



STEWARDS

OF THE

FOREST



Tom Kase, left, and Ken Kane have worked in the forests of northwest Pennsylvania for decades. It's the kind of work, they say, that requires faith, physical stamina and a lot of respect for nature.



CARING FOR 'OUR COMMON HOME' REQUIRES FAITH



Photo by Rick Klein

Both Tom Kase and Ken Kane have had close encounters with black bears in the forests of northwest Pennsylvania. In January 1986, Kane was walking over a hill in Toner Hollow in Elk County when he fell about five feet into the cavernous remains of a treetop that had fallen over a couple years before.

“I fell right into a bear den with a mother and two cubs, Kane says. “The mother stood up on her hind legs and looked me right in the eyes. Her muzzle wasn’t a foot from my nose; I could have kissed her. But she was hibernating, so her metabolism was slow. I let out the Lord’s name, but not in vain; it was in panic.”

Quickly and safely, Kane clambered out of the den.

In the spring of 2011, Tom Kase was making his way through the timberland of Whig Hill in Forest County when he heard a crunching sound nearby. He scanned the forest and caught sight of a couple of bear cubs climbing a cherry tree, their toenails scratching on the bark.

“I froze because I’m thinking, ‘Oh no! Where’s mom?’” I saw her about a hundred yards out and she was staring at me,” Kase says. “It was hair-raising. I eased back out of the area and she paralleled me for some distance to make sure I was leaving.”

These run-ins with wild animals give new meaning to being one with nature. Some people might think twice before entering the woods if it meant coming eye-to-eye with a big black bear.

But Kase and Kane — experienced foresters and also both members of St. Callistus Parish in Kane — still encourage others to visit the wilderness.

Lifelong Catholics and longtime woodsmen in the mostly rural areas of the Diocese of Erie, they call the natural world a gift from God. It is, they say, a place of beauty, inspiration, and yes, even danger and surprise.

They agree with Pope Francis, who stated in his 2015 environment encyclical, *Laudato Si’: On Care for Our Common Home*, that mankind has a responsibility to protect and preserve nature ... and promote its sacredness. Working day-to-day in the wild, Kase and Kane would add that humans also must have a healthy respect for its power. *[See their list on page 20 of practical and spiritual tips for being in the forest.]*

At 55, Kase is the interim general manager and head of the forestry department of the Kane Hardwood Division of Collins Pine Company. Collins Pine is headquartered in Oregon but was founded in Forest County in 1855 by T.D. Collins, one of the country’s earliest timber barons.

The Kane Hardwood Division of Collins manages about 118,000 acres of forest mostly in McKean, Warren, Forest and Elk counties, and some in Potter, Cameron and Clarion counties, all located within the boundaries of the Diocese of Erie.

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In the latter half of the 1800s, workers would transport logs via train. This photo was taken in Forest County, where the Collins Pine Company first started.

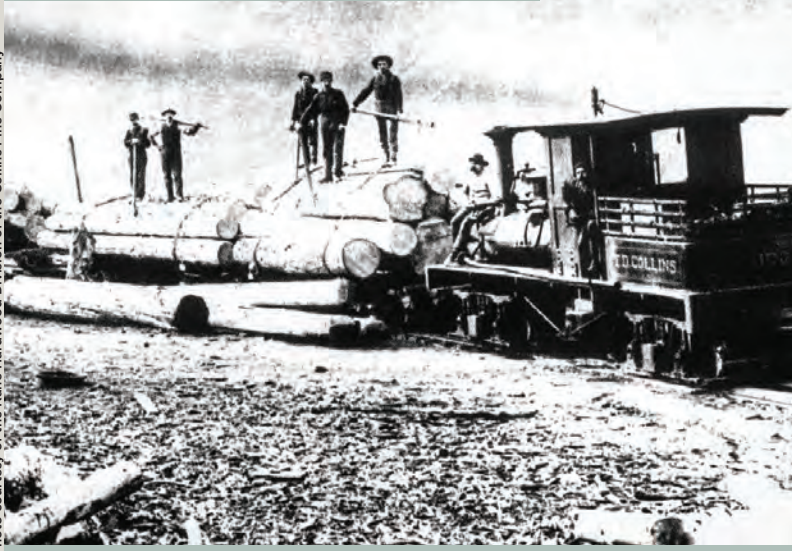


Photo courtesy of the Kane Hardwood Division of the Collins Pine Company



Photo by Rick Klein

“It’s my responsibility as the manager here to be a good steward of God’s resources,” Kase says. “I have to be responsible to my bosses, but I also must be responsible to the rest of the human race. Forests are a resource for all of us.”

A graduate of the State University of New York (SUNY) Professional Ranger School, Kase has spent the past 32 years as a professional forester. He’s done various forest-related jobs: timber marking, measuring trees, management planning, laying out harvest areas, computer mapping and database management.

Tramping around the woods is the kind of physical job you really have to love, especially in northwest Pennsylvania, where summers in the woodlands can get dreadfully hot, sticky and buggy, and winters can be brutally cold and dangerous. Snowpack can be heavy, and roads can quickly become

impassable. Anytime during the year, truck crews can get stuck in the dense woods due to any number of mechanical problems, like bad brakes or dead batteries.

Both Kase and Kane understand the challenges and joys of the work. Their businesses are located only a few miles apart in Kane.

As Ken Kane, 62, says, “It takes a hardy person to do this job.” He would know. He’s been working in the forest in various capacities since swinging an axe and girdling trees at age 14.

Kane owns Generations Forestry, which manages property as small as one acre and some more than 100,000 acres in Pennsylvania, New York, Ohio and New Jersey. He and his staff offer their expertise to individuals, families, businesses, corporations, municipalities and timber



Photo by Mary Solberg

Bike trails in the Diocese of Erie

ENJOY GOD’S WORLD

The 30 bicycle trails located within the boundaries of the 13 counties of the diocese provide beautiful vistas of forests and other terrain, including even a Great Lake.

- Allegheny River Trail (Clarion, Venango counties, 30 miles)
- Armstrong Trail (part of Clarion County, 35.5 miles)
- Bayfront Connector Trail (Erie County, 8.9 miles)
- Beaver Meadow Trail (Clearfield County, 2.9 miles)
- Blaisdell-Emery Trail (McKean County, 3.8 miles)
- Clarion Highlands Trail (Clarion County, 8.5 miles)
- David S. Ammerman Trail, formerly the Clearfield to Grampian Trail (Clearfield County, 10.6 miles)
- Ernst Bike Trail (Crawford County, 7.2 miles)
- Houtzdale Line Trail (Clearfield County, 10.5 miles)
- John C. Oliver Multi-purpose Loop Trail (Mercer County, 11.7 miles; the centerpiece of the Maurice K. Goddard State Park)
- Karl Boyes Multi-purpose National Recreation Trail (Presque Isle State Park in Erie County, 13.4 miles)
- Kinzua Valley Trail (McKean County, 6 miles)
- Knox Kane Rail Trail (McKean, 3.8 miles)
- Mahoning Shadow Trail (Jefferson County, 15 miles)
- Marilla Bridges Trail (McKean County, 1 mile)
- McClintock Trail (Venango County, part of Oil Creek State Park, 9.4 miles)



Taking the diameter measurement of a black cherry tree are Ken Kane, right, and Tom Kase.

management organizations.

A 1982 graduate of Penn State's former School of Forest Resources, now the Department of Ecosystem Science and Management, Kane purchased his business from another company that had divested in 2013.

He also has testified three times (on behalf of the Allegheny Forest Alliance, the Society of American Foresters and individually as a constituent) on forestry matters before the U.S. Congress.

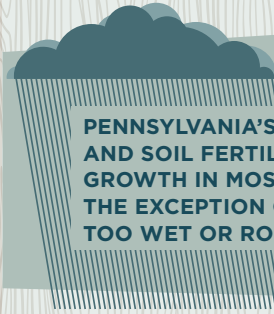
Generations Forestry maintains priceless timberland and watersheds through restoration forestry. It's an effort to extract value, in the form of lumber or wood chips for paper, while maintaining a healthy, diverse ecosystem for

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- Minister Creek Trail (Forest, Warren counties, 6.6 miles)
- Oil City Trail (Venango County, 3 miles)
- Oil Creek State Park Trail (Venango County, 9.7 miles)
- Queen City Trail (Crawford, Venango counties, 1.5 miles; part of Oil Creek State Park)
- Rail 66 Country Trail (Clarion County, 20 miles)
- Richard E. McDowell Trail (McKean County, 1.3 miles)
- Samuel Justus Recreation Trail (Venango County, 6 miles)
- Sandy Creek Trail (Venango County, 12 miles)
- Shawmut Trail (McKean County, .6 mile)
- Tidioute Riverside RecTrek Trail (Warren County in the Allegheny National Forest, 4.5 miles)
- Trout Island Trail (Mercer County, 2.4 miles)
- Warren to North Warren Bike Trail (Warren County, 3 miles)
- West Creek Recreational Trail (Cameron and Elk Counties, 19.5 miles)
- Wolf Run Trail (Clearfield, Jefferson counties, 4.2 miles)

Source: Rails-to-Trails Conservancy
www.trailink.com/stateactivity/pa-bike-trails/

Facts about Pennsylvania's forests



PENNSYLVANIA'S CLIMATE RAINFALL AND SOIL FERTILITY SUPPORT FOREST GROWTH IN MOST OF THE STATE, WITH THE EXCEPTION OF AREAS THAT ARE TOO WET OR ROCKY.

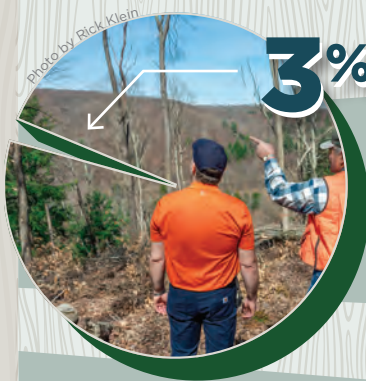


Photo by Rick Klein

3%

is in public reserve status, where the commercial harvesting of trees is restricted by law or public policy

MAJOR FOREST TYPES ARE NORTHERN HARDWOOD, OAK-HICKORY, GREAT LAKE BEECH-MAPLE, MESOPHYTIC (BEING OR GROWING IN A MOIST ENVIRONMENT)

Sources: U.S. Department of Agriculture and the PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources

FOREST RESOURCES IN NORTHWEST PA

- The Foundation for Sustainable Forests
www.foundationforsustainableforests.org
- Center for Private Forests (Penn State University)
<https://ecosystems.psu.edu/researchcenters/private-forests>
- NWPA Woodland Association
 Dick Thorr at 814-734-5730

1 NATIONAL FOREST IN THE DIOCESE OF ERIE

- The Alleghenies

6 STATE FORESTS IN THE DIOCESE OF ERIE

- Tiadaghton State Forest (tracts in Potter County)
- Susquehannock State Forest (Potter and McKean counties)
- Moshannon State Forest (Clearfield and Elk counties)
- Elk State Forest (Elk, Cameron, Potter and McKean counties)
- Cornplanter State Forest (Forest, Crawford and Warren counties)
- Clear Creek State Forest (Jefferson, Clarion, Venango, Forest and Mercer counties)

Illustrations by Matthew Walters



future generations.

“There is faith involved in practicing forestry,” says Kane, who is a board member of the Catholic Foundation of Northwest Pennsylvania. “There are many people who extract value from the forest and look at it strictly from an economic perspective, but it offers so much more than that. We manage the forests to produce more oxygen for our world. Forests are one of the biggest oxygen producers we have. We’re about diversity, providing an economic return, but yet recognizing that it provides a lot of intrinsic value.”

Collins Pine Company also is committed to future generations. Its woods in Pennsylvania have been certified sustainable by the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC). In order to maintain that certification, Kane Hardwood only can harvest 12 million board feet of lumber from its timberlands annually.

According to Kase, Kane Hardwood has a goal to perpetually provide material to its sawmill while also balancing the age classes of the forest.

“We want to ensure that another forest is growing up behind to replace the trees that were harvested,” Kase says. “For the people here in rural Pennsylvania, the forest is our home, so the last thing we want to do is destroy it.”

For five generations, the Collins family — all mostly living now in Oregon or California — has believed that managing a healthy forest also provides for stable communities through jobs. Additionally, the company is philanthropic. It gave 70 percent ownership of its original lands, purchased from 1855 to 1920, to Methodist Global Ministries.

Terry Collins, great-grandson of T.D. Collins, told *Faith* magazine from his

home in Chester, California, that sustainable forestry is “the right thing to do” in every respect.

His wife, Barb, a native of Kane, still attends St. Callistus Parish when she returns to visit the area. Of the woods in which she grew up, she says, “Our responsibility is to take care of the earth that was given to us.”

Both Ken Kane and Tom Kase agree. They’re committed to their role as humble, responsible stewards.

Says Kane: “When you go into the woods, all concerns go away. You can’t help but take time to pause. You look up at a tree that took 100 years to grow and think that everything had to be just right for it to be as big and beautiful as it is. We have to take care of it.” †

Pope Francis has added care for the earth as an eighth corporal and spiritual work of mercy.



Photo by Rick Klein

Using a clinometer, Tom Kase, right, tries to get an accurate measurement of the height of trees on Collins Pine Company property just south of Kane. Next to Kase is Ken Kane. As foresters, they use clinometers to measure the height of trees, as well as the percent of slope when designing a forest road.

PRACTICAL AND SPIRITUAL TIPS FOR VISITING A FOREST

Offered by foresters Tom Kase and Ken Kane

- Let your senses take over ... recognize not only things you see, but what you may hear, smell and feel.
- Sit quietly and talk with God, the creator of all creatures, great and small. Listen, too.
- Don't litter.
- Check for ticks (they're active in PA three-quarters of the year).
- Avoid windy days in the woods (falling tree limbs are dangerous and frequent).
- Avoid the forest during lightning storms.
- Carry adequate food and water, and always let people know where you're going.
- Wear proper clothing for the season; a rain jacket is always a good thing to have.
- Cell service is limited in the forest, so keep adequate fuel in your vehicle.
- Read *Laudato Si'* at www.ErieRCD.org/images/pdf/EncyclicalLetter.pdf