

FOREST OWNER

A Publication of the New York Forest Owners Association

March/April 1989

THE NEW YORK



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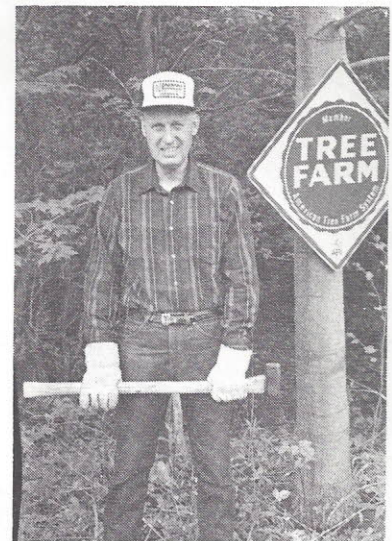
President's Message

Thought you might like a report on the meeting of the Governor's Task Force on the Forest Industry held in mid-January at the Silver Bay Conference Center on Lake George.

The Task Force is composed of thirteen members and is chaired by Ross Whaley, President of the College of ESF. In addition there are sixty advisors and the purpose of this meeting was to have the advisors give their input to the Task Force in an attempt to come up with a final set of recommendations to be made to Gov. Cuomo. In addition to the Task Force and advisors, there were present a number of authors (of the white papers we studied), facilitators, recorders and camp followers. There must have been eighty people present.

For a small forest landowner, it was an intimidating experience. There were so many high-powered professionals there from DEC and ESF that we wondered who was minding their stores. And there were foresters with lumber companies, furniture companies, paper companies, forest tax lawyers, RC&D people, land institute people and representatives from all the parks, preserves and state forests. It was good to see two familiar faces there from our Board: Don Gilbert and Bob Sand.

The Task Force is studying four topics and we broke into team sessions after lunch the first day. These are: Improving the Business Environment, Improving Forest Conditions to Support Economic Development, Land Ownership and



J. Morgan Heussler

Use and lastly, Education/Public Awareness/Visibility/Image. I was in the Land Ownership and Use group and we spent most of two days kicking around some forty suggestions and boiling them down. As a result of our work, we hope to see changes made in 480A, the forest tax law and also in the area of conservation easements.

It was a learning experience for me and I want to thank all of you New York State taxpayers for sending the whole group.

Sincerely,
J. Morgan Heussler

Supplying New York State Tree Farmers:

Saratoga Springs Nursery

In a few short weeks New York tree farmers will be picking up their seedlings from various locations in the State for spring planting. Some of those seedlings may come from Saratoga Springs Tree Nursery operated by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) Divisions of Lands and Forests.

NYFOA visited Saratoga Springs recently to learn about the nursery and the seedlings it produces.

The seedlings are grown on 100 acres along Route 9 near Saratoga Spa State Park. A mile south of the Park along Route 50, are 150 acres that contain the main office and other buildings; where our tour began in the office of John Solan, the nursery manager and an associate forester with the DEC our conversation began with some history and facts about the nursery.

At one time, there were nine nurseries set up to reforest land that had been heavily logged. They were located in areas that needed to be reseeded and usually near prisons that provided labor. By 1972 economics closed all nurseries except Saratoga, which now supplies seedlings ordered by land-owners across the State.

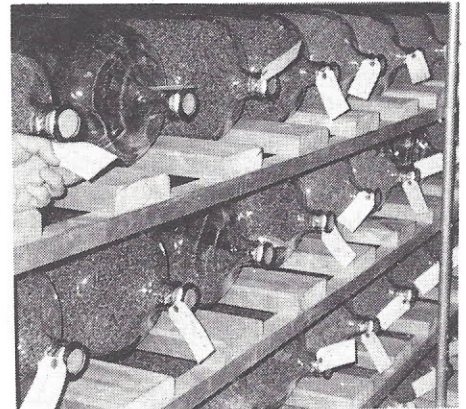
Saratoga State nursery is self-sufficient. The monies earned from the sale of seedlings are directed to a state fund that is returned to Saratoga and covers the entire costs of operation and staff salaries.

The only requirements to qualify for seedlings are owning land in New York and that the seedlings will be used for reforestation and not landscaping.

Since 1900 1.6 billion seedlings have been produced by state nurseries. Saratoga produces 6.5 million trees yearly and 16 million are growing in various stages. A minimum order of 500 seedlings, enough for an acre, is a stipulation.

Black Locust and Black Walnut are the only hardwoods grown. Smaller packets of trees and shrubs are also available for wildlife and erosion control.

Trees compatible to New York's environment are grown at the nursery: ten conifers, 11 wildlife



Photos detail process involved to grow seedlings. From the left: 1. 700 to 1,000 pine cones are collected and then air dried until seeds fall out. 2. Seeds are placed in 5-gallon glass jugs and stored. 3. The finished product, ready for shipping. Cover: Seedlings near harvesting stage.

shrubs and 2 hardwoods. Also grown are flowers for campgrounds in the Adirondack and Catskill forest preserves and other state parks operated by the DEC.

A staff of eight people run the nursery, care for seedlings, equipment and other business. But in April when seedlings must be harvested, packed and matched to orders, workers may number 120.

The main objective of the nursery is to grow the seedlings, harvest and fill customer orders between April and early May, so that customers receive their orders on time. The one deterrent to this goal is the weather conditions the seedlings experience and how they survive. This has an

enormous impact on completing orders.

Beginning in January and ending March 17th the main office is where orders are received and processed, either by mail or the several phones located on the second floor. Accounting Clerk Dorothy Holohean has been with the nursery for about 60 years and records the money received with the orders. She works part-time now just during the busy time. Only about six percent of seedlings are used on state land. The rest are sold at cost to private citizens and companies.

The beginning for the seedlings starts with the collection of pine
Continued on Page 10

Chapter Reports:

Cayuga Chapter

A particularly timely and noteworthy meeting attended by 31 people on January 10th was described by the following article written by Dorothy Long and herein reprinted with permission of the Auburn daily newspaper, *The Citizen*:

Recreational leasing: To landowner

Hunters in the county's southern end may find access to private property a little more expensive in the future.

At a recent meeting of the Cayuga Chapter of the New York Forest Owners Association, guest speakers explained systems of leasing private woodlands for hunting and recreational purposes that are helping farmers and foresters throughout central New York and in other states.

Richard Fox, who organized the program, told the landowners that though taxes are going up, the prices of corn and wood are not keeping pace. Fox sees recreational leases as a way for rural property owners to increase revenues from heavily taxed properties.

Robert Sand, representing the Cotton-Hanlon lumber company, explained that company's policy regarding the leasing of recreational woodland.

The company now has about 80 leases with the average tract between 50 and 200 acres. The leasee pays \$1.50 an acre a year, plus property taxes on the leased parcel. The company continues to control the land and has approval of all improvements and alterations.

Sand told the group that leasing private property for recreational purposes is becoming a trend. "It's going to become harder to find unposted land. We don't yet feel the pressure here of the lack of open land, but the handwriting is on the wall."

Also speaking was David Donovan of Cornell Natural Resources Cooperative Extension. Donovan has helped create leasing programs for farmers in Oklahoma and Texas. He told the foresters they wouldn't get

rich, but prudent leasing could probably cover their taxes.

Marketing would be no problem he said, usually just a newspaper ad is sufficient. "I don't think you'll have a hard time leasing. A lot of people want a safe place to hunt."

Most at the meeting reacted favorably to the idea. Some worried about the reaction of friends and neighbors who are used to "trotting all over out there."

Bob Hazelton of Sempronius spoke up for the sportsmen who often feel they subsidize farmers. "The animals don't belong to the landowner.

"It sounds real easy, but if you don't do something to insure you have the game it won't be so easy. If the hunters aren't successful, they are not going to come back."

Donovan agreed and warned the landowners that if they leased the land to a game hunter, they better be sure they have that game.

As for friends who are accustomed to hunting in a particular area, Donovan said "It does generate some hard feelings," but explained that special provisions can be made.

Don Spaulding is one property owner who supports the idea after leasing hunting rights on his land on Oak Hill last year.

He said he thought it was worthwhile, and he would advise others to do the same.

"The taxes are so outrageous, we need some help."

In addition I would like to thank Cotton-Hanlon, Inc. for demonstrating Robert Frost-neighborliness in generously sharing their proprietary experiences, and special acknowledgement to Heiberg Award winner — Bob Sand. Bob's simple AB & C scheme of forest management for quality timber, as he has practiced it on the lands of Cotton-Hanlon for over 35 years, assures his corporation of profit from forest ownership well into the next century.

Dave Donovan brought a broad range of experience to the program and delivered it in the enviable style of Cornell's Extension Specialists. Inasmuch as the landowners' concern with the competition between the

growth of the local tax and the growth of the tree's DBH, is so acute; it is most provident that Cornell's extension staff offers information and guidance to the question for groups seeking it. The problem of recreational leasing is complex; more comment is needed.

Respectfully submitted —
R. Fox

Western Fingerlakes

The Western Finger Lakes chapter of NYFOA held its second general meeting on January 18, 1989. Professor Doug Monteith, from the SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry, talked to the group about the concept of "Managing Your Woodlot as an Asset".

He was instrumental in getting us to think more broadly, as one tends to do with other financial assets, about alternative ways to get better return on investment. The importance of having a plan was highest priority of course, followed by things like understanding and using the current available tax options, various types of wood product sales, recreational leasing etc. Doug also passed out material compiled by Professors Don Koten and Hugh Canahm of ESF which listed some time and cost estimates for various forest management activities. Items included were planting, thinning, harvesting, road building and management plans. Approximately 40 people from all four counties in the chapter attended the meeting and showed their interest with a lengthy, spirited discussion following Doug's formal presentation.

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Western Fingerlakes —

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The next general meeting will be held on March 15, at which time our speaker will be Professor Gary Goff of Cornell University. Gary's topic will be "Managing the Woodlot for Improved Wildlife Habitat and Content".

CFA CHAPTER REPORT

By LOUIS TIRRITO,

CFA Woodlands Manager

The winter months have proven to be a busy time for the Catskill Forest Association, as we have been hard at work providing educational services to the region's forest landowners.

On Saturday, January 28, CFA sponsored an informational workshop regarding section 480-a of New York State's real property tax law, more commonly referred to as the forest tax law. The workshop was very well attended with 37 people participating.

The program included a two part presentation, which described the provisions and requirements of 480-a. Gerry Gotsch, Associate Forester with the Region 3 office of the NYS DEC, provided the group with a working background of the tax law, especially as it related enrollment requirements and responsibilities which are assumed by the landowner. Complementing Gerry's presentation was that of Clifford Asdal, a private forest consultant from Wurtsboro,

NY. As a private forest consultant, much of Cliff's work involves assisting forest owners enrolled under the tax law. Cliff's perspective offered the audience a well rounded view of the forest tax law. Both Gerry and Cliff stressed that although the tax law has its merits, it is very important that people understand how the law works, especially in terms of their responsibilities under the law. An

equally important message stressed, was that in addition to receiving a tax savings, forest owners enrolled in 480-a were improving their woodlots through implementing a good solid program of forest management. A managed woodlot has increased opportunities for many uses, some of which are invaluable. Look for upcoming CFA woodswalks and meetings!

LEGISLATIVE REPORT

By DON GILBERT

NYFOA Legislative Committee
Chairman



DON GILBERT

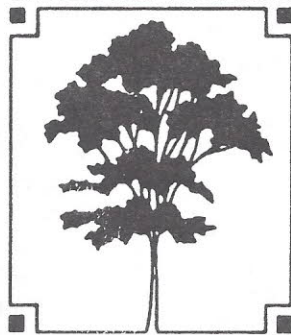
The new year has brought with it a new session of the New York State Legislature. There haven't been many bills introduced during this session which affect the forest industry of the state. As such, there is nothing to report to NYFOA members in the form of a Legislative Report. Most of this Legislative Session has dealt with ways to finance and eliminate the State's current deficit problem which seems to currently be the number one issue at hand for Legislators.

The NYS Governor's Task Force on Forestry Industry has been active lately with having held a meeting for its Advisors in Silver Bay, NY over January 18 and 19. Advisors were selected from all over the state and represented landowners, private forest consultants, loggers, forest product companies, governmental agencies, and numerous natural resource associations and organizations.

NYFOA President, J. Morgan Heussler, represented NYFOA's interests by being an Advisor to the Land Ownership and Use Issue Topic Committee. Don Gilbert, Executive Director of the Catskill Forest Association (NYFOA) affiliate), represented CFA and NYFOA on the same committee.

The Advisors' discussions centered around finding ways to improve the forest-based contributions to the State's economy while recognizing open space values. Their discussions will be considered further by the Task Force before any final recommendations are made to the Governor.

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Woodland Management Home Study Course Offered

You've owned a woodlot for many years, or maybe just recently purchased a woodlot. You may often find that the information needed to make many management decisions concerning your woodlot is difficult to come by. It is for this reason that Cornell Cooperative Extension in conjunction with SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry and the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) put together a home correspondence course, "Woodland Management", dealing specifically with woodlot management.

"Woodland Management" was designed for the landowner who is serious about working on his or her land; serious about learning preferred woodland management practices and concepts; and serious about maximizing benefits and enjoyment from the woodland. Enrollees pursue the course at their own pace at home, developing the skills necessary for successful woodland management. It covers topics pertinent to the landowner who wants to take either the single-purpose or the multi-purpose approach to managing woodland resources. The course helps woodlot owners gain not only a greater understanding of basic woodland ecology, but goes further and presents the concepts and practices that are essential to sound woodlot management. By developing and improving their knowledge, woodlot owners can increase the benefits they receive from their land

without unnecessary damage to their woodland or themselves.

Using materials already available, seven lessons were prepared by specialists in each topic. The following is a brief description of each of these lessons in "Woodland Management."

Woodland Ecology — This primarily introductory lesson presents information that is the foundation of all woodlot management practices. Whether your interest is simply one of better understanding your woodlot or a desire to manage for a specific purpose, basic knowledge and understanding of woodland inter-relationships is essential for proper and competent management. Prepared by terrestrial ecologist and former extension associate Ron Howard, this lesson provides a background for all subsequent lessons. It explores concepts of ecology and helps the student develop an awareness and understanding of how woodlands operate.

Managing Woodlands For Timber — The economic importance of timber and the ways to manage your own woodlot for timber are presented in this lesson. Doug Monteith, management specialist at SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry, prepared the lesson. Explanations of forest inventories, different timber products, and ways to estimate the amount and value of your woodlot's timber resources are all presented in this lesson.

Managing Woodlands For Firewood — Firewood may be the primary purpose of your woodlot. Topics covered are wood as fuel, site and stand selection, woodworking, silviculture, and selling firewood. The topics presented were prepared by Cornell Cooperative Extension fuelwood expert Gary Goff, and are designed to help the woodland owner decide if firewood production should be a primary management objective and to be able to realize the objective effectively.

Managing Woodlands For Wildlife — Emphasis on the importance of

Continued on Page 11

Planting

FOR BEST RESULTS

Best results from seedlings are obtained when planted promptly within 2 - 3 days. If you can't plant them immediately, there are some temporary measures you can take to ensure your seedlings stay healthy.

Open the bag and moisten the seedlings, reclose the bag and store in a cool, dark area such as a basement. They can be kept in this environment up to two weeks.

If it's any longer, heel them in, in a protected area such as a forest making sure they receive enough moisture.

When ready to plant:

1. Prepare a hole large enough to accommodate the root system.
2. Place seedlings in hole, long roots should be pruned back to six inches.
3. Make sure all roots are buried and the seedling is standing straight.
4. Firmly pack soil around the roots using the heel of your shoe. This will eliminate air pockets that will cause the roots to dry out.

Keep seedling roots moist while planting. Take only enough seedlings from the bag to last an hour or two of planting time. Leave the rest of the seedlings in the bag in a cool shady place. If your seedlings are in a plastic bag, this is the best protection for your trees while planting.

If you have further questions, contact your local DEC Office.

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Ask a Forester

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Freshwater Wetlands Act (continued)

My last article in the *Forest Owner* (Jan/Feb 89) reviewed policy, definition and classification of the Freshwater Wetlands Act. It was pointed out that the administration of the Act has created some conflict between some landowners and the Department of Environmental Conservation (or Adirondack Park Agency within the Park). This conflict was illustrated with four questions, commonly asked by forest landowners, the first two answered in the Jan/Feb 89 issue.

The remaining questions below will be addressed by reviewing regulatory USE, NOTIFICATION procedure and landowner COMPENSATION under the Act:

3. "I have owned my woodlands since the early '50's and after a DEC forester cruised it, he mentioned there is a classified 15-acre wetland in the middle. Why was I not informed of this at the time it was being evaluated?"

4. "The DEC says there is a deciduous swamp, Class 3, on my woodland. It is the best access to a knoll of valuable hardwood timber, but the regulations say a road with gravel fill may not be allowed across it. It will be much more costly to take the longer upland route. Is there any way I can be compensated for this loss?"

USE

The Class I wetland has the highest ecological rating and, therefore, receives the most protection under the Act. Many forest owners want to know how forestry operations will be restricted in and around their designated wetlands, whatever the Class rating. Here's where we get a break! Part 663, "Freshwater Wetlands Permit Requirements" states that "Agricultural activities, as defined in . . . this section, are not regulated under this Act or this Part", and no permit or permission is required. 'Agriculture activity' is defined as a farmer or landowner who may graze or water livestock, use water resources for agricultural

purposes, harvest the natural products of wetlands, selectively cut trees, clearcut vegetation other than trees for ag purposes, drain for growing ag products, and operate motor vehicles for ag purposes. However, you cannot clearcut timber on a designated wetland site.

But what about roads which are so necessary to practice forestry? Here, we have a little problem. The same section states the landowner may construct winter truck roads of less than 16' in width for removing trees, but you cannot move earth or use aggregate of any kind that alters water flow. So you can make the clearing and 'corduroy' the width with pole-size trees (or construct a 'winter truck road'). If the road existed on the wet land before the classification, you're in luck because normal or ordinary maintenance and repair of existing functional structures as roads and buildings is allowed without a permit. However, you cannot expand or substantially modify that structure.

The landowner who asked question #4 has a problem since the fill, even with a culvert, can alter water flow from or into the wetland. In this case, is it possible to adjust the route to the edge of the wetland where the flow of water would not be altered? If this is a possibility, insist on an on-site visit for approval of your permit.

DEC (or APA in the Park) may approve your desired road design and location on the Class III Wetland if they determine the "proposed activity satisfies an economic or social need that outweighs the loss of or detriment to the benefit(s) of the Class III wetland." For a Class II wetland, it must be a pressing 'need' that clearly 'outweighs' the wetland benefit. In a Class IV wetland, it would be permitted if "the activity would be the only practicable alternative to accomplish the applicant's objectives."

NOTIFICATION

This brings me back to question #3. I don't know for a fact that some landowners with classified wetlands were ever contacted, but I have heard complaints they were not. If it is a fact

then the Law enacting the Freshwater Wetlands Act has not been met, and you have reason for an appeal. According to Article 24, Title 3, these are the required steps: 1. After completion of the wetlands inventory, a tentative map is prepared showing all classified wetland boundaries; 2. A public hearing is held in or near the area affected and each owner of record, as shown on the latest tax assessment rolls, is given notice of the hearing (just how that notice is given is not stated); also, notice of the hearing is published at least once in at least two newspapers with circulation in the area where the wetlands are located; 3. After considering testimony given at the hearing (landowner's rights vs ecological 'balance'), the map is finalized by order and each owner of lands with designated wetland is sent a copy of the order by certified or first class mail; copy of the order is published in at least two newspapers; 4. At this point, you can challenge the classification or regulation of use by appeal or review through the Freshwater Wetlands Appeals Board and/or the county supreme court.

COMPENSATION

I do know for a fact that some designated wetland sites were never ground-checked for verification, and some under review in the appeal process were not visited. My personal feeling is that when the rights of landowners are abrogated by a democratic state, then the landowner(s) should be duly compensated. And if I feel this strongly about our constitutional rights, then obviously I feel the affected landowner at least deserves to be visited on the site with the party responsible for implementing the abrogation. This brings us, finally, to the question in #4: "Is there any way the landowner can be compensated for this loss?" The only 'compensation' that I'm aware of under this law is under Title 9, Tax Abatement: if a regulated use on your designated wetland deprives you of income, then the property tax

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480-a: Preparation Avoids Surprises

By DAVID HAWKE,
Past CFA Intern

Forest ownership, like most enterprises, is a mix of costs and benefits. The benefits are various, and enrich not only the landowner, but society as well. Trees harvested for wood products may produce financial return for the owner and also add value to the regional economy. The forest provides open space, scenery, habitat for wildlife, recreational opportunities, and a cleansing filter for water and air. The costs of ownership are also various, but unlike the benefits, they are usually borne by the landowner alone.

There are ways to reduce the costs, Society, acting through its elected representatives, has sought to ensure the continued flow of benefits from private forests by creating incentives for owners to maintain the land in forests. In New York State, one such incentive is section 480-a of the Real Property Tax Law, known as the Forest Tax Law. This law exempts eligible forestland from a portion of the assessment on which one cost is based, the annual ad valorem taxes paid to the local government. Qualified forestland enrolled under this law may have the assessment reduced by as much as 80%. In place of the yearly tax, a 6% yield tax is charged on harvested trees at the time of harvest.

A forestland owner might seek to reduce his tax burden by enrolling under 480-a. An owner who enrolls for this reason may achieve the objective of lower taxes and find the experience satisfactory in every way. On the other hand, the landowner may find that 480-a enrollment produces some unpleasant surprises, and the responsibilities assumed are a greater burden than the full payment of tax. In addition, the anticipated savings may fail to materialize. These surprises can be avoided by careful preparation before the enrollment process.

The Forest Tax Law does not regard all forest benefits as worthy of incentives. One benefit, timber, is singled out and serves as the basis of enrollment. New York acknowledged the value of "wild" forestland when it amended the state constitution to create the Forest Preserve. The

Forest Tax Law, however, decidedly does not provide for "forever wild" private forests. The law mandates management of the forestland for the production of wood fiber products. 480-a works most satisfactorily for landowners who are motivated to practice such management for reasons other than reducing their taxes. This does not exclude landowners who are not so motivated, but it suggests a need to fully investigate the responsibilities assumed (and the returns to be expected) when woodlands are enrolled under the law.

Forest management is a series of deliberate, conscious activities that help to establish, tend, and harvest a forest of certain desired characteristics. Timber management represents a level of involvement that goes far beyond simply owning land with trees growing on it. Some of the activities require investment; others pay for themselves or return a profit. All require time and thought, and produce the periodic disruptions that accompany logging activity. Enrollment in 480-a requires producing a forest crop according to a management plan prepared by a forester. It means cutting trees. It means harvesting mature trees and regenerating the forest, and it means tending the immature trees. Many forest stands require fairly extensive improvement cuttings to create conditions for future management. These cuttings are required under the law, at a rate of 10 acres or 5% of the woodland per year, whichever is greater. Periodic thinnings are needed to maintain stocking at optimum levels for the growth of crop trees. These activities and their timing are given in the plan, and are the basis on which the woodland is enrolled.

A management plan is a good idea whether the woodland is managed for timber or any other use, but it is imperative when 480-a is being considered. The management plan will identify the investments needed for precommercial operations and road construction, and will give some idea of the probable income from the sale of harvested products. Without such a plan, the landowner will have no idea of what might be in store under 480-a.

Once the plan is approved by the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC), the landowner is responsible for its accomplishment. Some flexibility is allowed, but the plan is not a guide to management; it is an absolute statement of requirements to be met. Failure to carry out the plan will bring the unpleasant surprise of stiff financial penalties and loss of certification.

Timber management can be a profitable activity. The rate of return may be low compared to some other investments, but money spent to grow a forest crop will generally return a profit over time. The time involved, however, may be measured in decades. To some landowners the investment is real but the return remains theoretical because of its distance from the present. The investment required under the management plan may, in some cases, exceed the savings on property taxes for a number of years. This is another surprise that landowners unfamiliar with forest management may discover when they enroll under 480-a.

Another aspect of the law that needs to be clearly understood is the time commitment that accompanies enrollment. A landowner may be told that 480-a requires a ten-year commitment and interpret this to mean that if he agrees to follow the management plan for ten years he will receive, in return, a lowered tax assessment for ten years. Actually, the landowner agrees to follow the management plan for nine years following each year that the tax exemption is received. Thus, at the end of the last year of the lowered assessment, there remain nine years of commitment to follow the plan. Failure to do so, again, brings penalties. Also, the plan will need to be updated and resubmitted to DEC for its approval every five years.

One more potential surprise lies in store when the landowner learns what his tax savings will be. The law exempts a portion of the assessed value of the land from taxation. The figure of 80% is rather widely known, and a landowner might assume that this amount will be subtracted from

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Maple Syrup From Your Woodlot

Know Your Trees

If you know you have some sugar maple trees in your backyard or wood lot perhaps you would like to make a little maple syrup. It is a relatively simple operation and can be a fascinating educational experience for young and old alike.

Here's a list of the items you will need to make some of that amber elixir that did so much to sustain the morale of early American settlers.

In order to tap the trees, you need a brace with a 7/16" bit. All standard spiles, whether for buckets, bags or tubing, are designed to fit a hole made with a 7/16" bit. The spile may be a commercially manufactured item or a short piece of 1/2" wooden dowelling with a whole drilled through it. Any type of pail or jug can be used to catch the sap, but if you intend to make maple syrup each year, you may wish to invest in special plastic bags, plastic tubing or metal buckets, with covers.

Keep Holes Sanitary

To keep the tap holes sanitary, you will need either a mixture of 1 part of household chlorine bleach in 20 parts of water or special tap-hole sanitizing pellets. The chlorine solution may be squirted into the holes with a plastic squeeze bottle at least twice during the season. Some clean, discarded household detergent bottles serve this purpose admirably.

On a good day, you may expect each tap hole to produce one gallon of sap. Therefore, if the pan, tub, or pot you're going to use for boiling is too small to hold all of the sap you are likely to collect at one time, you will need a storage tank. Such a tank may be a 20 to 30 gallon utility bucket, or a wooden box lined with 6 mil plastic sheeting.

Boil Outside

Unless you have an exhaust fan in your kitchen, do most of your boiling outside. A galvanized washtub and ten or twelve cinder blocks make an adequate evaporating set-up. The size of the tub depends on how many taps you have. A 14 1/2 gallon tub can comfortably handle 12 taps. You will need dry wood or some other fuel, too. A standard cord of seasoned wood, or a pile measuring 8' x 4' x 4', will boil down enough sap for 12 to 15 gallons of syrup. Depending on the season and the trees, you can count on 1 to 2 quarts of syrup per tap hole per season.

The syrup should be finished on your kitchen stove with the help of a candy or other thermometer on which you can read 7 degrees fahrenheit above the boiling point of water fairly precisely.

Filter the Syrup

When the syrup is ready, it may be cloudy due to imprints called sugar sand. These may be removed by filtering the hot syrup

through a sheet of orlon felt. Household flannel may also be used if nothing else is available, but it will not clarify the syrup completely.

Ordinary jars filled right to the top with hot syrup serve well as storage containers. The syrup contracts on cooling, but a vacuum is formed if the jars have airtight covers.

Tap in March

Trees may be tapped as early as the end of January, but the principal sap flow occurs in March. As soon as the buds begin to swell in April, the sap becomes off-flavor or "buddy" and collecting must be discontinued. Spiles should be removed and all equipment cleaned thoroughly with a weak chlorine solution before being stored until next year. The holes in the tree do not need to be plugged. A new hole, located at least 6 inches horizontally or 12 inches vertically away from the previous tap must be made next time. The same hole cannot be reused.

Sap begins to deteriorate if stored longer than 48 hours before boiling. The tubs and

pots used for boiling should be cleaned each time they are used to keep the syrup lighter in color and more delicate in flavor. On the average, it will take 40 quarts of sap to make one quart of syrup. Therefore, if you start with ten gallons of sap, you should boil outside until only 2 to 3 quarts of liquid remain. Then transfer to the kitchen stove and boil further until the thermometer reads 7 degrees fahrenheit above the boiling point of water as you determine it. You must do this each time you make the syrup. The boiling point may vary from day to day at the same location.

Maple Supplies Available

The special maple supplies such as spiles, bags, filters, sanitizing pellets and so on are available from many dealers throughout the state. If you know a maple producer near you, contact him. He might be a supplier of equipment as well. If you do not know where to go or would like more detailed information contact the Cornell Cooperative Extension Office, 753-5077.

Source: Wyoming County Cooperative Extension



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Saratoga Springs —

Continued from Page 3

cones. In the fall prison inmates from correctional facilities collect 700 to 1,000 bushels of pine cones from 120 acres of specially cultivated "seed orchards" planted with grafted cuttings from superior trees.

In a large building behind the office the cones are air dried, then put in a drying kiln, which opens the cones and allows the seeds to fall out. They then travel through a series of machines designed to separate seeds from shafts.

NYFOA was introduced to Kurt Swartz, principal Forestry Technician, who showed us how he tests seeds for germination, after they have been cleaned. The performance of seeds is recorded beginning with the cone, until it leaves the nursery as a seedling. This aids in improving the quality of the nursery produce.

Seeds are placed in five-gallon glass jugs, corked and placed in a storage room where temperatures are kept just below freezing.

Most seeds are used within three years, but some have germinated after decades in cold storage. "The seeds must be stockpiled," Solan said, "because of the precarious year to year production of cones by the trees."

Seedlings harvested just before Thanksgiving are sorted, graded and layered in polyurethane crates marked as to number and type. Then it's stored in a separate building where the temperature is just below freezing.

The last building we visited is where trees are graded, counted and tied

into units of 50 and then bagged. Manual labor is used here and they work from a conveyor belt that moves the seedlings along. Here is where workers check for the length to make sure each seedling is six inches long.

The fields where the seedlings are grown are long, flat fields enclosed by tall rows of cedar trees for wind-break. About 90 acres of seedlings in various stages of growth can be found here.

Before planting, the land is cross subsoiled every 18 inches to break up hardpan and provide good drainage. The soil is tested, and fertilized accordingly. The soil is also fumigated and between plantings, cover crops of millet and sudan are used to build up the soil.

"Trees are a unique crop," said Solan. "Unlike many farm crops the entire plant is removed when harvested so no roots or stems are left to replenish the soil."

Seeds are planted both spring and fall to produce enough seedlings for the amount needed by the nursery.

The seedlings are harvested when two or three-years-old (when dormant at the end of March), by a converted potato harvester made in Canada. The machine is pulled over the four foot wide thicket of knee-high seedlings. The harvester can collect up to 400,000 trees a day. After an angled blade undercuts the roots the trees are lifted from the ground and put on a jiggling conveyor designed to shake off loose soil and carry the seedlings to boxes for transport to the warehouse.

The harvester uproots the trees without the yanking and potential tearing of the roots they endured with manual harvesting.

The nursery is busy all year. In winter seeds are extracted from cones, orders processed and equipment maintained. In spring, the ground is prepared for planting and harvesting takes place in April to fill the orders. In summer, irrigation and cultivating take place. Plowing and leveling the ground occurs in late summer. A small harvest of one million trees is done in November before Thanksgiving and put in cold storage for shipment in early spring to the warmer climates of the state.

Mother nature ranks first on a list of problems for the nursery. Frost can wipe out entire beds of young trees. A lack of snow for insulation in extreme cold weather can cause young seedlings to burn from the wind. It was mid-January when NYFOA was there and the temperature was a balmy 62°. The seedlings were fine, but snow would be a welcome sight. Diseases and insects can harm the plants too. All year seedlings are monitored to provide the best crop possible.

The nursery's annual budget is \$540,000 which is about the income provided from the sale of seedlings. Producing seedlings at cost, is a problem, because finding people to work for \$5.00 an hour during the month of April is difficult, so a part-time evening shift will be introduced to attract more workers.

If all the elements: seed collecting, planting, weather and harvesting are successful so the orders can be filled and shipped on time, then the staff of Saratoga Tree Nursery has achieved the goal of supplying New York with seedlings.

NYFOA wishes to thank the staff of Saratoga Nursery and especially John Solan, nursery manager and associate forester for taking time from his busy schedule to talk with us.

Due to a lack of staff, public tours are not available.



Dorothy Holoheau, accounting clerk, has worked at the nursery for 60 years.

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Woodland Home Study — Continued from Page 6

wildlife and the economic and personal benefits that can be gained from wildlife are presented. Wildlife as a renewable resource is the major angle of this lesson, as presented by Steve Clarke, wildlife specialist at the Department of Environmental Conservation. Integrating wildlife management into other management objectives is discussed.

Managing Woodlands For Recreation — This lesson was added in 1987 in response to requests by earlier "Woodland Management" enrollees. Prepared by Cornell specialist Tom Brown, topics covered are multiple-use recreation trails, posting and recreational access, and considerations in developing a recreation business. The lesson presents some of the ways that the landowner can enhance access to and control use of woodlands for the owner's own enjoyment and that of others.

Managing Woodlands For Multiple Uses — Landowners often find that they want to manage their land for many uses. This lesson is designed to help integrate the individual management objectives into a comprehensive multiple-use plan. Prepared by Ron Howard and Steve Clarke with additional comments from Tom Brown, suggestions and guidelines for planning and accommodating multiple uses are presented.

Practical Considerations In Planning And Conducting Woodland Management — This final lesson presents many practical concerns and insights that apply generally to successful woodland management such as costs, insurance, taxes, outside assistance, and record keeping. It consolidates and enhances many topics covered in previous lessons and serves as the conclusion to the course.

A registration fee of \$75 covers the cost of materials, mailings, administration, grading of lessons, etc. For further information, contact: Cornell University Home Study Program, 247 Warren Hall, Ithaca, NY 14853. (607) 255-3028.

Prepared by: Susan McIntyre and Gary Goff, Department of Natural Resources, Cornell.

480a: Preparation — Continued from Page 8

the current assessed value of his land. Actually, the possible exemption is figured in two ways, and the lesser value is subtracted from the current assessment. The actual savings depend on the tax situation for each woodland. The first method determines the exemption by multiplying the current assessment by 80%. The second method exempts \$40 per acre of full value (not assessed value). The calculation is performed by multiplying the local equalization rate by the \$40 figure, which will give the per-acre savings. The smaller number produced by these two methods is then deducted from the current assessment. If the local equalization rate is low, as it is in many Catskill towns, the savings can be significantly less than 80%. It is even possible that no tax savings will result.

Preliminary work is necessary to avoid surprises such as these. Before considering 480-a, a landowner needs to know something about timber management. This is the crucial decision that must be made: Do you want to manage your woodland in this way? Such management is compatible with other forest uses, but it has requirements and consequences that may not suit the preference of every landowner.

Further information should be obtained to see how 480-a will apply to the woodland if it is enrolled. Various sources should be consulted: the regional forester of the DEC, an accountant, a lawyer, the local assessor. Perhaps most important is to talk to local people who have been enrolled. Their experience can save a landowner from many surprises.

From 1988 CFA Newsletter.

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Ask a Forester — Continued from Page 7

evaluation should reflect this. In the words of section 24-0905, "Assessed value shall be based . . . on the uses remaining to the owner thereof." The compensation is small, but at least the loss is recognized.

This has been a long article — forgive me. It is a very important subject for forest owners who have designated wetlands, and the legislation is fraught with technical and legal detail. How about some dialogue on this issue? Do you have a classified wetland with regulated use? How has this affected forestry practice? How has the Freshwater Wetlands Act worked for you?

Please send questions and comments to: Wes Suhr, RR 1, Box 59B, Oswegatchie, NY 13670.

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MULTIPLE USE — HOW IT APPLIES TO THE SMALL LANDOWNER

Bill Betts, Sr. Forester, NYS DEC, Sherburne

FARMING ALTERNATIVES — HOW TO REACH DECISIONS ON LAND USE

David Gross, Ext. Specialist Natural Resources, Cornell U.

RAISING FALLOW DEER AS AN ALTERNATIVE

Peter Duenkelsbuehler, Robinia Hill Fallow Deer Farm, Moravia

MANAGING THE SMALL FOREST FOR WILDLIFE

Ward Duckelow, NYS DEC, Wildlife Biologist, Cortland

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