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Going All-In

Katie Downie, OSAF Chair

Colleagues,

I'm amazed at what a week can do in northern Ohio. We went from sunny days with temperatures in the 60's to clouds, cool nights and colorful trees. Autumn is here, and winter is close on its heels. As we retreat into our homes earlier in the day and for longer periods during the late fall and winter, we often begin to slow down, snuggle in, and let the end of the year slide into the new.

I'd like to challenge you. Instead of taking this time to slow down, I'm going to ask you to go all-in on your life. Dream-build. Create goals. Determine your KPIs (key performance indicators to measure progress). Execute. Assess forward motion. Adapt as needed. And Repeat.

Sure, it's easy on paper to talk about this, but putting it in action is another story. The first thing I ask myself when presented with situations like this is, "What's holding me back?" Most of the time, it's fear of failure, what others are going to think, time commitment, and monetary resources. Sometimes, though, it's too many opportunities presenting themselves that inhibits me from FOCUSing (Following One Course Until Successful). Consciously making a mind-shift from a place of scarcity (problems holding me back), to a place of abundance (finding success in all I do) reliably allows me to move myself forward.

My mentor, George Wright III, has been coaching me on how to go all-in. His suggestions are simple, but not always easy:

Decide. Decide what you want to do and be resolute. Make the commitment. Don't look or go back. George said to me recently, "The mind that got you where you are now is not the mind that will take you further."

Create Certainty. Surround yourself with people who are also all-in in their lives. Create small groups to maintain accountability. Master your craft. Have a plan. The clearer the vision, the more certainty you'll have.

Take Massive Action. Fail faster. Be active. Be productive. Be active when not productive and productive when not active. Create boundaries. Push past the beliefs that are holding you back.

Some wonder why I talk so much about personal development in my notes to you. As people who regularly foster relationships with landowners, are stewards for our forests and work diligently to improve our land, we are innately relationship-builders. Going all-in on your own life will translate going all-in on your personal relationships, your business relationships, and your work-life. Taking these steps now will catapult you so much further ahead than those who will think about making this a New Year's resolution. Be the trend-setter, be the mentor, be the master of your craft, and always work to be the best version of yourself you can be. You have it in you, and you deserve it.

Respectfully,

Katie Downie

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Hetuch Publishing Schedule

If you have Ohio forestry content you'd like to share please submit by these dates to be published.

- 1st Quarter 2022: January 18th
- 2nd Quarter 2022: April 19th
- 3rd Quarter 2022: July 19th

Send to Elliot Smith at smith.elliot.13@gmail.com

2021 SAF National Election Results

Sam Cook of Raleigh, North Carolina, has been elected vice president for 2022. He is executive director of Forest Assets and vice president of the Natural Resources Foundation in the College of Natural Resources at North Carolina State University.

Victor Ford, CF, of Little Rock Arkansa, was elected District 9 Representative.

Terms begin January 1, 2022

Congratulations Sam and Victor!

Ohio SAF Incorporation and D&O Insurance

Katie Downie

During the 2021 House Society Delegates (HSD) meeting held via Zoom, the topics of local unit governance and business operations were discussed at length. This conversation was a result of national SAF's continued effort to assist in the management of local units and determined that many local units do not have the legal and regulatory structure that is required.

Citing the HSD Briefing Paper on Business Operations for the 14 September 2021 meeting:

Recommendations were brought to the SAF Board (Board) in July 2021 by CEO Baker. The Board agreed that the business operations between SAF national and state societies should be a partnership, consistent with organizational goals, and structurally and operationally linked according to applicable federal and state laws and sound business practices.

The Board believes the time is now to tackle our organizational challenges. The Board endorses taking the next steps to provide resources to help local units untangle the challenges being experienced and supports the investment of staff and legal counsel resources toward this effort. A motion was approved to authorize the CEO to work with state societies to initiate the process of state incorporation and share recommendations with the House of Society Delegates.

Implementation of a strategy to make changes in business structure and governance is a major undertaking that will take time (1.5-2 years) and be done in phases. The effort will require outstanding communications and a methodical and transparent approach to ensure each state society's unique circumstances are addressed.

Additionally:

Incorporation creates a nonprofit corporation that will provide liability protection for all state societies and their directors and members, and additional protection for SAF national. It establishes state societies as separate legal entities and creates a separation between personal and corporate assets, thus providing limited liability protection to those managing or governing the organization.

In an unincorporated association, directors and members can be personally liable for debts and liabilities of the association; however, in an incorporated nonprofit, the directors and members are generally protected from personal liability for the debts and liabilities of the incorporated nonprofit. Incorporation also helps to encapsulate liability at a specific state society level without creating exposure across state societies or at the national level.

...SAF's legal team will take the lead to incorporate state societies. This approach will alleviate the administrative burden on volunteer leaders who may not have the time or expertise to navigate the process. From a practical standpoint, this strategy allows for accuracy, efficiency, and timeliness in incorporating 30 state societies across the nation.

...SAF will provide resources for staff and legal counsel to research, coordinate, and set up incorporation for all state societies. The initial incorporation fee will be paid by SAF national at the time of filing. Renewal fees vary by state and will be borne by the state society. SAF will inform your state society of any such fees.

As a result of this recommendation, Lori Rasor, SAF Director, Awards and State Society Relations, will work with the OSAF Executive Committee, namely Katie Downie (Chair), Brad Wireman (Chair-Elect) and Henry Liebermann (Treasurer), as the liaison to the legal counsel to properly incorporate Ohio SAF. We have been in contact with Ms. Rasor to strategize obtaining the needed documents and setting submission deadlines.

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Forestry Forum Update

James Kelling, President

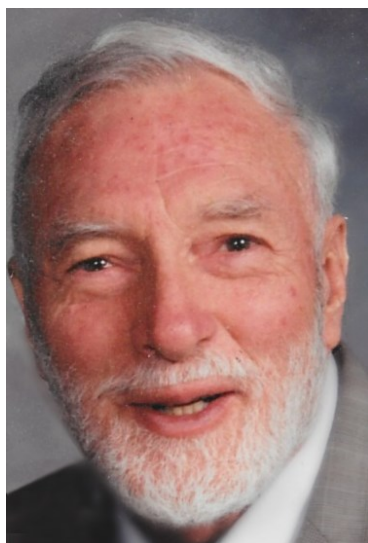
The first half of the fall 2021 semester has gone very well for the Forestry Forum! We had a great time introducing ourselves to many students during the Involvement Fair on the Oval and the Back to School Bash on West Campus. A good number of the students we interacted with at these events have become active members in the Forum, and it's been so great to watch our club grow! So far this semester we have hosted three guest speakers to chat with the Forum about careers in forestry: John Kehn with the ODNR Division of Forestry and Jimmy Alvarado & Loren Holfeld, both with the USDA Forest Service on the West Zone of the Hiawatha National Forest. All three of our guests shared a lot of valuable information with us, and John even got some of the Forum members set up with some opportunities shadowing consulting foresters!

On Saturday November 6th, we were fortunate enough to go on a tour at Urbn Timber right here in Columbus! Urbn Timber is a company that sources local trees from arborists and repurposes them as beautiful, hand-made furniture. Chris Toothman, our tour guide, walked us through their sourcing, milling, drying, and finishing procedures for the furniture they make. We in the Forum found it really great to see the folks at Urbn Timber working so hard to repurpose trees in a way that preserves some of our local Columbus history.

In addition to the recent tour and recent guest speakers, we have been having regular meetings where we plan other fun club events and practice timber sports. In the coming weeks, we are hoping to have more timber sports practice, more guest speakers, and a Forum bonfire. We are also looking into planning a West Virginia weekend getaway in the spring 2022 semester to tour a sawmill and grow closer as a club! As we look forward to potentially travelling to West Virginia as a club next semester, we are also looking forward to participating in Conclave. Hopefully all of our timber sports practice will pay off!

Despite having so many fun events on the horizon, we did have to cancel our annual Christmas Tree Sale. In the past, we have enjoyed providing beautiful Christmas trees to our supporters during the holiday season, and we hope that we can provide the supporters of the Forestry Forum with Christmas trees next year!

Thanks everyone for keeping up to date with the Ohio State University Forestry Forum! If any forestry or natural resource professionals are interested in speaking at a Forestry Forum meeting, send an email to ohioforestforum@gmail.com. Go Bucks!



Remembering Dr. John Paul “Jack” Vimmerstedt

Bob Romig says,

Jack was a real character in the best sense of the word. His research focused on strip mine reclamation specifically soils related to tree growth. On a humorous note, although not necessarily humorous to him, Jack ran a local 5K here in Wooster in wing tip shoes. Jack was a warm, caring person.

Dr David Hix says,

I met Dr. John P. (“Jack”) Vimmerstedt in 1990 when I interviewed for the silviculture faculty position at Ohio State University. I recall that he was one of the most outgoing and friendly members of the faculty. He frequently traveled from his work location at the OARDC in Wooster to the Columbus campus. I believe that he loved to teach, just as he loved to work in the forest. I still remember the trips we made to the field, including one visit to Delaware County where he carefully explained the complex relationships between the soil factors and the ecology & development of the different forest stands. Another recollection was his frequent field labs in his Silvics course, includ-

ing the revealing exercise to force worms out of the soil by pouring in a solution of mustard. Jack believed that students and foresters should learn as much about the plants, animals, and soils as possible, and use their knowledge to better manage and appreciate trees and the forest.

He was well known for his work on forest soil nutrients & site productivity, and he documented how to carefully reclaim strip-mines in eastern Ohio. Jack was also willing to help out with the administrative tasks and significantly helped with the process of achieving accreditation of the forest resource management curriculum by the Society of American Foresters. He was a respected faculty member at Ohio State for over thirty-five years. Perhaps some members did not know that Jack was a very active member of the Ohio Society of American Foresters. He was Chair-Elect and Chair during 2000-2001, and he received our Outstanding Member Award in 2000. Jack and his work have made lasting impressions on us and forests, and we will not forget him.

Ohio SAF Incorporation and D&O Insurance - Continued from Page 1

On 02 November 2021, the House Society Delegates met again and further discussed the need for Directors and Officers (D&O) Insurance. According to the HSD Briefing Paper on Business Operations for the September 2021 meeting:

Directors and Officers insurance is specific insurance to safeguard directors and officers against actual or alleged wrongful acts. A D&O policy allows volunteer directors and officers to continue to serve in these roles without running the risk that an honest or perceived mistake will cause them to lose their personal assets defending a claim or lawsuit. D&O insurance protects the personal assets of directors and officers, and their spouses, in the event they are personally sued by employees, vendors, competitors, investors, customers, and other parties, for actual or alleged wrongful acts in managing an organization. D&O Insurance also allows the state society to continue to use its assets to fulfill its mission without having to use the assets to defend a lawsuit.

When volunteers agree to serve on a local unit executive committee, they agree to accept the multitude of duties and responsibilities that come with the position and overseeing programs and services, which creates an innate level of risk. Even with state and federal volunteer protection laws, board members may be targeted in lawsuits alleging wrongful management decisions. D&O insurance is a tool regularly used by nonprofits to protect the organization and its volunteer directors for any allegations of wrongful acts in the governing and managing of the unit. Without it, volunteer willingness to step into leadership roles may be limited. In fact, local unit treasurers (or would-be treasurers) have vocalized a reticence to serve because of fearfulness of being personally sued.

D&O insurance will not cover risks such as property damage, bodily injury, or errors in professional advice, as these fall under other types of policies.

National SAF plans to obtain a policy that will cover all volunteers in every local unit. Many local units support the acquisition of D&O, including Ohio. We believe that proper coverage is paramount to solid business practices, and we do not want our volunteers to decline a volunteer role for fear of personal liability. It was recommended that the cost to obtain this type of insurance will be assessed on all members via their national dues payment. The HSD moved and approved this recommendation, and it will be brought back to the National SAF Board for their final decision.

As always, we will keep you up to date on the progress of incorporation and obtaining D&O insurance. If you are interested in reading more about these items, please do not hesitate to reach out. I am happy to share the documents provided, and I will keep everyone updated as forward progress is made.

Katie Downie

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Recently WOSU Public Media, the local NPR Station, ran a piece on the origins of the word “Hetuch”. Here’s a link to that article and recording. Enjoy!

<https://news.wosu.org/news/2021-11-17/curious-cbus-buckeye-nickname-origin-story-called-into-question>

Reaching at times 100 feet in the air, keeping watch over our forests – the humble fire tower. This is the history and status of the iconic galvanized steel towers in Ohio. According to The Fire Lookout Association (FTLA), 8,778 fire towers once stood in the United States, with 2,549 still standing currently. Here in Ohio as of 2014, FTLA states there are 18 towers still standing. It is believed there were at least 48 towers built on state, federal, and private lands. There could be more. The first tower constructed in Ohio was the Copperhead tower, built in 1924, and located in Shawnee State Forest. It still stands today.

In the early 1900s the Ohio Agricultural Experiment Station (OAES) was created. It employed Forest W. Dean to survey the forest resources in 10 south-central Ohio counties. The Dean survey showed that if the damage from land clearing, resulting from western movement and settlement, was to improve, the rate of fire incidence would need to be mitigated. OAES hired B.E. Leete to organize and supervise a system of local fire wardens to be stationed in fire lookouts. In all, at least 47 steel frame fire towers are known to have been constructed in Ohio by the Ohio Division of Forestry and the Wayne National Forest. Several wood frame fire towers were also constructed.



Irwin Tower, Lucas County, Ohio April 1960. This Style of Tower had the Ladder on the Outside of the Frame. Photo by ODNR Division of Forestry

There were several manufacturers of fire towers, but in Ohio, most of them were the Model LS-40, manufactured by Aermotor. The primary business of Aermotor was to manufacture windmills that supplied power for agricultural water pumps. Aermotor is still in business today manufacturing windmills. Fire towers come in a couple material types, wood and steel. The towers made by Aermotor are free standing. Some of the other designs employed guywires for support. Some towers had a stairway that zigzagged back and forth, and others had a ladder on the outside. All the towers still standing in Ohio have stairs inside the frame. In 1933, under the direction of the State Forester, the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) built 11 fire towers in 18 months. Later, the CCC would help construct six more towers before the CCC was disbanded in 1942. 1970 was the final year for fire tower construction in which two were built. In 1978 Marian Sanders descended the Green Ridge tower at Pike State Forest ending the use of manned lookout towers in Ohio.

I spoke to Don Karas, who started his career with the Ohio Division of Forestry as the use of fire towers was diminishing. I asked him his perspective of fire tower use and to share any memories he had of them.

Here is what Don shared:

I joined the Division [ODNR Division of Forestry] in 1974 as an Assistant Forest Manager at Blue Rock State Forest. Back then the managers were called Forest Rangers, so my official title was the Assistant Forest Ranger. I also acted as the District Fire Warden for five counties. Two towers were in my district, South Bloomfield and Blue Rock. The towers were equipped with a little heater that was fueled by a propane tank on the side, a telephone



Looking at a Fire Lookout Pilot out of the South Bloomfield Tower April 1967. Photo by ODNR Division of Forestry

line, and an antenna for a two-way radio. There was an outhouse at the base of the tower. Inside the 7' by 7' cab of the tower was an Osborne Fire Finder, or another brand of alidade, which was used to determine the direction to the fire. If the fire could be spotted from more than one fire tower, the location of the fire could be more accurately determined through triangulation. Some towers had more than one lookout. Elsie Derry was a lookout in the South Bloomfield tower. Her husband, Wayne, was a fire lookout pilot. The Division had five fixed wing aircraft and three helicopters.

The tower lookouts and pilots would work together to pinpoint a fire's location. At any given time there were four to six pilots employed by the Division. Elsie and Wayne's daughter would later become a fire lookout and replace her mother in the same tower.



Blue Rock Fire Tower Aerial View May 1955. Photo by ODNR Division of Forestry

Member Photos



Katie Gerber—Red fall color of Virginia creeper, a landowner's cat following close behind, Sori on the underside of a fern in California, a snail devouring a pawpaw fruit, and fall color of sugar maple.



Mike Bell and Elliot Smith—The tallest fire tower in the northern hemisphere, the Woodworth tower in Alexander State Forest in Louisiana. At 175 feet tall, this Aermotor Model MC-39 is the second tallest in the world to a 200 foot tall tower in Australia—the Beard Tower.

Most of the towers in Ohio have been dismantled due to various reasons. For example, when a tower was no longer needed by the Division of Forestry the acreage and tower were returned to the leaser of the property. The Division of Forestry would offer to dismantle the tower if desired by the landowner. This is a segment of the original deed for land around the Armintrout tower in 1934.

It is agreed by and between the Grantors and the Grantee herein, that if said above described tract of land shall ever cease to be used as a Forest Fire Tower Site or for Forest Fire Prevention Purposes, then said premises shall revert to the Grantors, their heirs, or assigns.

Due to liability reasons, most landowners accepted the free offer to dismantle the tower on their land. I continued asking Don Karas about his experiences with fire towers, specifically about the dismantling of them. He was only involved with one tower's dismantling, but more specifically he directed the dismantling, relocation, and reconstruction of the Armintrout tower to its present location: the Ohio State Fairgrounds.

The Armintrout tower might be familiar to many of us as it was formerly located in Pike County but due to the efforts of Robert Boyles, former Chief of the Division of Forestry, Don, and many others, it now resides in Columbus overlooking the animatronic Smokey Bear display in the ODNR Park at the Ohio State Fair.

The Armintrout tower was built in 1934, one of the 11 towers that were built by CCC in an 18-month period.



Armintrout Tower Dismantling and Restoration. Photos by ODNR Division of Forestry

Additionally, they erected six more towers prior to the end of the CCC program in 1942. Initially, there were 26 CCC camps under the direction of the Chief of the DOF, and 13 of those camps were on state forest land. The Armintrout family sold 0.33 acres to the DOF for one dollar for the purpose of constructing and operating a fire tower. The family had strong ties to forestry and owned hundreds of acres of forest, so having a fire tower protecting their land was welcomed. The landowner, on record in 1978 when the Armintrout tower was decommissioned, did not want the fire tower, so it was sold by the Division of Forestry to the Pike County Public Trust for Civil Defense for \$200. [The American Centrifuge Facility is 15 miles away].



Reassembly at the Ohio State Fairgrounds in Columbus, Ohio after Restoration. Photos by ODNR Division of Forestry

Don Continues with his recollection:

In 2016 there was a desire and some funding to move a fire tower to the state fair grounds to accompany the Smokey Bear. The tower's cab was in poor condition, so it was taken to the carpenter shop at Scioto Trail State Forest to be reconditioned. The wood used inside of the fire tower cabs was generally yellow pine. All this wood was removed by the Division of Forestry carpenters and replaced with quality hardwoods from Ohio's state forests. The metal sides were so badly rusted that the carpenters replaced the metal side panels as well. The window frames were stripped of paint and repainted. New glass was cut, installed, and glazed in all the window frames. Originally, this tower stood 80ft tall, from the ground to the floor of the cab, but we lowered the height to 60 feet to avoid conflict with local rules and regulations regarding the height of structures.



Whitehouse Tower Felling
August 17, 1983 Maumee State Forest.

Left to right: Bernie Mauwer, Bill Steeds, Crew Member (unknown name), Ed Parmer, Photographer (unknown name), Man on Tower (unknown name).

Tower Felling was Simple. Attach a Rope to the Top. While Pulling, cut the Two Legs on the Far Side.

Photo Provided by ODNR Division of Forestry

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In addition to talking with Don from the ODNR Division of Forestry, I spoke with someone who, a few years ago, found a passion for these towers and a desire to keep the history of these towers alive. Mike Bell is a senior at the Ohio State University and is the only one I know who's more enthusiastic about fire towers than I am. We discussed what got him interested and how he locates where they used to be.

Here is what Mike shared:

In 2018 I was working in Gallia County. My boss and I were checking a timber harvest, and I saw an 80-foot fire tower. It turned out to be the Keystone fire tower. I thought those towers were only on state land, but my boss said there are a lot out there and many of them are on private land, you just have to find them. So, I wondered to myself, how many are out there, how many are still standing, and so forth. I am still looking for where the Beaver-creek and Seneca Lake towers were as well as one around Newark, Ohio. In terms of looking for them, I use historical imagery and USGS topo maps from the 1960s-1980s. I can cross reference the materials and get a pretty good idea of where they stood. Often, I will just find the concrete bases left, but I can usually measure the distance between the pads and confirm the height.



Top: Atkinson Ridge Tower In Zaleski State Forest.
Both of These Towers Still Stand Today.
Right: Ash Cave Fire Tower in Hocking State Forest.

Mike goes on to talk about the National Fire Tower Lookout Association (NFTLA):

The NFTLA maintains a database of fire towers in the US and others around the world. At least for the towers that are no longer standing the information is decent. It is difficult for them to keep the information up to date, but it's a good starting point. The purpose of the organization is to promote the understanding of these towers and their use as they provided considerable benefit to foresters and the public. The towers themselves are a unique way to connect with both nature and history. Imagine seeing a forest from the ground, then climb 80-100 feet and see it from a totally difference view.



1978 was the end of an era. It was the final year a fire tower in Ohio was staffed. At one time 39 towers, operated by ODNR Division of Forestry, were staffed. About half of these spotters were women. Marian Sanders was one of these spotters and was the last spotter in the state.



Left: Mariann Sanders Revisits the Tower she Staffed in Pike State Forest. 1982.

Bottom: Scioto Trail Fire Tower Scioto Trail State Forest. September 1966.

Photos Provided by ODNR Division of Forestry





Ohio has relatively few fire towers compared to other more heavily forested areas in the United State. The west boasts most of them and there are a good number of them in the south. Pennsylvania has recently purchased new towers, though they are currently vacant.

I will close with this. In October 2021, Mike Bell and I traveled to Louisiana to the tallest tower in the northern hemisphere, the Woodworth Tower. At 175 feet, this tower stands high above the long leaf and loblolly pine forests in Alexander State Forest. For its status as the tallest tower in the northern hemisphere and second tallest in the world, you would think there would be more fanfare or at least a sign stating its significance, but there was none. After getting permission, we climbed to the top and experienced the three to four foot sway that comes from 175 feet of steel flexing in the wind. We were reminded of the fact that this tower, and many like it in the south, have deep footers and are designed to withstand hurricanes. Feeling the sway inside of the cab proved just how strong the wind gets at that height. I would encourage you to go find a fire tower during your next travels. They are out there, just hidden.

Woodworth Fire Tower in Alexander State Forest, Louisiana.
Photo by Elliot Smith

So, what towers are left in Ohio?

ODNR Division of Forestry:

- Armintrout – Formerly in Pike County, now at the State Fair Grounds
- Ash Cave – Hocking State Forest
- Atkinson Ridge – Zaleski State Forest
- Blue Rock – Blue Rock State Forest
- Brush Ridge – Tar Hollow State Forest
- Copperhead – Shawnee State Forest
- Mohican – Mohican State Forest
- Scioto Trail – Scioto Trail State Forest

USFS:

- Snake Ridge – Relocated from Snake Ridge – now at Wayne National Forest Headquarters in Athens, Ohio Department of Natural Resources
- Shawnee Lookout – Athens County

Privately Owned:

- Green Ridge –Pike County
- Keystone – Jackson County
- Sugar Grove – Hocking County
- Beaver Creek – Columbiana County
- Lone Pine – Lawrence County
- Woods Ridge – Scioto County
- Tappan – Tuscarawas County
- Senecaville – Noble County

I would like to thank Mike Bell for his insights and knowledge of fire towers in Ohio as well for getting me interested in the rich history of these towers. I would also like to thank Don Karas for all the resources and historical references he provided. If you have any questions about fire towers in Ohio, feel free to send an email to any of us.

- Don Karas Donald.karas@dnr.ohio.gov
- Mike Bell mike.bell@ttgforestry.com
- Elliot Smith smith.elliott.13@gmail.com

Near the end of my research for this article, I came upon a Kodak slide labeled “Meander Lake Fire Tower”. The tower was the same style as the Irwin Tower with the cab sitting on top of the frame instead of the cab built into the frame like so many in Ohio. A quick Google search showed me that Meander Lake is near Youngstown, Ohio. I looked on USGS Topo maps and sure enough there was a lookout tower labeled on a topo map from 1961. Until that point it was assumed there were only 46 known towers with a speculated 47th around Newark, Ohio. This confirms there are more towers out there, possibly still standing.