

New York Forest Owners Association Capital District Chapter Newsletter

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Message from the Chair



How fortunate we are! The mild winter gave us a chance to work on a lot of our outdoor projects, and was especially a help for those affected by Hurricane Irene. Hopefully the early bud openings and blossoms won't be seriously affected by the cold spells that are sure to come. One casualty was the just-blossomed Magnolia trees that turned brown after a night with the temperatures in the mid-twenties.

Our Chapter has been busy this quarter. We had our Holiday Gathering on January 21st, which was highlighted by a great program given by Kimberley Corwin, an ecologist with a specialty in birds.

On March 13th, several of our Chapter members participated in "Forest Awareness Day" at the Legislative Building in Albany. FAD is a day when the "Council of Forest Resource Organizations" (an affiliation of 15 like-minded organizations) meet in small groups with State Legislators and Senators. This year's issues were Property Taxation, Wood Energy, and Invasive Species. The idea is to keep the lawmakers informed about our issues and the importance of considering them in upcoming bills they are considering. Marilyn Wyman set up our NYFOA display, and as usual, led several visits to the Legislators.

Thanks to Hans Kappel, we had our NYFOA booth in a good location at the Saratoga Woodworkers Showcase on March 31st and April 1st. The booth was manned by Phil Walton, Bob Sheedy, Renee Bouplon and Todd Rollend.

There are some great events planned for the next quarter, as you will read in this Newsletter. The more that participate in these events, the more successful our Chapter will be. There is so much to learn.

Jim Balich

Chapter News

The annual meeting of the Forest Owners Association is held in Syracuse each year. Several awards are presented at this meeting. This year the state association recognized two of our chapter members for their many years of service – Hans and Joan Kappel of Altamont.



Phil Walton presents NYFOA's 2011 outstanding service award to Hans and Joan Kappel

Congratulations also go to **Bob Sheedy- winner of the 2011 CDC Chapter Service Award!** Bob is from Colonie in Albany County and has been a member of NYFOA for 15 years. He has been on the Steering Committee for 5 years, serving as Secretary for 2 years. Bob organizes the volunteers for our NYFOA display at the Schaghticoke Fair, helps staff the display at the Northeastern Woodworkers Showcase in Saratoga Springs, and is a regular supporter of the Chapter events.

2012 Winter Potluck Dinner and Holiday Gathering

On January 21st the CDC held its winter potluck supper at the Bethany Church in Menands, NY. Our hosts, Ron & Peggy Pedersen, did their usual fine job. Tables were placed and set and the dishes got cleaned in rapid fashion. Over 40 members and friends



Ron & Peggy Pedersen

attended. We even had the Darr's from Rushford, Minnesota. They were the furthest from home! The meal was potluck and we lucked out again with all the fixings just magically appearing without any preplanning on what to dish to bring. It is a good gathering overall and one looked forward to each winter.

CDC officers were elected without any conflict. Jim Bulich is Chair, Vice-Chair is Richard Gibbs, Treasurer is Phil Walton and Secretary is Jim Beil. It is amazing how we never seem to have a contested officer slate, thanks to the arm twisting of Jim House.

We had a marvelous speaker from the Endangered Species Unit at the Dept. of Environmental Conservation in Albany, Kim Corwin. She crafted a talk and power point presentation about her 12-month work on the Gulf oil spill cleanup in Louisiana. She was one of many biologists responsible for protecting the beach, wetlands, plants and animals from damage due to the cleaning efforts. The cleanup crews were very efficient and sometimes overzealous. That's where Kim came on the scene. All vehicle and foot paths had to be laid out and strictly adhered to. Kim said the beaches are now cleaner than before the oil rig explosion. Sometimes the best tact to take was leaving the oil in place in the marshlands and letting time, sunlight and air degrade it. More damage would have been done to the grasses to have had the stuff raked out and carted away. Much was learned in this still ongoing effort and will be used on future beach/marsh efforts around the world.

Kim also coauthored the last update of the "NYS Breeding Bird Atlas" compiled every decade. If you missed this version another will be done in 8 years. Her general conclusion is most birds benefit from habitat changes due to weather or logging. Some species are declining over time but this is due to many factors, while others are increasing. In NYS some shrub birds are

declining and the mature forest birds seem to be increasing, again for many different reasons.



Holiday Gathering dinner

Funds for the CDC are raised by an auction run by Phyllis House. All items are donated by attendees. Gifts ranged from gardening books, wooden toys, maple syrup, scotch and even a bluebird nesting box (which by the way went to Minnesota).



Audrey Kennison holding her son Brian Jr. - the youngest attendee!

Our thoughts are with those who couldn't attend and we all look forward to next year.

Landis Arboretum Walk

NYFOA members have been invited to walk the native plant trail with Ed Miller May 19 and 20 at 2PM at the Landis Arboretum, Route 20, Esperance, N.Y. Ed Miller is volunteer curator of the native plant collection. The trail features a collection of trees and shrubs that Ed has planted and nurtured for many years. More than 200 species are represented, including tupelo, red bud, cucumber magnolia, and persimmon. Some northern species like bog birch and balsam poplar are doing well too. Species are arranged in compact family groups and clearly labeled to make the collection a "living field guide". .

The walk is being held in conjunction with the arboretum's annual spring plant sale which starts at 10 a.m. both days. Both native species and selected horticultural varieties will be available for sale.



Ed Miller at Landis Arboretum

Rensselaer Plateau Walk

The Rensselaer Plateau Alliance is hosting a woods walk on Sunday, April 22, 2012, Earth Day 2012 - at Zion's Church's Earth Day Celebration. (741 Taborton Road, Sand Lake, New York 12153).

Master Forest Owner Walter Kirsch will be leading a woods walk starting at 1:15pm. Topics will include:

- What do we want from our forest?
- What should we do to our forest?
- What trees are valuable for dollars and esthetically?
- What improvements can be made to increase the value and for wildlife habitat.
- Why cut, best procedures to follow?
- Plant and insect invasive's - what's next?

The Chapter Welcomes The Following New Members:

Michael Finn Greenwood Lake, NY

Ashley Matthews Bainbridge Island, Wa

2012 WOODSWALKS & EVENTS

Sunday April 22nd - Rensselaer County

1:15 p.m. meet at 741 Taborton Road, Sand Lake for a woodswalk led by Walter Kirsch of the Rensselaer Plateau Alliance.

Saturday & Sunday May 19-20th Schoharie County

10 a.m. each day meet at Landis Arboretum at 174 Lape Road in Esperance for a walk through the native plants collection led by Ed Miller volunteer curator for the arboretum.

Saturday June 2nd - Albany County

11:00 a.m. meet at Five Rivers Education Center, 56 Game Farm Road in Delmar for a woodswalk led by forester/naturalist John Lawrence. This will include an opportunity to see a magnificent stand of old red oak and hemlock which has remained undisturbed for more than fifty years.



Saturday June 16th - Rensselaer County

2:00 p.m. meet at 231 Brainard Road, Averill Park at the property of Ken James to see the results of his work on American chestnut restoration. From the west take rte 43 to West Stephentown. Turn right on South Road (CR 23) to the first 4-way intersection and turn left on Brainard Road. Continue to the end - #231.



Saturday June 23rd - Schoharie County

10 a.m. meet at the library at Landis Arboretum, 174 Lape Road, Esperance for a four hour introduction to woodlot management led by Carl Wiedemann & Tom Wolfe. Woodlot owners will learn how to double the value of annual growth, reduce taxes by as much as 80%, battle current threats to woodlots, and the five most important things to do next. Please bring a brown bag lunch and dress for the weather. Note: there is a \$35 fee to participate in this program.

Saturday July 14th - Rensselaer County

12:00 noon meet at Gibbs property, 287 Hidley Road, Wynantskill, NY. Mike Birmingham will lead a walk through the woodlot and lead a discussion of forest health including strategies that woodland owners can use to address threats from insects, diseases, and invasive species.



Sunday July 29th - Albany County

11:00 a.m. meet at Glen Doone Picnic Area, in Thacher Park for our annual picnic. Bring a dish to pass and enjoy barbecued chicken. This is an opportunity to enjoy good food and fellowship in an outstanding natural setting.

Sunday September 16th Greene County

2:00 p.m. at Wyman Tree Farm in Huntersland, Middleburgh, NY. View a Timber Stand Improvement (TSI) harvest on the Wyman's Tree Farm that occurred last summer. see a White Pine with a diameter of over 18 feet, and explore the shiitake production project the Wyman's are doing, which utilize various small diameter hard wood trees.

Why Trees Matter

By Jim Robbins

Trees are on the front lines of our changing climate. And when the oldest trees in the world suddenly start dying, it's time to pay attention.

North America's ancient alpine bristlecone forests are falling victim to a voracious beetle and an Asian fungus. In Texas, a prolonged drought killed more than five million urban shade trees last year and an additional half-billion trees in parks and forests. In the Amazon, two severe droughts have killed billions more.

The common factor has been hotter, drier weather.

We have underestimated the importance of trees. They are not merely pleasant sources of shade but a potentially major answer to some of our most pressing environmental problems. We take them for granted, but they are a near miracle. In a bit of natural alchemy called photosynthesis, for example, trees turn one of the seemingly most insubstantial things of all — sunlight — into food for insects, wildlife and people, and use it to create shade, beauty and wood for fuel, furniture and homes.



For all of that, the unbroken forest that once covered much of the continent is now shot through with holes.

Humans have cut down the biggest and best trees and left the runts behind. What does that mean for the genetic fitness of our forests? No one knows for sure, for trees and forests are poorly understood on almost all levels. "It's embarrassing how little we know," one eminent redwood researcher told me.

What we do know, however, suggests that what trees do is essential though often not obvious. Decades ago, Katsuhiko Matsunaga, a marine chemist at Hokkaido University in Japan, discovered that when tree leaves decompose, they leach acids into the ocean that help fertilize plankton. When plankton thrive, so does the rest of the food chain. In a campaign called "Forests Are Lovers of the Sea", fishermen have replanted forests along coasts and rivers to bring back fish and oyster stocks. And they have returned.

Trees are nature's water filters, capable of cleaning up the most toxic wastes, including explosives, solvents and organic wastes, largely through a dense community of microbes around the tree's roots that clean water in exchange for nutrients, a process known as phytoremediation. Tree leaves also filter air pollution. A 2008 study by researchers at Columbia University found that more trees in urban neighborhoods correlate with a lower incidence of asthma.

In Japan, researchers have long studied what they call "forest bathing." A walk in the woods, they say, reduces the level of stress chemicals in the body and increases natural killer cells in the immune system, which fight tumors and viruses. Studies in inner cities show that anxiety, depression and even crime are lower in a landscaped environment.

Trees also release vast clouds of beneficial chemicals. On a large scale, some of these aerosols appear to help regulate the climate; others are anti-bacterial, anti-fungal and anti-viral. We need to learn much more about the role these chemicals play in nature. One of these substances, taxane, from the Pacific yew tree, has become a powerful treatment for breast and other cancers. Aspirin's active ingredient comes from willows.

Trees are greatly underutilized as an eco-technology. "Working trees" could absorb some of the excess phosphorus and nitrogen that run off farm fields and help heal the dead zone in the Gulf of Mexico. In Africa, millions of acres of parched land have been reclaimed through strategic tree growth.

Trees are also the planet's heat shield. They keep the concrete and asphalt of cities and suburbs 10 or more degrees cooler and protect our skin from the sun's harsh UV rays. The Texas Department of Forestry has estimated that the die-off of shade trees will cost Texans hundreds of millions of dollars more for air-conditioning. Trees, of course, sequester carbon dioxide, a greenhouse gas that makes the planet warmer. A study by the Carnegie Institution for Science also found that water vapor from forests lowers ambient temperatures.



A big question is, which trees should we be planting? Ten years ago, I met a shade tree farmer named David Milarch, a co-founder of the Champion Tree Project who has been cloning some of the world's oldest and largest trees to protect their genetics, from California redwoods to the oaks of Ireland. "These are the supertrees, and they have stood the test of time," he says.

Science doesn't know if these genes will be important on a warmer planet, but an old proverb seems apt. "When is the best time to plant a tree?" The answer: "Twenty years ago. The second-best time? Today."

"Why Trees Matter" appeared in the April 12, 2012 New York Times. Jim Robbins is the author of the forthcoming book "The Man Who Planted Trees."

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Note: Any chapter member is welcome to join the steering committee. We need your ideas and extra help. Meetings are held every three months at the Colonie Town Library.

CDC Steering Committee Meetings – 6:30 p.m.

January 10th
April 10th
July 10th
October 9th

Test Your Wildlife Knowledge ...

Mystery Critter

This mystery should be an easy identification for all ice fishermen – and ice fisherwomen!

According to legend, this unusual species of trout was first encountered by settlers during the seventeenth century. One wrote home remarking about the abundance of "furried animals and fish" in the new land. Asked to provide more information about the furried fish, he duly sent home a well salted and dried example. Today specimens mounted as trophies can occasionally be found hanging on restaurant walls in the Catskills and Adirondacks.

What is it?



Answer:

Fur-bearing trout

P.S. - Skinned fur-bearing trout makes a nice waterproof coat. Smells real fishy though.



FOUNDED 1963