

## Woodland tour provides tranquility and ideas

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ROCK SPRINGS — While Ag Progress Days bustled, last week, with all the gaiety and excitement of a carnival, small groups of visitors found nearby peace and quiet.

Although it wasn't Walden Pond, the southwestern corner of the Penn State Research center housed a small forest frequented by several woodland conservation tour groups during the three-day happening.

Extension Forester Mel Baughman guided the groups in and out of the different stages of forest development. Baughman offered tips to farmers for turning the wooded acres into healthy

forests that can sustain a variety of wildlife and vegetation.

The first stop offered a look at an old pasture that was naturally returning back to forest. Baughman pointed to established stands of white pines, sweet birch, oak and hickory trees.

He explained this stage of development lends itself well to wildlife maintenance. The young forest provides adequate feed and cover for cottontails, deer and grouse to name a few wildlife species.

The next stop, only a few paces farther, included a more mature forest with densely compacted trees. Baughman encouraged farmers with this type of forest to border cut about 10 yards into the woodline.

Border cutting eliminates shade from adjacent crop fields and generally increases crop yields. Cut trees will remain alive and continue to provide food and cover for wildlife. Baughman advised recutting every 10 years.

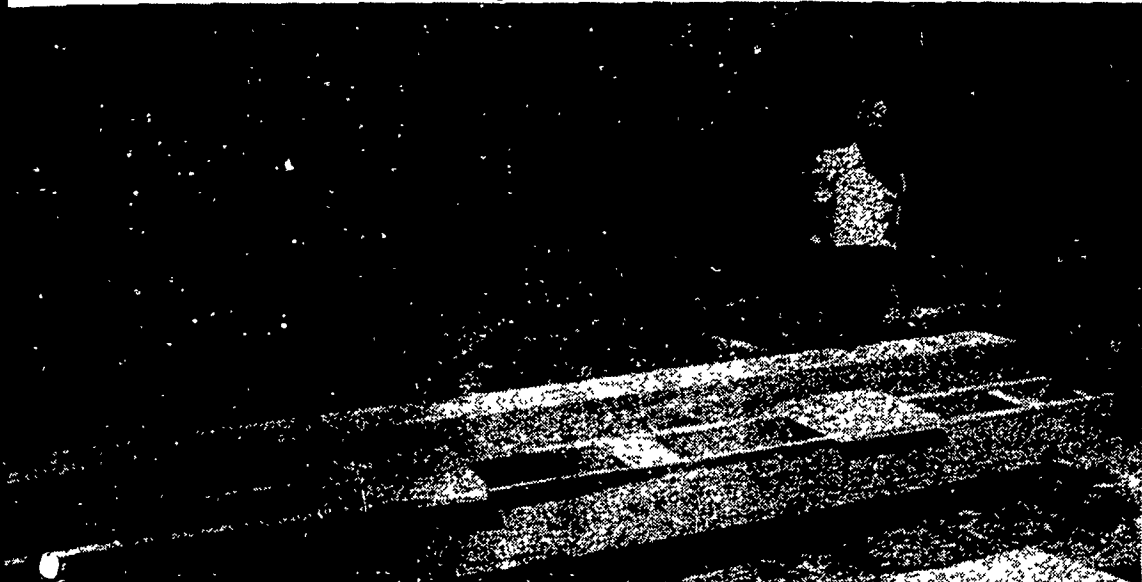
An old log landing created another ideal wildlife habitat. By

seeding these sites with fescue and Birdsfoot trefoil, a land owner can attract various insects which will in turn attract larger predators such as grouse and turkey.

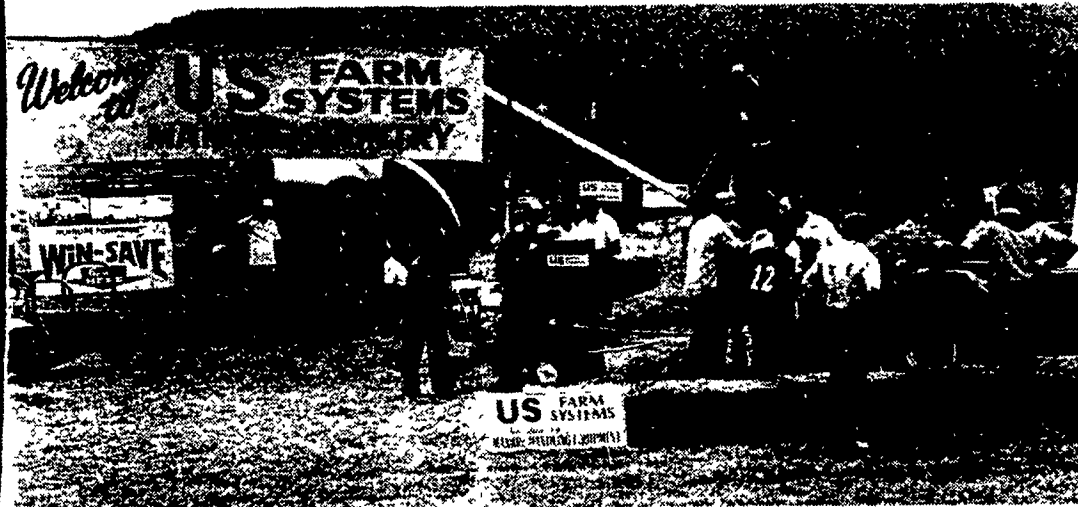
Tall dead trees pitted with several holes may look out of place in a thriving forest but Baughman stressed these "den trees" provide homes for many birds and small mammals.

Most cottontail hunters are aware of the merits of brushpiles. But Baughman pointed out they do more than just hide bunnies. They will slowly return organic matter and nutrients back to the earth and protect sprouts from heavy deer browsing.

By insuring a variety of trees and vegetation on a woodland plot, a land-owner can help protect the forest against a disease attack on a particular species, thus strengthening the forest and provide constant food and cover for wildlife.



Extension Forester Mel Baughman discusses the merits of homemade wooden culverts for installation near log land sites.



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