



NYFOA

New York Forest Owners Association

SOUTHEASTERN ADIRONDACK

The Overstory

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WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Peter Bain, Riparius, NY
Lynne/John Delskey, Caroga Lake
Winona Hathway/Scott Eastman,
Salem, NY
David Holcomb, Hadley, NY
Scott Perkinson, Greenwich, NY

ADIRONDACK STUMPAGE PRICE REPORT

New York State Department of
Environmental Conservation
www.dec.ny.gov/lands/5259.html

Forget About Reforestation

Paul Hetzler, ISA Certified Arborist

“Squirrels have been criticized for hiding nuts in various places for future use and then forgetting the places. Well, squirrels do not bother with minor details like that. They have other things on their mind, such as hiding more nuts where they can’t find them.”

Unfortunately, that juicy passage was penned in 1949 by Will Cuppy in his book *How to Attract a Wombat*. I say unfortunately because I wanted to write it first, but was unable to get born in time. The tradeoff, which is that I got to be a lot younger than him, probably worked out for the best anyway.

Before learning stuff like “facts” about squirrels, it made me feel smug to think that their attention span was even worse than mine. Popular wisdom used to hold that the fluffy-tailed rodents spent half their lives burying nuts, only to forget about most of them a few minutes later. I figured that was why they generally seemed frantic; always thinking they hadn’t stored any food yet.

The great thing about the whole affair is that tons of butternuts, oaks, hickories and walnuts get planted each fall, mostly in flower boxes, but some in actual forests where they can grow to maturity. As a kid I would see untold numbers of squirrels in parks, on college campuses and around dumpsters, but few in the woods. The latter, I assumed, were lost, or in transit to a day-old bakery outlet.

Bing images



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Forestry is for the Birds....Literally.

By Craig Vollmer, NYFOA Executive Director

On June 8th, forty forest owners gathered together in Speculator for a woods walk hosted by the Southern Adirondack Chapter of NYFOA and The Audubon Society on the Kunjamuk Property owned and managed by Lyme Adirondack Forest Company. The 3,300 acre Kunjamuk Young Forest Demonstration Project, which is open to the public for recreation, has been an ongoing collaborative management effort between Lyme and Audubon for the last 10 years. One of the goals of this project is to demonstrate how timber harvesting is a critical tool to create important and much needed bird and wildlife habitat; and how the goals of sustainable timber management and habitat management are not mutually exclusive.

The habitat management work consists of a series of patch regeneration cuts ranging from 1 to 8 acres in size varying in shape spread across the acreage. A certain number of cuts are to be made each year with the plan to harvest 375 acres like this over a ten-year period. This rotation of harvesting over time will develop a mosaic of forest in various stages of development catering to a wide range of habitat needs for birds and other wildlife.

The attendees had the opportunity to visit parts of the property that had not been harvested recently to get an idea of the “before” harvest uncut structure and condition of the forest, and then went to look at a cut that had been made more recently and one that was a few years old. The response of dense lush young tree growth was staggering, showing how these cuts can successfully establish young forest that is critical nesting habitat for certain bird species that is lacking and putting their populations at risk; species such as wood thrush, American woodcock, black-throated blue, Canada warbler, and chestnut-sided warbler.



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Please take a moment and think about receiving your SAC newsletter the “Overstory” electronically. Send an email to edwardsk922@gmail.com indicating this choice and I will remove you from the postal mailing list and add you to our “going green” email list. Your trees will thank you!

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So it came as a surprise to learn gray squirrels are native to temperate hardwood forests, at home in large unbroken tracts of woods. In fact, squirrels are critical to the survival of many nut-bearing trees. Walnuts, acorns and hickory nuts, which do not tend to waft on the breeze so well, and which soon dry out and degrade on the ground, need someone to cart them off and plant them in the soil.

The irony is that while gray squirrels can be so numerous in the human domain that they become pests, they are disappearing from the forests that depend on them for regeneration. The reason is that most woodlands today are patchwork. In a shocking failure of the free market, it seems no one is making large contiguous tracts of forested land any more, even though they're increasingly rare.

It's hard to criticize agriculture, especially if you eat on a regular basis, but clearing land to grow food has fragmented our woods. One problem with breaking up forest land is that animals may need more than just a piece of it at a time.

Gray squirrels have large, shared territories with no real borders. Although they are great at things like tree planting and eating the faces off Halloween pumpkins, they're not so good at running across fields to the next patch of trees. Well the running works OK, but not the looking-out for predators. Gray squirrels evolved in a world where hiding places grew on trees. As a result, predation was low. But since the time they have been forced to hike out in the open, hawks, coyotes and foxes have taken a bite out of wild squirrel populations.

Red squirrels, however, are moving into habitats once occupied by gray squirrels. It seems logical to think that an army of red, fluffy nut-planters would be just as good at propagating an oak-hickory forest as the gray, fluffy sort were. Not so. The reds, which evolved among conifers, are accustomed to stashing pine, spruce and fir cones in hollow trees or right out in the open. When they encountered acorns and nuts, they carried on with this tradition. In the open-air caches of the red squirrels, tree nuts desiccate and become non-viable. Nothing gets planted. Also, red squirrels have smaller, discrete territories they do not share, so they're not as apt as the grays to gallivant over to a nearby block of woods, and thus they avoid those pesky carnivores. In this way they're better adapted to a fragmented forest than the grays are.

Getting back to forgetfulness, science has polished up the reputation of gray squirrels by observing them. Evidently no one thought of doing this novel procedure until 1990. That's when Lucia F. Jacobs and Emily R. Lyman of Princeton University's Biology department set up a series of nut-caching experiments with gray squirrels. And hopefully a few interns as well. Their impressive article was published in the *Journal of Animal Behavior* in 1991, and is readily available online in case anyone has an attention span longer than a squirrel.

I should mention that gray squirrels are considered "scatter hoarders," stashing nuts and acorns all over the place. They tend to dig them up and rebury them as many as five times prior to winter, possibly to confound greedy neighbors or pilfering jays, or because of anxiety. Each successive re-cache takes them farther and farther from the parent tree, which is good in terms of forest ecology.

Jacob and Lyons concluded that even after waiting 12 days, gray squirrels quickly located about 2/3 of the nuts they buried, but that they also exhumed a few that weren't theirs. However, each squirrel managed to end with at least 90% of the original number provided by researchers. This shows that memory is the primary means of locating cached tree nuts. And that while they don't plant as many trees as we once thought, they make up for it by planting each one many times.

Paul Hetzler has been an ISA-Certified Arborist since 1996, and is a member of ISA-Ontario, the Canadian Institute of Forestry, and the Society of American Foresters. His book "Shady Characters: Plant Vampires, Caterpillar Soup, Leprechaun Trees and Other Hilarities of the Natural World," is available on amazon.com.

Conserving Crandall Park

Elizabeth Little Hogan, Crandall Park Beautification Committee

Crandall Park, in the City of Glens Falls, is a great resource which is heavily used throughout the year. There are running and walking trails, disc golf, festival spaces, gardens, athletic fields, tennis, pickleball and basketball courts, playground equipment, a splash pad, and much more. In December of 2023 the Crandall Park Beautification Committee (CPBC) teamed up with the Warren County Soil and Water Conservation District (District) with a site visit to evaluate the wooded portion of the park and discuss potential management options.

District staff noted the prevalence of woody invasive species, with several sections of the woods nearly having 100% lower canopy cover of winged euonymus/burning bush. Along with that aggressive and well-established invasive plant, there was Oriental Bittersweet, honeysuckle, Japanese barberry, and a others noted. These species were having a significant negative impact on regeneration of the site, which historically had Eastern White and Pitch Pine and northern hardwood species. The CPBC and District planned to address a section of invasive species from the wooded areas of the park, which was not wholly enveloped by these species. As a precursor to the project, volunteers mapped 64 acres of the park's woods where thousands of burning bush and oriental bitter-sweet plants were identified.

Burning Bush while an attractive plant in fall, can take over habitats and crowd out native species. Deer will consume the young conifers and deciduous trees, preventing a natural repopulation of the forest and they generally leave the invasive species untouched. The shade cast by the blanket of Burning Bush prevents new trees and shrubs from growing. The second plant of concern was Oriental Bittersweet. Bittersweet is an aggressive plant that grows up established trees and chokes their growth while weighing down their crown thus making them more susceptible to falling due to wind. Both plants can spread to new areas by birds that eat their seeds.



Burning Bush—Bing images

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The great news is that these kind of habitat practices can be scaled and implemented on smaller ownerships like those of NYFOA members, making any practices you perform on your property to encourage young forest and important contribution to the greater landscape. If you would like to explore these practices further, Audubon has a great publication that can help – Managing Forests for Birds, A Landowner’s Guide. www.ny.audubon.org.

Everyone who attended was really engaged, enjoyed learning about these practices, and enjoyed the opportunity to network with other forest owners. NYFOA will be hosting more of these programs with Audubon, so if you couldn’t make this one, you will get a chance another time.

Thanks to Suzanne Treyger, Audubon Senior Program Manager and NYFOA Board Member, and Eric Ross Lyme Adirondack Forest General Manager for leading the tour of Kunjamuk. A special thanks to the Audubon Society for providing grant funding to NYFOA to cover the expenses for this program.



Did you know



Tree rings can predict climate change

Dating a tree by studying its rings is called Dendrochronology. However, a tree’s rings don’t only reveal its age, they can also indicate the occurrence of natural disasters such as a volcanic eruption or a drought event. In the years of good growth, characterized by a healthy supply of resources, the ring is thick. It is thin when resources are scarce in the ecosystem. A [study by Somaru Ram](#) from the Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology showed that the increasing heat index and temperature in Sikkim, India has had an adverse effect on tree growth due to high potential evapotranspiration—the rate at which plants lose water through their leaves. Such studies help scientists understand the impact of climate change.

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During New York’s Invasive Species Awareness Week in early June, over 800 invasive plants from 5 acres of the woodlot, utilizing 100 volunteer hours (60 participants) was spent working in this area. The volunteers were led by the CPBC and the District, with the support and assistance of the Glens Falls Mayoral office and Department of Public



Works. The harvest numbers suggest that the initial mapping underestimated the true number of invasives. While Burning Bush and Oriental Bittersweet were the two primary species focused on, Japanese barberry, Tartarian honeysuckle and Norway Maples were also removed. Ongoing monitoring by the Beautification Committee will track the effectiveness of the removal, and another smaller harvest effort is planned for this August. The partners anticipate making this a yearly event and look forward to seeing some level of natural regeneration of the woods for the future. [For more information on Crandall Park go to https://crandallpark.com/.](https://crandallpark.com/)

Oriental Bittersweet—Bing images

Coming Events....

Washington County Fair 2024

August 19th thru 25th

If you would like to schedule a date and time to work contact Mary Marchewka by email: DoughHaven-Farm@gmail.com or by phone: 518-692-9615.

You can also contact Kristie Edwards: edwardsk922@gmail.com to schedule a time. Admission will be free.

We will schedule 3 hour time blocks but the hours are flexible.

- 11am - 2pm
- 2 pm - 5pm
- 5 pm - 8pm

SAC Annual Picnic

September 28th, 2024

Hosts:Ed and Donna Welch

105 Dankers Road, Johnsbury, NY 12843

Arrive: 9:30 —10: am (refreshments available)

Woodswalk— 10:00 am

Picnic following woodswalk – Hamburgers, hotdogs and beverages, paper products will be provided.

Please bring: A salad or food item to share and lawn chairs

Please RSVP to Kurt Edwards 518-661-5685 or at

edwardsk922@gmail.com by 9/16

Directions: Dankers Road is 2.3 miles down South Johnsbury Road from its intersection with Route 8 in Johnsbury. The house is 1/2 mile down Dankers Road on the left. There are no other houses on the road.

Members Corner....

In April we took our “long awaited trip of a life time” to Hawaii. Although the islands were full of beautiful sights we found ourselves enchanted with the trees of the tropics. The Cook pines were magnificent! But this tree was a special treat! This rainbow eucalyptus tree is one we will always remember. We all look forward to our colors of autumn when the leaves turn into beautiful shades of red, orange and yellow. This tree is an array of color year round.

“It is called the Eucalyptus Deglupta. It is also known as the Mindanao Gum, Rainbow Gum, or Rainbow Eucalyptus and its array of colors are a natural phenomenon. As if hand-painted by the brush of an abstract artist, the trees boast awe-inspiring colors and patterns that must be seen to be believed. “

The bark on the Rainbow Eucalyptus is thinner than what you’d find on most trees. It sheds at various times throughout the year revealing a bright green under-layer which changes color over time. As the combination of air and sunlight react with the bark, the long strips turn from green to shades of red, orange, blue, purple and even pink. Because it sheds intermittently, the trees color’s are in a constant state of change, and will never repeat the same pattern.



Photo and memory shared by Kristie and Kurt Edwards

For more information on the Eucalyptus Deglupta or Rainbow Eucalyptus: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eucalyptus_deglupta

Members corner is available to any SAC member that would like to share something of interest with the other chapter members. Please email Kristie Edwards at edwardsk922@gmail.com with any photos or articles.

Are you interested in hosting a woodswalk?

Do you have a suggestion for a chapter event?

If so please contact Kurt Edwards, event coordinator,

at 411 Beech Street, Mayfield, NY 12117, or at edwardsk922@gmail.com



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ADIRONDACK CHAPTER**

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