

WELCOME TO THE EASTERN NATIVE TREE SOCIETY!

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I'd like to take this time to welcome everyone to the society and encourage each of you to feel free to participate in our sometimes lively organization. We're all equal in the eyes of the trees. At present, the Eastern Native Tree Society (ENTS) exists primarily as a web-based interest group. There are no dues, nor are we yet an official nonprofit. However, there are times when financial support is needed for a specific project or general mission. In these cases, for contribution purposes, we are able to operate under our fiscal agent status of the Friends of Mohawk Trail State Forest, a 501c3 nonprofit organization.

The easiest way to actively participate in ENTS is to join in our e-mail list hosted at:

<http://lists.topica.com>

You can join Topica at no cost and then choose from one or more of their lists, including ENTS. Our current list membership is 130 and we will unquestionably grow as more and more people discover us and our mission. In a nutshell, the ENTSTrees list is the official voice of the Society and the primary method used for all of us to stay in

touch as a group. However, the message traffic can get heavy and so some elect to join the list but receive digests of messages. These folks form part of our silent majority. Another way to participate in ENTS is to submit material directly to our webmaster for inclusion on our website. But we really want to get to know you directly, and given our wide geographical separation, the e-mail list is the best way to do that.

ENTS was formed as a tree-centric organization. More specifically, ENTS was organized in the mid-1990s to celebrate trees in art, poetry, music, photography, history, mythology, medicine, food, science, aesthetic, sport and the nobler human uses of trees. Its founding members are Will Blozan, David Stahle, Michael Perlman, Matthew Therrell, and myself. Later, Colby Rucker was adopted as an honorary founding member. You will see us use the acronym ENTS and also see the term "Ent." ENTS refers to the Society as a whole; an Ent (adapted from the works of J.R. Tolkien), is a member of ENTS. We often pay tribute to Tolkien and his sensitivity to trees as wise, sentient beings.

Over the years, ENTS has evolved to concentrate on tree measuring—a largely quantitative pursuit that incorporates various tree-related disciplines. In the pursuit of our scientific objectives, a primary goal of ENTS involves the maintenance of a significant big tree/exemplary forest site database that can serve as a research tool and repository of highly accurate tree measurement data. New members soon learn that accuracy is our trademark and it distinguishes us. However, developing the involved data sets that go into the big tree/exemplary site database is outside of the interests of many of our members and that is perfectly okay. We do not forget the roots of our interests and always encourage the broadest participation. We look to the membership to develop new pursuits—and to take ownership for new tree-based interests. We all function sometimes as leaders and sometimes as supporters.

On a day-to-day interactive level, our e-mail list allows us to explore a variety of topics from sharing favorite tree stories to exploring the often conflicting roles of the stakeholders of our forests. On this latter topic, discussions can get a bit spirited (some might consider this an understatement). For example, in the past we spent many days discussing the balance between active forest management, forest preservation, and the state of forest practices. There is always a healthy span of viewpoints and differences of opinion, but we pride our civility and respect for one another. ENTS is apolitical. We always remind ourselves that in terms of opinions expressed, all of us are equal in the eyes of the trees.

I say this fully recognizing that we have a number of distinguished scientists in our organization, including Dr. Lee Frelich, Director of the Center for Hardwood Ecology at the University of Minnesota and Vice President of ENTS; Dr. Don Bragg, research forester with the USDA Forest Service and Editor-in-Chief of our e-journal; Dr. Robert Van Pelt, forest canopy researcher at the University of Washington; Dr. Tom Diggins, ecologist at Youngstown State University, Professor Gary Beluzo, ecologist at Holyoke Community College; and Dr. Roman Dial, forest ecologist at the College of the Pacific in Alaska. Important contributors to our science come from the forest research institutions. They are well represented on the list. For example, the prestigious forest research institution Harvard Forest, which is an affiliate of Harvard University, is well represented on the list through Dr. David Orwig and Dr. John Okeefe. Perhaps most importantly, one of the ENTS founding members is Dr. David Stahle, Director of the Tree-Ring Laboratory at the University of Arkansas (home of our website). Dr. Neil Pederson of the Biology Department of Eastern Kentucky University is another of the scientists that help keep us grounded in ecology.

We also have other scientists in ENTS who contribute to the organization. For example, we have at least one meteorologist to answer questions about climate and weather. A new member to our list will quickly recognize that in addition to scientists, we have a number of members in ENTS who serve in their respective professions with distinction. But perhaps the most visible individuals are the measurers, forming a core group of absolute tree fanatics. To this end, we have coined the term "dendromorphometry" to distinguish our efforts

from traditional forest mensuration by our focus on individual trees. Dendromorphometrists regularly feed the ENTS big tree/tall tree database, and we have pioneered tree measurement methods.

A casual visitor to our e-mail list might understandably conclude that tree measuring is all that we do. Will Blozan, the distinguished ENTS president, arborist, and former science technician with the Great Smoky Mountains National Park, is perhaps the foremost among us in this department. Will measures and applies techniques both from the ground and aloft. The late Grand Ent Colby Rucker of Maryland was a prolific tree measurer. Forest ecologist Bob Van Pelt wrote "the" book on measuring and modeling the giant trees of the West Coast. Scientists Bragg, Diggins, and Dial are also keenly interested in measuring. Then there is Dale Luthringer, educational specialist and naturalist at Cook Forest State Park in Pennsylvania. Dale has done for Cook Forest what no previous person or group of people has done. Mathematician John Eichholz helps keep us on a sound theoretical footing. Scott Wade, Pennsylvania's big tree coordinator, provides an indispensable connection between ENTS and state-level champion tree coordinators. The list goes on and on. And you might just encounter my name in the arena of tree measuring from time to time. (I can hear my friends now – "Yeah, right, Bob, like daily!").

We are highly pleased to have a number of distinguished foresters on our list who are dedicated to ecologically sound forestry. Some are in government, some are in academia, and some are in private practice. But they are of one mind when it comes to being good forest custodians. Over the years, the Forest Stewards Guild has been well represented on the list, courtesy of Michele Wilson and the late Karl Davies. The Guild and ENTS have held joint events in the past. Beyond the forestry profession, environmental organizations like the Sierra Club and the Massachusetts Audubon Society are well represented in ENTS, and to be expected, we are well represented by academics at all levels.

We are particularly blessed to have several restoration ecologists with us. Don Bertolette is one that works at the Grand Canyon National Park and forms part of an east-west link for ENTS. Don contributes many interesting posts and has formed a western equivalent of ENTS called the Western Native Tree Society. Tamra Raven, past vice pre-

sident of the Council for Women, is likewise a restoration ecologist and has posted from time to time.

Interestingly, we also have members who are or have been affiliated with other organizations that measure trees. The champion tree programs of the states provide most of the examples, but there are others. For instance, we have members like Loona Brogan who established the Vermont Tree Society (VTS). For a time, the late Colby Rucker and I served on a special committee of American Forests to work out better rules governing which trees get into the National Register of Big Trees. Will Fell administers the champion tree program for Georgia. Karen Fedor, a past vice president of American Forests, is a member of ENTS. There is no competition between ENTS and these other organizations. They exist to serve other purposes, and at times, ENTS serves as a behind-the-scenes support for these organizations.

With all the accolades and recognition of the scientific side of ENTS where, a new member might wonder, is the art, the music, the mythology? Do we pursue these other focuses in ENTS? Yes, absolutely! Smith College professor of music Monica Jakuc organizes annual ENTS concerts. Writer Pamela Briggs deals with the mystical side of trees. Several photographers on the list reveal the pleasing

symmetry and equally pleasing asymmetry of the objects of our affection. Philosopher John Knuerr questions the human-tree association. And, we have sub-groups in ENTS like the "Tree Amigos" (corny, but a lot of fun). Our periodic rendezvous at great big tree sites like Cook Forest State Park combine science, tree-measuring workshops, music, poetry, and just plain fun.

Let me devote the final word about ENTS to our website now at <http://www.uark.edu/misc/ents/>. Courtesy of Grand Ent David Stahle, our website has its home at the University of Arkansas' Tree-Ring Laboratory. Our webmaster, geologist Ed Frank, has developed the site over the years to the point that it has no rivals. The organization and great depth of the ENTS website provides those interested with many opportunities for further exploration. The research material available (with ENTS permission) has no equal for the kinds of data presented. We will continue to develop the website and invite all members to make suggestions on its future organization and content.

Please feel absolutely free to contribute along the lines of your specific interests in trees. Welcome aboard!

Bob Leverett

Will Blozan calculating the volume of an ancient baldcypress from Bayou DeView in eastern Arkansas during the 2006 Eastern Old-Growth Forest Conference, co-sponsored by the Eastern Native Tree Society, the University of Arkansas, and the USDA Forest Service.

Photo by Don C. Bragg.

