

# The Pinchot Eagle



Friends of Pinchot State Park

October/November/December 2009

## Help Let the Sun Shine In

By Betsy Leppo, FOPSP Board Member



This small patch of meadow needs help to survive.

Pictured (left to right): Pat Sabold, Jack Ray, and John Kunzman. Not pictured but present: Betsy Leppo.

On a sunny August afternoon, John Kunsman, a botanist from the Pennsylvania Natural Heritage Program (PNHP), led a small group from the Friends of Pinchot State Park (FOPSP) into a densely wooded thicket. After pushing through scratchy bushes and brambles, we stepped into a small clearing. Instantly we felt a difference in the air. The sun was intense and insects buzzed energetically around us. Golden-rods and Black-eyed Susans dotted the meadow with



©TONY DAVIS (PNHP)

Jungle of Oriental Bittersweet, one of many invasive species at Pinchot.

yellow, while native Indian-grass waved delicate plumes of sunset-hued flowers.

When the property that is now Gifford Pinchot State Park was acquired in 1957, it was a mix of crop land, pastures, and forest. Over time the agricultural lands have filled in with dense layers of herbs, shrubs and trees. As the map below shows, the area has also filled in with invasive species not native to Pennsylvania. The worst offenders at Pinchot include multiflora rose (*Rosa multiflora*), oriental bittersweet (*Celastrus orbiculatus*), autumn olive (*Elaeagnus umbellata*), Morrow's honeysuckle (*Lonicera morrowii*), Japanese honeysuckle (*L. japonica*) and Japanese stiltgrass (*Microstegium vimineum*).

Approximate extent of heavy invasive plant species infestation at Gifford Pinchot State Park. 2005 PAMAP imagery, PASDA. Map courtesy of the PA Natural Heritage Program.

Weed areas  
Pinchot\_weed\_concentrations  
Gifford Pinchot boundary



Some natural meadows in the park have stubbornly resisted the transition from field to native forest or invasive jungle. These sunny glades support an uncommonly diverse assemblage of wildflowers,

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### DID YOU KNOW...

Fall waterfowl migration runs from late August, peaks in October, and ends in December?

Pinchot Lake will be a rest stop for many waterfowl species during fall migration. A few diving ducks to watch for are the Ring-necked Duck, Lesser Scaup, Bufflehead, Ruddy Duck, Common Merganser and Red-breasted Merganser.

# Pinchotween: Halloween at Pinchot Park

## ACTIVITIES FOR ALL

**Date:** Saturday, October 24, 2009  
**Time:** 2:00-4:00pm  
**Place:** Nature Center



Join us for the 4th Annual Pinchotween! Play games, decorate a pumpkin and enjoy a scavenger hunt.

## EVENING ACTIVITIES FOR CAMPERS\*

**Time:** 6:00-9:00pm  
**Place:** Campground

**Trick or Treat:** Meet at 6:00pm at Bathhouse #3 to begin. Children must be accompanied by a parent or an adult.

**Best Costume:** Awards will go to one winner in three different age groups: ages 1-4, ages 5-8, and ages 9-12. Winners will be announced and prizes awarded at the bonfire afterwards.

**Bonfire:** Bathhouse #7, immediately following "Trick or Treat." Snacks will be served; please bring something to share.

*\*Note: Evening activities are for guests registered in any of the camping facilities available at Gifford Pinchot State Park.*

## VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

If you would like to assist with any of the following Pinchotween activities, please contact Beth Kepley at (717) 432-5011:

- Event Set-up, 1:00-2:00pm
- Pumpkin Decorating, 2:00-4:00pm
- Games and Crafts, 2:00-4:00pm
- Clean-up, 4:00-5:00pm

# Fall Wildflowers

By Pat Sabold, FOPSP Board Member

The highlights of the autumn floral parade are the asters and goldenrods. Approximately 10 species of goldenrods (genus *Solidago*) and 10 species of asters (genus *Aster*\*) grow in Gifford Pinchot State Park.

Complementing the yellows of the goldenrods, which usher in fall, are the blues, purples, and whites of the asters, which usher out fall.

Among the abundant white-flowered asters of



Early Goldenrod



White Wood Aster



New England Aster

The goldenrods begin to bloom in mid-to-late summer with the Early Goldenrod (*S. juncea*) leading the way.

Common species of open places are the Gray Goldenrod (*S. nemoralis*) with its grayish stem and leaves; and the Grass-leaved Goldenrod (*Euthamia graminifolia*) with its narrow, grass-like leaves.

In the woods, look for the Blue-stem Goldenrod (*S. caesia*) with its flowers growing in the axils. Along roadsides and woodland edges, look for a creamy white species called Silverrod (*S. bicolor*).

fields and edges is the Calico Aster (*A. lateriflorus*). The Calico Aster is easily identified by its purple central disk.

In the woods, the White Wood Aster (*A. divaricata*), with heart-shaped leaves, is commonly found.

Of the blue and purple asters, the spectacular New England Aster (*A. novae-angliae*), with its massive bouquets of violet-purple rays, is the most common.

*\*Note: Recent molecular studies have led some botanists to split Aster into several smaller genera.*

# Firewood Sales in the Campground



Volunteers stacking firewood in the storage shed.

Due to the efforts of the Friends of Pinchot State Park, firewood is now available at the campground. This is a convenience for campers and a fundraiser for the Friends. The cost is \$5.00 per bundle and will be available throughout the camping season.

The Friends Advisory Board would like to extend a special thank you to the campground hosts and other volunteers that are helping with this ongoing project.



James Rodgers, the first Pinchot camper to purchase firewood from the Friends.

**Help Let the Sun Shine In**  
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native grasses, and meadow herbs. The reason some meadows persisted over the past 50 years while others did not was literally underfoot. John gestured to a mound of gray rock that basked like a turtle in the middle of the field and said, "The bedrock is near or at the surface here and the soils are

very shallow." Most trees, shrubs, and invasive species need to sink their roots into deeper soils.

Shallow soils have maintained these open meadows for decades, but the forest relentlessly pushes in. Without human intervention, these clearings will eventually be lost. John has been visiting these fields for many years, documenting the rich array of native plants and has watched them fill in before his very eyes. Looking around the field he simply said, "You can cut out all those trees."



This November, the Friends of Pinchot State Park will begin to manually remove trees and shrubs from some of the best remaining meadows in the park in an effort to maintain this special habitat.

To cut the trees and shrubs, there is a need for chainsaws and people experienced in using them. We will also need lots of hands to haul out the brush. If you are interested in helping with this project, please email us at FOPSP@aol.com or contact Sally Ray at (717) 292-4881 for more information.

# WE ARE ON THE WEB!

The Friends of Pinchot State Park website is located at [www.friendsofpinchot.org](http://www.friendsofpinchot.org).

What is on our website?

- Calendar of events.
- Information about "The Friends."
- Photo gallery.
- Color version of our newsletter, *The Pinchot Eagle*.
- List of various volunteer opportunities.
- Downloadable membership form.
- Information on making tax-deductible donations.
- Park map.
- Information about the hiking trails.
- The Park's local weather forecast.
- Information on recreational activities, including camping.

Questions? Go to the "Contact Us" tab and send us an email.



2200 Rosstown Road  
Lewisberry, PA 17339  
(717) 432-5011  
Email: FOPSP@aol.com

### ADVISORY BOARD

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*This volunteer advisory board is dedicated to preserving, protecting and enhancing the natural and recreational resources of Gifford Pinchot State Park for present and future generations.*

Friends of Pinchot State Park is a chapter of the Pennsylvania Parks and Forests Foundation (PPFF). The PPFF is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. Contributions are tax deductible to the fullest extent of the law.

**Newsletter Editor: Pat Sabold**  
psaboldFOPSP@aol.com

Publication deadlines are the 15th of each quarter (March, June, September, December). The Advisory Board reserve publication decisions.

## FRIENDS OF PINCHOT STATE PARK

Annual Membership Application

**Make checks payable to: PPF**  
(include FOPSP on the memo line)

Mail form with payment to: Friends of Pinchot State Park, 2200  
Rosstown Road, Lewisberry, PA 17339

NEW MEMBERSHIP     RENEWAL

- |  |          |   |
|--|----------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Senior (age 65+)  | \$5.00   | <input type="checkbox"/> I'd like to make a |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Individual        | \$10.00  | tax-deductible                              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Family            | \$15.00  | contribution of \$_____                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Damselfly Sponsor | \$50.00  | <input type="checkbox"/> I'm interested in  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dragonfly Sponsor | \$100.00 | volunteering                                |

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I would like to receive my newsletter via email:  Yes  No

Friends of Pinchot State Park was formed in March 2009 as a chapter of the Pennsylvania Parks and Forests Foundation (PPFF). The PPFF is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. Contributions to PPFF are tax deductible to the fullest extent of the law. The official registration of the Pennsylvania Parks and Forests Foundation may be obtained from the Pennsylvania Department of State by calling toll free within Pennsylvania 1-800-732-0999. Registration does not imply endorsement.

*Memberships are for one year, June 1 through May 31.*