

# New York Forest Owners Association Capital District Chapter Newsletter

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## Message from the Chairman



Jason Post

Hello members of NYFOA-CDC! Since most of you own forestland, I would imagine that the price of timber is of great importance to you. In this article, I'd like to fill you in on recent and current hardwoods lumber and log trends.

Rather than bog you down with numbers and statistics (which can be found in US Forest Service and NY DEC periodicals or most hardwoods trade magazines), we'll instead provide you with a simple overview - one that can generate comments and questions from our members.

According to Joe, the hardwood lumber markets started to rebound slightly in the early stages of 2010. Prior to that, during the Great Recession, prices of kiln dried timber had been at an all-time low and inventories were high.

This recession poorly affected the US and Canadian sawmill industry, with mills going out of business either shutting down due to lack of sales or liquidating. As America climbed out of the recession and the housing market improved, demand for kiln-dried lumber also improved, and therefore prices increased. Good news for us!

This increased demand over the past four years led to a shortage in supply of hardwood kiln dried lumber, so the sawmills responded with extra shifts and capitalized on the price increases. Two shifts became the norm and three shifts were not unheard of. Mills began installing new technology designed to increase yields from logs and increase lumber production. Log prices continued to increase and NYFOA forest owners got what they had been waiting for! Hooray!!

But bad news followed as this boom and bust cycle continued to play out. The lumber market started to settle as demand slowed, with supply and prices leveling out. Even though demand slowed, log production and prices remained high with a strong

market in early winter; however, the strong winter harvest was followed by a slow spring. Log inventories continued to grow and, in fact, became too large, prompting a slight reduction in log prices beginning in February, followed by a plummet in prices in March and April.

While sawmills may cite other factors, such as oil price drops, housing starts declines, or decreased demand in Asia, I would blame this price decrease on overproduction from sawmills.

Given the summer season, the recent wet weather in the Northeast and this recent price decline, I predict a very slow summer. Under the current lumber market conditions, big mills who bought standing timber at higher prices are now unable to afford to cut and will let woodlots stand. I would expect this trend to continue into October and late Fall before we see a rebound.

There are a few products that continue to be in demand including White Oak, Walnut and Ash, but many including Sugar Maple, Red Maple and Cherry are in the tank for the time being. So my plan is to enjoy the summer months, make good use of the slow period, and look forward to a busy winter! How about you all?

*Jason*

P.S. Please don't forget the annual Chapter Picnic at Thacher Park just a few weeks away. It will be held on Sunday, July 26<sup>th</sup>. It's a beautiful spot, plenty of good food, and great company. Family and friends welcome. For more details see the events calendar on page 6.

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Note: For event reminders and late-breaking news, subscribe to our email list by sending a blank email to - [nyfoa-cdc-news-subscribe@npogroups.org](mailto:nyfoa-cdc-news-subscribe@npogroups.org)

# The Importance of Commercial Value

by Carl Wiedemann

Jason wrote about the market outlook for various commercial hardwood species in New York State. I agree with Jason that this is a very important aspect of the forest resource. Landowners have to pay taxes, so timber income is always welcome. But I'm not sure that we all get the connection between commercial value and maintaining healthy forests for all the other benefits they provide. Without valuable trees and good markets, forest management activities which require tree cutting are difficult/expensive to accomplish. So, at the risk of preaching to the choir, I'll offer a few opinions about family forest owners and timber value.

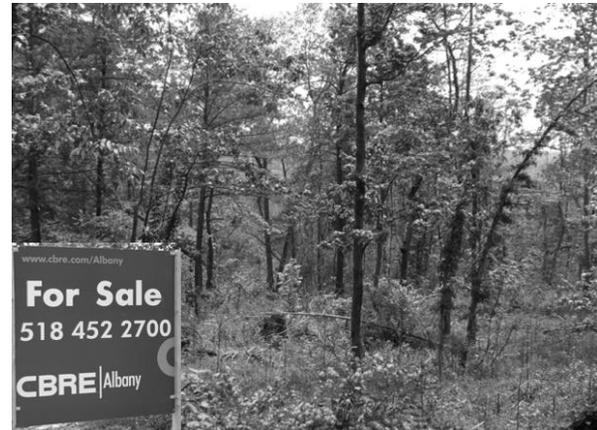
Commercial timber value is important because it generates income for woodland owners and helps offset expenses – such as property taxes. It provides employment for loggers, consulting foresters, and mill workers. The size and financial viability of the forest products industry is directly related to the quality and availability of the timber resource. It's difficult to build a strong industry on a poor quality resource. Finally, all of the economic activity associated with commercial timber production helps support the tax base.

The good news is that we live in a state that is more than 60% forested and most of that forest land is capable of growing high quality, high value timber when carefully managed.

So what do family forest owners think about timber management? Unfortunately, it's not a priority. According to the most recent national woodland owner survey the top five reasons for owning forest land are; beauty and scenery, part of the home, wildlife habitat, pass on to children/heirs and privacy. Yet taxes are also one of the top concerns for woodland owners according to the survey. If taxes are a concern, timber management should be a priority.

A recent editorial by Dan Meyer of the Hardwood Review Express stated; "Forests will only remain forests when their greatest value is for their sustainable production of wood and non-wood products. If the value of the land is greater for agricultural crops, grazing, mining or urbanization, then land conversion can be expected". In other words, anyone who wants to keep forests as forests should support sustainable timber management. This fits with NYFOA's mission to promote sustainable woodland practices and improved stewardship of privately owned woodland in New York State.

Yet the evidence suggests that much of what goes on in the woods probably doesn't qualify as sustainable management. When timber is sold, the main goal is often to maximize income, not to improve the stand for future harvests or for regeneration. The consequence is that both future timber value and productivity are often degraded.



It's not hard to find examples. This is a photo (above) of a recent timber harvest in Albany County. The residual stand is understocked and consists of poor quality trees and low value species. The property is for sale – a perfect candidate for conversion to a non-forest use in the future because otherwise the next landowner will pay taxes for many years before any income is possible from timber. As Jason would say; "Sustainable forests are the beginning of a future; exploited forests are the beginning of an end"

In New York State timber is growing twice as fast as it is being cut. Some claim that this is proof that the commercial timber resource is being sustainably managed. Really? Surveys also show that most family forest owners don't use a consulting forester when they sell timber and that most woodlots have been degraded by past cutting. Perhaps we are growing more than we cut because we grow a lot of low value wood which is hard to sell.

We grow a lot of low value wood because most landowners do not use timber harvests as a way to improve future growth and timber quality. With truly sustainable harvesting practices the commercial value of the timber resource could probably be doubled. That would benefit landowners, the forest products industry, and the economy. It would also help keep forests as forests.

It makes sense to support sustainable woodland management for a variety of reasons. This can be accomplished, at least to some extent, with technical assistance, education, and financial incentives for family forest owners.

# Endangered Bats & Woodlot Management

You may have heard that the northern long-eared bat (*Myotis septentrionalis*) is suffering from a fungal disease known as white nose syndrome. The disease surfaced six years ago in a Schoharie County cave (Howe Caverns). It has spread rapidly from eastern North America westward. The disease is expected to spread throughout the range of northern long-eared bats which includes much of eastern and north-central United States, and most of Canada.

New York has lost up to 99 percent of its northern long-eared bats. Diseased bats have a distinctive fuzzy patch of white fungus that appears around the noses of afflicted bats. It causes bats to wake up early from winter hibernation and go outside and either freeze or starve in a futile search for food.

According to Carl Herzog, DEC wildlife biologist; "The speed at which this problem has spread and the degree of impact on the bat numbers is, well it's really beyond what anyone would have imagined. I don't think that it's an exaggeration to say, even in the field of wildlife study, there are few examples of disease issues that have been so virulent & complete in their impact".

Here are some reasons why woodland owners should be concerned, and what they can do to help.

Decline or loss of the northern long-eared bat is a concern because all species have essential niches or jobs they fill in our ecosystems. For example, bats eat up to half their weight in insects each night. Recent studies estimate that bats deliver \$6 billion in insect control services to agriculture, forest industries and the public each year!

A second reason is that, as an endangered species, regulations are in place which may restrict summer timber/firewood harvesting. Removal of trees used as summer maternity roosts is prohibited. This includes any cutting within ¼ mile of known roosting sites. At this time there are no known roosting sites in the Capital District Chapter although there are hibernacula (places where bats hibernate).

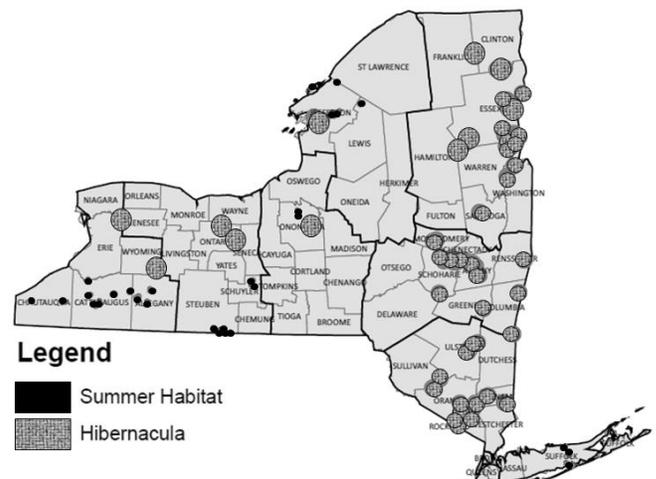
What can landowners do to help?

Sustaining healthy populations of all bat species in New York State is the goal. Strategies to prevent the spread of white-nose syndrome and which

maintain diverse, native forests with the structure and age classes of trees needed by bats are particularly important.

Recommendations: Woodland owners should leave (where possible and not a safety hazard) large, older trees that are dead or dying and that provide loose bark, crevices and cavities for roosting and maternity colonies. Many other crevice and cavity-dependent creatures will also benefit. Properly built and placed bat houses can provide additional roost sites.

## Northern Long-eared Bat Occupied Sites



According to the US Fish and Wildlife Service website:

Northern long-eared bats use their maternity roost trees and hibernacula repeatedly for many years. Unless a survey or other information indicates otherwise, if the habitat around a roost is intact and the tree is suitable, USF&WS would conclude that the tree is likely an occupied maternity roost during the pup season (June 1 - July 31). Similarly, USF&WS would assume that a hibernaculum remains occupied unless a survey or other information indicates otherwise.

Therefore, if you have a northern long-eared bat roost tree or hibernacula documented on or near the harvest area, any incidental take of bats will be exempted from permit requirements if you follow these conservation measures:

- Do not conduct any activities within ¼ mile of known, occupied hibernacula;
- Do not cut or destroy a known, occupied roost tree from June 1 to July 31 (the pup season);
- Do not clearcut (and similar harvest methods that cut most or essentially all trees from an area, e.g., seed tree, shelterwood,

# **Study Finds Increasing Wood Pellet Demand Boosts Forest Growth, Reduces Greenhouse Gas Emissions, Creates Jobs**

By Robert Johansson, USDA Acting Chief Economist

An industry that can reduce greenhouse gas emissions, increase forest growth, and create jobs sounds too good to be true. But that is the reality of the emerging wood pellets market in the Southern U.S. That conclusion is supported by independent economic assessments of wood bioenergy, including a recent study that specifically focused on European pellet demand conducted by researchers at Duke and North Carolina State Universities. Those researchers found that increasing demand for wood pellets resulted in more forest area, more forest investment, large greenhouse gas reductions, and little change in forest carbon inventories.

So, why is there concern?

Some critics have recently argued that land used to produce biomass for energy should instead be permanently protected as forests. They say that harvesting biomass from forests reduces forest carbon stocks. Instead, they claim that the best way to increase carbon storage is to reduce demand for renewable products that come from the land. Those arguments fail to account for market dynamics and incentives, and do not recognize that these resources are renewable. Importantly, forests with little or no economic value are at greater risk for conversion to non-forest other uses.

A key to accelerating forest growth and regeneration is to create strong markets for biomass that will stimulate investments. Farmers and forest land owners, as with all business owners, respond to markets and invest in strategies to produce more and earn more when facing increasing demand. Biomass energy markets are providing greenhouse gas benefits for Europe and can be a larger part of our domestic strategy as well. The United States has committed to lowering greenhouse gas emissions by 26 to 28 percent over the next 10 years. One component of that strategy could be to expand renewable energy generation from forest and agricultural biomass.

The conclusions by the Duke and NC State researchers are not unique to the South. Other studies

have found that expanding the use of sustainably grown biomass for electricity production across the U.S. can actually increase forest acreage and carbon storage. Those studies show that as demand for biomass expands, the resource becomes more valuable at creating an incentive to grow and invest. Expanding the use of biomass for electric power will not result in the devastation of the American forests. Rather, forest owners will more effectively and intensively manage forests to increase their value and optimize biomass production and use over time.

For example, USDA Forest Service researchers analyzed the potential effects of greatly expanding biomass electricity markets in the US. They found meeting 8 percent of U.S. electricity production from wood energy would require a 42 percent increase in harvesting; but they also found that a substantial portion of that increase would be offset over 50 years largely because of regrowth and market responses in land use and management strategies. They estimated that substituting biomass for fossil fuels to generate electricity could reduce greenhouse gas emissions by between 40 and 70 percent.

Larger trees and higher valued materials, such as sawtimber, are not likely to be used for energy. They are simply too valuable for uses such as structural building material, furniture, high end plywood, and veneer. In reality, new markets for biomass energy can help supplement declining markets for low-value, small diameter wood, logging residuals, and the byproducts of manufacturing. In many parts of the country, wood energy can in turn help to reduce the risks of catastrophic wildfire and provide incentives for forest management needed to address the increased risks of insects and disease.

A great deal is at stake. The nation's forests provide us with many services. They filter the air we breathe, they provide millions of Americans with clean drinking water, they provide habitat and recreation opportunities and they offset about 13 percent of U.S. greenhouse gas emissions each year. Yet many of those services are at risk, in part due to the challenges of a changing climate: increased exposure to pests, diseases, and wildfire. Over the next few decades holding policies constant, carbon sequestration rates in our nation's forests are expected to slow, mainly due to a loss of area principally to development.

Generating clean and renewable energy from biomass is an important and economic tool in our toolkit to address those challenges. Markets work. Increasing forest productivity and health makes them more valuable and less susceptible to conversion to other uses. Vibrant markets for wood materials raise the value of forest lands and encourage investment,

regrowth and expansion. Using biomass for energy helps reduce greenhouse gas emissions by displacing fossil energy sources.

A healthy, productive, well-managed forest has high value, not just to the public and to the environment, but to the owner. Shaping policies that recognize the real benefits of biomass and that provide incentives for continued performance improvements is a challenge, but the economic and environmental benefits that will be realized make this worth the effort.

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## **DEC Proposes State Wildlife Action Plan**

The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) has proposed a ten-year plan to target conservation actions for species in greatest need of protection, as well as their habitats.

Known informally as SWAP (State Wildlife Action Plan), the proposed plan is now available for public comment through Friday, July 17th. You can review the draft plan and submit comments by email. Web address:

<http://www.dec.ny.gov/animals/7179.html>

## **Steering Committee**

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**Next Meeting** – July 14, 6:30 p.m. Colonie Library

\*Director – member of the NYFOA state board of directors

## Capital District Chapter 2015 Chapter Events

**What:** Game of Logging  
**When:** Saturday July 16 & 17, 2015  
**Where:** Hoyt Property  
Dyken Pond Road  
Cropseyville, NY 12052

There will be two days of Game of Logging Training on the Rensselaer Plateau, July 16 and 17. Participants will learn how to fell trees safely using a chainsaw and wedges. Both of these classes will be held at the Hoyt property which is near the Dyken Pond Environmental Center in Rensselaer County. The property has timber stand improvement work going on and marked trees. Both of these classes are jointly co-sponsored by the Rensselaer Plateau Alliance and CDC-NYFOA. For more information contact Lisa Hoyt at (518) 658-2055

**What:** Capital District Chapter Picnic  
**When:** Sunday, July 26, 2015 11:30 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.  
**Where:** John Boyd Thacher State Park, Glen Doone picnic shelter

Our annual chapter picnic is being held at the Glen Doone shelter. The site has spectacular views of the capital district from the Helderberg escarpment. The BBQ chicken will be served around 12:30 or so. Please bring a dish of your favorite picnic accompaniment to share with others. The cost: \$6 per adult which includes the park admission, a BBQ chicken half, drinks and “dinnerware”. Take a hike on one of the many trails, or challenge someone in pitching horseshoes. This is a great place to relax on a hot summer afternoon.

**What:** Keleher Preserve Woods Walk  
**When:** Sunday, August 9, 2015 10:00 a.m. – noon  
**Where:** Keleher Preserve, Gulf Road, Clarksville.

Join us for a woodland walk in a Mohawk Hudson Land Conservancy nature preserve with views towards Albany along the trail. The property is at the top of Wolf Hill (1636 feet) and along the Helderberg Escarpment. Steep slopes alternate with relatively flat terraces. We'll walk a trail about two miles in two hours. For more information contact Jim Beil at (518) 542-5800

**What:** A Walk in a New York Woodland  
**When:** Saturday, August 15, 2015 10:30 a.m. – noon  
**Where:** Agroforestry Resource Center, Acra

New York has a long history with and dependence on its diverse and productive forests. The health, vigor, and utility of the next generation of New York's forests, depends on the understanding, willingness and ability of owners, and managers to restore adequate conditions that allow for the regeneration of private woodlands. Come for a woods walk in the beautiful Siuslaw Model Forest with Marilyn Wyman, Extension Educator, to learn how good forest stewardship can help address some of these issues, and help ensure healthy productive forests in the future. You will also learn about effective ways to prevent erosion on trails, see our mushroom laying yard, explore a timber stand improvement harvest and much more. This program is supported in part through funding from the Robert H. Wentorf Foundation.

Registration required. To register online [https://reg.cce.cornell.edu/restorewoodlands\\_210](https://reg.cce.cornell.edu/restorewoodlands_210) or call 518-622-9820 x0 Note: deadline August 13<sup>th</sup>

**What:** Grafton Tree Farm Tour  
**When:** Saturday August 29, 2015 9:30 a.m. - noon  
**Where:** Grafton Tree Farm  
99 Old Road  
Cropseyville, NY 12052

This eighty acre woodlot has been a Tree Farm since 1980. During this woods walk you'll see mixed hardwoods that are being managed as a long term investment. We'll discuss the Tree Farm Program, the Forest Tax Law, and financial aspects of a woodlot investment. Note: Access to the property is from an unimproved road 1/3 mile from the highway. A four wheel drive and/or a high clearance vehicle such as a truck or SUV is advisable. Parking space is limited so it is necessary to pre-register. Contact Carl Wiedemann at (518) 895-1028

**What:** Tour of Hudson River Hardwoods  
**When:** Saturday, October 10, 2015 at 10:00 am. (Oct 17<sup>th</sup> rain date)  
**Where:** Hudson River Hardwoods, 1339 CR 23B, Leeds NY 12451

This will be an opportunity to learn about the lumber that is produced from logs, which relates to how logs are graded and priced. Jason Post, owner of Hudson River Hardwoods will show us how tree length logs are initially processed to get the most value and utilization from each. For further information contact Jason Post at (518) 577-4101.

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# Test Your Little Grey Cells



1. Johnny's mother had three children. The first child was named April. The second child was named May. What was the third child's name?  
Answer: Johnny of course
2. There is a clerk at the butcher shop, he is five feet ten inches tall and he wears size 13 sneakers. What does he weigh?  
Answer: Meat.
3. Before Mt. Everest was discovered, what was the highest mountain in the world?  
Answer: Mt. Everest ; it just wasn't discovered yet. [You're not very good at this are you?]
4. How much dirt is there in a hole that measures two feet by three feet by four feet?  
Answer: There is no dirt in a hole.
5. What word in the English language is always spelled incorrectly?  
Answer: Incorrectly
6. Billy was born on December 28th, yet his birthday is always in the summer. How is this possible?  
Answer: Billy lives in the Southern Hemisphere
7. In California, you cannot take a picture of a man with a wooden leg. Why not?  
Answer: You can't take pictures with a wooden leg. You need a camera to take pictures.
8. What was the President's name in 1975?  
Answer: Same as is it now - Barack Obama (Oh, come on)
9. If you were running a race, and you passed the person in 2nd place, what place would you be in now?  
Answer: You would be in 2nd. Well, you passed the person in second place, not first.
10. Which is correct to say, "The yolk of the egg are white" or "The yolk of the egg is white"?  
Answer: Neither, the yolk of the egg is yellow [Duh!]
11. If a farmer has 5 haystacks in one field and 4 haystacks in the other field, how many haystacks would he have if he combined them all in another field?  
Answer: One. If he combines all of his haystacks, they all become one big one.

# **Join NYFOA**

## **Help Support Sustainable Forestry**

The New York Forest Owners Association is a not-for-profit organization established to encourage sustainable forestry practices and sound management of privately owned woodlands. Members include woodland owners and all others who care about the future of New York's trees and forests. Please consider joining because your support helps make a difference. Regular annual dues are just \$45.00 for an individual or family.

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

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