



NYFOA

New York Forest Owners Association

SOUTHEASTERN ADIRONDACK

The Overstory

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Vice-Chair: Brayton Pendell
Secretary: Bill Burke
Treasurer: Mary Marchewka

NEWSLETTER

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Dan Carusone, Queensbury, NY
Moira Goldfab, Adirondack, NY

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

Wormwood

By Paul Hetzler

If you're tired of hearing about new invasive forest pests, I'm right there with you. Seems like they arrive at an ever-increasing pace, and the harm potential ratchets up with each newcomer. At this rate maybe we'll get some wood-boring beetle whose larvae explode inside tree trunks. As distasteful as it may be to learn who's next in the queue, we all realize it's better to know what we're up against.

If there's a bright side to spotted lanternfly, it's that it has an actual bright side – it stands out. At the other end of the Obvious Spectrum is a new and significant threat to forests, Asian earthworms, which have cleverly disguised themselves as earthworms. The fact that we are used to seeing worms in the landscape makes them a challenge to notice, but it is well worth the effort.

The new pests are three related species of earthworms from East Asia, *Amyntas agrestis*, *A. tokioensis*, and *Metaphire hilgendorfi*. While *A. agrestis* was the first to be identified, it has come to light that *A. tokioensis* is the more common. Known variously as Asian jumping worms, snake worms, crazy worms, and probably some choice expletives, these super-sized (20 cm when mature) annelid cousins look very similar to one another. In fact they can only be accurately separated by species through dissection, so I think it's fair to consider them as a group.



Invasive earthworm *Amyntas agrestis*— New York Invasive

SAC Annual Meeting

By Jim Lieberum

Saturday January 20th was a cold and overcast day, quite a contrast to the warm and welcoming room that NYFOA SAC members experienced as they attended the SAC's annual meeting in Ballston Spa in Saratoga County. Approximately 18 attendees met and a range of topics was discussed stemming from the annual meeting and required duties, promotion of NYFOA through multiple events and mailings, through an insightful presentation by NYSDEC forester Rob Ripp.

Chair Bruce Cushing welcomed everyone and began moving through past minutes and then the treasures report. A discussion ensued about potential donations from SAC to several local programs which is a topic that is likely to be spoken about at most meetings of volunteers. Hugh Canham (Legislative Affairs) spoke about Forestry Awareness Day in Albany on March 5th and encouraged anyone interested to reach out to him to get signed up. This is a great way to get the forestry message out to legislators and others in Albany. As the agenda topics were checked off, members continued to provide comments on ways to communicate NYFOA's message more effectively and to encourage more members and participation. Further discussion on what the best way to get the chapter newsletter dispersed with rising costs was talked about. It's difficult to have an approach that casts a wide net to meet what everyone wants, but again cost and technology certainly are aspects that need consideration. Several ideas were discussed and may be tried over the course of this year. Elections were held and congratulations to Chair Bruce Cushing, Vice Chair Brayton Pendell, Secretary Bill Burke and Treasurer Mary Marchewka. Not since the famous Lincoln-Douglas debates was more discussion held prior to an election.....LOL, maybe that is an exaggeration.....

Around noon, we broke for lunch and members did a great job as usual with potluck offerings! Warm entrees were on tap as the outside temperature was around 10 degrees and I think we had the market on slow cookers.. Suffice to say no one went hungry after the main and side options, and the homemade desserts. Having shared meals like this is a nice way to get relax and to know one another. I personally want to get to know whoever brought the blueberry dessert.

After lunch we managed to connect to the new Smart Screen TV for the presentation. DEC Supervising Forester Rob Ripp presented on deer impacts on forest regeneration. This was topical and thoughtful, as Rob discussed forest regeneration and issues that comprise successful regeneration. Instead of focusing just on deer, Rob brought in the consideration of canopy cover.

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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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Asian worms can be identified by the smooth band called a clitellum, which in European earthworms is dark, close to their middle, and thicker than the rest of the body. In these worms it is milky-gray to white, and much closer to the head. It is generally flush with the body as well. Behaviour is another clue: when disturbed they scatter across the ground, snake-like, rather than disappear into the soil. If touched, they thrash wildly and may shed their tail. They feel drier than other worms, and more turgid. A woman who tried to fish with them told me they “exploded” when she put a hook in them. Incidentally she said fish will not touch Asian worms, which speaks to their toxicity.

One issue with Asian worms in the forest is that they have a high reproductive potential, with 2 or sometimes 3 generations per season compared to one for European worms. The latter are hermaphroditic, having both male and female organs, but still needing to find a mate. Invasive Asian worms are parthenogenic, all females who bypass the need to go out on a date, and spew out cocoons teeming with baby female worms. All it takes is one to start an infestation.

As with any recent pest, Asian worms have not been well-studied. Even the modest research which has been done can conflict at times. It is known that adult Asian worms die off in winter, but that their cocoons are cold-hardy. I have read figures which place the soil-temperature cutoff around minus-30, and other references to the limit being below -40. This puts much of southern Canada at risk. And based on research done by Josef Görres at the University of Vermont, cocoons can remain viable in the soil for at least 3 years, analogous to a soil seed bank.



Bing images

Invasive jumping worms damage soil and threaten forests

By end of summer, Asian worm biomass is many times that of other species. This means they eat a lot, primarily on the surface and within the top 2.5 cm of soil. A September 2016 article in Science Daily cites work done by Jiangxiao Qiu, whose graduate research at the University of Wisconsin-Madison found that Asian worms reduced leaf litter in hardwood forests by 95%. I have seen an infested forest in Cortland County in south-central NY State, and can attest that it was almost entirely bare soil.

Not only do Asian worms leave soil bare, they leave it barren. Breaking down detritus incredibly fast leads to a big increase in plant-available nitrogen late in the season, when few plants can use it. Nearly all these nitrates leach out of the soil by spring. The soil also loses its healthy structure, becoming granular, and much more vulnerable to erosion and compaction.

In addition to their huge appetites for organic matter, Asian worms are known to vastly increase ligninbusting enzymes, according to a March 2015 article in Applied Soil Ecology. At this time it is unclear whether the worms secrete the enzyme itself, or a substance which induces white-rot fungi to ramp up production. As a result of this effect, wood breaks down at least 2.5 times faster in the presence of Asian worms. It is also not known what effect this has on tree seeds.

In the face of an Asian worm infestation, other changes in hardwood forest ecosystems occur. European earthworms disappear, although no one yet knows the mechanism by which this happens. Researchers in the USA have documented substantial reductions in juvenile and male salamanders at infested sites, as well as much lower populations of millipedes, and a general drop in invertebrate species richness.

Welcome New Officers....

At the annual meeting SAC members voted on our slate of officers for the coming year. Bruce Cushing and William Burke were re-elected to the offices they held, chairman and secretary respectively. We would like to welcome two new officers to fill vacant positions.

Brayton Pendell, Vice Chairman: Brayton prepared the following bio for us

Forestry has been a passion of mine from an early age. I grew up on nearly two hundred acres of primarily forested land in the town of Crown Point, in Essex County. I spent a majority of my childhood and adolescence exploring the outdoors which included hunting, trapping, riding ATV's and hiking. When I became of age, I started helping my father cut timber. We sold timber for firewood, for pulpwood to International Paper Company, and to various sawmills in New York and Vermont. I loved the outdoors and really enjoyed cutting timber and decided I wanted to pursue a career in forestry. I graduated from Paul Smith's College with an AAS in Forest Technology in 2003 and with a BS in Industrial Forestry Operations in 2005. After graduation I spent a few years in private industry working for a forestry consultant which was an invaluable experience. I moved on from that position and have spent the last 18 years working in a few different roles for the New York State DEC. Most of that time has been spent working for the Saratoga Tree Nursery. Currently I am the Senior Forester at the facility, and I absolutely love every day there. I now live in Glens Falls with my wife Christina, my son Zachary and my daughter Lilah. We still own the property in Crown Point, where the primary use is for recreation and firewood production. I am excited about being part of NYFOA, as this organization has the potential to have huge impacts on forestry all across New York State. I admire the mission of NYFOA and can't wait to meet more members and hear their stories and visit their properties.

Mary Marchewka, Treasurer: Mary prepared the following bio for us

In 1997, I purchased two lots for a total of 53 acres in Easton. I named the property Dough Haven Farm and formed an LLC. I was putting all my dough (money) into the place and thought of it as a haven (getaway).

I have a BA in Biology and wanted to get educated on what I had purchased and how to own a forest. I reached out to NYS DEC to have a forester visit the property. Ron Cadieux came and walked the wood lot, asked what my goals were, explained that the lot had been heavily logged and I needed a management plan to meet my goals. He gave me lots of literature and information and told me to become further educated by joining NYFOA SAC and Tree Farm organizations. He wrote a management plan and I joined the organizations. I became the SAC treasurer, attended meetings, went to many events, met many other private landowners and got to see the results of people managing their woodlots. I worked the NYFOA booths at the fairs and Woodworkers show and continue to do this type of educational outreach with my husband David.

A 3 acre clear cut was performed, along with water bars installed on main trails through a FLEP grant. A portable sawyer was hired on 4 occasions and the resulting pine, aspen & oak lumber was used in building structures on the property.

In 2012, I helped organize the retirement celebratory party of three DEC foresters at the Gideon Putnam. I stepped down from the treasury position shortly after.

In 2016, after many years of hiring foresters to mark for timber stand improvement, TSI work we decided to use the resulting logs not only for firewood and timber but for growing specialty mushrooms. After much education, research and hard work we have approximately 600 logs in production and many Aspen totems. We offer workshops twice a year on farming mushrooms and educating people about Agroforestry techniques. We hold different types of agritourism events at the homestead. More information is on our website at DoughHavenFarm.com

In 2021, David & I took Cornell Master Forest Owner, MFO program and have completed several visits with private landowners sharing what we have learned. Both David & I have taken Games of Logging classes and recommend others take this valuable course.

In November of 2023 I retired from my career with NYS and am very happy to be able to invest more time with the organizations I have benefited from, especially NYFOA.

We are hoping to have our first harvest of timber within the next two years and have a woods walk to demonstrate the results of our more than 25 years of working a management plan.

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These invaders have few predators. Raccoons, opossums, moles, and centipedes find them tasty. Many amphibians feel otherwise. Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources Invasive Species Specialist Bernadette Williams, who essentially broke the whole Asian worm story in the northern US, told me in a 2014 phone interview her team observed a salamander grab an Asian worm, then release it and spend several minutes wiping its mouth on the soil.

I doubt anyone needs convincing that Asian worms need to be taken seriously. Williams put it bluntly: "Their [Asian worm] introduction into our state poses a huge threat to the future of our forests."

Although to-date there is only one confirmed Asian worm infestation in Canada, these pests are literally on our borders with the US States of Vermont, New York, and Michigan, and it's likely many more such sites already exist. Jean-David Moore, a researcher with the Ministère des Forêts, de la Faune et des Parcs in Québec City, believes the forests of southern Canada are vulnerable to Asian worm infestation. For more information, see the article "Exotic Asian pheretimoid earthworms (*Amyntas* spp., *Metaphire* spp.): Potential for colonisation of south-eastern Canada and effects on forest ecosystems" by Moore et al in the journal *Environmental Reviews*, 2018, 26(2): 113-120.

So where to from here? Asian worms are commonly spread through the horticulture trade, both in containerised plants, and especially mulch, which they love. Paw through bulk mulch before purchasing, and maybe think twice about getting fill delivered to your property. Where reforestation is concerned, it is safer to plant bare-root stock than plugs.

Equipment may pose the biggest threat to forest land, so be cautious. Before a logging crew shows up at your place, find out where their last job was. Skidders, forwarders and trucks coming from a known infested site may need to be steam-cleaned to protect your land.

If you're in an unfamiliar woodlot during the summer or fall to mark timber, bid on a sale, or just out for a walk, turn over a log or flat rock. Do the worms dive down, or scoot out in all directions? If the latter, be sure to notify the owners, as well as any crews working on that parcel. Asian worms are most likely to be found at log landings and along skid roads. Clean all dirt and debris off your boots, and preferably disinfect them as well, before getting in the vehicle to return. Worm cocoons are brown spheres about 2 mm. in diameter, and very easy to take home with you. A little prevention goes a long way in protecting our forest resources

A Permanent Resident of Canada, Paul Hetzler lives in Ottawa. He is a member of ISA-Ontario, the Canadian Institute of Forestry, and the Society of American Foresters. Before moving to Canada he was the Natural Resources Educator for Cornell University Extension in northern New York State.

Did you know



Skunks eat honeybees

If you are a beekeeper, you are keenly aware of the danger skunks pose to your hives. Skunks can do a great deal of damage to a hive, killing numerous bees in one meal, and they'll come back for more the next time they get hungry for the taste of bees. Generally, skunks draw bees out of the hive by scratching on the side of it, causing the curious bees to go out and investigate. As they exit the hive, they become easy prey. Skunks do a lot of good things for the ecosystem, but you don't want them eating your bees. You can take measures to deter skunks from invading your hives. <https://www.skedaddlewildlife.com/location/milwaukee/blog/do-skunks-eat-bees/>

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Essentially do you have a problem with regeneration in your woodlot because of deer, shade or a combination (or something else)? We all know that deer hunting and tree cutting can be emotional and challenging discussion points, but these are critical issues that need to be discussed for our future forests. Most woodlot owners have a goal and how they arrive there is up to them, but with the number of private woodlot owners in New York, they need to realize the impact they can have on a micro and macro scale. Most management goals come back to perspective, which is a hard metric for many people to get their arms around. We would like to thank Rob for his time and his informative presentation.

Lastly, Dan Ladd, editor of the New York Outdoor News (<https://www.outdoornews.com/new-york/>) attended the meeting and discussed connecting with the NYS Outdoor Writers Association (<https://nysowa.org/>). He spoke about how communication has changed and the use of social platforms such as Facebook and Instagram are important and necessary to reach people. I agree with that, in particular regard to non-landowners as forestry is something that everyone can be involved with from the center of the Adirondacks, to downtown of Saratoga Springs. Trees are everywhere especially in NYFOA SAC. Thank you to Saratoga CCE for allowing the meeting to be held at their facility, thank you to the past and current SAC board and thank you to the members that were able to make it this year. Mark on your calendars the May 4th woods walk in Ballston Spa. Have a great winter!

Coming Events....

"Keeping Your Forest Healthy"

Saturday May 4th, 2024 10am – 12pm
4H Training Center
556 Middleline Road, Ballston Spa, NY

Join Kristopher Williams from the Capital Region Partnership for Regional Invasive Species Management (CR-PRISM) for a Presentation and Woods Walk on "Keeping Your Forest Healthy" using Score Card created by The Nature Conservancy and Cornell Cooperative Extension System. The program will be broken into two parts one a presentation on sustainability with a focus on invasive species the other a woods walk will use a scorecard to help guide general discussions on basic forestry concepts. Content will include discussions on forest resiliency and practices to control invasive species. Kristopher will also draw on his experience as the Cornell Master Forest Owner Volunteer Regional Director. Facilities are located on the 4H Campus, please be prepared for weather and take tick prevention measures.

Following the woods walk we will gather for lunch, if you plan to stay please bring a bag lunch and beverage.

Please RSVP to Kurt Edwards by April 20th at (518) 661-5685 or by email: edwardsk922@gmail.com

RSVP to Bruce Cushing from April 20th to April 27th via email: nyfoasac.cushing@gmail.com

More Spring Events

May 11th: NYFOA Regional Meeting
 Tupper Lake –save the date
 More information to follow

June 8th: Woods Walk
 Partnering with Audubon
 Kunjamuk Demonstration Forest
 Speculator, NY
 More information to follow

June 15th: NYFOA Regional Meeting
 Held in Catskills last year
 May be moved north

Saratoga County Fair 2024
July 23 thru 28th
 SAC and Cornell's MFO Program
 will share a booth, if you are interested in
 working please contact Kristie Edwards
 (518) 661-5685 or email edwardsk922@gmail.com

Chair Camp 2024

August 8th, 9th and 10th

Make a family heirloom this summer at Chair Camp 2024. Select from a menu of 6 Windsor projects: natural edged bench, shop stool, side chair, arm chair, rocker, or 28-inch mini settee. Materials will include walnut, cherry, and ambrosia maple. All turned parts, materials and tools will be provided. All skill levels are welcome. Class will be held August 8, 9 and 10 at the workshop of Harold and Gay Thistle located near Wellsville, New York.

As in years past, a 10% discount is available to active members of the New York Forest Owners Association (NYFOA). To enroll in this year's camp text or call instructor David Abeel at 734-646-2064 to reserve your space. Examples of past class accomplishments are at Facebook: David Nelson Abeel.

The fee for class is payable by check or cash:

Tall Kitchen or Shop stool:	\$225	NYFOA member--\$200
Natural Edged Bench:	\$225	NYFOA member--\$200
Comb Back Side Chair:	\$300	NYFOA member--\$270
Comb Back Arm Chair:	\$375	NYFOA member--\$335
28 inch Mini Settee:	\$400	NYFOA member--\$360
Comb Back Rocking Chair:	\$425	NYFOA member--\$380



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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