



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.

March 14 th meeting

We had an excellent turnout for our March meeting at the Lion's Clubhouse! The meal was excellent and included lots of chicken, potatoes, salads, fried leeks, and a delicious venison stew that our speaker, Morgan Goodling from the National Wild Turkey Federation (NWTf). I'm hoping that she will share the recipe, it was that good!

After supper, we had a short business meeting to discuss scholarships to Camp Canopy and generating interest for future years. A vote was passed to offer our scholarship funds to the Ohio Forestry Association in case there is a need for monies for up to three students outside of our area. SOFA will maintain the funds in our treasury unless or until they're needed. Several members volunteered to reach out to local VoAg and FFA coordinators prior to next year's cut off of 15 March 2025.

In regard to membership, several members have not paid their 2024 dues. In fact, several long-time members haven't paid dues for quite some time. By a voice vote, it was decided that members who haven't paid their dues in three years will be moved to an inactive status. Since the newsletter is now distributed electronically, inactive members will still receive the newsletter. Members who haven't paid for five years or more will be dropped from the roles entirely. If those members decide to rejoin at a later date, they will not be required to pay their back dues.

Sue Hillger made a motion that we update our trifold and provide copies to local realtors. The motion passed. She also suggested that we hold a contest to create permanent name tags using products from the woods. The person creating the most unique name tag will get to cut to the head of the chow line (in front of Tim) and eat first at an upcoming meeting. We will do it twice to let everyone get a chance, so bring it to the April meeting, and we'll do it again in May. Be creative!

Our next meeting will be held at the Kincaid Fish Hatchery open house on April 13. The fish hatchery is located at 7487 OH-124, Latham, OH 45646. You're encouraged to bring family and friends as well as a bag lunch and drink. There is no charge to attend the event and it is kid-friendly!

Our May meeting will take place at Camp Perry again this year. Keep an eye on the Facebook page and next month's newsletter for details.

Morgan Goodling from the NWTf gave a turkey talk. We learned about turkey reproduction (did you know that poults can fly when they're only two weeks old?), nesting, best practices for enhancing habitats for optimal turkey use, and how the EQIP and CRP programs can be utilized by timber farmers to encourage turkeys to use your property and increase flock size and poult survival. Several of her suggestions for enhancing turkey habitat will also help your timber farm. Crop tree release, feathering between the forest edge and open fields, and opening a few acres within your woods will encourage turkeys and other wildlife to use the area. And planting mast-bearing trees, like oaks, after timbering ensures that your forest will welcome wildlife for genera to come. It was nice to have Morgan and her family at the meeting and I hope to see them again - and not just because she brought the stew!

Cheers, Kelly

Southern Ohio Forestland Association

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I'M GETTING OLDER..... but..... BACK IN THE DAY.....

I spent my youth bow hunting with a 35 LB re curve bow. Cedar arrows, fixed blade hilbre broadheads, surplus army camo fatigues, and tree stands were unheard of. Find a good trail (no trail cams back than), climb a tree, sit and wait for many hours every day after school.

Finally one evening down the trail comes 8 pointer! I had to twist around in the crotch of the tree to draw, aim, and shoot instinctively (no sights) 3 finger grip! The arrow hits the deer but not where I aimed!

I backed out of the tree and went home to get my brother to help me recover my prey. We followed the blood trail till 10 pm when we located him still alive! I quickly finished what I started!

That's how it was done back then in Pennsylvania. Now, Hi Tech compound bows, sights, range finders, tree stands, trail cams, phone apps, deer feeders, food plots, scents, drones, ground blinds, shooting houses, carbon arrows, lighted noes, atvs, and you name it, they have to have it. Leave it to man to ruin a good thing. Anything to make the hunt easier no matter the cost. (actually a much greater monetary cost!)

Is this ethical? To me, it's not so much about the hunt, as it is connecting with nature. Walking under the starry night sky early in the morning, with owls hooting, the rustling of the leaves as the woods come alive with the rising of the sun, observing the daily activities of life in the forest until the sun sets, creatures large and small prepare for the night, and all returns to darkness.



It's not about the harvest, but the connecting with the nature around us, the wonders that God created for us to enjoy. I feel blessed to have experienced these times in my life, and am looking forward to every chance I get to do it again.

It doesn't cost much, monetarily, (the way I do it), mostly just time! So get out and enjoy God's gift of nature!

RICK WRIGHT

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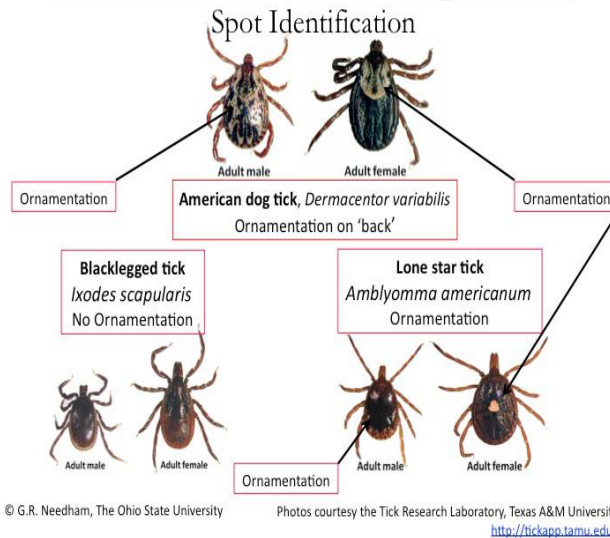
Tick Season Predicted to be Bad This Year

While some ticks, such as the blacklegged tick, can be active all year round in one stage or another, most encounters with ticks occur in spring through mid-summer, and again in the fall.

The best way to avoid them is stay out of brushy areas with high grass and leaf litter. Always walk in the center of trails and use tick repellents. You can use approved repellent on the skin or treat clothing with permethrin. Cover your body with long pants and long sleeves, tucking your pant legs into socks or boots, and tuck shirts into pants. Light-colored clothing will help you spot ticks more easily.

Diseases spread by ticks are an increasing concern in Ohio and are being reported to the Ohio Department of Health more frequently in the past decade, with Lyme disease and Rocky Mountain spotted fever (RMSF) being the most common. Other tickborne diseases such as anaplasmosis, babesiosis, and ehrlichiosis are also on the rise. Though rare, diseases such as tularemia, southern tick-associated rash illness (STARI), and Powassan virus may also be carried by Ohio ticks.

Three Ixodid Ticks of Importance



This should not keep you from working in your woods/ enjoying for recreation. It should just be a reminder that they are a problem that we will have to contend with and to take proper precautions.

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

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

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

A DAY in the WOODS

We are proud to announce the lineup of events for the 2024 edition – our 13th season!

May 10 – Evaluating your Woods
 June 14 – Getting a Handle on Invasive Species
 July 12 – Native Grasslands and Pollinator Habitat
 August 9 – Prescribed Fire: Ecology & Implementation (Smokey's Birthday!)
 September 13 – Night Flyers (5pm)
 October 11 – Critter Homes: Wildlife Habitat Improvements
 November 8 – Forest Stand Improvement

You can find our 2024 brochure attached to this email. It includes all relevant details for events and registration. You can also keep an eye on our [Facebook Page](#) and [Website](#) for any updates.

We look forward to seeing you in 2024!

Jessica

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SOFA DUES

Please note! We don't want to loose anyone as a member, If your dues have been forgotten for the past few years, **NO WORRIES!** If you simply pay the current years dues, you will be completely caught up! We value your involvement, and would love to see you at the next meeting! Our Officers try hard to put on informative programs, as well as fun things that we “Outdoors People” like to do! See you soon!

AHHH Spring! (Signs, wonders and warnings)

I would wager that a poll on your favorite season would result in a majority choosing spring. I think I would agree for the most part, but I also enjoy many parts of the other three seasons. I am probably in a minority though when I say I am not terribly fond of Summer. I'm talking mid-July through mid-September. Back to spring and what makes it so great.

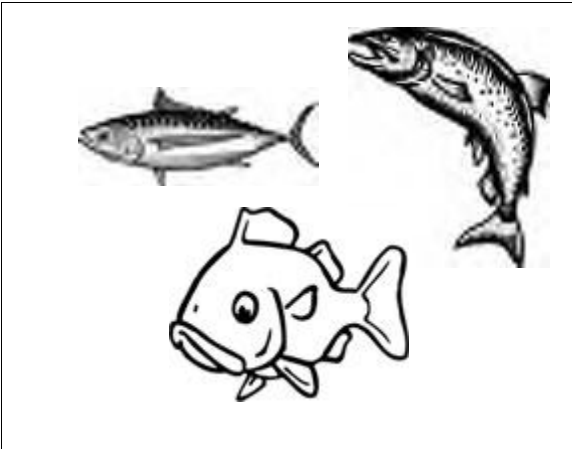
It's early March and the earth is starting to get restless and showing signs of waking from Winter's slumber. Spring shows up on a defined schedule. We have learned to watch for this cycle and use many of its regimented schedule as markers for other things. Late winter is Maple syrup time and timing is very important in that process. We know that trees need a certain amount of cold days sleeping to generate the sugars in the sap that we desire. We also know that there's an end to when we can use that sap. For many of us producers that is foretold by the arrival of Daffodils and when they bloom. A budded daffodil means the season is all but over for a Maple producer. If that is not enough warning, then spring will audibly announce it when you hear spring peepers.

If you feed the birds and watch closely you will see them start to get more colorful. Gold finches in particular start to get mating plumage. You'll hear more singing around your house and if you're observant you see some early mating rituals. Some of the first to nest are raptors and waterfowl, followed by bluebirds and wrens. From there on it's a steady progression. Red Tailed hawks are very vocal in their courting, and they do an aerial dance. Eagles are now common nesters in our area, and they are some of the very first nesters. There's a nest about 6 miles from my house that can be observed from the road, and I noticed that pair of Eagles started incubating about a week ago. The eagles have spectacular mating rituals and do an extraordinary aerial dance, locking talons and plummeting through the air. Wood ducks are now searching for nest cavities and many of us erect nest boxes around our ponds and streams for them. Being a seasoned turkey hunter means spring is the time to listen for that distinct rumble of a gobbler sounding off to announce that he is in the market for hens. I spend many spring mornings sitting on my porch listening to them serenade the hills and plotting my strategies to bring one home.

Plant life has a predictable succession as well. Spring is the time to view wildflowers and it's a great explosion of color. It starts slowly with the first small showboats arriving here and there. Spring beauty and Trout Lillies are some of the very first to arrive. Following soon will be Wild leeks or Ramps as many know them. They do not bloom but come up in dense colonies that create green blankets in our woods. They are also relished for their food value as a wild edible. Following will be blue bells, May Apples, Trilliums, and dozens more. Many of us watch this succession with great interest as they are indicators, or as hillbilly sayings go "pointers", of anxiously awaited things. For instance when I see the Trout Lillies blooming I know it's time for the spring Saugeye (hybrid Walleye) bite to start, Trilliums mean the Crappies are biting and dogwoods and May apples tell us it time for Morel mushrooms.... Yummy.

There's a dark side to spring as well. The first warning is about ticks and warm weather means they will be out. Ticks are the most annoying and dangerous insect God ever created in my mind. They transmit several diseases like Lime disease, Alpha-Gal and Rocky Mountain spotted fever. The best defense is to treat your hiking, hunting and work wear with tick repellent and pesticide. I use a permethrin Spray on my clothes. Second, we should check our bodies soon as we return from being outdoors. These are serious diseases and I encourage you to take precautions. We have seen devastating consequences in our family from these diseases. Also, mosquitoes can carry disease and there are also natural repellents you can research, as well as many commercial repellents.

All in all, it's a wonderful time of year and a therapeutic season. I think there's no better way to detox from life's stress than to get out in the spring woods and fields. It can be a very mystical, wondrous, and even spiritual experience. It's a time to let go of stress and transport to wonderland. I especially like the spring woods right after a spring rain, the smells and sounds are a sensory smorgasbord. There's an old saying, "get outdoors" and that is my prescription.



APRIL 13 th
Kinkade Fish Hatchery Open House

7487 OH-124, Latham, OH 45646.

10 AM to 2 PM

Bring a sack lunch, and a friend!

The production building will be open for visitors to view and feed rainbow trout. Visitors will have the opportunity to shoot at the archery trailer and explore some of Ohio's furbearer display at the mammal display. Fish biologists will have an electrofishing boat and nets open for viewing to explain the process of population surveys and brood stock collection. State wildlife officers will be present to answer hunting and fishing questions.

S.O.F.A.

3681 US Highway 23
 Chillicothe Oh 45601



Visit us on the web at 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