effort with shovel and rake.) Late this summer, Merle gave notice of retirement. He has been on our road

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crew for over fifteen years and is really going to be hard to replace. Happy (second) retirement, Merle!

"That time of year" is fast approaching. As in the past, we try to send an e-mail notification (to those folks we have addresses for) about snow and road conditions. If you would like to be placed on this list, please send an e-mail request to either [cooketwp@kuhncom.net](mailto:cooketwp@kuhncom.net) or [lastport@aol.com](mailto:lastport@aol.com) with subject line "Cooke cabin notification".

### BEARS

Over the past decade, the population of black bears in Cooke Township has increased. We used to see them rarely and they seemed mostly to be yearlings just passing through; nowadays it's clear we have a breeding population in our area. In some corners of the Township, a few bears have even taken to raiding bird feeders and knocking over garbage cans.

That said, we don't really have a bear problem in Cooke yet - let's keep it that way! Please take a look at the helpful Game Commission brochure "Living with Pennsylvania Black Bears" at [www.pgc.state.pa.us](http://www.pgc.state.pa.us). It can be found via the "Self-Help" tab at the top, then "Your Property and Wildlife" then "Living with Black Bears." Note the suggestion to avoid leaving any food outside, and (if possible) not putting garbage cans out until the morning of collection. At this time of year, bears are beginning to prepare for winter and are packing on calories. Please don't attract them to your cabin! It's not good for us or for the animals.

**The Cabin Bookshelf** by Nancy SummersFeatured Book: *The Tree*, by Colin Tudge

What is a tree. Colin Tudge asks rhetorically, opening his book, *The Tree*. He goes on to answer this question with considerable detail, probably more detail and information than most of us are interested in digesting in a summer at the cabin. This compact paperback is a wonderful collection for botanists and biologists with information about modern broadleaves back to their historical ancestors or an entire chapter on the conifers which include the tallest trees in the world "(California's coastal redwoods) and the oldest (California's bristlecone pines) and some of the most drought resistant (a cypress in the midst of the Sahara)..."

Of particular interest is his chapter, *How Trees Became*, in which he takes the reader through a series of transformations with language that is accessible, the author traces large plants through "plants with vessels and the first stirrings of wood. He writes (p. 65).

The early vascular plants also invented lignin. .... It is a fairly small molecule, but it serves to toughen the cell walls of plants, which are made of cellulose. Pure cellulose is flexible – it is the stuff of cotton – but cellulose spiked with lignin is tough and hard. Lignin, in short, is what turns floppy cellulose into wood. Plants that lack lignin (or have only small amounts) are called "herbs".

Why did Tudge write this detailed work? To "... present science not as it is often presented, as a tribute to human cleverness and power, but truly in a spirit of reverence." If we pick this book up and leaf through the pages reading excerpts here and there we learn about the magnificent power of nature to create without human intervention those standing giants in our own Michaux Forest.

\*\*\*\*\*

## Save The Springhouse!

By Doris Fitting

It's been quite a few years since I noticed the precarious leaning of the large oak tree threatening the old Springhouse on Old Railroad Bed Road along Laurel Lake.

No one has been able to identify the date of this structure, but it seems very probable it has been there as far back as the old ice house days! Certainly well before 1929, the year our Cottage was built by my Father. Thus it would seem to hold some historical significance of the area. For many years, before digging our own well, we and numerous others carried buckets of water for scrubbing and cleaning from the then open water



well beside the building.

I've taken numerous pictures of the tree and structure over these years. Just two years ago the tree was still about a half inch from the roof, now it is actually against the frame, continuing to grow and lean even more. The tree not only presents a hazard of falling on and destroying this old springhouse, but also the overhead power lines.

The Park, Forestry, Friends of Pine Grove Furnace State Park and the MFA have been notified of my concern. I also received one estimate to have this tree cut down, as Forestry does not have money available. Although it seems reasonable, I surely recommend getting a few more estimates. Forestry did give permission for the work to be done!

This cause was mentioned at the MFA Meeting in June, sparking enough interest for several members to promise private donations, or possibly using monies from the MFA treasury! Many old structures in the area have been restored over the past several years. It seems this Old Springhouse should be worthy of the same!

On the lighter side: The ruin of this springhouse would also threaten the existence of "Old Slimeball", the fictitious inhabitant who has lived there for years! Many times my Grandchildren have snuck down the steps and peered inside, hoping to catch a glimpse of him!

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Jason Zimmerman, Park Manager

## Park News - Pine Grove Furnace State Park

By Jason Zimmerman

More crazy weather! In the past three months we've experienced tropical storms, earthquakes and an October snowstorm. The latest of the three events created significant damage by closing roads and keeping everyone in the dark for six days. The park is up and running with the exception of the Family Campground, which received significant damage. It will reopen on March 30, 2012. I want to thank Cooke Twp and park staff that worked round the clock to get roads open to help trapped patrons, and also to those patrons for being patient during the storm. Anyone wanting to purchase firewood permits for storm damage in the park should call the park office for more information. Phone: 717-486-7174

Summer was as busy as ever. With hot and humid days came large crowds. Memorial Day saw the busiest day in park history where there was literally no room for anyone else to park. Throughout the summer, patrons were treated to a variety of special events and park programming. The Appalachian Trail Museum Festival was held in June as was National Get Outdoors Day, and provided a variety of programming opportunities for the entire family. Labor Day weekend was the inaugural South Mountain Outdoors which had dozens of sites throughout the South Mountain Region providing programming for families. The park participated through a Fishing Derby and Bike Tour. New Environmental Education Specialist Tara Gettig was busy with her Friday evening amphitheater programs, Saturday kayaking and hikes and weekday school groups. The most popular programs were the moonlight kayak paddles, bats, and bear programs (based on increased sightings

this year). Park programming was supplemented by a Sunday afternoon program at the AT Museum and tour at the Ironmaster's Mansion.

Both the Mansion and Museum are pushing forward as their organizations continue to grow. The museum in its second year of existence had nearly the same amount of visitors as year one and is preparing to expand exhibits to the second floor and basement. Their lease with the park has been extended to 25 years allowing them more funding opportunities. The mansion in year one of operation saw quite a bit of hiker traffic as well as use from school groups and weddings. With increased emphasis on environmental education, the mansion will partner with the park and other agencies to offer additional school group programming and teacher workshops in 2012.

The Fall Furnace Fest entered year three and the weather was perfect. 5,000 people attended the event. It was another successful year thanks to staff, friends members and volunteers who put a lot of time and hard work into the event.

We have exciting things planned in 2012 through programming and projects. Check the MFA website and DCNR Calendar of Events to stay up to date with what's happening at the park. There will be an increased awareness of invasive species and their removal in the years ahead and we'll be looking for cabin owners to help by managing species on their leases.

Thanks for another great year and as always, feel free to contact me with any issues, questions, comments or concerns!



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