

WV Woodland Stewards Meet

Contributed by Dave McGill
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2009 WV Woodland Stewards workshop held at Camp Caesar

WV Woodland Stewards learn how to measure heights of trees and to estimate wood volume in standing logs.

It was a perfect fall setting as 20 forest landowners, educators, and nature enthusiasts met on October 9-12 for the 7th Woodland Stewards workshop in the heart of Webster County. The participants of the workshop learned about many forestry and wildlife management topics during these four days and came away from the training with a better understanding of how forests grow and how humans and wildlife depend on diverse forest resources.

USDA Forester Jane Bard led the group deep into a regenerating clearcut, still full of briars and dense pockets of young, fast growing trees. In another area, there were large red oak trees where scattered stumps were the only evidence that there had been two previous thinnings operations carried out years before. On the forest floor was a mat of small red oak seedlings.

Snakes are possibly the most misunderstood group of species living in the forest. Following a presentation with 12 species of different live snakes by naturalist Roy Moose of the Cranberry Nature Center, many of the participants learned that these unique species have a big role in the healthy functioning of forested ecosystems.

While many landowners in West Virginia choose to sell timber to the first one that asks, Stuart Moss--who teaches forest business at WVU Division of Forestry and Natural Resources--demonstrated how complex timber sales really are. His evening lecture on "How not to sell timber" made it clear that the wording of timber contracts is everything. A timber sale can be a satisfying experience for a landowner, but hiring a forester will save a landowner a lot of headaches and will generally bring in a strong price for timber.

The workshop participants all seemed to benefit from the lectures and field tours this year. As one stated in leaving that it "was a great and useful workshop, especially for the woodland owner looking to start into forest management and stewardship."

WV Woodland Stewards is sponsored by the West Virginia Division of Forestry. For more information on this and other upcoming workshops, be sure to visit the AHC website or call Dave McGill, 304-293-2941 x 2474; dmcgill@wvu.edu.