

OHIO SAF Newsletter  
The Hetuch  
Winter 2025



**SOCIETY OF  
AMERICAN  
FORESTERS**  
OHIO

**IN THIS EDITION**

*Announcements—Page 2*

*Interview with the 2026 Chair Elect Katie Gerber—Page 3*

*Ohio Conventions – Page 5*

*The Future—Page 6*

*GIS Corner—Page 8*

*Member photos—Page 9*

## **Announcements**

### **National Awards**

The deadline for national awards nominations is **March 1, 2025**. Therefore, we need our nominations submitted to our chairperson on **February 21, 2025**. If you are interested in nominating someone for a national award but might need assistance pulling the nomination packet together, please let Josh Kocher know and he can assist you. You can find more information about those awards and nomination requirements online at:

[https://www.eforester.org/Main/Community/Awards\\_Fellows/Awards.aspx](https://www.eforester.org/Main/Community/Awards_Fellows/Awards.aspx)

# **Interview with the 2026 Chair Elect Katie Gerber**

*by Thomas Christopher*

Katie currently serves on the State Executive Committee as the Scholarship Chair, helping to award funds to outstanding forestry and natural resources students at OSU and Hocking College. Katie is currently a Service Forester with the Division of Forestry in North Central Ohio, assisting landowners in Wyandot, Crawford, Richland, and Morrow counties. She has been a Service Forester since 2019 and was an intern starting in 2017, while at OSU. Katie also assists with the Forester for a Day programs that work with local Girl Scout units to encourage the next generation of foresters. She volunteers her time with regional Women Owning Woodlands groups that aim to provide resources and training to landowners that may not know these resources exist. Katie has been serving on the Ohio Executive Committee since she was a student as the District 9 Student Representative in 2017; she was then elected to be the National Student Representative in 2018. Katie is a graduate of Hocking College and Ohio State University. She is originally from Huron County, but currently resides with her husband, Lucas, and their cat, Kiki, in Mansfield.

## **What got you interested in forestry?**

I think like most of us, I sort of kind of fell into forestry. I have fond memories of going to my grandma's house as a kid and exploring the woods on her property. I would spend hours climbing up and down the ravine, finding salamanders, and looking up at the tree canopies. I felt like I could be lost in the woods for days. At only 10 acres, I probably walked around in circles most of the time, but nevertheless, the woods sparked a sense of curiosity and imagination in me. I knew I wanted a career in the outdoors, so I went to Hocking College. Once I took a dendrology course, I realized how much I wanted to learn more about the forest and decided to major in forestry!

**What is your favorite thing about being a forester?**

I work as a service forester for the Division of Forestry, so I think my favorite thing is meeting a landowner who has had an extensive history working with forestry professionals on their property. It's much more common for me to see mismanaged and neglected woods than it is to see a woods that has a long history of management. Those landowners are such a treat to work with. I love hearing their stories about their parents or grandparents working with their forester from many years ago. When interest in forest management spans generations, it is really quite special.

**Have you had any mentors in your professional life?**

Absolutely! What I really love about the forestry profession here in Ohio is that it is a community. I've had lots of support through my college professors at Hocking, SAF leadership, coworkers, and local consultants. I look up to a lot of people in the forestry community and enjoy listening and trying to learn from their experiences. I'm still learning a lot from so many people, and I hope that maybe someday I can be a mentor to someone, too.

**What are you most proud of accomplishing in your career?**

Getting to serve as chair-elect for Ohio SAF, of course! 😊

**What are you hoping to achieve during your time as chair elect?**

I really want to plan a successful summer meeting! The annual meetings are always so enjoyable. It's so great to have these opportunities to get together to learn new and current information and to network with each other, so I hope to do my part to continue that forward. I am already brainstorming some ideas to hopefully achieve a good meeting that will garner a lot of interest. I'm also happily taking suggestions and ideas, so please feel free to email me at [Katherine.Gerber@dnr.ohio.gov](mailto:Katherine.Gerber@dnr.ohio.gov) if you have anything to share!

## **Ohio Conventions**

*by Thomas Christopher, Research Credit- Phil Perry*

Ohio's forests have been the lifeblood of this region since before the settlement of the Northwest territory. It has been the backbone of our state's development as we have progressed into the modern era. In 1971, the SAF National Convention was hosted in Cleveland. We were able to highlight our wood basket of eastern Ohio by showing off the Muskingum watershed, the gorgeous fall colors of the Hocking Hills region, and the woodworking traditions of Amish country. The greater Cleveland area also received special praise by showing off the land management successes of their fantastic Metroparks system. In 1982, with the help of our peers in the Indiana and Kentucky SAF chapters, we hosted the national convention in Cincinnati. With our combined efforts we were able to highlight the challenges and futures of hardwoods management, as well as the city's strides in the field of urban forestry.

Last year's convention in Loveland, Colorado allowed our fellow foresters in the Rocky Mountains to show off their great strides in reforestation and adapting to this era of increased wildfire activity. Ohio has a proud history of sharing our forests and forestry with the country, and it is my opinion that it should in the future as well.

# The Future

*by Elliot Smith*

I'm Elliot Smith and I'm honored to serve you and the profession this year as chair. 2025 is quite exciting as it's the 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary of SAF. There will be some creative ways of celebrating this year including some unique SAF logos being released.

I'd like to congratulate Katie Gerber on being elected our 2026 chair elect! I have no doubt she'll do great and am excited about the upcoming summer meeting she's planning. Speaking of meetings, our winter meeting is March 18-19, 2025, at the ODOT headquarters just as in years past. A save the date has already gone out and the registration should be released six weeks prior. I've planned a theme of sorts following some survey comments from last year. Many of the presentations will be in regards to urban forestry here in Ohio, so stay tuned for the full agenda and registration information. Something that will be brought up in the business meeting in March is a discussion of the possibility of being the host chapter of the 2027 SAF National Convention. That may sound daunting, but I will do my best to explain a bit in this article.

If you've ever been to a national SAF convention you're probably aware that there are many moving parts, one such part is the field tour portion. That is the primary area of responsibility of the host chapter, along with some plenary session input, and it is the main way we add the local flavor to the convention. Local volunteers will be identified to serve as local unit coordinators for planning field trips, managing local publicity, coordinating fundraising efforts to support the Forester's Fund & Kurt Gottschalk Science Fund, and working with SAF national staff to meet sponsorship & fundraising financial objectives. Additionally, the local chapter will assist the SAF staff in planning the opening ceremony components. For a full list of responsibilities, check out the handout about hosting conventions. It may be in a separate email or sent in the same email as the Hetuch.

There will be time set aside for discussing this at the business meeting in March. You are more than welcome to email, text, or call me about this beforehand. The important thing is that before we commit to anything, we must be sure we have enough volunteers to handle the work. I will send out a survey requesting participation and gauging interest level. The planning starts about two years out, but we would need to get the ball rolling in April, more than likely. This potential venture was brought up in our November 2024 executive committee meeting. Many members expressed interest in volunteering for this large event. Many ideas were brainstormed including an extensive list of potential tours. Here at OSAF, while our members are very capable on their own, we are stronger when we work together. That's why I've reached out to the Ohio Division of Forestry, Ohio Forestry Association, Ohio Tree Farm, and other partners so that we can all tell the story, of forestry in Ohio, together.

## GIS Corner

*by Thomas Christopher*

Have you ever had to plan a sale or planting in a particularly complex area? QGIS is a free, open-source GIS program that can simplify your planning process, especially when utilizing rasters and QGIS raster tools. Digital Elevation Model raster files made by the U.S. Geological Survey from LiDAR data can be obtained for free at [www.usgs.gov](http://www.usgs.gov), and are available for the entire United States. With this as your base data, you can use the slope and aspect tools in QGIS to find the slopes and aspects of an entire area. The hillshade tool is also a great way to display topographic features with or without contour lines for maps. If there is a specific combination of elevation, aspect, and slope you are looking for in an area, you can use the Raster Calculator tool to make a new raster that only displays areas meeting your criteria with a simple “AND” formula, not unlike you would see in Microsoft Excel™.

## Member Photos

*Courtesy of Maxwell Schrimpf, from his recent fire deployment, with a stop at the Grand Canyon.*

