



**THE FORGOTTEN RESOURCES**  
Robert S. Hansen

County Forester Towanda

Most often when we talk about forest resources, two resources seem to stand out in our minds. These resources are the trees (timber) and wildlife.

In most cases the other resources that can be found in a forest environment are ignored. The ignoring of these other resources is generally not a conscious effort but more of just forgetfulness and not realizing that these resources are there.

What are some of these forgotten resources? One is the water resource found in the woods. The streams and rivers that may flow through your woods are generally not forgotten, especially if they flow all year round. Other water resources exist, however. There may be streams that may only flow part of the year, during the spring runoff or during heavy rains. For this reason they are important. Much erosion can occur during the spring runoff season or during heavy rains.

It is important to protect these stream channels. A thoughtless act can increase the instability of these channels and the direct result can be the increase in the amount of erosion during a storm. This can lead to an increase in sedimentation of a trout stream for example.

Vernal ponds (ponds that only

exist during the spring) can be important water sources for wildlife and habitat for a variety of insects and amphibians. Wetlands are also a valuable source of wildlife habitat as well as serving as natural flood control devices. Springs and seeps are also valuable water resources. They are important water sources for wildlife. Protecting these seeps is important. It doesn't really take much activity to damage this resource.

The riparian vegetation zones found along streams, lakes, and ponds are other valuable forest resources. These zones are valuable wildlife habitat and play an important role in protecting streams and lakes from erosion and sedimentation. Riparian vegetation controls, to a large extent, the temperature of these waters. Extreme fluctuations in water temperatures limit the variety and number of fish and insect species found in streams and lakes. Trees are also able to screen out a large proportion of nutrients before they reach streams and ponds. Cattle should be excluded from these areas and timber should not be harvested close to these areas.

More information on riparian vegetation management and care can be found in the following publications: "Woodlot Management, Water Quality, The Law, and You" by the Endless Mountains R C & D Council, Riparian Forest Buffers NA-PR-07-91 by the US.D.A. Forest Service, North-

eastern Area; and Stream Bank Fencing Extension Circular 397 by Penn State College of Agricultural Sciences.

Nongame wildlife species such as owls, song birds, and chipmunks are often overlooked. They are often not as spectacular as many of the game species, but many individuals very much enjoy seeing these animals in the woods. To these people they are just as important as a deer or grouse. Managing for game species can sometimes be detrimental to the habitat of non-game species. This is another aspect to consider during forest management activities.

Another resource that is often overlooked, until it is gone, is the visual resource itself. This can be a difficult resource to identify because we all have different tastes. What is very beautiful in the landscape to one person is not even noticed by others.

Sometimes the management of the timber resource will temporarily damage the visual resource. However, this damage can be diminished and, keep in mind that when timber is harvested properly, the visual resource has the ability to recover relatively quickly.

Other activities can essentially destroy parts of the visual resource. As an example, when you walk the woods of northeastern Pennsylvania you will often come across old stone walls. To many individuals these walls are important to the charm of the Northeast. Removing these stone walls can damage the visual resource. Again, this depends to a large part on your personal perspective.

There may be areas with special wildflowers, unique trees or tree species, and areas with special meaning to the landowner found in the woodlot. A forest landown-

er has the ability to protect these areas if he or she desires.

What is difficult for woodland owners is that being a forest steward requires thought about how your actions affect not just the resource you are most interested in, but how your actions affect all of these important, but often forgotten, forest resources. Your forest stewardship plan should address all of these resources to some extent and can be a helpful guide in decision making. The Stewardship Incentive Program also provides cost-share assistance in addressing the management of these other resources.

It is not easy being a steward, but it can be very rewarding when you see a job well done!

**FOREST STEWARSHIP VIP**  
George Hurd

Franklin Co. Agent

There is something new and innovative happening in the woods of southcentral Pennsylvania. It's called the Forest Stewardship Volunteer Initiative Project, or VIP for short.

The purpose of the VIP is to train volunteer woodland owners in the principles of forest stewardship so that they will not only better manage their own forestlands, but motivate other woodland owners to become actively involved in the future of Pennsylvania's forest resources.

The project is sponsored by Penn State College of Agricultural Sciences, School of Forest Resources, the Pennsylvania DER, Bureau of Forestry, and the Coverts Program of The Ruffed Grouse Society.

Woodland owners that are selected to be a Stewardship VIP will be an important link in the nationwide stewardship effort to pro-

vide proper forest and wildlife management by private forest landowners.

Stewardship VIPs will receive approximately 40 hours of classroom and field training in forest ecology, the concepts of biodiversity, silviculture, wildlife science, environmental resource management and other subjects related to stewardship. In exchange, VIPs agree to invest a like amount of their time relaying what they've learned to motivate forest landowners in their communities.

What type of individuals are we looking for? First of all, you should be a forest landowner who is active or has the desire to become more active in forest management. Outstanding candidates who are not currently landowners will also be considered. We are looking for concerned local residents who are considered by their peers to be responsible members of the community.

Equally important, the appropriate participant must be interested in forestry, able to articulate well-informed opinions, and must have the time to contribute towards community-sharing activities.

If you are interested in more information or an application, contact George Hurd at the Penn State Franklin County Cooperative Extension Office, (717) 263-9226. Deadline for selection of this year's Stewardship VIPs is Friday, March 25.

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