



NYFOA
New York Forest Owners Association

FALL 2017

NIAGARA FRONTIER CHAPTER NEWSLETTER

When the Buffalo Roam

When NFC member Fred Thurnherr had the opportunity to spend a few months in Yellowstone National Park, he jumped at the chance of a lifetime. Here is Fred's story.

We all have our favorite places and for me, 50 years ago on a family camping trip, that place became Yellowstone National Park. From the wildlife, to the geology, to the scenery, there is no other place in the world like Yellowstone. Last year when I was in the Park for the 13th time, as always with time limiting what I was able to do and see, I decided I **HAD** to experience a full season in Yellowstone to really try to learn the Park.

I was fortunate to be offered a volunteer position with **Yellowstone Forever**: the official philanthropic and educational partner of Yellowstone. YF operates all the bookstores in the Park, the Lamar Buffalo Ranch Campus (as well as another one for educational programs in Gardiner, MT), has public information volunteers throughout the Park and offers dozens of educational programs for youth, teachers and adults on an amazingly wide variety of topics from geology to fly fishing. This year YF will raise approximately 18 million dollars for projects the Park needs.



Luckily, I was around the instructors and other experts on a daily basis and was chosen to assist with many programs on subjects as diverse as Park history, geology, wildlife photography, teacher education and fly fishing. I was also able

to pick the brains of the experts on where to explore during my ample free time.



Much has been written recently about overcrowding and traffic in the National Parks, especially Yellowstone. Frankly, I didn't find the traffic any more onerous than it was when I was a kid. Yeah, when there's a bison standing in the middle of the road the cars back up and people do drive like idiots when they see a bear, but I can't think of a more scenic place to be caught in a traffic jam. Plus, from all the studies I've read, virtually every animal species is doing pretty well. From the road, one experiences only 2% of Yellowstone's 2.2 million acres and that is what 99% of visitors see. Get a ¼ mile off the road and you are in a different Park, free from the crowds and even in 5 months of hikes and fishing expeditions, I barely scratched the surface.

This was one of the best experiences of my life and I can't recommend it highly enough. Many National and State Parks, National Forests, Wildlife Refuges offer volunteer and seasonal employment opportunities. Give it a try. I doubt if you will regret it.

Chairman's Corner

Fall 2017 by Bob Glidden

What a great summer with the woodswalk with an active timber harvest in progress, as well as the family picnic at the Erie County Bureau of Forestry. I was able to pick up a lot of good information as well as meet new members, share thoughts and renew old acquaintances.

Election of Officers was held at the family picnic. Nominations were made and all currently held positions were all voted in, plus 2 additional members were added to the Steering Committee: Wayne Forrest and Dan Ciszak. Welcome Wayne and Dan, we appreciate contributions of ideas from all members! And, I guess you will be seeing me around for a while too!



Shamel Milling donated several items for our raffles along with many coupons. We have several coupons left, let me know if you would like me to pass on to you. They are a great supporter of the NFC, and are located at 9384 Genesee Road in East Concord, if in the area stop in and you will be amazed at the selection of wildlife supplies they have.

With Fall in its prime it is great to get out in your woods and enjoy the beautiful colors as well as finding your favorite spot for deer hunting. Hope all you deer hunters were able to get your radish and turnip plots planted in late August as recommended.



When you get older, the time seems to go by faster and faster not leaving enough of it to get food plots in and trails mowed as was my excuse this year. I did manage to get one of my old food plots roto-tilled for clover planting in 2018. All the trails are trimmed and got my last mowing done this last week.

Hope you all have a successful hunting season, good Thanksgiving and a Merry Christmas and a Happy and Healthy New Year.

Bob

Welcome New Members!

- Joe Wawrzynek—Lockport, NY
- Kristen and Matt Ferguson—Appleton, NY
- Cal Stinson—Lyndonville, NY
- Dan Ciszak—East Concord, NY



NFC Family Picnic and Elections

The Erie County Bureau of Forestry again was our location for our Annual Family Picnic on August 26, 2017. Our agenda included raffles, the Chainsaw Raffle Drawing, election of officers, a great barbecue lunch and an informative woodswalk led by retired county forester Dan Ciszak.



Chainsaw Raffle Winner



The winner of the 2017 Chainsaw Raffle is...
NFC Member Vic Bandinelli!
Congratulations Vic!

Members Corner

Confessions of a Weekend Woodcutter

By Mitch Banas

Our deer camp goes through three or four face cords of firewood a year – at most \$300 worth at local prices (delivered). So why do I cut my own? It certainly isn't to save money. In fact, I have no doubt that at small quantities like that it's actually a money *loser*, once you figure in the cost of the chainsaw (and no forest owner worth his or her salt can have just one chainsaw, right?), saw chains, gas, oil, PPE, and the countless other "incidentals" cutting firewood requires. And that's *before* you even figure in the value of your time. So no, it's not about the money. But then what *is* it about?

It gets you out of the house. Need I say more?

It gets you into the woods. That's something very different from immediately above.

It gets you into *your* woods. Something still different again.

It gives you time alone. Time to think, to observe, to take in your woods without distracting chatter, to figure out how to successfully complete a task bigger than you are and get yourself out of self-created jams using only your own wits and brawn, without anyone else's help – or, depending on who they are, interference.

It divides the labor and provides comradery. Let's face it, not every tree is a one-man job (at least not at my skill level it isn't!). I would even go so far as to say that most trees are more easily tackled by two rather than one (not to mention safety reasons), and that nearly always four hands are better than two. Related, it also helps teach collaborative problem-solving and teamwork, which is especially gratifying when your workforce includes the next crop of forest owners.

It needs to be started anyway. Much of our firewood comes from trees that Mother Nature has decided cannot fall in any direction other than right across one of our trails, and in a really bad year all of it does (and then some). I need to get the chainsaw out to make those roads passable anyway, so why not finish the job? While this alone does not turn an inconveniently-fallen tree from a curse into a blessing, it at least provides a silver lining to what could otherwise be just another chore.

It's "conservative." Why buy a cord of wood while scores are left in the forest to rot? I know there are benefits to the forest itself in that, but it just seems wasteful.

It helps increase the value of remaining timber. We all know that by properly selecting inferior trees for firewood, we are improving the remaining stand – and increasing its value in the process. Who has a problem with that?

It's like money in the bank. Just like the standing timber you've left behind, those stacks of firewood represent dollars you don't have to spend down the road, all while contributing to your self-sufficiency and self-reliance.

You get to play with toys. Like I said, who doesn't need that third chainsaw – or, for that matter, that new tractor to skid the logs you just cut with that third chainsaw?

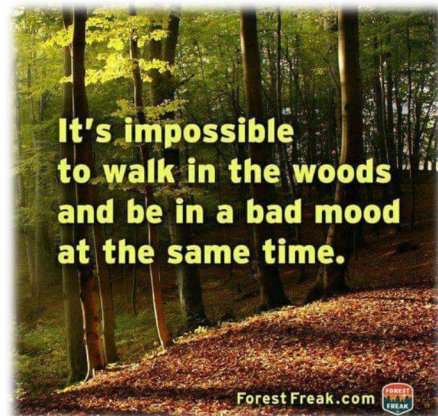
It sounds productive. Who can possibly give you grief about cutting firewood? It sure sounds like work – even when it isn't (see immediately above).

It actually *is* productive. So much of what most of us do on a daily basis results in no tangible, perceptible end product (although maybe that's simply reflective of my own existence). When you fell, limb, buck, and split a tree into stacked cords of firewood, though, you have something to show for it – something you can see, something you can smell, something you can touch, something you can point to and say you've accomplished.

It lets you *know* you've accomplished something. The sore shoulders, the stiff legs, the rapped knuckles, the solid slumber at the end of a long, hard day – those are all good, rewarding, life-affirming things.

It lets you see into the future. Those neat stacks of firewood you have at the end of that long, hard day are a crystal ball of sorts: if you look at them the right way, they give you a small glimpse into next week's fire, next year's deer camp, and, if you've done things right, the next generation's tradition of good forest stewardship.

Those are some of the reasons that cutting firewood is my "guilty pleasure." I'm sure some are debatable and your own list of reasons may be different, and that anyone who cuts firewood for a living on a day-in, day-out basis would argue that I've been standing a little too close to the smoke – and they might well be right. But I take great satisfaction in knowing that it's my smoke, from my wood, from my forest.



Barn Construction—Part 1

By Mark Gallo

Land, many of us become owners of it so we can enjoy its many benefits. It can be a source of income with timber sales, it can be a source of enjoyment for hunting or nature watching, it may be a source of self-sufficiency by providing firewood. Our forbearers saw it as a source of building material. Agricultural practices changed and so did the need for these large barns. Internal members were “in the way” and tie beams were cut out to make way for hay rails, or roofs were lifted from gable to gambrel to make more space for hay.

As industrialization took over larger equipment was available and internal posts became a hindrance to their use. Steel structures have largely replaced large timber frame barns because of their ease of construction and maintenance. Timbers may be used in pole barns, but their size is small and their connection to the property itself is lacking. Timber frame barns were a testament to a way of life, an agrarian way, these early settlers were the first environmental stewards concerned with sustainability of their surroundings. Barns were a sense of pride, something that could be used by the family for generations to come. And they did.

Our collective history is being destroyed, either directly as barns are pushed over to eliminate taxes, or through neglect until the elements reclaim them. Timber frame barns, to use a biological term, are going extinct.

My family had begrudgingly been backed into my quest to save a timber frame barn. After carefully taking down several to salvage enough timbers to put up one, I ran into enough problems with code restrictions and decided to do what was done in the past – start from scratch and harvest timbers from my land to build a barn. We will be making a few concessions – modern tools are allowed – horsepower instead of horses to turn trees into timbers. Ingenuity is crucial as my equipment (and my wife would say my mental capacity) is a bit small for the job at hand. We have a foundation that is 30' x 67'6", so that pretty much sets the parameters. We have been har-

vesting oak, both white and pin, that have already died. Pin oak will only be used inside for main timbers, white oak for flooring and siding.

The architect's plans called for 8" x 14" 30 ft girders. Reality check – that is a BIG log. (See photo)



We cut and dragged all the logs out of the woods, with tractors and a small dozer and lots of blood, sweat, and tears. (OK, not much blood, mostly stolen from us by mosquitoes.) A portable band saw sawmill was used to cut the timbers. Now comes the finish cuts, and then the assembly and raising and closing in. More about that in future issues as the project continues.



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NFC Woodswalk 2017

Wayne and Brenda Forrest Woodswalk, July 29, 2017

Working towards your Goals

In the summer of 2015 Wayne introduced us to his property: **“The land has been owned by the Phillips/Forrest family since 1947. It was operated as a dairy farm, vegetable farm, orchard and sand pit up until about 1972 when the operation shifted from a family run farm to rented farm land. In the 43 years since, the woodlands were left pretty much undisturbed except for unauthorized deer stands and occasional timber trespassing. The 85 acre plot consists of about 50 acres of tillable land and the remainder was either wooded or is reverting back to it.**

The land (Quaker Rd., Hartland, NY) has Eighteen mile creek running through it, a sand pit, numerous red oak at 30”

DBH, a few patriarch red oaks at 37.5” DBH, black walnuts, shag bark hickory, ash, black cherry, beech, multiflora rose (ouch!) orchard remnants, poison ivy, wetlands, cottonwood and wildlife along with a mix of red oak and black walnut. To some extent we could make our way through the understory but the multiflora rose is making its way into this area. We found that cottonwood had taken hold and was consuming the canopy. Finally we made our way to a 3.5 acre area of red oak, beech, ash and shag-bark hickory. The understory here consisted of dead leaves, some trout lily and a small area of beech trees which are sending out suckers. This was by far the healthiest wood-lot on the property.

So the first year has been one of assessment, getting to know the forest and learning how to make the forest the best it can be. I am looking forward to receiving the final forest management plan so I can begin to implement the recommendations.”

With the help of Pat Marren (DEC) and a management plan written by Bruce Robinson, Forestry Consultant, and Legacy Woodland Services, Wayne started implementing his plan. After a very wet spring, Wayne was finally able to start his timber harvest in June 2017. Our highly attended woodswalk on July 29th got to see the results of the harvest underway. Many of us have attended various woodswalks lead by Bruce Robinson, most often a year plus after a harvest, so this was a first to see a harvest while it was underway. Not only did Bruce explain the mechanics of the timber cutting, but also how the areas would be enhanced with the plan. Charley Kesterson, USDA, NRCS Resource Conservationist also attended. After the walk the group ventured down Quaker Rd. to Becker Farms— Becker Brewing Gastro Pub for lunch and a presentation by Charlie on updates to the various programs being offered (Equip and Conservation Stewardship Program).



NFC Woodswalk 2017—cont'd



Downey Woodpecker joining our group!



Bruce Robinson explaining why this was cut and that wasn't!



Legacy Woodland Services



Charlie Kesterson updates us on the Equip and Conservation Stewardship Programs

Photos contributed by Herb Linderman



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More from Yellowstone



Stumpage Report: *Summer 2017*—Latest Report <http://www.dec.ny.gov/lands/5259.html>

Please follow this link to provide you with the current pricing information.

2017—2018 NFC Steering Committee

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