

The Overstory

New York Forest Owners Association Southeastern Adirondack Chapter

Volume 24

Issue 3

Fall 2013

HIGHLIGHTS

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!

Joan Bobbette
Piseco, NY

Judith & Graham Cox
Bolton Landing, NY

Michael Dealy
Brooklyn, NY

Zachary Hanan
Oakdale, NY

Bill Lasher
Galway, NY

Joseph Mastandrea
Wilton, NY

Rebecca Russell
Diamond Point, NY

INSIDE

- Recent woodwalks
- Mackey remembrance
- Forestry links
- Tree mortality
- Letter from the Chair

ONLINE FORESTRY RESOURCES

Private Forest Management
www.dec.ny.gov/lands/4972.html

Wildfires in NY
www.dec.ny.gov/lands/42378.html

Climate Change
www.dec.ny.gov/energy/44992.html

Consulting Foresters and Cooperating Forester List
www.dec.ny.gov/lands/5230.html

NY Draft Invasive Species regulations (released 10/23)
www.dec.ny.gov/regulations/2359.html

Myth, Folklore, or Fact?

By Laurel Gailor

Of all critters, especially this time of year, the Banded Woolly Bear caterpillar (*Pyrrharctia Isabella*) seems to be a topic in many conversations; particularly as it relates to predicting the upcoming winter forecast.

Possibly, the banded woolly bear is the most well-known caterpillar. The caterpillar is the larva of a moth in the Isabella Tiger moth (*Arctiidae*) family. In North America, including the United States, Canada, and Mexico there are approximately 260 species of Tiger moths. Unlike many other moths, the Tiger moth species has very bold, contrasting colors making them fairly easy to identify. However, the adult of the banded woolly bear is not nearly as showy as many of its relatives.

The life cycle of the banded woolly bear begins in the spring when the caterpillar hatches from an egg, laid by the female Isabella Tiger moth, on the surface of various plants. The caterpillar continues to grow throughout spring, summer, and early fall, chewing on leaves of nettle, dandelion, asters, plantain, some grasses, goldenrod, and many other herbaceous and woody plants. The woolly bear overwinters as a larva, in protected places underneath stones, bark, logs, or even firewood piles. As spring returns, and the temperatures begin to warm up, the woolly bear will feed for a short time on the fresh leaves before forming a cocoon or pupa. A few weeks later, an adult Isabella Tiger moth will emerge. This species can produce one or two generations per year – May and August.

The full grown caterpillar can be slightly over an inch long and covered with tubercles, bumps or raised areas. The hair emerges from the tubercles in stiff, dense clusters. The middle segment of the abdomen is covered in red- orange or possibly brown hairs, and the posterior and anterior ends have black hairs. To some, handling a woolly bear caterpillar can cause irritation to sensitive skin.

Many believe that the longer the sections of black hair at each end of the body; the more severe the weather will be during the forthcoming winter months. Or the reverse is often thought, the wider



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The Banded Woolly Bear caterpillar (*Pyrrharctia Isabella*) is the larva of a moth in the Isabella Tiger moth (*Arctiidae*) family.

that the red-orange color band is, then the milder the winter. So, believe it or not, research has found that as the caterpillar grows or matures, the black hairs are often replaced by the red-orange hairs. The amount of black color also varies with moisture levels in the habitat that the caterpillar spends its summer.

You might be ready to say, “but I have seen a solid orange or solid black woolly bear caterpillar”. Yes, this might be true, but the solid orange ‘woolly bear’ is actually the larva of the yellow bear caterpillar, and the adult is the Virginia Tiger moth. The solid black ‘woolly bear’ is the larva of the giant leopard moth.

Things you can count on woolly bears to tell you:

- If the woolly bear has frost on it...it is cold.
- If he (she?) is walking on a layer of snow...you can plan on having at least one snow in that winter.
- If the woolly bear is blowing across the road... it is windy!
- If the woolly bear is wet...get indoors out of the rain and stop looking at woolly bears!

If you enjoy these little critters, they overwinter fairly easily, and then you can watch them as they go through their metamorphosis.

Syrup, Soot and Sawdust

A Remembrance of Gregg Mackey

By John T. Hastings

Like any remembrance story, this must start the same way. "I first met ..." and so I did. It was in the late 1980s when Gregg called the DEC office in Warrensburg looking for forestry advice on his newly acquired woodlot in the Town of Greenfield. After working as a logging contractor in Norfolk, Massachusetts for many years, he decided to move his family to New York, where he would join his friend, Chris Pryor, in the business of selling, installing and cleaning of wood stoves. It wasn't long before Gregg was on his own and started Nantucket Chimney Service.



Gregg was a big man whom I often called a "gentle giant" because that's what he was. He was always easy going and I can never remember seeing him mad. When environmental logging was an issue in Massachusetts, Gregg put on a horse's harness which was attached to a large log, so as to appear as though he was pulling the log (which he probably could!). The photo appeared in several local Norfolk newspapers.

Gregg became active in the Southeastern Chapter of NYFOA a few years after it was formed in 1990. It was in 1996-97 that Gregg served as SAC President. He often attended woods walks and winter meetings, as well as writing letters supporting forestry in New York. I can still see him standing outside, at one of our winter meetings at Crandall Library, with the temperature around 10 degrees, with nothing on but a tee shirt! Gregg also sponsored woods walks at his woodlot on Spier Falls Road. Those of us who remember these meetings cannot forget Gregg's enthusiasm and interest. He had made small tar paper roofs for each of his stacks of lumber, with tie downs at each corner to take up the slack as the lumber dried. He bought larch saw logs from State Forests which he had sawed and used on the side of his new shop, even though he had to screw each board down to keep it from warping. It was and is beautiful, but required a lot of work. He finally purchased his pride and joy, a Finnish portable sawmill. The mill had won many contests for its speed and efficiency.

When Gregg learned that my brother and I had a small sugaring operation, he soon became a steady customer. He loved the "extra dark" or Grade B maple syrup and soon started making home-made bread using this extra dark grade. One time, to pay for his syrup, he opened the refrigerator and literally pulled out some "cold cash." But as he said, "If I'm being robbed, how many crooks are going to look in the refrigerator for money?" Good point.

If you knew Gregg, you will remember him.

MEMBER'S CORNER

A Short Story

By Gregg Mackey

Standing with his eight year old son, Tim, Chuck Smith looked on as the logger felled the marked trees, limbed and skidded them to the header and sawed them into logs. Another logger loaded the logs on his truck. Fully loaded, the huge rig grunted and groaned under the weight of the logs as it pulled onto the roadway, slowly picking up speed as it headed away.

Chuck shook his head in disgust. "I never would have had this place built in the country if I'd known that the property across the way was going to be destroyed by damn loggers. Those beautiful trees - they're gone!" exclaimed Chuck. "Is it wrong for those men to take trees away, Dad?" asked Tim. "Of course it's wrong, Tim! Remember Earth Day? Remember how we learned that we can't live without trees? Of course it's wrong, Tim, and I'm going to do something about it!" proclaimed Chuck.

Just then, Chuck remembered a group of people who had a booth set up at the park on Earth Day- they called themselves "Saviors of the Trees."

Chuck turned away, heading for his brand new spruce framed home. He walked up his yellow pine front steps, across his fir-decked front porch, into his poplar trimmed front room with its gorgeous wide pine floor, through his cherry cabineted kitchen, grabbing his checkbook off the hard maple countertop. Next, he headed up the birch staircase and down the hall to his oak wainscoted study, parking himself in his ash office chair at his walnut desk. He then tore a made-from-hemlock-pulp check from his checkbook and wrote out a hefty check to "Saviors of the Trees."

Young Tim then entered the study. Holding the check in his hand, Chuck turned to his son and said, "Tim, this check is one way we can put an end to these loggers. We can't live without trees."

GREENFIELD CENTER — Gregg A. Mackey, 55, of Spier Falls Road, passed away Thursday, June 27, 2013, at Albany Medical Center, following complications after surgery. Born Dec. 9, 1957, in Boston, Mass., he was the son of Shirley (Evans) Mackey of Greenfield Center (and formerly of Norfolk, Mass.), and the late Alan Mackey. Gregg graduated from King Philip Regional High School in Wrentham, Mass., in 1975, and in 1982, graduated from Northeastern University in Boston with a degree in criminal justice. He was employed as a logger at G&L Logging in Norfolk, Mass., for several years and worked as a rigger at Schaughnessy and Ahern Co. in South Boston, Mass. Gregg also worked for several years for Adirondack Chimney and, most recently, owned and operated Nantucket Chimney Service in Greenfield Center for many years. He married Carol L. Clayton on April 18, 2009, in Queensbury. Gregg was an active member of Church of the King in Queensbury. He enjoyed woodworking, gardening, cooking, reading, singing, camping, watching movies, going to the ocean and, mostly, being with his family. Survivors besides his wife and his mother, both of Greenfield Center, include two daughters, Emma C. Mackey and Abigail G. Mackey, both of Corinth; three stepsons, Jared Piper of Glens Falls, Nathaniel Piper of Fort Carson, Colo., and Alexander Piper of Greenfield Center; two brothers, Christopher Mackey and his wife, Sandi, of Maple Grove, Minn., and Jonathan Mackey and his wife, Beth, of Norfolk, Mass.; one sister, Andrea Rossi and her husband, Michael, of North Grafton, Mass.; several aunts, uncles, nieces, nephews and cousins; and his many friends and loyal customers.

Olowan Tree Farm Woodswalk

By Dodie and Pete Seagle 🌲 Photos by Dodie Seagle and Bob Manning

84 acres were logged in the winter of 2013 with a feller-buncher and grapple skidders. The management plan called for single tree and group selection to achieve pine regeneration.

Owners, Pete and Dodie Seagle, hosted a woodswalk at Olowan Tree Farm near Schroon Lake on Saturday, June 8, 2013. They greeted 20 guests, including the Forester, Chris Gearwar of Lake George Forestry, and the loggers, Dan Galusha and William Teneyck of G & T Enterprises, Johnsbury, NY. Laurel Gailor of Cornell Cooperative Extension assisted. In spite of the damp weather, almost everyone walked around the header and the nearby harvest areas. Chris explained some of the management considerations for the harvest, especially selection of trees to be harvested. An ample number of healthy pines were left around each of the group selection areas. They can be harvested in 10-15 years, after healthy offspring are established. Little erosion was evident along the skid roads, and the owners noted that the spring runoff was less damaging than before the harvest.

The walk ended with soup and discussion in a cabin built with on-site logs in the 1930's.



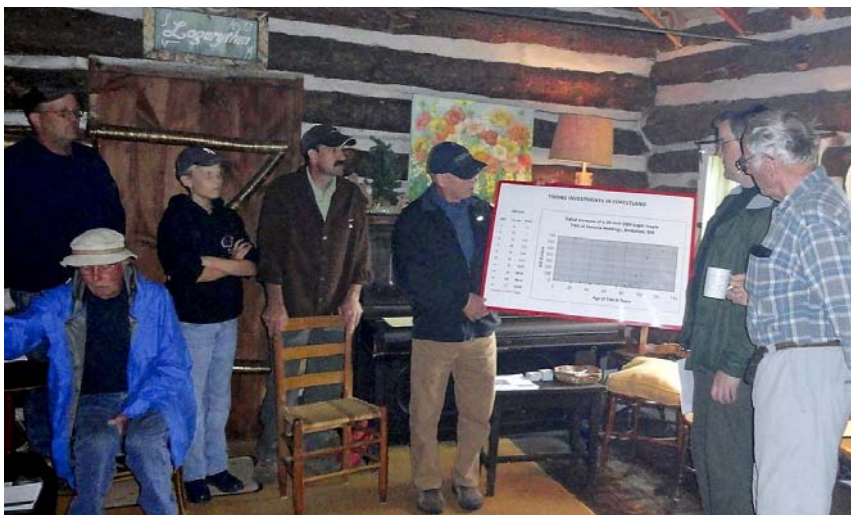
William Teneyck, Logan & Dan Galusha, Chris Gearwar.



The cutting wheel with 4 year old Juniper Seagle.



Studying a group selection area.



Chris Gearwar using graph to explain the importance of correct timing in forest investments.

Technical Details

Of the 84 acres, 12 were from Stand 1, described as:

White Pine Sawtimber
 Basal Area: 90 square feet/acre
 White Pine 75%, Ash 4%, Aspen 4%,
 Red Maple 3%, Beech 2, Cedar 2%, Misc. 10%
 By Species: Acceptable Growing Stock 80%,
 MSD: 10 inches

The remaining 72 acres were from Stand 3:

Mixed Hardwood & Softwood Pole Timber/Sawtimber
 Basal Area: 80 square feet/acre
 Hemlock 25%, White Pine 15%, Sugar Maple 15%,
 Red Maple 10%, Yellow Birch 10%,
 Ash 10%, White Birch 5%, Misc. 10%
 By Species: Acceptable Growing Stock 60%,
 MSD: 9 Inches

The total harvest was 222 MBF (plus 249 cords of pulp) in an area with total estimated sawtimber volume of 550 MBF according to a 2010 cruise.

Tree Mortality

By Peter Smallidge 🌿 Photos by Peter Smallidge



People love their forests and the trees. They understandably become concerned when a tree dies. But tree death is only a negative occurrence when it either indicates disease or is hazardous to humans or wildlife. In some situations dead trees should prompt the landowner to contact a NYS Department of Environmental Conservation forester or a Cornell Cooperative Extension educator for diagnostic assistance, but in most cases the landowner can attribute tree death to natural and normal processes. In areas frequented by humans, standing dead trees can pose a hazard, but in other situations those trees provide a source of habitat for wildlife. If the dead trees don't have a pest that might spread to other areas, landowners who can handle dead trees safely may utilize them for firewood or lumber. There are a few things you should know about forests, trees, wood value, and forest management before you take action to manage the dead trees on your property.

Each year some of the trees in a forest will die.

Tree death is normal. The bigger the acreage, the more dead trees you will see. In very young forests, the juvenile trees are subject to environmental stresses. Some trees don't survive those initial stresses. In middle aged forests the trees get larger and require more resources, but the amount of land and resources available for tree growth doesn't change. Tree growth stagnates, trees are weakened, and some trees eventually die. As the growth of a tree stagnates, the weaker trees will succumb to insect or disease pests and die. In these young and middle-aged forests, there may be as much as 20% death, 1 in 5 trees, to allow the average tree size to increase by 1 inch of diameter. In old-aged forests, some trees will die just because they have reached the upper end of their longevity. The number of trees that die each year will not be constant. Rather, the forest will have some years with higher mortality when an environmental event, such as drought, interacts with naturally weakened trees to cause episodic mortality. Many factors and organisms can

Some large trees die because they have reached their maximum lifespan. This snag is too decayed to justify trying to use for firewood or boards. It may stand for several more years and provide habitat for cavity nesting birds.

ADIRONDACK STUMPAGE PRICE REPORT

New York State Dept. of Environmental Conservation

www.dec.ny.gov/lands/5259.html

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Tree Mortality, continued from page 4

result in tree death (www.dec.state.ny.us/website/dlf/privland/forprot/health/).

Most New York forests started after agriculture, with many beginning in the late 1800's and early 1900's. Thus, the trees are all approximately the same age, though of different sizes. Species such as black locust, pin cherry, paper birch and aspen may only live for 40 to 100 years even under ideal conditions. In forests that are now 75 to 150 years old, tree death of these early successional species is common.

A significant, sudden, and obvious pattern in tree death or loss of vigor will likely indicate a condition that will require additional professional assistance to guide your response. Actually, if any two of these three conditions occur, you should seek assistance. Significant means more than three or four trees per acre. Sudden means that the tree death or vigor change occurs in the same growing season or from one growing season to the next. Obvious pattern means that you can describe the changes in the trees that relate to species, symptoms, aspect, ages of trees, or geographic areas.

If you suspect that tree death or loss of vigor warrants professional attention, record the details of what you are seeing. Then, call your local office of the NYS DEC or Cornell Cooperative Extension for help in submitting a sample to Cornell University's plant disease diagnostic service (www.plantclinic.cornell.edu). If possible, take digital pictures to illustrate the problem. The more information you can provide the quicker and more certain the diagnosis will be. The cause of the death or low vigor may be known and fact sheets may already be available for your use. The purpose of diagnosis is typically not to prevent the death of the trees you are observing, but rather to limit the spread of mortality to other trees.

You can't prevent trees from dying, but you can influence which trees are most likely to survive. Through management you can provide sunlight, the most critical resource, to the desired trees by cutting the adjacent, less desired, poorly formed, or unstable trees. In this way, you can enhance the growth and prolong the life of specific trees. In a previously unmanaged forest, this process is known as forest stand improvement. In some situations, the cutting of trees can generate revenue and help develop a more productive forest. Selecting which trees to cut will likely require assistance from a forester.

Once you understand the cause of tree death, you can decide if and how to utilize those trees. Utilization should support your personal ownership objectives. Because these trees are dead or near death, their wood strength and stem integrity is uncertain and warrants significant caution and special



training for safe felling and removal. Some species will be useful for firewood if removed within a year of death. These include oak, maple, locust, ash, hophornbeam, beech and several others. Some trees may have lumber value for processing through a local portable sawmill. It is rare that a small number of dead trees will be saleable to a local sawmill. Finally, other trees may be left in the woods for use as wildlife habitat if they are too decayed or not able to be safely removed.

To get more ideas on how to use dead trees in your forest and to see the types of mortality that occurs, attend a NYFOA chapter woodswalk. Talk with others to understand the extent of tree mortality in their forest and how they utilize dead trees.

Dead trees may stand for several years because the loss of leaves and small branches reduces their interception of wind. Initially the dead trees may have solid wood and be useful for firewood or boards. Within a year or two, fungal decay in dead trees makes them most suitable for wildlife.

Wanted

WOODSWALK HOSTS

SAC members willing to host a woodswalk in 2014,
please contact Donna Welch at (518) 225-0629
or trautwei@gmail.com.

Kindervolk Woodswalk

A Fairy Tale Ending

By Eric and Beverly Lawson 🌿 Photos Bob Manning



As realists, we all know that fairy tales, which always conclude fabulously, are just fantasies, trumped up dreams with unrealistic outcomes. I shared this view too until September 14th when, at the end of the day, I reflected upon the just finished Woods Walk at Kindervolk, our 156 acre forest in Elizabethtown near Lincoln Pond. It was truly magical!

The walk, a joint collaboration of the Southern and Northern Chapters of NYFOA, had been planned for many months and included experts such as Debby Boyce, our Forester, Peter Smallidge, the resident Cornell Extension Forester, Gary Goff, Cornell's Administrator for the Master Forest Owners and David Reckian, the Essex County Soil and Water expert. The dawn broke that Saturday overcast and gloomy the dampness of the previous few days stubbornly persisting despite a glorious fall weather forecast.

The walk was to begin at 11AM to give people travel time. A little after 10AM the gloom began to lift and soon people began meandering up the trail and then more people and then even more. It was a glorious assembly of 45 who finally gathered around our camp fire to enjoy hamburgers, potato salad, chips, brownies and drinks, a most satisfying prelude to brief remarks offered under a blue tarp cautiously erected in the expectation that maybe the forecast would be wrong.

The walk covered a forest with three distinctly different aged stands of timber and included a side jaunt onto a piece of state land that had lain forever wild since the mid-19th century – a towering climax forest. We tarried along the way to examine a large beaver pond and to cogitate over the place of wild things and wild habitats in our forest wonderland.

The weather held, a great crowd, no insects, good early color, a wealth of knowledge shared and priceless socializing among forest aficionados – a woods walk promoter's fairy tale indeed!



From top: Forester Debby Boyce and Cornell Associate Gary Goff discuss the biology of a climax forest; woodswalk attendees examine a beaver pond; and SAC/NAC members reassemble at our camp while Barley looks on.

OFFICER NOMINATIONS

At our next annual meeting we will have the membership vote for new officers. A nomination committee will be formed to secure candidates for all offices. We currently have potential candidates for the offices of chair and treasurer, but all offices are open to any member wishing to become more involved in our organization. At this time the office of secretary is vacant and we will also be seeking someone to fill the vice chair position. If you have any interest in any of these offices please contact me, Kurt Edwards, at 661-5685 or kedward1@nycap.rr.com. I will pass your information along to our committee chair.



A Greener *Overstory*

In effort to “go green” and save extra postage expenses to the chapter we are offering you the opportunity to sign up for an electronic copy of *The Overstory*. Anyone who would like to replace their black and white newsletter with a beautiful color issue received via email can just request the change. You will receive the newsletter faster, you can view it on your computer and save to a file for future reference. Or you can print a color copy to have on hand and share it with a friend. If you would like to be removed from the mailing list and start receiving your *Overstory* by email just send me a request at kedward1@nycap.rr.com

Reflections from the Chair

It is amazing how fast two years can go, my term as SAC chapter chair is quickly coming to an end. Since I was relatively new to NYFOA when I stepped into the position, I really needed so much help learning the ropes. I want to thank all of you that have been there for me and I have enjoyed getting to know you so much better. I have made many new friends at chapter and state level, friendships I will continue to foster. I have tried to do the best job I could for my chapter but couldn't have done it without the help of my wife, Kristie, she is the organized one. I look forward to working with our next chapter chair. We all need to support SAC and NYFOA as best we can.

We made it through the fair season which brought in a number of new members. A special thanks to our organizers Jane Jenks (Washington County Fair) and Bill Burke (Saratoga County Fair) your dedication and hard work is very much appreciated. Many thanks also to all of our members that volunteered to staff the booth, without all of you it would be impossible to have our presence at the fairs.

It was a great summer for the seedlings we planted at our RNYW woodswalk, they are doing outstanding. All that early rain really gave them a good start. I greatly enjoyed listening to the wood thrushes this year; they are in two different locations on our property. Their flute like song is like

no other. Thoreau wrote of it “Whenever a man hears it he is young, and nature is in her spring; whenever he hears it, it is a new world and a free country, and the gates of Heaven are not shut against him.” It is amazing how in a few hours your woods or world can come down. Then in a few short years be grown up again, there's no stopping trees. I loved the article in the Northern Woodlands about the 1938 hurricane and how fast things returned. I'm sure after the wild fires out in the western part of the country, the forests will spring up faster than most would imagine.

Get out and enjoy your woods.

Kurt Edwards



**New York Forest
Owners Association**



PO Box 541
Lima, NY 14485
1-800-836-3566

Chair: Kurt Edwards
Vice Chair: Lou Inzinna
Secretary: Vacant
Treasurer: Bob Manning

**NYFOA/Southeastern
Adirondack Chapter**

Kristie Edwards, Editor
411 Beech Street
Mayfield, NY 12117

This edition had been prepared by:
Kristie Edwards, Editor
Jill Burks, Graphic Design

To submit articles for publication
please e-mail Kristie Edwards:
kedward1@nycap.rr.com