

The Forest Management Committee consists of: Chair: Lise LeTellier, Wayne Robert, Robert Sullivan, Cheryl Binder, Al Lenge, Jane Glover, Rafe Demers, Wilbert Sanchez and Lisa Gaudreau.

This has been a productive year for the FMC. Though a bit of a struggle for the forests. The forest has seen an increase in diseases and invasive species. We all have seen the effects of the HWA, EAB, and the BBD disease. But new this year, and only recently discovered in our region is the Beech Leaf disease, which is associated with a nematode attacking the internal structure of the leaves. Because it was only discovered a few years ago (2012 in Ohio and 2020 in Mass) the full cause and how it spread is still being researched. But it is here and affecting our trees. Other invasive species present in Wildwood, especially along personal property and along roadways include Oriental bittersweet, Japanese barberry, Winged Euonymus (Burning bush), Garlic Mustard and multiflora rose to name the most prevalent. An observant Wildwooder recently discovered Mile a Minute Vine and we are still searching to see if there is more. Invasive species require diligence on the part of ALL of us. There is no way we can monitor and control the entire 800 acres we call Wildwood, but we are doing our best to try. Most of the plant based invasives threatening our forest can be mechanically removed and if you have them on your property please remove them or hire a landscape person to remove them. Japanese barberry, Winged Euonymus, Burning bush, are the two most seen on private property. The insect pests are more difficult to deal with and can not be treated on the large scale on our common property, so to some degree we have to let succession occur. Which brings us to what we, the FMC, are doing.

First we are always looking at current research and funding opportunities to assist. Our entire Wildwood is eligible for many grant funding opportunities if the Woodland Enhancement Plan we have and filed with the state indicates the need for it. In September Robert Sullivan and I attended a seminar to learn more about additional programs through the US Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service, the agency we received funding through for the stand one Wildlife Enhancement cut for the NEC. We learned there is money out there, but we have to plan for what needs we have before and amend our Woodland Enhancement Plan first before applying. One of the possibilities we are looking into is Forest Resilience and Health in light of Climate Change. To this end, we moved forward in two ways. First, we secured a new consulting forest, who is local and trained in climate forestry. Adam Brown of ShireForestry of Sandfield has been active here in Wildwood since we hired him in the fall. After some meetings over the winter and spring, and after the April vote at the community meeting, he has helped us with three projects: 1) the laying out of a new family friendly trail in the Owl's Nest region of the trail. There will be a work party this September to continue the work on that trail. 2) he marked out an area of WPOA boundaries along the south west corner of the property that the FMC felt does not get accessed often, yet has multiple properties bordering it. 3) He has set up our three long term, ongoing research plots, which you read about in the Newsletter. These were placed in three of the four forest stands. They are marked very vividly in Red striped paint and numbers on trees. Once the leaves are off the trees, these will be a bit more visible, especially the one near Meadow Beach upper parking lot.

The purpose of these plots is to monitor various aspects of forest health for resilience. Succession happens, we understand that, however, as scientists have been saying, climate change is accelerating this and species are simply not able to adapt as quickly as change is happening. As a committee we want to be more aware of these changes and to make decisions that might help to maintain diversity, which is a forest's greatest tool against devastation. A healthy, diverse forest is much more likely to withstand change.

Lastly, Stand one is doing great. We are seeing good regeneration already of native species and the colleges associated with the research continue to collect data on song birds and various mammals, including the NEC.

As our community deals with climate change, erosion and invasive species, our Woodland Enhancement plan can be modified to accommodate these needs and federal or state funding becomes available to us through various grants. So monitoring all these aspects help us determine how we will modify the plan in the future.

We will continue to learn, monitor, and discuss our forests to keep WPOA wild as possible.

Respectfully submitted by Lise LeTellier, FMC Chair