



# Friends of White's Woods Monthly Newsletter



**November**

## *Carbon Sequestration and Invasive Species webinars inform on revenue possibilities; removal, control techniques*

White's Woods can produce income for White Township through its canopy and trees and, at the same time, the woods can assist companies like local fossil fuel plants in mitigating their carbon footprint.

This was the conclusion of FWW's Sept. 28th webinar by Alyson Fearon of the Allegheny Land Trust (a recording of this webinar is available on the home page of FWW's website under "Upcoming Events.")

Large companies such as Microsoft, General Motors, Delta Airlines and Walmart are purchasing "carbon credits" to meet their carbon reduction goals.

A forest, like White's Woods, currently stores tons of carbon and continues to capture carbon daily through its dense canopy. Fearon estimated White's Woods' canopy at 95% with 80% being the minimum for consideration for the carbon sequestration program. Fearon also gave a conservative estimate that White's Woods could garner some \$200,000 (after fees) in payments over three years in return for not timbering for the next 40 years. Elizabeth Township and Bethlehem have already entered into such contracts.

The Oct. 21st webinar by Dr. Sara Kuebbing of the University of Pittsburgh's Invasion Ecology Research Lab (recording also available on FWW's website) found three widespread nonnative invasive species in White's Woods. Most are located in the open area around the gas well, along trail perimeters and boundaries of the

woods. The three pervasive species are garlic mustard, barberry and Japanese stiltgrass. Mechanical (hand pulling) is the preferred method to remove garlic mustard and barberry. Treated stumps are also permissible for treating barberry provided care is taken to coat just the stumps.

The best way to control stiltgrass, according to Kuebbing, is to increase the tree canopy as stiltgrass requires sunlight to grow and spread. In addition, controlling the deer browse will encourage growth of native plants. Reducing soil disturbance by high impact vehicles/machines and rinsing shoes and wheels that will track stiltgrass seeds throughout the forest is essential to controlling the species.

A question about the use of the herbicide sulfometuoron was raised. Kuebbing explained that this is a preemergence herbicide that is applied to the soil and will kill ANY germinating herbaceous plant species. It apparently does not affect woody plant species (like tree seedlings), and it appears from Penn State Extension information that if your goals are to harvest a forest and then promote tree seedling germination without native plant regeneration, you could apply this herbicide to keep the stiltgrass from going gangbusters with an open-light canopy, but not prevent tree seedlings and saplings. Kuebbing would not recommend this – it would be more akin to "flooding the forest with herbicide" compared to some of the spot application suggestions.

### *October 2 Events: A Walk in the Woods and "In White's Woods: An Artist's Response"*



**IUP Homecoming 2021 proved a beautiful day for a walk in White's Woods and for artists' inspiration.**

*Photos by Cheri Widzowski*

### *Upcoming Events*

**Nov. 13, 2021:** Oak Tree Planting and Trail Cleanup starting at 10 a.m. at the 12th Street entrance. (Rain date: Nov. 20)

**TBA:** "The History of White's Woods webinar" by Kevin Patrick from 4 to 5 p.m. To register for the webinar, send an email to [info@friendsofwhiteswoods.org](mailto:info@friendsofwhiteswoods.org).

**Dec. 3, 2021:** Exhibition of works from "In White's Woods: An Artist's Response" opening at The Clark Gallery at 637 Philadelphia St. in the Indiana Theater Building, third floor, from 5 to 7 p.m.

**For more information, visit: [friendsofwhiteswoods.org](http://friendsofwhiteswoods.org)**

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## Have You Found an Eastern Box Turtle in White's Woods?



On July 27th, FWW President Sara King saw her first eastern box turtle near Yellow Creek State Park.

"I stopped my car to ferry it to the other side of the road that it was aiming to cross. I used to see a box turtle in White's Woods almost every year, but have not been so lucky since 2019," King said.

According to a February 2021 article posted by the Penn State Extension, "Of the thirteen turtle species that inhabit Pennsylvania, nine are considered threatened, endangered, or a species of special concern by the state." The eastern box turtle is among them. A species of special concern is a wildlife species that may become a threatened or an endangered species because of a combination of biological characteristics and identified threats.

Eastern box turtles are primarily terrestrial animals found in both urban and suburban areas. Reaching an adult size of six inches, this turtle can usually be spotted early in the day or after a summer rain. The upper shell of this turtle is high domed and keeled in colors of black and brown with markings of yellow, orange or olive.

Here is an article about turtles at risk in PA:

<https://extension.psu.edu/the-need-for-turtle-conservation-in-pennsylvania>

Just a reminder: If you spot a species that is considered threatened, endangered, or a species of special concern, please document your sighting at [ebird](#) or [inaturalist](#). (Please download the free apps.)

To find the lists of birds and animals at risk, please take a look on the web at [DCNR's Wildlife Action Plan](#) (scroll down

to see the Appendices of specific lists), as well as the [Pennsylvania Natural Heritage Program "Species and Special Features"](#) list of species in every at-risk category.

Birds listed on the "Species of Special Concern" spotted in White's Woods last summer include a number of Eastern Towhees, a Gray Catbird, Wood Thrush, and

a Scarlet Tanager. There are surely more birds from this list in our woods (Sharp-shinned Hawk, Barn Owl, and a number of the flycatchers, wrens, and sparrows!) Please help to document these.

### **FWW Website Provides Useful Information about the Woods**

If you wish further information on model stewardship plans for Project 70 woods, such as White's Woods, and how to manage a natural area (versus a commercial woodlot), or you wish to watch/re-watch a webinar, then the [friendsofwhiteswoods.org](http://friendsofwhiteswoods.org) is the place to go.

The history of this organization including the 1995 and 2007 efforts to save White's Woods can be found there as well as the latest news items and information about upcoming events.

We also have a FaceBook presence at Friends of White's Woods, Inc.

## *Project 70 and White's Woods*

### *What is Project 70?*

The Act that created Project 70, passed into law in 1964, was designed to help acquire public lands for public parks, reservoirs, and other recreation, conservation, and historical conservation purposes through state bond issuance.

### *Why did the legislature decide that public parks and conservation efforts were necessary?*

Due to the rapid growth of the population in Pennsylvania's urban and suburban areas, greenspace land was rapidly disappearing. If lands were not acquired then for preservation purposes, the legislature feared the land would be lost forever to residential or commercial development.

### *So, the state just took the land?*

First, the Department of Forests and Waters (now DCNR) had to approve the acquisition of the land. Then, a public hearing had to be held in the county where the land is situated.

### *Was WWNC acquired through Project 70?*

Yes. In 1970, the Project 70 application for the 250- acre White's Woods Nature Center (WWNC) was approved. This state tax-payer funded area was designated to remain "largely in its natural state" for hiking and other forms of "passive recreation." White Township is identified on the two WWNC property deeds as the land owner. Both WWNC deeds specify, as required by law, that "this indenture is given to provide land for recreation, conservation and historical purposes, as said purposes are defined in the "Project 70 Land Acquisition and Borrowing Act."

### *So, who owns White's Woods?*

White's Woods is owned by the taxpayers of White Township and the taxpayers of Pennsylvania. White's Woods is managed by White Township, the political subdivision in which the acreage is located. DCNR oversees all Project 70 lands and approves all Project 70 land stewardship plans.

Video version available at [friendsofwhiteswoods.org](http://friendsofwhiteswoods.org) and FaceBook (Friends of White's Woods, Inc.)

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