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Forestry question needs examination

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Most of you don't know me, but have maybe read my editorial screeds. Fine.

I don't live in the borough, but I lived in your neighborland in my late teens, went to high school at IASD, played football and messed around in White's Woods, building cabins and hunting squirrels for the crockpot. I still love that forest and don't want to see it mismanaged.

I am also very much pro-management in improving conditions based on my clients' ownership objectives and the realities of conditions of the forest health and sustainability. This is all I have done as a private forestry consultant for more than half of my life. Frankly, it is a passion for me and a *raison de vivre*.

That being admitted, I am concerned for your community and the resources you share. It seems to me that your current management “plan” is written backward. Any disturbance in the overstory must be preceded by an examination of the plants on the forest floor.

Any excess of sunlight on a site occupied by invasive species has to be considered absolutely first.

This control can take concerted effort for several growing seasons to ensure satisfaction in preparing the property prior to any overstory disturbance. Any other regime will result in disappointment of the stakeholders and long-lasting disaster on the land.

I don't know who was hired to run this show and I am not going to disparage. But did any of the supervisors, commissioners or whoever examine credentials, etc.? Unfortunately, anybody in Pennsylvania can run a “forestry” business or call himself a “forester.” Heck, you can't buy a haircut from an uncertified barber! There is no legislation for U.S. foresters in Pennsylvania. This thorn festers in my brain!

So take your time, folks. You shouldn't make snap decisions about something that takes so long in patience, considerations and time to grow and thrive. What is the rush? Ask the stakeholders what they cherish in the community resource.

Listen, act, sustain, conserve, use science and manage!

T.S. Murphy, Forest resource consultant

Clarksburg