



THE 500-YEAR FOREST FOUNDATION

Newsletter

Volume 20 ■ Number 1 ■ Fall 2017

Your donation helps protect and sustain forests that store one ton of carbon per acre annually.

Welcoming Ravens Hill Forest and the Dutnells

IN LATE September, 500-Year Forest Foundation directors finished their fall board meeting in Charlottesville then headed about eleven miles southwest to visit Ravens Hill Forest, the newest addition to our fold.

Director Jeff Smith photographed owners Peter and Susan Dutnell accepting a member forest sign from chair David Ledbetter, after which the Dutnells gave David, Jeff, Frank Biasioli, Ches Goodall, Hullie Moore, and Tom O'Halloran a look at their forest.

Ches was on familiar ground, having worked with the Dutnells years ago in a county conservation program and having made more recent visits to prepare an assessment for the 500YFF. "It is an impressive and beautiful forest that is well-stocked," he wrote, taking particular note of the property's soils.

Part of the Dutnell property is farmland supporting livestock grazing and hay production. Some 133 acres is woodland, mostly on the eastern slope of

Cook Mountain in southern Albemarle County, VA. The mountain's backbone is a wide seam of coarse-grained quartz monzonite--the Lovingson Formation--which has weathered to produce loamy and fertile top soils that Appalachian hardwoods thrive on, Ches reported. There is also an unusual narrow seam of metamorphic rock of igneous origin that runs along the foot of the mountain.

From a 1,055-foot secondary peak of Cook Mountain, Ravens Hill Forest slopes in nearly every direction. Numerous streams originate on the property, ultimately feeding into the Hardware River. Varying combinations of elevation,



aspect, earlier use, moisture and soils yield a second growth forest with wide-ranging site quality and species composition.

The most common forest type is yellow poplar-red oak along stream valleys, Ches found. Mixed oaks, hickory and red maple dominate drier, more acidic southeast-facing ridges. Windswept ridges and higher elevation west-facing side slopes harbor chestnut oak and mountain laurel.

(Continues on page 2)

Kim Biasioli is the foundation's newest director



THE 500-YEAR FOREST Foundation was already in Kim Biasioli's debt even before she joined the board in March 2017. As a Forest Conservation Specialist for the Virginia Department of Forestry, she introduced our mission to other organizations whenever the subject of old-growth forests arose.

That networking should continue to flow quite naturally from her day job. Since 2014, she has worked

on the establishment and stewardship of conservation easements in the forestry department's Central Region--35 counties between I-95 and Charlottesville from the DC suburbs to the North Carolina line.

Before joining the Department of Forestry, Kim worked as a stewardship specialist for a small California land trust and as a Nature Conservancy botanist in

New York. A Massachusetts native, she received a B.S. in Environmental Science from Evergreen State College in Washington and a M.S. in Natural Resources from the University of Vermont, where she conducted research on forest ecology and forest management practices in northern hardwood forests.

Kim is the daughter-in-law of 500-Year Forest owners Eleanor and Frank Biasioli.

Ravens Hill Forest (from page 1)

The riparian zones along major stream channels in visible bottomland have a deep layer of silt and organic matter that produces extremely moist and fertile soils ideal for tulip poplar and its frequent understory companion spicebush. Shortleaf and Virginia pines have sprung up on abandoned farmland at lower elevations.

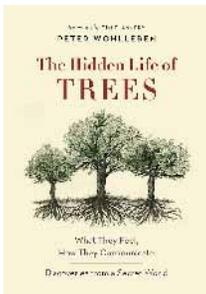
Those “old fields” harbor invasives, although Peter has done a good job keeping them under control, Ches says. Along with forest management, the farm operation and Susan’s University of Virginia day job, the Dutnells also juggle whatever past-times and projects occupy daughters Emily and Ealasaid (holding Kip in photo). Over the years, the list has included dance lessons, soccer, drawing, county fair competitions, apprentice lambing and college.

Even before September, Peter and Susan had made room in their lives for the 500YFF, attending the 2016 Clinch Mountain owners meeting and before that an event at Teddy Roosevelt’s Pine Knot retreat. But then, Pine Knot is a birding hot spot and Peter’s passion for birding is legendary. He is a Christmas Bird Count stalwart. He works with Master Naturalists and junior naturalists. Primarily through the Monticello Bird Club, he leads bird walks at the Ivy Creek Natural Area, where he helped establish trails. His ornithology expertise will add greatly to habitat monitoring.



Bookshelf

“Winter is coming” needn’t always be ominous. Sometimes it just means more time to spend inside with thought-provoking books. Our founder reviewed one such title. That’s followed by three other recent publications of interest.



The Hidden Life of Trees: What They Feel, How They Communicate by Peter Wohlleben *A Review by Ted Harris*

Peter Wohlleben, a German forester, has written a revealing, perceptive and very readable book about the forest and its tree members. He says, “My message, though grounded in a forest I interact with almost every day, is a message that applies to all forests and woodlands around the world.”

In the foreword, Tim Flannery says of the author: “His deep understanding of the lives of trees reached through decades of careful observation and study reveals a world so astonishing that if you read this book, I believe that forests will become magical places for you, too.”

What a great advantage it is to a tree to be born in a healthy forest. Despite competition for sunlight, the forest, it turns out, is a most cooperative society, a social venture where there is manifold ability to work together. As Wohlleben says, forests are superorganisms with interconnections like ant colonies.

Scientific discoveries have revealed that trees have a sense of smell and taste. Trees can identify a marauding insect’s saliva and create a compound that will attract the insect’s enemy. This pheromone drifts through the air warning trees nearby so that they can also respond. The Africa Acacia tree creates ethylene making their leaves tasteless, which wards off giraffes and alerts neighboring trees to the threat.

Don’t miss “Note from a Forest Scientist” at the very end of Wohlleben’s book. It’s written by Dr. Suzanne Simard, Professor of Forest Ecology at the University of British Columbia and describes Simard’s work discovering that tree roots and fungi function symbiotically. Simard learned that Douglas firs suffered when paper birches were thinned from the forest stand because the Douglas firs received more photosynthetic carbon from the paper birches than they transmitted. “Looking further,” she writes, “we discovered that the exchange between the two species was dynamic: each took different turns as ‘mother’ depending on the season.”

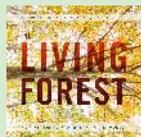
Simard’s findings gave rise to so much research worldwide that our understanding of forests has expanded exponentially in the last twenty years. Fortunately for the reader, Wohlleben’s book covers all those subsequent significant discoveries as well as his own interesting insights into trees and forests.

Recently published:



**Grand Canyon For Sale:
Public Lands versus Private Interests
in the Era of Climate Change**
by Stephen Nash

**The Songs of Trees:
Stories from
Nature's Great Connectors**
by David George Haskell



**The Living Forest:
A Visual Journey
Into the Heart of the Woods**
by Robert Llewellyn and Joan Maloof

Thank you to our Donors

What we do is only possible with the support of the people you see on this list. The following gifts were received through September 30, 2017. Soil Saver gifts start at \$600, Stream Steward at \$300, Flora Fancier at \$150, Fauna Fan at \$60 and Tree Tender at \$30.

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Hank Shugart
Madeline Vann

Creative giving

OUR DONORS are both generous and creative. Ted Harris, this organization's founder, made a generous donation to the foundation specifically in honor of Ravens Hill Forest. Many of you designate individuals you want honored or remembered. We are grateful for those thoughtful gestures.

Earlier this year, a donor made The 500-Year Forest Foundation beneficiary on an insurance policy. Other donors have set up automatic monthly schedules for giving. Donations have been matched by employers.

Tried and true works, too: checks, credit cards or cash. Don't forget the AmazonSmile program, where you shop and we benefit. Remember the forests in your estate planning. Donations are essential, but we also need volunteers, ideas, forest prospects and director candidates.

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The 500-Year Forest Foundation, a non-profit organization, works in partnership with private forest owners to produce future old-growth forests.

You can help.

For more information or to contribute, volunteer or recommend a forest, go to www.500yearforest.org, email 500yearforests@gmail.com or call 434-953-3325.



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Director's Letter



Ches Goodall

It seems fitting that my turn in this space coincides with welcoming Ravens Hill Forest to The 500-Year Forest Foundation. The Dutnells and I first met in 2008 when they enrolled in the Albemarle County Acquisition of Conservation Easements Program.

Peter and I talked about easements as we walked his property and I got a sense of his commitment to land preservation. From the get-go, it was obvious Peter revered his land and that it gave him a deep “sense of place.” He wanted to protect what had sustained him economically and spiritually for so many years. Putting the land in a conservation easement was a no-brainer.

But that easement allowed timber harvesting. So, in 2017, Peter doubled down and made his forestland a “no-cut” preserve. In addition to generating tax credits, the move protects a majestic stand of yellow poplar and red oak growing on deep loamy soils and supporting a rich herbaceous layer.

It guarantees undisturbed habitat for ecological and scenic purposes, protecting the viewshed of a highly visible mountain and water flowing off that mountain from pristine headwater branches. The 500-Year Forest Foundation adds a member forest and the entire planet benefits from Peter’s foresight and loyalty to his land.