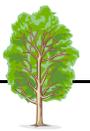


The Forest Friend



The Newsletter of the Kanawha State Forest Foundation



April 2013 Issue

www.ksff.org

Summer Quarter

"Our spring has come at last with the soft laughter of April suns and shadow of April showers"

From the Assistant Superintendent's Desk

by Kevin Dials

Spring has sprung here at the forest. While there is still the occasional nip in the air, the plants and animals don't seem to mind. Complaints among forest visitors are rare, too, as they are just glad to shake off the winter. We have opened the campground and have already had a few campers. Hopefully, people will continue to experience what a night in the forest can do to clear and repair their minds.

Staffing is and might continue to be an issue due to the hiring freeze in state government. This could also affect our swimming pool if we are unable to hire lifeguards. We will continue to do what we can to circumvent these problems.

A bill was introduced recently in the WV Legislature to allow ATV's on certain areas in state parks and forests. There was a rapid response from the public to comment on this bill and, to my knowledge, it has now been withdrawn. Many thanks to those of you who called or emailed and shared your opinions.

On March 30, a large group of volunteers comprising master naturalists and Foundation members, led by Willis Trammell and Chris Gatens, transplanted trees from within the forest to the arboretum in Shrewsbury Hollow. Once signs are installed, the enhanced arboretum will be a great addition to the forest.

Another project completed recently was the installation of heaters in the swimming pool snack bar room. These will greatly enhance our ability to have winter events there and have the space available for classroom purposes.



Board Meeting

Monday, May 6, 2013, 6:30 PM
Kanawha State Forest, Shelter #9

Everyone is Welcome to Attend!

2013 Events

April 20 - Saturday

8:30 AM

Osbra Eye Memorial Wildflower Walks. Register at 8:30 at swimming pool area. Adults \$5; Students under 16, \$2. Hot dogs, soft drinks, and cookies for sale. Door prizes, raffle. Contact: Forest Office, 304-558-3500

June 16 - Sunday - 3 PM

WV Birthday Celebration and Band Concert - Featuring Kanawha Valley Community Band directed by Robert Leighty. Birthday cake and cold drinks provided. Free Admission. Donations appreciated. Near swimming pool area. Ample parking. Bring lawn chair. Contact: Forest Office, 304-558-3500

September 14 - Saturday

8:30 AM

Margaret Denison Fall Nature Walks. Register at 8:30 at swimming pool area. Adults \$5; Students under 16, \$2. Barbecue, drinks and cookies for sale. Door prizes, raffle. Contact: Forest Office, 304-558-3500

Nature Quiz

Question: This is a plant that blooms in late spring and has a rootstock with 2-4 roundish tubers. A single large, oval, wrinkled leaf develops in late summer and lasts through the winter. The unique leaf is dark green with white veins and is visible in the forest now but will be gone by flowering time. (Answer on page 6)



Lifetime Membership Award

by Bill Hall

The Board of Directors recently voted unanimously to award Emerson (Buzz) Evans a lifetime membership in the Foundation. Buzz has supported our events and mission in numerous ways over a span of several decades. We are grateful for his contribution and extend our best wishes to him and his family.



Email Address List and Website

The Foundation Board has consulted webmaster Doren Burrell regarding a hosting location for a member email list. He has agreed to set up a designated personal account for email addresses to be stored. Many members have already provided an email address when renewing for 2013. We encourage all others to send their email addresses to ksff@doren.net in order to receive broadcast alerts and messages. Your address will not be shared or in the public domain. We are considering this as a prelude to offering The Forest Friend electronically as well.

Doren has also requested ideas and input on improving or expanding the Foundation web site (ksff.org). You are urged to check out the current

web page and send him your suggestions. There are links to our site from WV State Parks and Kanawha State Forest so we are committed to making it a useful and informative resource.



Shirley's Corner

Submissions to Shirley's Corner are made in tribute to Shirley Schweizer. She was always looking for ways to promote Kanawha State Forest and get people excited about the beautiful resource that was available to them. We will be submitting articles from time to time that appeared in the newspapers when it all began . . . to stir up your interest in KSF.

The article below appeared in the *Charleston Gazette* on **December 14, 1937**

Kanawha State Forest

"Next summer Charleston will have available one of the most beautiful recreation parks in the state, Kanawha State Forest. January 1 the CCC will start developing 6,705 acres of wild land extending from near Loudon Heights to near Hernshaw. The park will be within 10 miles of the city, and delightful roads will eventually wind through it.

"The federal and state conservation departments are working out plans three years ahead and tentative plans for three years more. There are to be picnic sites, horseback trails, a national game preserve and a large lake for fishing, boating and swimming, when plans now worked out are approved by the federal government.

"A CCC camp is to be established the first of the year. Four and one-half miles of the main road through the park, built by CCC men, are ready for gravel surfacing. Some virgin timber is on the land and much second growth timber is practically mature. There is to be a system of replanting and timber farming conducted by the government.

"If Charleston businessmen see that this beautiful recreational attraction is properly advertised it will bring thousands of visitors to this section."

Newsletter Staff

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The First Memorial Shirley Schweizer Winter Walk

by Doug Wood

The Winter Walks were named after Shirley Schweizer, while she was living, to honor her many years of service to Kanawha State Forest, first as a volunteer with the Kanawha Trail Club and later as a founding member of the Kanawha State Forest Foundation. Shirley left this world on December 11, 2012, so our January 26, 2013, Winter Walk was the first one held in memoriam for this delightful, funny, friendly, honest, caring, persistent, tireless, uplifting "Grande Dame" of Kanawha State Forest. I could have sprinkled in even more adjectives, but I think you get the picture. If you had the good fortune to know Shirley well, then you understand her depth of character and her ability to make volunteers realize that our work is important.

"King William" as I endearingly call our Foundation President, Bill Hall, eulogized Shirley in a truly touching memorial to help welcome the 50 or so winter walkers who came out to enjoy the snowy winter woods. This year's theme (Shirley always insisted that I have a theme for each walk) was "Winter Storms and Forest Ecology." Wouldn't you know it—we had a small winter storm the night before the Walk. I wonder if Shirley had anything to do with that? I started off the exploration with a skull quiz that allowed the attendees to compare the responses to winter of a variety of creatures, including humans. No skull for *Homo sapiens* was on hand, but I did have skulls for alligator, white-tailed deer, and black bear. Then we hit the ground running, with a little fellow named Roan (pronounced Row-un) leading the way up Shrewsbury Hollow.

Taking advantage of an old fence around the perimeter of the group camping facility, we could see soil building up from the combination of decaying leaves and eroding rocks. The material piled on the uphill side of the fence gave us a

cross-section view of soil building in action. The onlookers learned that there are three main habitat differences between the forest in summer and the forest in winter: leaf-covered trees vs. nearly leafless trees, thin forest litter layer vs. thick leaf litter layer, and prevailing warm temperatures vs. prevailing cold temperatures, the latter habitat pairing due to the difference in the angle of the sun, in turn due to the difference in the tilt of the earth between the seasons.

We also learned of how these habitat characteristics lead to still other habitat differences. For instance, the lack of tree leaves leads to minimal movement of moisture from ground to transpiring leaves (mainly only the evergreens still transpire). This leads to typically higher groundwater tables, which in turn leads to more seeps, springs, vernal pools, and flowing intermittent streams than in summer. The increase in such temporary water bodies, combined with greater leaf litter due to autumn leaf fall and mass movement of leaves into the water courses during winter storm runoff, lead to more suitable foraging habitat for benthic macroinvertebrates and breeding habitat for amphibians, such as the late-winter/early-spring explosive breeding spotted salamander, wood frog, and mountain chorus frog.

We saw evidence of how winter storms often bring down large trees, and the consequence of this opening in the canopy is that during the growing season, seeds that have lain dormant and saplings that have grown ever so slowly, suddenly take advantage of the burst of sunlight and grow profusely. When the openings are covered with hemlock saplings or pole-timber, then they serve as winter refugia for white-tailed deer and numerous bird species looking for protection from wind and heavy snow cover on the ground. We also discussed the role of winter tree damage in establishing fungal infections that eventually lead to hollows forming in the infected trees. American beech, black gum, and sycamore in particular will thrive for decades

even after fungal induced heart rot has caused substantial damage to the interiors of trees. Of course, this bane of the lumberman is the boon of many species of wildlife that seek shelter in tree dens: raccoon, gray squirrel, red squirrel, white-footed mouse, big brown bat, barred owl, and screech owl, to name a few.

At our stop at Davis Creek, some fool ecologist waded into the water unshod and bare-armed in order to grab a hunk of CPOM (Coarse Particulate Organic Matter = leaf pack). Dianne and one of our younger winter walkers assisted the others in seeing what secret critters the leaf pack held. The leaves that wash from forested hillsides during winter rains and heavy snowmelts, make their way via ephemeral channels into intermittent and permanent streams, where they become the anchor strands for a complex food web. We saw other members of this food web at lower trophic levels than fish and salamanders. They were crane fly larvae and stonefly nymphs crawling about on the leaf pack. The crane flies help break down the CPOM into FPOM. Can you guess this acronym's translation? The FPOM becomes food for filter feeders like blackflies and certain species of caddisflies. Of course these benthic macroinvertebrates are eaten by predatory beasts like some species of stoneflies, dragonflies, fish, and salamanders. Without the action of torrential winter rains and snowmelt, fewer leaves would make it into the aquatic environments to become CPOM and the base of a significant food pyramid.

Even the damaging flooding that often characterizes winter storms has its ecological upside. Exposed roots and eroding banks become sustenance and shelter to muskrats and kingfishers, respectively. Rates of erosion in largely natural forested environments are just about right to maintain healthy stream biota diversity. As long as man-caused disturbances do not become too extensive in any given

watershed, even heavy flooding in winter will not increase the stream sedimentation so much that a balance cannot be attained. But with too many man-induced disturbances, stream health will decline rapidly, and restoration will be difficult and long-coming.

We spoke of mass sloughing of soil due to increased soil saturation during winter combined with frequent freeze/thaw cycles. An icicle-covered rocky outcrop was evidence of such past erosive force, and in Kanawha State Forest there are many outcrops that started out as mass slough in winter. These forces help create "rock camps" where prehistoric Americans established seasonal hunting/gathering living quarters. Such undercut rock shelters are excellent habitats for green salamanders, woodrats, chipmunks, eastern phoebes, and other troglodytic species. There's another word for you to look up. Did I mention the rock scree that is usually found at the base of such outcrops? Wonderful places to find ring-necked snakes, copperheads, long-tailed salamanders, and other critters.

Well after all this adventure, our winter walkers were homemade hungry and eager to return to the gathering place for some good grub. Volunteers from numerous groups brought homemade soups and chilies. Each tasted different from the others. I know. I had at least one cup of each. Every one was yummy. Hot drinks were available, too. Did I mention the cookies, brownies, and fudge? We picked up some new members and renewed relations with some old members. On our walk, we saw the evidence that Forest staff and volunteers had done a bang-up job of clearing trails and roads of downed timber from two major storms in 2012, one in summer (El Derecho) and one in early winter (Hurricane Sandy). Ernie, Kevin, Tom, and Larry were on hand to help out with the event, and they sure do deserve our thanks, as do the

volunteers who organized this, the First Annual Memorial Shirley Schweizer Winter Walk.

Bill spoke to Shirley during his introductory remarks, thanking her and telling her how much we missed her. I would like to close in like manner. Shirley, as a trail developer, hiker, and backpacker, you were an inspiration to me for many years when I was just a young buck learning the ropes as a volunteer with the WV Scenic Trails Association. Thank you for the encouragement you gave me in my many outdoor and conservation endeavors. I hope I can pass onto youngsters some of the encouragement and know-how you passed on to me. Thanks for being a friend.



Tough Break on Rocky Ridge

by Leanne Chandler

It was Sunday, November 25, 2007, three days after Thanksgiving. I had planned to go for a hike in the Forest that afternoon to top off a nice holiday weekend. An overcast day with temperatures in the 50's, it was not a picture perfect day but still inviting enough to get out. My husband had agreed to join me but didn't seem very enthusiastic about the hike, so I told him not to worry about going with me that I would be fine going alone. As I drove through the Forest deciding which trail to hike, I glanced over at Davis Creek Trail and thought that would be a safe choice to hike alone, after all it runs parallel to the road and doesn't go deep into the woods. The day wasn't getting any younger, and I wanted something challenging to get a good workout. I continued on to the last parking lot on the left, past the campground, where I parked my car. I would hike up Rocky Ridge and come out Pigeon Roost, then walk back down the road to my car. There was plenty of daylight left to get this hike in. I had done it several times before

and liked the challenge it offered.

As I began to climb up Rocky Ridge, I had reservations about the hike, but ignored that "little voice" that said to turn around. After all, I was Miss Independent and was not about to let fear hinder or dictate what I wanted to do. If anything, I would hike this trail just to show fear who was boss! As I hiked on up the hill and onto the ridge, my uneasiness subsided and I was enjoying being in the woods. I continued on down the back side of Rocky Ridge, and as the trail leveled out and neared the intersection of Pigeon Roost, I thought I was "out of the woods." "See, nothing to be afraid of," I thought. I would be back in the car in 15 minutes and on my way home! That thought no more than dissipated when I slipped on some wet leaves, slid off the trail, and heard what sounded like a branch breaking. But it wasn't a branch at all. I had broken my ankle; both my tibia and fibula had snapped completely in two. My second thought—you can guess my first thought—was, "Oh no, I'm alone out here! I told my husband not to come along!"

At this point I did what any rational person would do in the same situation, I immediately and frantically began to crawl on my hands and knees to get out of the woods and get help. Not knowing how bad the break was and fearing a compound fracture, I decided I needed to stop and assess the damage. As I looked at my sock and hiking shoe, I was thank there was no blood or protruding bones, but my ankle was severely angulated, and my foot was connected only by soft tissue. I thought, "I'm not going to be able to go to work tomorrow." What a ridiculous thought!

After a quick check of my cell phone, only to confirm what I already knew (no cell service) and some shouts for help, I continued to crawl along Pigeon Roost Trail. The pain wasn't too bad initially, numbed by adrenaline, but the farther I crawled, the more my foot moved back and

forth, and the worse the pain became. Periodically I would stop to rest, check my cell phone for bars, curse my cell phone carrier, then shout for help only to hear my own voice echoing in the woods. What horrible feeling! Although I had on long pants, my knees were getting torn up by the little rocks on the trail, so I took off my polar fleece pullover and put it under my knees so I could keep going.

After crawling over a tree that had fallen across the trail, I began to lose hope that I would make it to the trail head before dark. My knee caps were raw and tender. As I continued to cry out for help more, my voice became hoarse, and finally, I heard a man's voice answer. He was telling me to follow his voice and asking why I couldn't come to him. I yelled back that I had broken my ankle and couldn't walk. We continued to talk and he followed my voice and eventually made it to where I was. Knowing I was found, the adrenaline began to subside and the pain became unbearable.

He helped me up and I put my arm around his neck and he put his arm around my waist and we continued down the trail, me hopping on my good foot as he supported me. This didn't last long as the pain was excruciating! I asked him to just please go tell someone I was out there and call 911. He refused to leave me, saying he was going to carry me to the trail head. I responded by telling him that he had no idea how much I weighed and realized I wasn't even quite sure myself. He assured me he could carry me, that he had been a wrestler in high school. He did in fact throw me over his shoulder, carried me the rest of the way out Pigeon Roost and down the hill to the trail head. Just as we reached the trail head a car stopped to help and then a Ranger in a State Forest pickup truck happened by. He stopped and said he would take me to the Forest Office in his truck and call 911. I envisioned them throwing me in the bed of the pickup and was pleased to find myself gently seated in the cab of the truck.

I had surgery the next day to repair my leg with plates and screws, so I did, in fact, miss work that day and every day after that for nine weeks.

My rescuer was a Registered Nurse and Paramedic from Beckley. He was geocaching in the Forest with his dog while his wife attended a baby shower in Charleston. He later told me he had heard my cries for help earlier but discounted them as someone goofing around. His dog, however, was very disturbed by my cries. He said she was going crazy to the point he had to take her back to the car. When he got in the car to leave, he realized he had left his dog's leash in the woods and went back to get it. That's when he once again heard me and responded. I'm so thankful he did and for his dog realizing something really was wrong.

I still hike alone on occasion but with a new awareness of what can happen. I am not nearly as carefree as I used to be when hiking alone. I am choosy about the trails I hike and always tell someone where I'll be hiking and/or leave a note on my dashboard. This is not meant to frighten anyone, only to raise awareness that the buddy system is always the best choice, and cell service is really only guaranteed in the Forest on the higher ridges.



Nature Quiz Answer:

Puttyroot or Adam-And-Eve (*Aplectrum hyemale*). Member of the Orchis family usually found in rich woods and swamps. In addition to the corm of the current season (Eve), that of the previous season (Adam) from which Eve came, is usually present. Purplish or yellowish-brown flowers with a white or magenta-spotted lip bloom in May-June.

