



Karger presented SAF Presidential Field Forester Award

Ned Karger CF was presented a 2014 Society of American Foresters (SAF) Presidential Field Forester award at the SAF National Convention held recently in Salt Lake City. Ned, representing SAF District 7, was one of nine awardees selected from SAF regions throughout the US. District 7 includes Pennsylvania, West Virginia, Maryland, Delaware, New Jersey and D.C.

Ned is currently the Land Manager for the Kane Hardwood Division of the Collins Pine Co. managing 118,000 acres of FSC certified forestland in northwestern Pennsylvania. He is a 1979 graduate of Penn State with a B.S. in Forest Science. Before coming to Kane Hardwood in 1983, he worked for Hammermill Paper Co., USFS Forestry Sciences Lab (Northern Forest Research Station) at Warren PA and the USFS Allegheny National Forest.

Ned has held a variety of positions at Kane Hardwood / Collins Pine Co. since 1983 including Forest Technician, District Forester, Harvest Manager and Silvicultural Manager before becoming the Land Manager. In 1994-95, he was part of the team that earned recognition for the Collins Pine Co. Pennsylvania forest lands under the strict standards of the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC). The Collins PA Forest (CPF) was the first forest land to receive FSC certification in the eastern US. This FSC certification has been continuously maintained since then through annual audits and four full audits (1995, 2000, 2005, 2010) under the continuously evolving FSC Principles, Criteria and Indicators.

Since the 1990's, the management of the CPF can be characterized as "continuous quality improvement". A comprehensive geographic information system has been created and continuously been improved and updated. A complete comprehensive inventory of the CPF was established and is continually updated with annual data collection. All silvicultural activities are tracked using GPS and GIS technologies. Standard operating procedures have been adopted and are continuously reviewed and revised.

During Ned's tenure as Silvicultural Manager and Land Manager, a number of changes and initiatives improved the decision making processes, the monitoring of results and the use of monitoring to improve processes. This adaptive management process has been a cornerstone of his tenure and philosophy. This process has been used to improve timber marking systems, regeneration monitoring protocols, silvicultural treatments and herbicide prescriptions.

In the early 2000's, the CPF staff established a set of water quality monitoring sites to establish baseline data. This monitoring has continued with a subset of the sites monitored annually focusing on areas with recent harvesting, road building or other activities. The number of monitoring sites has been expanded over the years focusing on the highest quality watersheds. Results have demonstrated that the management of the CPF has protected the watersheds with no significant impacts.

Since 2007, Ned has worked closely with his staff to study and treat invasive plants on the CPF starting with a major effort on Japanese Knotweed in the Tionesta Valley of Forest Co. PA. He has encouraged other private and public landowners with the realization that invasive species management requires efforts across ownership boundaries. This focus has expanded to other areas and other species such as Glossy Buckthorn and cooperation with other landowners and the Sinnemahoning Invasive Plant Management Area.

A member of the Society of American Foresters since 1985, Ned served as Northern Hardwood Chapter Vice Chair and Chair from 1996-1999 and Pennsylvania Division Vice Chair and Chair from 2000-2003 as well as SAF representative to the Pennsylvania State University, College of Agriculture Ag Council. Ned has been an SAF Certified Forester since 1998 and attended the SAF Leadership Academy in 2000. In 2002, he organized a leadership workshop for the PA Division of SAF. From 2004-2014, he served the Allegheny SAF as a member of the Executive Committee and continues to serve as their Program Committee Chairman. In 2005 he received the Allegheny SAF Robert W. Bauer Outstanding Service to Forestry Award. During the 2006 SAF National Convention in Pittsburgh, he volunteered as well as presenting during the concurrent sessions.

Ned has served on the Ben Roach Forestry Forum Steering Committee since 1985 and became chairman of the steering committee when it was renamed the Roach-Bauer Forestry Forum in 2003. He has been active with the Allegheny Hardwood Utilization Group and received their 2003 Sandy Cochran Memorial Award. He has served as a member of the PA DCNR Bureau of Forestry's Ecosystem Management Advisory Committee since 2003.

Ned has served on the Kinzua Quality Deer Cooperative (KQDC) leadership team since 2011. The KQDC is a 74,000 acre area of public and private lands partnering forest landowners, forest managers, biologists, hunters, and local businesses.

Over the last two years, Ned has served on the Steering Committee for the effort to develop a "Hemlock Conservation Strategy for the Allegheny Plateau" to deal with the Hemlock Woolly Adelgid. This effort was initially organized by The Nature Conservancy and the USFS but now includes a broad coalition of public and private forest land owners and managers, NGOs, researchers and citizen volunteers.

Ned credits his efforts to improve management on the CPF to the philosophy and support of sustainable forestry from the owners and managers of the Collins Pine Co. They have always supported these efforts and his involvement in SAF and participation in all of the other collaborative organizations. He recognizes that none of his accomplishments would have been possible without the excellent teamwork of the entire Collins Pine Co. forestry staff. He also credits his professional development to his mentor and former recipient of the SAF Presidential Field Forester Award, Blaine Puller as well as the late Bob Bauer, a PA Game Commission Forester who was an inspiration and role model.

End

Interesting Note: When receiving the award Ned noticed it was made from FSC certified Black Cherry and made by a company called Rivanna Designs of Virginia. Ned checked with the lumber salesman at Kane Hardwood and Rivanna is a customer. So Ned went all the way to Utah to receive a national award and the Black Cherry wood for the award grew in the Collins Pennsylvania Forest that he manages.

This article was published in the Allegheny SAF newsletter (the Allegheny News) and can be found at: http://www.alleghenysaf.org/docs/AN_14_Fall.pdf