



## NEW YORK FOREST OWNERS ASSOCIATION

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### **Master Forest Owner Program Director Honored with Heiberg Award**

WATKINS GLEN - Gary Goff, director of the Master Forest Owner program of Cornell Cooperative Extension, has been presented the Heiberg Memorial Award for 2008 by the New York Forest Owners Association.

Goff led the design of the program 18 years ago, based on existing programs in Connecticut and Massachusetts, and continues to serve as its director. He has been with Cornell Cooperative Extension since 1980, with areas of expertise in forest management, silviculture, wildlife habitat enhancement and Extension education.

"I was surprised and honored and grateful," Goff said about receiving the prestigious award at the New York Forest Owners Association annual meeting held February 23 in Syracuse.

The Heiberg Award recognizes outstanding contributions to forestry and conservation in New York. It is named in memory of Svend O. Heiberg, a world-renowned professor at SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry and one of the original founders of the New York Forest Owners Association in 1962.

The Master Forest Owner, MFO, program trains private individuals in forest stewardship, complementing their own experiences as forest owners. These volunteers then work with other landowners to discuss forestry issues and management objectives. They are not foresters, but they know who to recommend and where to find information, Goff said.

In New York, the program "is a perfect blend of focus on wildlife and forestry," Goff said.

Goff credited the Forest Owners Association for making the MFO program a "powerful and hugely successful" effort in good forest stewardship. The Association's most important support is encouraging its members to become MFOs, Goff said.

The Association's involvement goes back to the beginning of the MFO program and then-Association President John Marchant.

"He prompted me to put together a committee and design the program," Goff said. "He was the sparkplug behind the initiation of the program."

Additional sponsors of the MFO program are the USDA Forest Service State and Private Forestry, the Ruffed Grouse Society, the Renewable Resources Extension Program, and the Robert H. Wentorf Foundation Inc., in cooperation with the Department of Environmental Conservation Division of Lands and Forests and Cornell Cooperative Extension.

The goals of the New York Forest Owners Association include the long-term sustainability of New York's 18.5 million acres of forest land and education of landowners and others as to the need for and benefits of responsible forest management. The Association has more than 2,000 members in ten chapters throughout the state. More information about the Association is available at its website [www.nyfoa.org](http://www.nyfoa.org).

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