



Serving Adams, Brown, Fayette, Gallia, Highland, Jackson, Lawrence,  
Pike, Ross, and Scioto Counties

Founded 1995

Our Mission . . .

*To encourage through education and demonstration the sound management and appreciation of woodlands, wildlife, soil and water resources. To provide information and technical assistance to members interested in the planning, management, and the use of forestry resources for economic and recreational purposes.*

### DECEMBER CHRISTMAS PARTY / ANNUAL MEETING

SOFA members are having a Merry Christmas! We started out with a fun party at the Pike County Fish and Game location on the 14th. Brent brought hors d’oeuvres and we had a catered meal of chicken, beef, lots of sides, and desserts. After our meal, we had a quick meeting where we elected officers, talked about the February meeting to be held at Dana Schmidt’s (date and time depends on the running of the sap, watch the webpage and the Facebook feed), and we had an update on the newsletter. Just a reminder, we will no longer receive paper copies, the newsletter will only be available via email, on the website, and linked on the Facebook page. We also had an update on Rick Wright’s health. He’s doing well, misses seeing everyone, and hopes to be back soon. We also heard that Kate Roy’s surgery went well. FYI, Kate provided all the tableware for the party. It was very festive and we appreciate all her efforts to organize the party and arrange for the caterer. Thanks to Tim Shoemaker for arranging the party venue. We were the last party of the season - the fish and game folks closed and winterized the building after we cleared out.

The officers for 2024 will be as follows:

**Tim Shoemaker** will continue coordinating and distributing the newsletter (if you have updated your email recently, please let him know so he can add you to the distribution list);

**Brent Flaskerud** is the new chairman, and

**Rick Wright** will be the co-chair, Rick will be on medical leave for a while, but will still have lots of input;

**Jim Meacham** will remain as our Treasurer;

**John Hillger** will provide syrup for our speakers;

and, in a very close vote,

I (**Kelly Flaskerud**) will remain as Secretary (not really, I was the only “nay” vote...)

The robbers’ gift exchange was fun! The elves were busy making walking sticks, birdhouses and feeders, targets and target holders, candles, decorations, nuts, foodstuffs (including a huge package of Twinkies!), and other assorted goodies. There were lots of items stolen, laughs, and good cheers.

As always, we will not be having a meeting in January. We hope everyone had a Merry Christmas and send best wishes for all of us to have a healthy, happy, and prosperous New Year. See you all at Dana’s in February for some syrup making!

Cheers, Kelly

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Southern Ohio Forestland Association



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### What does a Forester do?

A forester can work with you to realize the goals you have for your land. Whatever your goals are, from having a beautiful healthy woods to enjoy, or creating wildlife habitat, or sustainably harvesting trees for income. Foresters can develop a plan for your land that meets your goals and objectives while ensuring a healthy forest for the future.

### What training does a Forester have?

Foresters are professionals that have undergone training through a college or university program. There are several professional association that your forester might be a member of, including the Society of American Foresters (SAF), the Association of Consulting Foresters (ACF) or the Professional Forest Guild.

### How do I find a forester to work with?

Like the other professionals you work with in your life, whether they be doctors, lawyers, tax accountants or foresters, you want to find someone that you trust and can have a good working relationship with. Your local extension, DNR, or NRCS office is an excellent place to start to finding a forester. You can also check out websites like ACF's Find a Forester tool.

For years, herders and swagmen in the Australian Outback had to fight a particularly pesky foe: the blowfly. While harmless, the flies had an irritating habit of swarming around people's faces. That is, until the Australians began fighting back. Before the days of bug spray, Aussies used a bit of string to dangle small pieces of cork from the brims of their hats. The swaying wood was just enough to keep the blowflies at bay, and the absurd headwear joined the Foster's can and Paul Hogan as an unmistakable icon of Australian culture.

### A Note to all Members/ active and inactive

There are a lot of reasons that many members are not able to attend our monthly meetings. That being said, we miss you, and hope you are well. We would like to hear from you, to know that you still have an interest in our group, and what is going on in your world. There will be a place in the newsletter to publish your message (only if you give permission) to let everyone know about you. The weather is changing in southern Ohio, so sit down and drop a few lines to me. Email [tshoe140@horizonview.net](mailto:tshoe140@horizonview.net)

## FACEBOOK

Check often, there is timely information, that cannot make it into the newsletter!  
It is a private group, so you may want to register. After registering you will be able to post entries. This will enable us to put out immediate information, such as cancellations, or other plan changes. In order to register, open Facebook search for "S.O.F.A." There you will be able to join the group.

## Tentative SOFA Meetings 2024

January	No Meeting / Happy New Year!
February	Dana Schmidt / Maple Syrup / Date to be announced
March 14 <sup>th</sup>	NWTF / About Turkeys
April	All About Bats
May	Camp Perry Trip
June	Chain Saw Demonstration
July	Farm Tour To be announced
August	Yearly Planning Meeting / No regular Meeting
September	Pike SWC Youth Day at Pike Lake
October	Farm Tour To be announced
November	Auction / fund raiser
December	Annual Meeting / Christmas Party

### What a Beech Natures message board

Few trees offer the opportunity to be a canvas as readily as a Beech tree. There's something inviting about a Beech tree and for centuries people have made them their canvas and message board. I suppose no other tree has as many hearts carved in it as Beech trees. As I traveled around the country hunting, I have always investigated when I see big beech trees with carvings. Most are simple initials or Joe loves Sally with a heart. I have at times seen some elaborate artwork carved in Beech bark. The oldest I have ever found was a little over 100 years old. I once saw a Beech that had evidently been a family tree. It had many names and initials with dates over several decades all with the same last initial or name. I once saw one so covered that you'd need a ladder to get to untouched bark/canvas. Think about some of the things you've seen carved into a tree.

Part of me is enthused with seeing what others have left as their mark in the past and part of me wonders if it's defacing nature. Now make no mistake, any unnatural alteration or applied message to natural landmarks and environmental resources is in fact defacing. I may get amused at carvings, but paint just plain irritates me. Just last week I noticed someone had painted a message on a rock face along Paint Creek and it brought an internal snarl from me, and I was disgusted. I suppose we've all had our moments of indiscretion and done things we wish we hadn't, especially looking back at our younger years. Somehow, the carvings found on the old Beech trees gets a pass and perhaps have become a part of our heritage. It is neat to think this tree has stood and received these messages for up to 100 plus years.

The Beech tree is one of the workmen of the woods and often reviled and not given much respect. As a timber tree it is always sawed as "low Grade" or "pallet lumber". Woodworkers seldom use it for building. It is often left behind as junk. Part of this is because the big ones are often hollow and do not retain much savable lumber. This makes it a good heritage message board as it's more likely to be left behind.

However, Its qualities and assets are many. It grows a large canopy that makes a great place for birds to nest. The fact it is often hollow is a housing boon for wildlife. Squirrels, raccoons, woodpeckers and more rely on these mammoth apartment buildings for winter shelter and raising families. Beech nuts are a delicacy for forest critters. It makes a good firewood for heating our homes when we do cut it down. Even when their days are done, and they break over and fall to the ground they still have value. I once knew of a fox den in a fallen beech. I will never forget a hunting trip to Virginia that led to a memorable encounter through a Beech Tree. I was turkey hunting and I come to a downed beech, and I climbed up on it to sit a spell. Suddenly, I heard a rumbling form underneath me and a ruckus. Out of the end of the hollow log came a black bear. I don't know who was more startled, him or me. Fortunately he ran before I crapped my pants. Afterwards I had to chuckle and in retrospect I was amused and blessed by the encounter.

I had an instructor once who told a joke about some species of tree that I thought was good. I am sure I have forgotten the correct version, but I am going to share my version. "The lowly Beech tree never stood a chance. She was the illegitimate child of the woods; her father was a Hickory Nut and her mother was the best ash in the woods and she was destined to be a Beech."

Dana F Schmidt

### **What does a Logger do?**

Once you and your forester develop a plan for your woods, a logger can help you with certain activities in that plan. When you and your forester have identified trees that need to be removed, whether for income or forest health (thinning for wildfire resiliency or pests or wildlife) or creating wildlife habitat then a logger will cut them down (harvest) and remove those trees. The logger can then transport the trees to a local mill.

### **What training does a Logger have?**

Many loggers receive on the ground training. Some state agencies, logging companies or trade associations have training programs for loggers. There also might be a logger certification program in your state. Be sure to check with your state agency to find out if there is a certification program in your state.

### **How do I find a logger to work with?**

You have invested a lot of resources and time in your land so it is very important to find a reputable logger to work with. Most important is to have a signed contract that clearly lays out the work your logger will be doing including any clean-up or damage that might need to be addressed. Your forester can help you find a trustworthy logger.

### **Wildlife Ponds..."if you build it they will come"**

By Carl Struck, NM Tree Farm #2 forestreefrog@gmail.com (575)587-1066

Remember the line in the movie "Field of Dreams" when Kevin Costner's character hears a voice in his head saying "if you build it, he will come"? I think of a slight variation on that line when I look out on our 1/3 acre wildlife pond in the high Ponderosa pine forests of Northern New Mexico. In 2010 my wife, Johanne Riddick, and I decided to take the plunge and invest in a huge hole in the ground on the edge of our natural mountain meadow hoping to catch some of the often abundant Spring run-off.

Our site visit with the NRCS team went very well with everyone confirming that our site would make a perfect wildlife pond. We filed all the necessary paper work and received a Livestock Water Impoundment (Wildlife Pond) permit a few weeks later.

On September 7, 2010 we started the project by scraping the top soil, from the pond/embankment area and saving it in a pile. We were lucky to find our almost pure clay deposits in our meadow went down over 9 feet.

During 4 years of waiting, the pond depth was a foot or two deeper every Spring until on March 19, 2015, after a 1.5" rainfall fell on our winter long snow-pack, the pond overflowed and our spillway was tested as our inlet became a rushing stream that could have filled our pond several times over!

The list of plants and creatures that have found their way to our "oasis" in the Ponderosa is a long and fascinating one. From the first, Chorus Frog tadpoles, Water Striders, various forms of water beetles, Tiger Salamander larva and Wandering Garter Snakes made it their home and we introduced Fat Head Minnows and Grass Carp (for mosquito control and water weed control respectively) so the water has always been rich with life. The wet clay margin at shoreline has held the frequent tracks of Elk wading through the shallows as well as a Black Bear skirting the the edge and a Mountain Lion that one early morning swam across and left his tell-tale story behind. We often walk up to the pond to find water fowl (Green Winged Teal, Ring-Necked Duck, Canvas Back duck and Eared Grebe to name just a few) and of course more often, our common Mallard. A pair of Mallards in fact have hatched and raised many ducklings on our floating island over the years!

It didn't take long for the Dragonfly/Damselfly squadrons, those dazzling jewels of any aquatic habitat, to stake their claim to our pond with a certitude of abundance and we frequently encounter the Belted Kingfisher diving for minnows as well as the Spotted Sandpiper stalking the muddy margins. Of course, parallel to all the animals, the aquatic plants also made their appearance with Sedge the first arrival followed by numerous forms of the Spiked Rushes and the Giant Bulrush and, of course, Cattails.

Since that day of filling, almost 8 years ago, we never miss an opportunity to "check on the pond" for there is always something new and interesting making an appearance where fresh water has made a new home in an arid Ponderosa habitat! One of our friends calls it the biggest science experiment he's ever seen... another thinks it's the biggest toy.



Happy New Year!!



It's Maple Syrup Time!

FEBRUARY SATURDAY 10 th 10 AM  
Alterate day (weather related) 17 th  
Dana Schmidt Farm  
MAPLE SYRUP MAKING  
2112 California Hollow Rd Bainbridge Oh 45612  
Between Bournville and Bainbridge  
California Hollow Rd is in the "S" curves on St Rt 50just  
East of Paint Valley Schools  
Check Facebook or call one of the officers to make sure of  
the date due to weather conditions.

**S.O.F.A.**

3681 US Highway 23  
Chillicothe Oh 45601



Visit us on the web at [www.ohiosofa.org](http://www.ohiosofa.org)

Meeting locations will vary from month to month, watch for  
announcements!

APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

NAME \_\_\_\_\_ PHONE \_\_\_\_\_  
ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_  
EMAIL \_\_\_\_\_

If you own woodland, in which county? \_\_\_\_\_ Acres Owned? \_\_\_\_\_

New Member \_\_\_\_\_ Renewal \_\_\_\_\_ Scholarship Fund Donation \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Thank-You

Mail application / renewal & check to Jim Meacham, 4332 St Rt 776, Jackson Oh 45640

Make Check Payable to Southern Ohio Forestland Association (SOFA)

**Individual \$15, Family \$25, Partnership, Association, or Corporation \$25**