

# New York Forest Owners Association Capital District Chapter Newsletter

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April 2011

## Message from the Chair

Hello! I'm Jim Bulich and am glad to be the Chair of Capital District Chapter of the New York Forest Owners Association. Although I am a Real Estate Broker, I have learned a lot about NYFOA's mission while I was on the Steering Committee, attending woods walks and work shops, and working with a forester on my own land.



I have lived in Greene County all my life, always in a rural setting, and always appreciating the outdoors, especially while hunting, bird watching or observing the wildlife, wild flowers and changes in the forest.

It was with great sadness that I learned that our friend and colleague Mike Greason died unexpectedly of a heart attack on March 8, 2011. Mike was one of our most active members and made many contributions to the Capital District Chapter. This included serving as newsletter editor and Chapter Chair as well as helping to organize many woodswalks and workshops. You can read a tribute to Mike's work as a forester and as a conservation advocate on page 4 of this newsletter.

Our Chapter has been very fortunate to have had a long line of dedicated members to lead and serve on the Steering Committee. They put together events throughout the year that offer all the Members a chance to learn more about our woodlands and how we can preserve them in a way that fits the desires of the individual owner. These events also allow a chance for fellowship and fun.

Many of the things planned for this year are mentioned in this newsletter. Take the time to mark your calendars for some of the upcoming events and join us in making this a successful year in protecting our woodlands.

Also in this newsletter is a list of the members on the Steering Committee, with contact information. If you have any ideas or suggestions, please contact us.

*Jim Bulich*



## 2011 Heiberg Award Mike Birmingham

Mike Birmingham of the Capital District Chapter received the Heiberg Award at the recent State Board meeting in Syracuse. Heiberg was one of the original founders of the New York Forest Owners Association in 1962. Mike had a long and distinguished forestry career with DEC. He is a graduate of the SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry and for many years managed his own woodlots in western New York.

Although he retired in 2002, he has remained active in the forestry community. Mike is a long time member of the Forest Owners Association, the Society of American Foresters and of the Northeastern Forest Pest Council. Among his most recent accomplishments:

- Service as the state treasurer for the New York Forest Owners Association.
- Writing articles for Alan Devoe Bird Club of Columbia County,
- Serving on the state board of directors of the Forest Owners Association.
- Serving on the steering committee of the Capital District Chapter
- Serving as a regional coordinator for the Master Forest Owner program in the capital district area.

# Forestry Awareness Day

May 2, 2011

## 2011 Holiday Gathering

The Capital District Chapter held the annual cover dish supper for members, family and friends on January 22nd. With the help of Peg and Ron Pedersen has reserved the Bethany Presbyterian Church in Menands. James and Phillis House organized a silent auction which is always a popular part of the event.



Bob Stegemann was our guest speaker this year and gave a very interesting account of his summer job while he was attending the College of Environmental Science and Forestry at Syracuse.



Bob showed slides and talked about his experiences as smokejumper for the Forest Service in Alaska and Montana.

NYFOA is one of several organizations that co-sponsors "forestry awareness day" in the state legislature. The idea is to visit individual members of the legislature to talk about the importance of our forest resources and issues of concern. Attendees have the opportunity to attend an issues briefing in the morning starting at 9:00 a.m.. A bag lunch is provided for participants.

This year the following issues will be high-lighted:

- Develop property tax and assessment legislation that encourages long term forest management.
- Provide DEC with the necessary resources to sustainably manage the State Forests and support the DEC's service forestry program to encourage private forest owners to responsibly manage their forests.
- Provide budget support for forest-related programs in DEC, Ag & Markets and Empire State Development Council.
- Aggressively combat invasive pests, especially insects and pathogens, through coordinated efforts with State and Federal agencies.

This is a great opportunity to lend your support for sustainable forest management in the state legislature where laws are made and yet where many representatives are unfamiliar with the concerns of private woodland owners.

For more information and to register contact:  
Muriel Church: [mchurch@esfpa.org](mailto:mchurch@esfpa.org)  
Phone 426-9502

## Forest Landowner's Assessment Guide

Forest\*A\*Syst is a self-assessment guide for woodland owners with the goals of helping forest landowners articulate their objectives in a written management plan and foster a working relationship with a resource professional who can provide them with technical assistance.

The website, [www.forestasyst.org](http://www.forestasyst.org), is intended to provide an introduction to the concepts of managing a forest for timber production, wildlife, recreation & aesthetics, and water quality. It includes video clips, printable documents (pdf files), links, and searchable database files.

## Could Your Woodlot Be A Future Energy Resource?

A recent analysis of forest resources in Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, and Vermont showed that wood could replace up to 25% of the oil and gas currently being used for commercial and industrial heating in the northeast. "The heat generated by locally-grown biomass can reduce dependence on fossil fuels and support local economies," said Dr. Charles D. Canham, a forest ecologist at the Cary Institute in Millbrook, New York and co-author of the report. "But each forested landscape is different, and regional variation in forest conditions and energy infrastructure means there is no one-size-fits-all solution."

The report found that using wood for heat in the region was far more effective in replacing liquid fossil fuels than converting it to cellulosic ethanol. Wood burned in combined heat and power plants reduced fossil fuel use more than five times more effectively than substituting gasoline with cellulosic ethanol. Under the right circumstances forest biomass can provide a domestic energy resource, create local jobs, and provide incentives to forest owners.



Aerial view of a biomass harvest in the Adirondacks

But the report cautioned that ongoing oversight is necessary to ensure that forest biomass is sustainably harvested. According to Dr. Canham; "Unrealistic growth in biomass energy facilities could lead to serious degradation of forest resources. While forest biomass is part of the renewable energy toolkit, it is by no means a panacea."

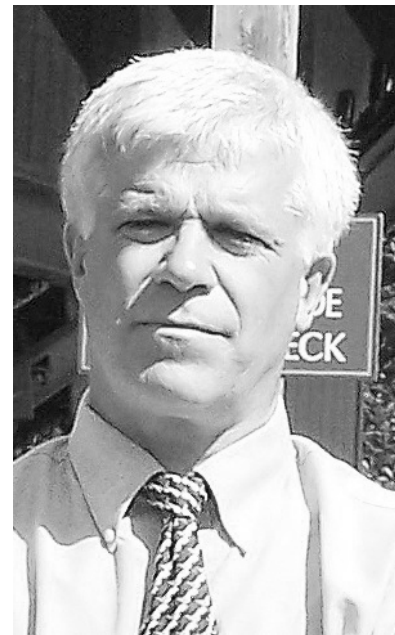
The full report is available on-line at:  
[www.ecostudies.org/report\\_biomass\\_2011.pdf](http://www.ecostudies.org/report_biomass_2011.pdf)

## New DEC Commissioner Appointed

Joe Martens has been appointed the new commissioner of the State Department of Environmental Conservation.

Commissioner Martens served as deputy state secretary of energy and the environment from 1992-94, during the gubernatorial administration of Mario Cuomo. Since 1998 he was president of the Open Space Institute. OSI is a nonprofit that works largely in the northeastern United States to acquire lands for conservation and sustainable development and farming. Martens is also the chairman of the state Olympic Regional Development Authority, based in Lake Placid.

Mr. Martens received a Bachelor of Science degree in Resource Economics from UMass in 1978. He later received an M.S. in Resource Management from the State University of New York, College of Environmental Science and Forestry at Syracuse University.



Martens was a standout competitor for the UMass Minutemen from 1974-1978 when he set the indoor high jump record of seven feet, which still stands today as the school record. He also set the outdoor record in the 400 meter run, which was held for 25 years before being broken in 2000.

Pete Grannis, the previous commissioner, was fired for protesting budget cuts and layoffs at the DEC. Grannis has since been hired by Comptroller Thomas DiNapoli as first deputy comptroller.

# A Tribute To A Man Who Loved Trees

by Bob Beyfuss and published in the Kingston Daily Freeman April 8, 2011

ON TUESDAY, March 8, Mike Greason died while working in his beloved forest. Mike was one of the nicest people I ever met and I considered him the world's greatest forester. I guess you could say that he was almost always living on "borrowed time" since his profession had left him with multitudes of injuries that might have killed or crippled a lesser man decades ago. As a former logger and consultant forester he had suffered from numerous accidents that left him with a plate in his head, a severely damaged shoulder and leg, but a completely intact sense of humor that was never far from the surface – as evidenced by his ever present wide grin. Despite his injuries, he could do hard physical work far longer than men half his age. His strength and stamina while working in the forest were amazing to me and everyone else who tried to keep up with him.

Mike's accomplishments while working for the NYSDEC as chief forester surpass any single individual I can think of and are too numerous to list here. He co-authored the state's Forest Tax Law (480A), which has resulted in saving many thousands of dollars for forest landowners, while protecting, improving and preserving thousands and thousands of woodland acres. He also helped to write the legislation that protects forest landowners from timber theft. He was not necessarily a believer in the concept of "forever wild" recognizing that it is only a slogan and does not represent reality. He believed in managing forestland for the many benefits they provide to society and not just for the value of the timber they produced.

After retiring from the DEC, Mike started his own forestry consulting business which differed significantly from most forestry consultants. Most foresters charge landowners a commission based on the sales of timber that they mark. Mike considered this a conflict of interest that would motivate the forester to mark and sell more timber than ought to be harvested at that time. Instead, he charged on an hourly basis for his time, which undoubtedly cost him many jobs since landowners often prefer to not lay out any money up front. But Mike's first concern was the long-term management of the forest. He liked trees more than he liked some people it would seem, an odd perspective that I shared with him myself.

In addition to his professional career, Mike was an amazing volunteer, particularly for the New York Forest Owners Association, but also for Cornell Cooperative Extension and the Agroforestry Resource Center in Acra, where he toiled many hours doing both hard physical work as well as administrative work on the board of directors.

As long as there is an Agroforestry Center, Mike's legacy will remain intact and permanent. You see, the beautiful oak floor that surrounds the entrance and hallway of the building was his idea and he delivered on that idea from felling the trees himself in the Siuslaw Model Forest across the street, to milling them on the sawmill he sold to me, to sanding and planing them with his equipment, to cutting and installing each and every plank. That beautiful oak floor will always remind me of Mike, a man who truly loved trees and who left the woodlands of New York State and his friends, far better off than had he not existed.

Bob Beyfuss is retired from Green County Cooperative Extension and lives in Schoharie County. He writes a gardening column for the Daily Freeman.



Mike Greason leads a NYFOA woodswalk

# 2011 WOODSWALKS & EVENTS

## **Tuesday, April 14<sup>th</sup> Rensselaer County**

3:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m. Old Daley Inn (Crooked Lake House), 2339 NY Hwy 43 Averill Park, NY  
Open house sponsored by the Rensselaer Plateau Alliance. Get answers to questions about Forest Legacy funding or the sale of development rights, 480a forest tax incentive program, the Master Forest Owner program, and conservation easements. We will also have an attorney/land use planner to answer legal questions. This event is for people who are considering selling or donating development rights on their forestlands in the Rensselaer Plateau Forest Legacy Area or are interested in the other programs listed above.  
More information call 794-9160

## **Saturday May 14<sup>th</sup> Albany County**

10:00 a.m. meet at Wolfe Tree Farm  
88 Curtis Road, East Berne, NY  
Join Tom Wolfe on a tour of his woodlot which has been a source of maple syrup, deer and firewood. This year Tom is planning on cutting and selling timber roadside. This is a great opportunity to see the results after twenty years of careful management for multiple values.  
More information call 872-0811

## **Saturday June 4<sup>th</sup> Schoharie County**

9:00 a.m. meet at Landis Arboretum  
174 Lape Road, Esperance, NY  
If you haven't been to the arboretum recently, you'll enjoy this opportunity see the facility which has grown to 500 acres and has added a stand of "old-growth" forest. Carl Wiedemann and Tom Wolfe will lead a walk through different forest types and discuss land use history and the forest as seen through the eyes of foresters. There will be discussion of how past use has affected the current woodlot condition and management options that could be applied to meet various landowner goals.  
More information call 875-6935

## **Saturday July 16<sup>th</sup> Albany County**

9:00 a.m. meet at Brearton property at 1676 Berne Altamont Road, Altamont, NY at the junction of SR 147 and 156; driveway leading north from that intersection State Extension Forester, Dr. Peter Smallidge will lead a Small

Scale Woodlot Management and Low Impact Harvesting Workshop. The event will focus on tree selection for various landowner objectives; demonstration of safe tree felling techniques,

and demonstration of controlling beech stump sprouting and root suckering.  
More information call 872-9600

## **Sunday July 17<sup>th</sup> Rensselaer County**

9:00 a.m. meet at Gibbs property, 287 Hidley Road, Wynantskill, NY. Peter Smallidge will lead a Small Scale Woodlot Management and Low Impact Harvesting Workshop. The event will focus on tree selection for various landowner objectives; demonstration of safe tree felling techniques, and skidding with a small tractor equipped with a winch; and demonstration of controlling beech stump sprouting and root suckering.  
More information call 283-0155

## **Sunday August 7<sup>th</sup> Albany County**

11:00 a.m. meet at Glen Doone Picnic Area, Thacher Park for our annual picnic. See a detailed description of the event on page 6.  
More information call 861-8753

## **Saturday August 20<sup>th</sup> Schenectady County**

10:00 a.m. meet at Christman Sanctuary 3201 Schoharie Turnpike, Delanson, NY  
Join us for an easy hike through this nature preserve. Along the way we will discuss land use history and woodland management opportunities. There are several scenic waterfalls along the Bozenkill Creek which runs through the property which will make this a memorable experience.  
More information call 280-8892

## **Saturday September 24<sup>th</sup> Greene County**

8:30 a.m. meet at Agroforestry Center  
Route 23, Acra, NY  
Choose from several concurrent workshops (morning) and field visits (afternoon) covering a variety of topics of interest to woodland owners including emerald ash borer, Agroforestry, silviculture, and a visit to a log export yard.  
More information call 622-9820

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## The Chapter Welcomes The Following New Members:

Maureen & Dave Mooney  
Amy Walsh  
Christine Young

Valatie, New York  
Catskill, New York  
Sand Lake, New York

## STEERING COMMITTEE

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## August 7<sup>th</sup> – Family Picnic & Chicken Barbecue

Capital District Chapter's annual family chicken barbecue/picnic is Sunday, August 7th, at the Glen Doone area of John Boyd Thacher State Park in western Albany County. Mark your calendar.

Suggested arrival time is between 11 am and 12 noon, allowing time to walk on the trails or in the woods, to play horseshoes, volleyball, and socialize with other members. The barbecued chicken will be ready around 1:30 - 2:00, depending on the weather and the breeze.

Beverages and tableware will be provided. Please bring a dish to pass -- one of your family's favorites. We ask for a \$6 per person contribution to defray expenses - this is an unbeatable deal, because the regular \$6 Thacher Park parking fee is waived for those attending our picnic!



If you're not familiar with Thacher Park, Google "John Boyd Thacher State Park" and there is lots of information on the background of the park, the trails, the geological formations, the Nature Center, etc.

**Jim Beil, Secretary** ph 355-4471  
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mjbirming@airport.net

**Ron Bernhard, Member** ph 765-4600  
rgb138@msn.com

**Renee Bouplon, Director** ph 929-7832  
bouplonrj@gmail.com

**Jim Bulich, Chair** ph 943-5047  
bettyjim@mhicable.com

**Dick Gibbs, Vice Chair** ph 283-0155  
rgibbs@nycap.rr.com

**Jim House, Member** ph 674-8720  
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**Hans & Joan Kappel, Members** ph 861-8753  
bluespruce@juno.com

**Ron Pedersen, Member** ph 785-6061  
rwp22@nycap.rr.com

**Jason Post, Member** ph 577-4101  
jpost@mhicable.com

**Dave Schmidt, Member** ph 237-8327

**Bob Sheedy, Member** ph 482-1288  
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**Phil Walton, Treasurer** ph 895-5346  
pwalton518@gmail.com

**Carl Wiedemann, Member** ph 280-8892  
wiedeman@nycap.rr.com

**Tom Wolfe, Membership** ph 872-0811  
tbwolfe1064@aol.com

**Marilyn Wyman, Director** ph 622-9820  
mfw10@cornell.edu

Any interested member of the chapter is welcome to join the steering committee. Meetings are held every three months at the Colonie Town Library starting at 6:30 p.m. The next meeting is scheduled July 12<sup>th</sup>.

# Test Your Wildlife Knowledge ...

Are you having difficulties distinguishing a Snoligoster from a Snaligaster? Do you want to know how to avoid a Whangdoodle or how to track a Squonk? Or are you simply pondering how to catch a Shovel-nosed Hodag? Then this is the test for you! Many fearsome critters have been described by lumberjacks and hunters around the campfire. So don't venture out into the forest without having learned to recognize these beasts. You wouldn't want to get eaten by a Rumptifusel, would you?

Here are three clues to the identity of another rare denizen of the forest:

## Clue #1

Nature has endowed this marvelous feline critter with an amazing right forearm. It works like a folding pruning hook on the pantographic principle. Its howl on a lonely night will curdle a crock of sourdough. Females of the species may be killed only with a crosscut saw. The males, practically indestructible, carry in their fur the germ of white pine blister rust. Under the influence of a full moon, the glare from their eyes starts forest fires. Their footprints are visible only in solid rock.

## Clue #2

The critter lurks on a craggy promontory with its tufted ears aslant like the budding prongs of a young goat and its voice softened from the customary howl of a disfranchised banshee to the bleat of a kid. When a hawk or eagle approaches, the strange arm shoots out with astonishing speed and direction. The bird is caught and reeled in.

## Clue #3

Origin - on the trusted authority of a rare & endangered species specialist, this critter's closest relative is the old-fashioned beaver. It seems that a trapper's dog surprised a beaver far from water. There was nothing for the animal to do but climb a tree. But beavers don't climb trees. So it became a \_\_\_\_\_

What is the name of this confounded critter?

## Mystery Critter Do You Recognize It?



# ?

Answer:

**THE Wampus Cat**  
*Aquilamappreluendens forcipe*

\*From Henry H. Tryon Fearsome Critters 1939.

# Join Us!!

## Help Support Forest Conservation

The New York Forest Owners Association is a not-for-profit organization which supports sustainable forestry practices and improved stewardship on privately owned woodlands. Our members are family forest owners and all others who care about the future of New York's trees and forests. If you are not a member, please consider joining today. Your membership makes a difference. Regular annual dues are just \$30.00 for an individual or \$35.00 for a family.

**Contact: NYFOA, P.O. Box 541, Lima, New York 14485 1-800-836-3566 [www.nyfoa.org](http://www.nyfoa.org)**