

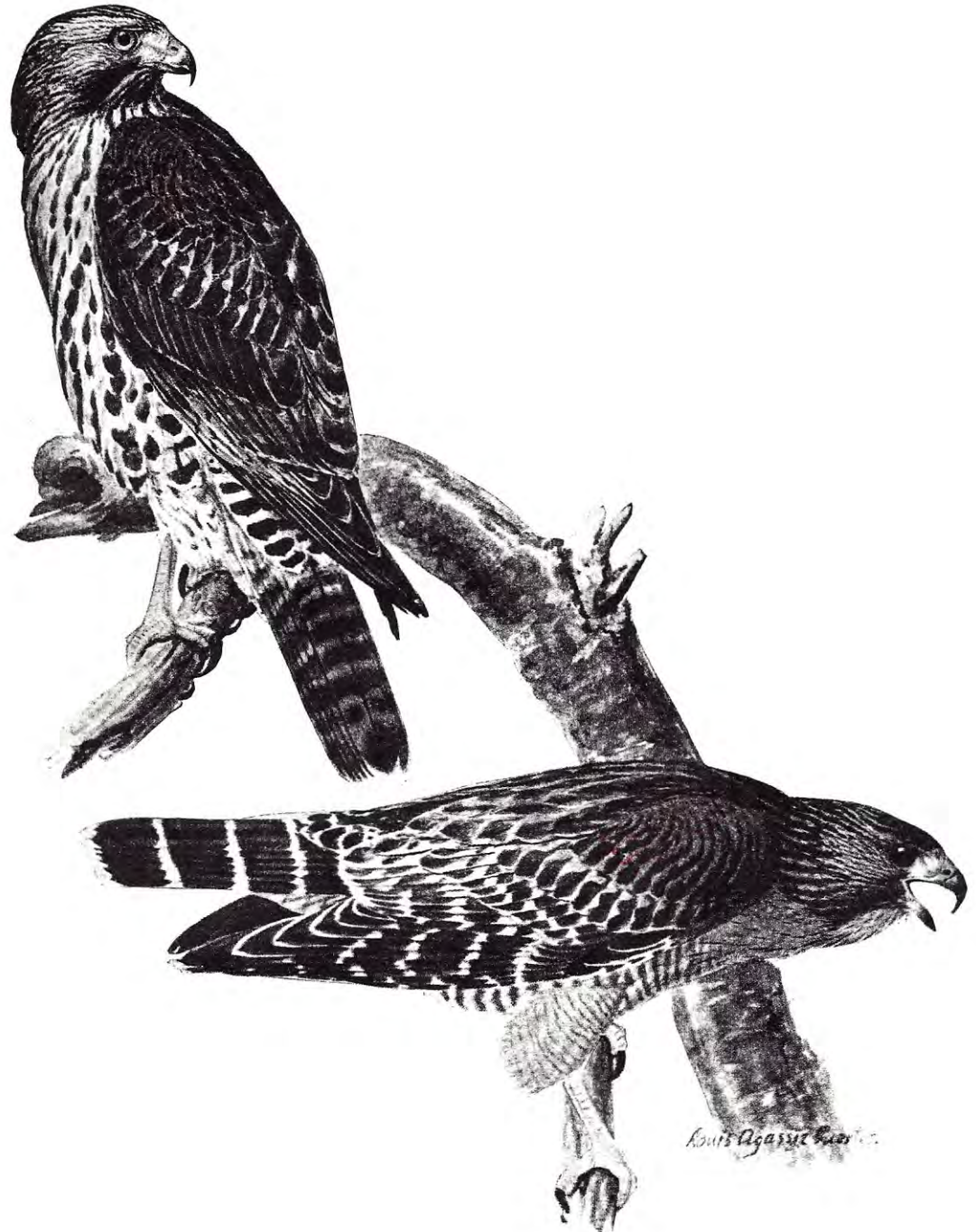
# FOREST OWNER

A Publication of the New York Forest Owners Association

May/June 1992

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THE NEW YORK





# THE NEW YORK FOREST OWNER

VOL. 30, NO. 3  
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## COVER:

Red-Shouldered Hawks  
Top: immature; Bottom: adult  
Credit: Birds of New York, Memoir No. 12,  
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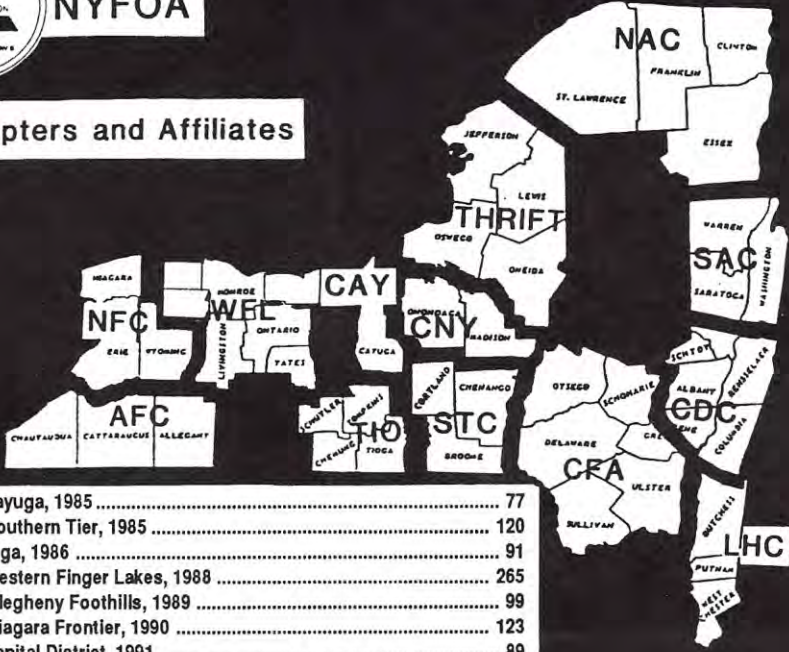
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## NYFOA

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# President's Message

By Stuart McCarty

The NYFOA budget for 1992, approved by the Board in January, will be presented for approval by the membership at the Annual Meeting. It shows a modest increase in membership income of about \$1000 to a total of \$25000. We need to do better, but realistically feel a net of 50 new members is about where we will finish the year. In 1991 for instance, we gained 367 new members but lost 317 in spite of energetic efforts to retain the latter.

The good news is that the six-month Chapter Membership Contest has been successfully completed with the winners being the Tioga Chapter in Section A, the Allegheny Foothills Chapter in Section B, and the Northern Adirondack Chapter in Section C. Congratulations to the victors. Each will be appropriately recognized at the Annual Meeting and presented with a plaque and a forestry video.

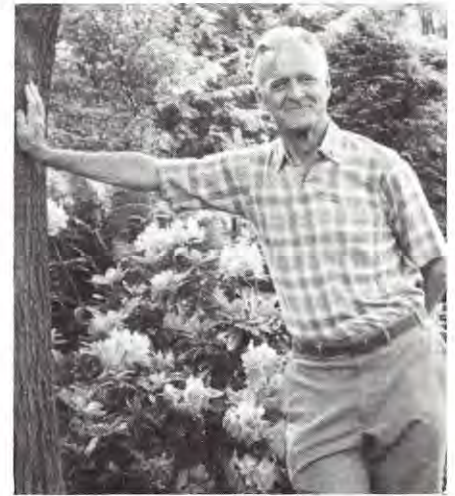
I am sure the contest raised the level of awareness of the need for new members among the chapters. We now have 1125 of

our 1595 members in our 11 chapters. Along with those of our two affiliates, the chapters' activities and newsletters have to be our best source of new members.

Another excellent source of new members has been the application in the Woodland Steward. This quarterly newsletter goes to over 7000 woodlot owners including NYFOA members and has generated over 190 new members for NYFOA since its first issue almost two years ago. This is a clear indication that there are potential members out there.

Another effort to find those potential members has been made by Dave Colligan, Chairman of the Membership Committee, and Pat McGlew, Chairman of the Tioga Chapter. Distribution of our brochure has been made to 58 offices of the Cooperative Extension with the request that they be prominently displayed. Dave reports that we are starting to see some results from this activity.

Finally, looking to other sources of income for NYFOA, a novel idea was



originated by Mark and Sue Kiester of the Western Finger Lakes Chapter over a year ago when they contributed 1% of the gross revenue of their timber sale to NYFOA. Just this past month this was repeated by a couple in the Allegheny Foothills Chapter. What a great idea which could be valuable for the future of NYFOA



## A Challenge!



By Bob Sand

April 1992 is a milestone for this Association. It marks the start of our thirtieth year since we officially organized. The New York Forest Owners Association has grown to well over 1500 members. It is a viable organization which has flourished because of the active dedication of hundreds of volunteers throughout the State over the years. We all have given in some way, but along the way received much too. There isn't a forest owner who, after attending a woods walk, heads homeward without new understanding and appreciation of the day's effort. Our membership has a diversity of ownership and management skills, as well as long term goals. It is

this sharing and showing that counts.

The past has presented many challenges. Fortunately our resolve as an association has brought a good measure of success. New vitality was provided when Affiliates and the formation of Chapters added another dimension to NYFOA. Membership growth has been dramatic. The direction and scope of our influence is far greater because of this more localized membership involvement. It has given us a new opportunity to influence good forestry here in our beautiful New York State.

NYFOA has much more to accomplish as an Association. We are poised and ready to accept new opportunities. Many of us are looking forward to that time when we can serve a membership of 10,000. It is a big number, but not so when you recognize that there are over 250,000 forest owners in the State.

Over the passing years several trends have developed. We have now significant fragmentation of forest land, an ever escalation of real property taxation, and continued challenges regarding forest health. Fortunately, our forest products industry has modernized and is in a good position to

provide strong markets for our ever increasing forest growth. Yet our political atmosphere is slowly losing rapport with New York's forest owners. There is a lack of understanding that a forest property is a very long term investment. Society and the environment are both enhanced by good forest practices but little consideration is granted to the forest owner.

As we move into a new century, NYFOA has important work to fulfill. It will take not only good and dedicated leadership, but continued support of forest owners willing to be a part of our membership. The future is indeed challenging. We have much to gain by working together. Membership is a bargain by any standard. Help us gain added support by enthusiastically seeking out and encouraging others to join the NEW YORK FOREST OWNERS ASSOCIATION now.

*In addition to forty years as Chief Forester for Cotton-Hanlon, Inc., Bob Sand has held every possible office for NYFOA and he received the Heiberg Award in 1988. Bob has retired as Chief Forester and is currently our Recording Secretary.*



# Biological Diversity - Is Variety The Spice Of Life?

By Douglas C. Allen

Forestry and wildlife practitioners must manage and perpetuate for society a widening array of commodity and noncommodity natural resources. Pervading this responsibility is a commitment to conserve a healthy environment. The latter is not an easy task in its own right, but the challenge is magnified as our productive forest land base declines and human populations and their attendant demand on natural resources increase.

At this juncture, it is difficult to make many forest management recommendations that will enhance or sustain biological diversity, because we are ignorant of the interactions that occur between most species, and know little about the contributions that individual species make to a community. It is unlikely, however, that all species contribute equally to community structure and function. Eventually society will have to make some difficult choices; tradeoffs between human desires and the needs of other species or, more to the point, the needs of the assemblages of plants and animals that we call communities. We can minimize our regrets at some later date only if decisions are based on good science, good management practices, and an understanding of the economic, social and ecological trade offs associated with different decisions. In this regard, there is a tendency to think solely in terms of commodities -- fur, feathers, wood products, or aesthetically pleasing organisms -- "fuzzy" creatures and showy flowers. However, often the most important constituents of a community are "invisible" or unattractive, even repugnant, to most people. Insects, fungi, and bacteria, for example, represent a multitude of invertebrate and microbial agents that are important components of biological diversity. Many of these organisms function as key players in nutrient cycling, predator-prey relations, decomposition, and other vital community functions.

The concern over biological diversity is legitimate. Relatively few life forms have a clearly defined economic value, but to varying degrees all species play a role in the structure and function within and between forest communities. Even in the absence of human disturbance, species will disappear. Paleontologists estimate

that 99.9 percent of all species that have lived on earth, since its beginning some 4 billion years ago, are extinct. Today, however, the earth is losing species in forested systems, most especially in the tropics, at rates greater than ever before. This loss has many dimensions; ethical, economic, and ecological. The concerns are not felt equally by all nations, nor among peoples within a society. Humans will continue to place demands on forested systems and, in doing so, will continue to modify landscapes. These modifications must be done in a responsible way and with a better understanding of both species needs and the species interactions necessary to maintain healthy forest communities.

"We are a unique kind of animal, conscious, able to reflect on what we do, gifted in wondrous ways. But at the same time, we are tied tightly to the surrounding ecological system from which our talents, physical and psychological, are drawn. Ignorance of our source and, too often, disdain for it, lie at the root of humanity's major predicament. Politics and economics continue to centre on the individual and the collectivity, on free enterprise and social welfare, neglecting ecological necessities of a higher order. Neither philosophical liberalism championing liberty nor philosophical socialism championing equality will save us from ourselves. Human history will end in ecology or nothing." (2)

## Biological Diversity - a definition

Biological diversity is a complex issue. It refers to the variety and abundance of species, their genetic composition, and the communities and landscapes in which they occur. It also refers to the variety of ecological structures, functions, or processes at any of these levels. Biological diversity occurs at spatial scales that range from local through regional to global.

While genetic diversity is a starting point in understanding the dimensions of the biological diversity issue, forest landowners can influence compositional and structural diversity most readily at two geographic scales; the stand and the forest.

## Types of Diversity

Compositional diversity includes the

commonly recognized species diversity, as well as genetic and community diversity. Maintaining genetic diversity is necessary to maintain the ability of a species to adapt to changing environments, and maintaining a variety of communities provides the habitats necessary for conserving diverse species.

Structural diversity pertains to the spatial arrangement of physical units. For example, at the stand level structural diversity can be characterized by the number of vegetational strata or size classes of trees. At the watershed level, this type of diversity is measured by the distribution of age classes.

Functional diversity represents variation in ecological processes; for example, predator-prey relations and nutrient cycling (the movement of nutrients, such as nitrogen, through interconnected geological, atmospheric and biological systems).

## The Importance of Scale

Biological diversity is also a question of scale. The concept applies equally at the stand, forest, watershed, landscape, and global levels. Conceptually at least, biological diversity can be strategically preserved, conserved, or managed at all levels. However, the attributes of biological diversity change depending on the scale at which it is considered. Not only does this have biological implications, but social and political consequences as well. By appreciating the concept of scale, one can begin to understand the complexity of biological diversity issues, and the fact that different management strategies are required for different scales and species.

(Continued on page 5)



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# NEW FORESTRY

Tropical rain forest? No. But yes, it is biological diversity in the forests of New York State. Billy Morris, NYS DEC forester from the Bath, NY office, evaluates a "giant" tree that is slowly dying and decomposing as it provides food and shelter to a variety of other plant and animal organisms. Perhaps this ecological forest environment relates directly to "New Forestry." This concept, "New Forestry," involves learning to understand and manage forest ecosystems from a complex ecological perspective that includes a time frame of hundreds of years, as well as an appreciation of nutrient cycling and micro-organisms. "New Forestry" was discussed in the C. E. Farnsworth Memorial Lecture and Fellowship presentation of March 26, 1992, at the SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry. Presented by the "father" of New Forestry, "Forest Stewardship in an Ecological Age" was discussed by Jerry Franklin, PhD., the Bloodell Professor of Forest Ecosystem Analysis, College of Forest Resources, University of Washington - Seattle. (Cornell Cooperative Extension Photo by Taber)



*"The history of civilization details the steps by which men have succeeded in building up an artificial world within the cosmos. Fragile reed as he may be, man, as Pascal says, is a thinking reed: there lies within him a fund of energy, operating intelligently and so far akin to that which pervades the universe, that it is competent to influence and modify the cosmic process." Thomas Henry Huxley, Evolution and Ethics, 1893; Stephen Jay Gould, Natural History, 4/92, 25.*

## Diversity

(Continued from page 4)

### What the Private Landowner Can Do

What can a forest landowner in New York do to enhance biological diversity in a meaningful way? I certainly am not an expert on the subject, but with this admonition, I will offer my views on how each of you can help and why it is important to do so. **My theme centers on the idea that, in many instances, deliberate forest management will be the most effective tool at our disposal. Appropriate silviculture is not only key to developing healthy and productive forests from a commodity perspective, it also can be central to**

### providing and maintaining diverse noncommodity values.

At this point in time, we really have little scientific basis on which to make recommendations to manage for biological diversity at large geographic scales. Even if we had the information necessary to make reasonable prescriptions at watershed or landscape levels, implementation in most geographic regions would require an unprecedented degree of cooperation and planning between diverse ownerships and political jurisdictions. Above the forest level, we often lack both scientific understanding and appropriate institutional mechanisms. Our ability to maintain and

perpetuate appropriate biological diversity becomes even more problematic when scientific and political questions must be addressed in the context of constitutional, and strongly held, property rights and the self-centeredness of human nature.

However, there are steps that small landowners can take to enhance diversity at the stand and forest levels. For starters, let's consider forest insect pests at the smallest geographical scale, the stand, and with a view to maintaining forest health. This approach appeals to me for two reasons; I am comfortable talking about insects, and it is at the stand level that a landowner can

(Continued on page 5)



# Diversity

(Continued from page 5)

most easily appreciate the hows and whys of enhancing biological diversity. Admittedly, my example provides a narrow view, and one of limited scale, but the principles can be applied more broadly.

For the most part, insect outbreaks materialize because 1) natural checks on population growth, such as predators and adverse weather, temporarily relax and insect numbers increase to the limit of their food supply, 2) human activities create ideal habitats for a native insect species, or 3) we inadvertently transport an insect from another continent (say Europe) where it has evolved in close association with a complex of checks and balances, to another continent (say North America) where the climate is suitable and food plentiful, but there are no effective (coevolved) natural enemies.

Observations by forest entomologists in many forest types over several decades suggest that diverse forests are often less susceptible to insect outbreaks, or less vulnerable to damage if an outbreak occurs, compared to relatively simple forests. Forest diversity is manifested in two ways; species composition (biological diversity) and stand organization (structural diversity). A forest that consists of a single species and one size class is often more susceptible to an outbreak and less resilient to disturbance than forests that are biologically and/or structurally more diverse, such as a collection of single species stands that consist of several size classes, or mixed species stands.

Susceptibility (i.e., the likelihood or risk of an outbreak) is determined by many factors, but certainly availability of suitable food and reduced populations of natural enemies are two important ingredients. Some forest pests are polyphagous (i.e., they are capable of feeding on a wide variety of hosts) but seem to do best on just two or three species, and many others are host specific. Additionally, a pest usually concentrates on only one or two size classes of the host. For example, the major pests of white pine seedlings are quite different from those encountered on saplings, and major problems of sawtimber size white pines are different still. A stand that is diverse structurally and compositionally presents more of a "challenge" to the pest, both in terms of the pest's ability to find a suitable host and the broader array of natu-

ral enemies that it often encounters under these conditions.

Economic opportunities, management objectives, or site conditions frequently may dictate that you perpetuate a relatively simple forest condition. Under these circumstances, one should be especially attentive to changes in pest activities, including the appearance of incipient damage, that may portend future losses.

Often insect outbreaks are triggered by external events over which the landowner has no control; for example, successive years of favorable weather that enhances insect survival, or mass immigration from a distant infestation. Under these conditions, forests characterized by diverse species and structure are often less likely to sustain significant damage. That is, they are more resilient to disturbance.

Different species of mammals, birds, amphibians, flowers, etc, also have different needs. In some instances, these needs are met at the stand level or even by an individual tree. Other species may have more "expansive" habitat requirements that can be addressed only at the forest, watershed, or landscape levels. Obviously, sustainability of these organisms may depend on the coordinated efforts of many landowners, because a single holding often is not adequate to accommodate their needs. **Current thinking indicates that emphasis in biological conservation should shift away from managing for single species in favor of maintaining healthy communities (i.e., managing for collections of interacting species). In most instances, this is viewed as a more prudent approach, both from economic and ecological perspectives.**

It would be futile to try and compile specific guidelines or a list of "hands on" management activities that a landowner can use to manage or enhance biological diversity. Each ownership has different objectives, opportunities and constraints. Additionally, species and community needs vary.

The following general recommendations seem like a good place to begin for most landowners who wish to address the diversity issue: 1) retain and perpetuate as many different habitat types on the property (both aquatic and terrestrial) as is deemed practical; 2) maintain natural forest cover types in large blocks rather than fragmenting into smaller blocks; 3) incorporate a conifer plantation or two within

hardwood types; 4) maintain, where economically feasible, stands with multiple rather than single tree species; 5) retain a mosaic of age (size) classes of trees or, where practical, multilayered (two-aged or uneven aged) stands; 6) retain snags and tree species, such as beech or basswood, which often have little "commercial" value, but are important to wildlife; 7) layout roads carefully to minimize erosion and, ultimately, the degradation of aquatic systems; and 8) contact your local DEC office for assistance if you believe that your property contains a rare species or habitat.

Expropriation of property or diminishment of property rights certainly are not the answer to the biological diversity issue. Understandably, most landowners cling tenaciously to the inalienable character of these rights. I would suggest, however, that along with these rights goes a social responsibility that will intensify as the human population and its overall impact on the environment increases. One could argue that true "stewardship" includes a measure of altruism. In the long run, society may have to compensate landowners for actions perceived as altruistic (and more often than not costly) when environmental concerns become entangled with the issue of private right vs public good. Rights are established by law, responsibilities are not. Is it naive to think that we can cultivate a conservation generation? I hope not. For in its truest sense, "stewardship" should transcend boundaries and ownerships, and integrate public concerns with private desires.

## SUGGESTED READING

- 1) Society of American Foresters. 1991. *Biological Diversity in Forest Ecosystems*. 52p. (5400 Grosvenor Lane, Bethesda, MD 20814, price-\$10).
  - 2) Rowe, Stan. 1990. *Home Place - Essays on Ecology*. NeWest Press, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada. 253p. (\$15.)
  - 3) Hunter, Jr., M. L. 1990. *Wildlife, Forests, and Forestry*. Prentice Hall, Englewood Cliffs, NJ. 370p. (\$60.)
- [Acknowledgement: I thank Wayne Zipperer, Research Forester, U.S.D.A., Forest Service, SUNY, College of Environmental Science and Forestry for reviewing this article and providing many helpful suggestions]
- This is the third in a series of helpful and informative articles by Dr. Allen, Professor of Forest Entomology at SUNY ESF.*



## MADE IN NEW YORK:

# Accessing Your Woodland With Hand-Built Hiking Trails

By Ed Greenaker

While hiking through a New York State woodland, nature constantly provides stimulus for our senses to experience the hammering sound of a woodpecker, the smell of fallen leaves, a glimpse of a white-tailed deer. Implementing trails on your own woodlands not only allows one to witness the solitude of nature first-hand, it is also great exercise and therapy. In order to provide a maximum experience, the trail itself should be subtle and rustic in design allowing the hikers attention to be focused on the quality of the outing.

The Appalachian Trail Conference states that their environmental objective is "To provide a footpath designed and managed to lie lightly on the land with a minimum disturbance to the natural surroundings". Made-by-hand trails tend to blend much more readily with the landscape than those

made with big machinery. The treadway should be cleared of most vegetation, but in a manner which would result in minimal disturbance to the humus layer, thus insuring a solid, non-erosive treadway. The Appalachian Trail Conference recommends trail specifications of a 4-foot width by an 8-foot clearance (in ideal conditions).

A well-designed trail will wend its way through a variety of cover-types, thereby providing diverse settings for the hiker to enjoy (for example: mature hardwoods, pine stands, meadows, edge of wetlands). The trail might incorporate a generous mix of straight-aways and curves. The design should be such that a unique point of interest or vista might be preceded by a turn in the pathway, creating a surprise to the hiker and adding a sense of adventure to the hike.

Occasionally, hiking trails require additional projects as dictated by the terrain. Footbridges may be necessary to cross brooks. Puncheon (wooden walkways) might provide access through bogs or lowlands. Other areas may require merely a few large stepping stones. In keeping with a natural trail design, all projects should be constructed primarily with native materials.

The benefits of accessing your woodland with a low-impact, made-by-hand hiking trail are numerous. A trail which is properly designed and constructed can provide a lifetime of pleasure. So tread lightly and enjoy the natural treasures that are ours to savor.

*Ed Greenaker is a self-employed recreational forester and outdoor enthusiast. He resides in Oneonta.*

# Pond Building Workshop Sparks Interest

By Kathleen Farnum

CFA held a pond building workshop last September that was exceptional. Over 100 attended, a new record for CFA. That figure tells me we did something right.

To start off we arranged for a professional pond builder to speak. It just so happened that our Board President, Jack McShane, had three ponds put in by LaFever Excavating over the last five years and was contemplating putting in a fourth. He offered to have the workshop at his second home in Andes and convinced John LaFever to speak. We also decided to incorporate a woodswalk into the day.

Over 80 people called to sign up for the workshop. Now we needed mother nature to cooperate. She did. She gave us a beautiful sunny day right between two rainy ones. The cars and trucks and even a motorcycle rolled in one by one. Pretty soon Jack's place looked like a small fairground.

The group enjoyed watching a 15 minute video LaFever made describing the process. It was set up on Jack's back porch and played various times during the day so everyone got a chance to view it. We also picked some of Jack's apples right off the tree for brunch as we waited for the entire group to assemble.

Jack welcomed the group and took advantage of the super opportunity to give an overview of CFA and what our goals are. He is really dedicated to CFA and is active in recruiting new members.

John LaFever took over from there and explained the questions to be considered when putting in a pond. He led the group around Jack's three ponds explaining the different aspects of each and the different types to chose from. The site for an additional pond was inspected and the possibilities discussed.

Some members of the group stayed on to tour Jack's woodlands. Jack has a really beautiful piece of property of 240 acres. there isn't a lot of timber on this property so he has concentrated on Wildlife Habitat Improvement and has done some really

interesting things in this regard.

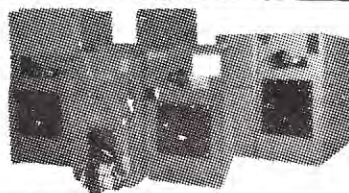
As an avid archer he designed an archery course that wends its way through his property. Bird houses and brush piles for rabbits were all over. He also brush-hogged some of his fields in strips alternating cut rows and tall grasses, it had proved to be a great fawning ground. He opened up mast producing trees increasing the edibles available to wildlife.

He ended by talking about the good relationships he has with his neighbors and some plans he has for the future.

The day was so successful that a second workshop is planned for late summer and this time we may incorporate pond stocking. Hope to see you there!

*Kathleen Farnum is the Executive Director of the Catskill Forestry Association.*

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# RED-SHOULDERED HAWK

By Stephen W. Eaton

This hawk usually makes its presence known by its loud cries, near its nesting area, a wooded wetland. With the reduction of habitats they have become much less common since WWII and the Red-tailed Hawk, inhabitant of more open country, has replaced it over much of New York and the northeast. The Redshouldered's distribution in New York<sup>1</sup> is a fairly common nester in Chautauqua, southern Cattaraugus, Allegany; Tompkins, Oneida and Oswego Counties, the Tug Hill plateau, river valleys draining the western Adirondack foothills, Lake Champlain Valley, and the Delaware Valley and its tributaries. Elsewhere it is rather widely present as a breeder. It was confirmed as breeding in only two blocks (5 x 5 km) on Long Island and was confirmed in only one block of the Ontario Lake Plain where it had been a common breeder in the early part of the century.

Palmer, in his Handbook of North American Birds Vol.4, shows it to nest from Maine to southern Florida west to Minnesota, south through eastern Texas and into Mexico, where it may now be absent. There is a distinct population nesting in California and Nevada where water development projects have increased habitat.

In winter most New York breeding individuals leave their territories and move south to Virginia, the Carolinas and Georgia. This was determined by recovery of birds banded in New York and found in the south.<sup>2</sup>

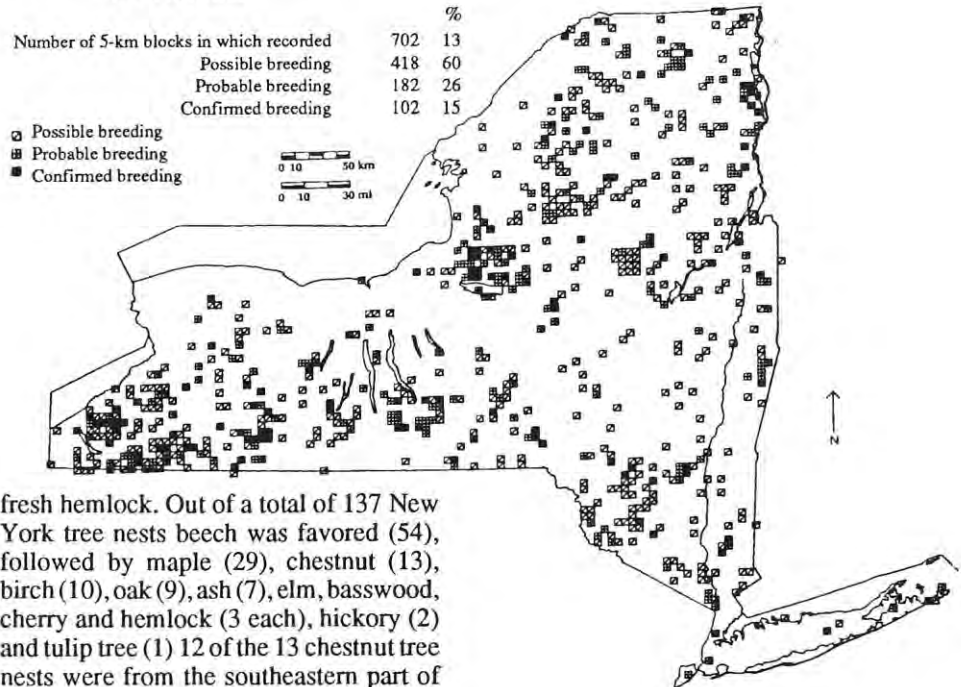
We look for the Red-shoulder the first week of March in southern Cattaraugus County. The sun gets a little higher in the sky and on a bright sunny day, the cry, a loud clear "Kee-ah, Kee-ah" is heard on the day of his arrival and can be heard through the nesting season. Before they leave in the fall in October they will also give their cry, as though to claim their territory one last time. One must be cautious to not mistake the mimicking call of the Blue Jay - particularly in the fall and early March. The Blue Jay's "Kee-ah" is weaker but quite realistic.

Red-shouldered Hawks are slightly smaller than the familiar Red-tailed Hawk and have a longer tail with three distinct white, narrow bands. The shoulders, less often seen, are rusty reddish as is the breast in the adult.

The nest is typically built in a large tree in a stand of mature timber about 100-150 feet from water and there is usually a well developed understory. If a previously built nest is to be used, ownership is indicated by deposit of greenery- in New York usually

(*Buteo lineatus*)

## Distribution<sup>1</sup>



fresh hemlock. Out of a total of 137 New York tree nests beech was favored (54), followed by maple (29), chestnut (13), birch (10), oak (9), ash (7), elm, basswood, cherry and hemlock (3 each), hickory (2) and tulip tree (1) 12 of the 13 chestnut tree nests were from the southeastern part of the state. On Long Island they nested almost entirely in chestnut trees.<sup>3</sup> The height of New York nests ranged from 15-75 feet. The number of eggs ranged from 2-5 with most sets of three.

In New York and New England eggs are laid from 5 March to 31 May, peak 18-29 April. Incubation may be largely by the female but some authors say that mates seem to share incubation equally. The male comes in low, calling, and swings up to the nest rim; the incubating female rises and flies away and the male settles down. After hatching the male delivers food to the female at the nest or near by. Incubation lasts 33 days per egg; as incubation starts with the first egg, hatching is spread over some days. Daily feeding by the parents averaged about 10 feedings a day; and by day 20, after hatching, when young started feeding themselves, feedings were reduced by half. Age at first flight is about 45 days. As "branchers" (perching in trees near nest) they continue to return to the nest to feed and roost for some time. Young begin to hunt for food about two weeks after attaining flight but parents continue to supply them with food for 8-10 weeks.

The Red-shoulder is a woodland dweller, hunting beneath the canopy and over more open terrain near by, which is moist or near water. They perch quietly, not far off the ground, watching for prey which is attacked with suddenness. Their food is mainly reptiles, amphibians, small mam-

mals and birds, and some insects. They seem to specialize on cold blooded vertebrates and in some places, seasonally, on small mammals. Often chipmunks are a major food item. When the various frog, toad and salamander species spawn in our pond they often come to perch on our Wood Duck box to get their meal. During period of drought their food may be mainly small mammals, the next year with normal precipitation, mainly amphibians.

The former abundance of the Red-shoulder in New York can be seen by my father's statement [E.H. Eaton] 1914, "This bird is probably the commonest large hawk in the southern, central and western counties of New York, where most of the original forests have been cleared away and small patches of woodland have been left standing along the streams and in swampy tracts." Palmer in the book Maine Birds, 1949, cites William Brewster (1925), who said that the Red-shoulder replaced the Red-tail Hawk throughout much of Massachusetts and the Umbagog region of Maine because the original forest was replaced by mainly deciduous woodland. Today this trend has been reversed in New York and New England where the Red-shouldered has become greatly reduced in numbers and the Red-tail increased. The Atlas of Breeding Birds in New York State, where data were assembled from 1980-1985, confirmed the Red-shoulder nesting in 102

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# Somewhere Over The Rainbow



By Dick Fox

Despite the fact that the Land of Oz is in the Territory of the Oneidas, it really depends upon which direction Dorothy is looking. Unofficially since the late twenties, and officially, since 1970, the Eastern Bluebird (*Sialia sialis*) has been recognized as the State Bird of New York, the same species so honored by the State of Missouri. There are two other kinds of *Sialia* over western rainbows of Kansas and the Rocky Mountain Range. The Family is Turdidae or Thrushes with ten other species found in North America, and includes the American Robin (*Turdus migratorius*).

Given that the Eastern Bluebird favors grasslands and a few trees for cavity nesting and perch sites, it must be some stubborn quirk or a deeper profound insight of New Yorkers to select this bird for the honor. Consider: New York was probably over 95% in forest of one kind or another

since the retreat of the glacier. Absent genetic modification or environmental adaptation, the bluebird must have been restricted to beaver (the unofficial State Mammal) meadows and natural burns, which according to some, was not an overly common habitat.

Unless Indian land management by agriculture and deliberate burning provided additional habitat and pre-white settler encouragement; it was the berserk woodsmen and aggressive homesteaders of the 19th Century who strived to satisfy the food and fiber needs of an expanding urban growth and an accompanying industry. By the removal of 75% of New York's forest canopy the new people provided excellent bluebird habitat.

The wistfulness of Dorothy's song is echoed in New York, because the immigrants brought two friends very antagonistic to the Eastern Bluebird: the English or House Sparrow (*Passer domesticus*) to Central Park in 1850 and the European Starling (*Sturnus vulgaris*) to Central Park in 1890. Commencing in the 1930's these two cavity nesters successfully displaced the bluebird from its decreasing habitat, a New York of 62% forests and much greater urban growth. To further define the quirky New York character and our questionable choice as the State Bird, the Eastern Bluebird has a considerable roster of unfriendly native critters that is an ever-present threat to the bluebird's survival. The list includes the House Wren (*Troglodytes aedon*), the Tree Swallow (*Irodoprocne bicolor*), the Raccoon, and the larvae of the Blow Fly, to name a few. So much for the overture.

However, during Act I, the appeal of

*Sialia* and its own cheerful song prompted an all out effort to provide suitable housing in suitable habitat. Golf courses, pastures, lawns, and roadways have become Bluebird Trails networked with organizations of dedicated New Yorkers and others elsewhere. An extensive body of knowledge has proliferated the birding community and, despite the expanding forests in our future, the bluebirds are coming back.

For Act II the nest boxes and stands are designed to frustrate the starlings and opportunistic mammals; located carefully to discourage the House Sparrow and the House Wren and doubly sited to accommodate the Tree Swallow. The next boxes are monitored for blow fly maggot infestation; the larvae removed, if present; nests removed after fledging to encourage a second effort; and generally patronized for their role as heralds according to the New York Wizard, John Burroughs:

"And yonder bluebird with the earth tinge on his breast and the sky tinge on his back - did he come down out of heaven on that bright March morning when he told us so softly and plaintively that if we pleased, spring had come?"

To become a player in Act III, write: UPSTATE NEW YORK BLUEBIRD SOCIETY, Joe & Sue Sedlecek, 226 Myrtle Ave., Johnson City, NY 13790, (607) 797-9268; and catch a Bluebird.

*I am indebted for this article to Steve Kahl, Conservation Chairman of the Owasco Valley Audubon Society and much help from Joe and Sue Sedlecek, also NYSDEC's The Conservationist.*



*John Marchant, Executive Director of NYFOA with Cub Scouts on the Bluebird Trail.*

## Hawk

(Continued from page 8)

blocks in the State: the Red-tail in 1042 blocks. Gerald A Smith, who wrote up the species in the atlas stated, "The virtual absence of the Red-shouldered Hawk from red maple-hardwood swamps along Lake Ontario and the scarcity of records in riparian situations on the Great Lakes Plain is striking. Equally striking is the large number of records from the Adirondack and Tug Hill Plateau forests. This is in sharp contrast to distribution described earlier in the century."

The history of the distribution of these two hawk species illustrates beautifully how pervasive man's influence can be on

the status of the northeastern hardwoods and their woodland occupants. Although pesticide residues have been found in Red-shouldered Hawks most authors seem to agree that these have not been a major factor in the change in status of this hawk.

### References:

- <sup>1</sup>[The Atlas of the Breeding Birds of New York (Andrle and Carroll 1988)]
- <sup>2</sup>[(Bull, Birds of New York state, 1974)]
- <sup>3</sup>(Dutcher 1888-94)

*Steve Eaton is a retired Professor of Biology at St. Bonaventure University; manages a Certified Tree Farm in Cattaraugus County and member of NYFOA's Allegheny Foothills Chapter; and a Master Forest Owner, class of '91.*



# Otsego's Woodland Heritage

By Henry S. Kernan

Most of those familiar with our county will agree that trees and forests are the most striking natural beauty of the landscape. Whatever the tax-rolls say, they are more than undeveloped "open space" waiting for buildings and roads. The seasonal changes alone should persuade us that forests are an ineluctable, dynamic force that shape the way we live and the way we use our land. They already cover two thirds of our county and spread further each year, with their dazzling fall colors and more somber hues of the leafless winter months. Maple flowers tinge the "green fire" of early spring with yellow and red. As the summer advances the woods become quiet and the leaves droop to signal the passing season. A landscape and a life without forests is almost unimaginable to us.

New York's forest inventory of 1980 found 371.3 thousand acres of forested land in our county. The inventory now under way will undoubtedly show past trends continuing; more forest, more wood, denser stocking and larger trees. We have more red maple but less red oak. High quality sawlogs and veneer logs are more abundant, but even more abundant are low-quality trees fit only for chipping and burning. The human presence has long dominated those trends and will continue to do so even more thoroughly in the future than in the past. The more we learn about forests the better we can guide them toward desired goals.

Reciprocal links between men and forests are as ancient as the human species. Though early civilizations and agriculture appeared first in nearly treeless river valleys, they spread into the forest with stone axes and fire. The need for tools and equipment have strengthened those links to farming, shelter, transport and the stages of industry through the present elaborate chemical conversions of wood and generation of electric power. Concerns for rare species and ecologies under stress are coming to dominate the next stages. Thus passive indifference toward forest and trees is even more inappropriate today, when the need for natural resources and the means of their conservation or destruction are more powerful than ever before.

The trees that dominate Otsego County's



*Circa 1925 photograph by Arthur J. Telfer with special thanks to Milo Stewart, Bill Gengenbach and Julius E. Waller (Master Forest Owner, Class of '91)*

forests are northern hardwoods; essentially birch, beech and maple. The oak-hickory forest type pushes north along the wider valleys, with a few remnants of the boreal forest around glacial lakes. Pioneer demands for clapboarded housing, harnessing horses and shodding feet did away with much white pine and hemlocks. The conifers are coming back as a glance at our landscapes can suggest. Nevertheless the forests we see and admire most are predominantly maple forests.

For the last 10,000 years northern hardwoods have been following the retreating glacier across our Allegheny plateau and the boreal forests of spruce and fir. They thrive best in deep, well drained soils with protection from excessive sunlight and wind, avoiding the extremes of too much water or soils too stony, poor and thin. At those extremes the typical species are white pine and red maple. The most successful northern hardwood in numbers and volume, in sentiment and beauty, the backbone of the local sawmill industry, is the sugar maple, the golden tree of syrup and autumnal splendor. About 20 other species of timber size grow with sugar maple but none does so well as the forest advances over open land with mostly light-seeded, sun-loving component species. The forest evolves, becoming taller, denser and casting more shade, toward a nearly stable association of sugar maple, beech and hemlock. Their dense shade and thick layers of

debris on the forest floor keep most other species out and thus establish the climax stage. Without drastic disturbance the stage is permanent. Nevertheless because drastic disturbances are within the climatic pattern undisturbed stands of sugar maple, beech and hemlock do not often occur.

Most northern hardwood forests in Otsego County are even-aged and result from natural or man-made disturbances that interrupted the successional trend at an earlier stage than the climax. They take many forms and degrees of forms, one or more together: fire, wind, ice, drought, insects, diseases, browsing, breakage and clearing for conversion to other uses. For example the gypsy moth prefer to feed on trees weakened by extreme cold or drought. With defoliation the roots lack food and the energy to absorb water and send it to the upper branches where photosynthesis can take place. The tree dies; light reaches the forest floor where seedlings are waiting to replace the older trees.

A case to visualize the process is that of the white pine, whose seedlings need mineral soil and sunlight. White pine seed must have found them in the primeval pre-colonial forest; only drastic, catastrophic disturbance can account for their presence on the forest floor. Without them, white pine does not survive in competition with hardwoods. Still white pine is Otsego's largest and most long-lived tree.

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# Otsego

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Henry S. Kernan measuring a white birch tree on his tree farm in the Charlotte Valley.

Yet the predominate influences on the forests we see to-day are human activities. They cleared and cultivated land that has since relapsed into forest and they logged over woodlots time and again. Plantations of exotic conifers have proliferated as have exotic pests like the white pine blister rust, the chestnut blight, the Dutch elm disease and the gypsy moth. Even the abundance of deer and beaver, both tree killers, is to an extent the result of man's presence. Trees and forests are under continuous stress and combat for survival. Yet no form of life has surpassed them for longevity, 6000 years or more in the case of bristlecone pine.

The backdrop of life in Otsego County is the sugar maple, in village, field, forest and highway. Nevertheless we are fortunate in having several other species of outstanding value, red oak, white ash and black cherry. They produce wood of extraordinary beauty and usefulness, and are also the most majestic trees of the forest.

They are neither pioneers such as poplar and pin cherry nor shade-loving climax species such as hemlock and beech. Their seedlings and saplings do best in moderate shade but later need full sunlight on their crowns. In market value as standing trees they are worth twice sugar maple, eight times beech and twelve times poplar. At their best they have long, straight clear boles and crowns above the sugar maples and other slower more shade-loving species. All three are abundant, though periodic, seeders. They thus enrich the forest with the offer of food and shelter to wild-

life. The red oak has heavy branches and a spreading crown. The other two have narrower crowns and can thus grow in denser stands without losing their rapid growth. The most valuable woods for timber are those with a quarter to a third of their capital growing stock in oak, ash and cherry.

In the 1850's New York was the nation's leader in lumber and nearly every household used wood as a fuel. Where the state stands today compared to others is less important than the balance of growth to drain. They are strongly and surprisingly out of balance. In round terms the net annual increment is 550 million cubic feet and the removals are 200 million cubic

feet. The ratio of 2.8 to 1 suggests that New Yorker's are making very conservative use of their forests, at least for industrial and energy production.

Given that ratio and the heavy burden of real property taxes, one can well ask why half a million or so New York woodland owners acquire and retain their properties. They must have reasons beyond those of growing and selling for financial gain. Each one has a set of values, but probably the weightiest whether conscious or not, are in assured affinities with trees and tree-covered land, affinities deeply rooted in the human psyche. Especially at the times

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## How to Avoid Best Sellers

By Romeyn Berry

We read the book reviews pretty carefully. Having done so, we're apt to reach around, pull down an old book, and read that. Last week it was Fenimore Cooper's "The Pioneers" that we picked off the shelf at more or less random, after perusing the current Saturday Review.

This practice does not represent a stubborn disregard of public opinion or of critical estimates—just patience. Public opinion is frequently right, but it's most apt to turn out to be reliable when it has been given a chance to cool off and settle down. If, after a year, a new book continues to sell and still wins the favorable comment of people whose judgment in such matters we commonly find in harmony with our own, we then feel the water with our toe, wet our wrists, and dive into it. By this method we catch up in the course of time with the new books likely to survive, and avoid those best sellers which have become known to the trade as tripe.

The last previous occasion on which we read "The Pioneers"—in 1898 at a guess we read it solely for the plot and to follow the fortunes of Natty Bumppo who had previously won our interest in the pages of "The Deerslayer," "The Last of the Mohicans," and "The Pathfinder." At that time we leaped lightly from episode to episode skipping the descriptive passages and the comments on the manners and customs of the early settlers of Otsego County. On this trip we reversed the journey through Cooper's slow and pon-

derous paragraphs and concentrated on the early days of Cooperstown.

"The Pioneers" was written in 1823 and deals with the last decade of the 18th century, and the early part of the 19th. The Cooperstown country had a 15-year start on the Ithaca section, less than 100 miles away, but the manner of settlement was entirely different. The difference is still strikingly apparent in the social and economic structure of the two communities.

Over there tremendous areas were early acquired by smart real estate operators who encouraged settlers to come in, purchase small holdings, clear the land, establish farms and villages, and thus make more valuable the unsold portions of the big tracts. The children of the sellers and the buyers were soon grouped into two distinct categories and, according to reports, the line of demarcation can still be seen when people throw parties.

Being part of the Military Tract, the land around Ithaca was broken up into small parcels from the start. Nobody ever acquired large tracts and the rise and fall of family fortunes around here was at no time based on the unearned increment.

All of which is respectfully submitted to show it's still possible to get a lot of information out of the works of J. Fenimore Cooper.

*A selection from "Dirt Roads to Stoneposts", a collection of articles by "Rym" Berry published in book form by Century House, Watkins Glen in 1949.*



# Otsego

(Continued from page 11)

of seasonal change, budburst and leaffall, their presence creates both delight and awe. The thoughtful observation of forests, understanding their structure and rhythms of change by day, season, year and decade, deepen and sharpen those affinities thereby increasing the rewards of ownership beyond those found in passive awareness.

About the only ways we woodlot owners have to stand the drain of real property taxes are through sales of standing timber. Paying an annual assessment with periodic sales is hardly a way to make money. Moreover to many citizens a logged-over woodlot is an affront, like billboards and roadside beer cans. Until a practical way is found to remove trees by air, logging and the first years of recovery are certain to be unsightly. Fortunately woodlots do have spontaneous powers of recovery even from the most brutal treatment, powers to which the 371,300 acres of forest land in the county are witness. Probably few or none exist today without some trace of human intervention by selective cutting and removal of trees. Clear cutting and conversion to agricultural land are no longer practiced to any important degree. Hence the emphasis upon the word selective.

Quite understandably loggers choose to pay for and remove trees that yield the highest profit. As a woodlot loses the trees of best quality and retains the poorest, the selective process entails a deterioration of genetic quality and species mix. Most of Otsego's forests have been through the process several times and are therefore very far from growing anywhere near their potential. Skillful management and careful logging can more than double their growth and value.



Looking North towards Cherry Valley, circa 1990. Photograph by Nancy Waller.

The most important factor is the control over the density and diversity of the stand. The process of control can begin when the trees are a few inches in diameter. Careful and selective thinnings concentrate the growth upon the trees of best quality and species. Density control is very important, because the crop trees must have room to grow. Another important goal is diversity. Stands of different sizes and species produce the best trees while making fullest use of the site and best satisfying the multiple purposes of forestland ownership.

In sum, our woodland heritage is doing well, but could do better. We need more diverse markets for wood, more skillful loggers, fairer taxes and, above all, more informed and interested owners.

*Henry Kernan is a consulting forester particularly active in international forestry. He has hosted many woodswalks for the NYFOA affiliate, the Catskill Forestry Association, and other groups on his Charlotte Valley forest; and is a Master Forest Owner, class of 1991.*

## Membership Corner

By David J. Colligan

Our membership ranks are growing, but we are always looking for ways to attract new members. Stuart McCarty, our president, started a friendly competition amongst the chapters to try to increase the memberships within the chapters. Hew has covered this in his message elsewhere in this issue. Those not in the competition who are not in a chapter are not left out because we keep track of any individual who is credited if the new member puts down the name of the sponsoring member on the line after the words "Referred by...." on the membership application.

We'd like to take this opportunity to honor those individuals who have been credited with bringing in four or more members since the data base was brought up to date by John Marchant in the fall of 1989. Our apologies to anyone who didn't get credit either because our records aren't complete or the applications didn't specify the sponsoring member:

### HONOR ROLL

Member's Name	Number of New Members
Dick Fox	12
Morgan Heussler	9
Wes Suhr	8
Mary McCarty	7
John Marchant	7
Billy Morris	7
Bob White	7
John Hastings	6
Stuart McCarty	6
Karen Anderson	5
Dave Tregaskis	4

Congratulations to all of those on our Honor Roll as well as anyone else who has brought in new members!

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# My Favorite Tree

By Audrey Childs

My first memory of a favorite tree goes back to my preschool years. My Dad and I were very close and on weekends he would take me hiking in hills near our home. Looking back it must have been he who found this secluded spot, but I called it my "house". It was a hemlock grove with a stream running along the side of it. The hemlock branches swept down and across the edges of the bubbling stream, making it a very secluded, cool oasis. My Dad would cut me a bough which I used to sweep and tidy up my house. We would take our lunch with us and keep the fruit and drinks in the bubbling refrigerator. It was such a happy time for me that even after all these years the smell of hemlocks brings back a feeling of nostalgia.

We moved to the city when I was seven so I had to leave my little home in the forest behind. My love of the woods, thankfully, did not end with this move; it was nurtured by frequent visits to my grandparents. Their

property in Cattaraugus County provided a link with forests as they always took me after leeks in the springtime and "huckleberrying" (as the natives called it) in the summer. A particular memory is of a pink, wild azalea. They had dug it in the woods and planted it in their yard. I was always in awe of that beautiful flowering shrub. When I was about twelve, I went to visit in the spring and was shocked to see my favorite shrub gone. I rushed into the house to find out what had happened. Apparently my Grandfather had cut it down because my grandmother was afraid I would get stung, since it attracted so many bees. That was the one and only time I was ever disillusioned with them.

Years later, just after my husband and I had purchased our property in Cattaraugus County, we were exploring and came upon a huge, beautifully flowering azalea in the woods. It literally took my breath away. In the twenty-six years that we have owned our forest, I have yet to miss a springtime

visit to my favorite shrub. We fertilize it and keep it trimmed, which has resulted in a delightful springtime experience each year.

These are just a few of the experiences I have had that make me thank God daily for the privilege of now being able to live on our acreage and enjoy the forest and magic of nature every day.



(early azalea, *Rhododendron roseum*)

*Audrey, with her husband Bob, are enthusiastic members of the Allegheny Foothills Chapter and Master Forest Owners, Class of '91.*

## Your NYFOA Chapter and You

By Betty Densmore and Charlie Mowatt

NYFOA'S chapters are as diverse as the state they cover. All are different and all are alike. Each chapter forms along its own guidelines and "cookie-cutter" sameness is not a feature. Some are very active; others much less. Where do you fit in the equation? Are you one of the many who have never attended a chapter activity (or haven't in a long time)?

Maybe you are missing a very dynamic experience. Where else can you meet with and exchange information with a group of like-minded people who have, in many cases, the same goals? Where else can you talk with foresters, Master Forest Owners, and private woodlot owners who are grappling with the same problems as yourself?

Some chapters feature woodwalks on member properties, a perfect chance to see what others have done. Don't be surprised to find out you are doing a good job of forest management. Everyone has pride in their forests and it is always fun to share the pleasure, insights and experiences of others and to see how they are tackling the same tasks you are facing.

Workshops are another way that some

chapters get information on a variety of subjects to members. It's always a stimulating learning experience to attend an informal workshop on Stewardship Incentive Programs, wildlife management, pruning, 480-A tax laws; even chain saw safety and other less cerebral exercises. It's a wonderful opportunity to question an expert on any aspect of a vexing dilemma, without obligation, in a relaxed atmosphere, surrounded by others with every range of expertise from novice to past master.

Some chapters seem to exist as much for the socializing as for the exchange of information. Some have annual picnics, potluck dinners and Christmas parties where the strong friendships that have been forged result in memorable not-to-be-missed good times that provide the glue that builds strong chapters. Some fund-raise in a variety of ways. Highly motivated volunteers usually end up having a terrific time while filling the coffers of their treasury.

Chapter representatives from each chapter attend NYFOA Board of Directors meetings during the year and information is exchanged that help to keep NYFOA's goals firmly fixed on your needs as a forest

owner. NYFOA's Board recognizes the enormous value of chapters in the organization's growth and effectiveness. Chapter representatives recognize the value of the volunteers on the Board who work in many ways to further the aims and ends of the private forest owner.

You need to go to a few of your chapter's activities. Don't be put off by fears of getting over-involved when an already hectic life leaves you little time to do half of what you wish. You'll come home revitalized, with some of the practical solutions you've been looking for. At the very least you'll have spent some time with people who care about the land and are trying to implement good stewardship.

Your input may be what is lacking in your chapter. Every chapter leader is always looking for ideas on ways to provide you with what YOU want from NYFOA. Maybe all that is missing is you and your stated needs. Your local chapter needs you and it might come as a very pleasant surprise how much you can get from your local chapter.





# Ask A Forester: Forest Inventory & Management



*The Woodland Steward*

*Wes has received several questions and comments about articles in the February issue of Woodland Steward. Since there is insufficient space for full response in that newsletter, he has selected two for reporting here that should be of interest to many of you.*

Dear Wes:

This letter is precipitated by your very unflattering article about "The Lowly Beech."

Anyone who needs to be convinced of the aesthetic value of beech is invited to come inspect the woodwork in my dining room. Built in 1905 by a lumber merchant who obviously knew and appreciated fine woods, the general opinion among the many persons knowledgeable in woods who have inspected my home is that the dining room, paneled in cross-sawn beech, is the visual prize in a house generously endowed with handsome woodwork.

I am fortunate that not every woodland manager thinks beech is suitable only for pallets or firewood. When we had a fire and I was obliged to replace a part of the wood in the dining room, I was able to obtain cross-sawn beech, which was then milled and fabricated into replacement paneling to match that historically present in the room.

The compliments on the new beech woodwork have been as generous as the admiration of the old beech woodwork. So, please, if any of you grow veneer quality beech, don't sell your trees for fire wood. Save them for the custom woodworkers who have been petitioning me for my source of beech.

There is no more beautiful or showy paneling than the magnificent rays in cross-sawn beech.

Sincerely,  
Rosemary Nichols  
1241 Nineteenth Street  
Watervliet, New York 12189



Dear Rosemary:

Thank you for your interest in the article, The Lowly Beech, I am sorry you thought it "unflattering" due to a lack of discussion on the wood grain of beech. Unfortunately, nature has afflicted this species with the beechbark disease, and the forest owner is not compensated for growing veneer quality beech. Under these circumstances, the number of beech logs reaching the mill will continue to decline, regardless of our desire for beech lumber and veneer.

Although done consciously in the referenced article, I did exclude a description of the wood grain which is very beautiful with its conspicuous wood ray flecks. Everyone who has seen the grain would agree it has unusual aesthetic appeal. I have also seen beech veneer with a pinkish-brown, wavy grain -- very attractive indeed. If more people were familiar with the grain, the demand for beech should rise which may increase its stumpage value in the woods. (Stumpage is the value, or average bid, for trees as they stand uncut in the woods.)

Besides a low demand for beech, why is the stumpage value so low, compared to other species? One of the reasons is the difficulty in processing it at the mill, with its dense grain which readily distorts when drying in the kiln. Also, a smooth, seemingly defect-free surface on the log may yield defective lumber. The mill people tell me there can be much wood lost in the processing.

One obstacle in supplying beech would be removed if forest owners were fairly compensated for raising beech sawtimber (stumpage at least \$100 per thousand board feet). However, they may never realize an adequate return on their investment because most trees will die or will be defective before reaching marketable size, due to the beechbark disease.

Certainly, if the forest owner has high-quality, mature beech in commercial quan-

tity, by all means attempt to get the highest bid for premium or veneer sawlogs. In our area, you will be fortunate to get \$50 per thousand board feet which will not return the holding and management costs for maturing beech. The average stumpage for beech in our area is \$30 per thousand, close to the stumpage value for firewood.

My responsibility is to point out the facts to forest owners. If they have young stands of beech, I would encourage them to thin the stands heavily, leaving only the very best for the next thinning or harvest. Very few trees will produce high-quality mature stems (lumber or veneer) with the present incidence of the beechbark disease. The best local market for the thinned (small) stems is firewood. And if your mature beech look like this defective tree, as most of mine do, then the highest-value product is still firewood, beating both pulpwood and pallet markets in this area.



Dear Mr. Suhr:

I read with interest your comment about Sapstreak disease in your latest "Woodland Steward."

I would like a little bit clearer explanation.

You mention poorly designed system of skid roads as a contributing factor. Is that because of root damage due to the above ground traffic, or because of possible side injury to the stem during skidding? Or both?

Also, I have an old farm in the Adirondacks which has reverted to forest land. Along the old stone walls, and where the barbed-wire field dividers used to be there are many maple clumps coming up—but most of them are red maples, rather than sugar maples. None of the stems are over 6" in diameter. I have been taking out what appear to be the weaker stems of each clump, and trying to make one healthy tree. Are you suggesting that I shouldn't do this either, or are red maples not a problem?

Thanks for your help. SASE enclosed.

Sincerely  
Robert C. Stevens  
One Green Ridge Road  
Pittsford, New York 14534-2408

*(Continued on page 15)*



# Forester

(Continued from page 14)

Dear Mr. Stevens:

Thank you for your letter of interest in the article on sapstreak disease.

Infectious points of entry for the spores of this fungus may be both through wounds on exposed roots and through basal wounds on the stems of sugar maple. The wounding is often done by traffic on skid trails or by thinning sprout groups of pole-sized stems (4" and above). So far, research indicates larger stems to be infected (poles +), with incomplete or unpublished information on saplings. The fungus probably does not recognize diameter limits! Cut saplings may be infected, but their more rapid, vigorous growth/sap-flow may be able to thwart the disease (just my guess).

The evidence to date indicates sapstreak disease is specific to sugar maple, it has not been found on red maple. I believe it is safe to assume it will not infect red maple.

As you, I have also thinned many red maple clumps. It is best to thin the stems when they are large enough to show some dominance (around 2" in diameter), as you are doing. Select the largest, bestformed (straightest) stems which arise lowest on the old stump or closest to the ground. The latter characteristic makes the stem less susceptible to infection (various diseases) through the old stump or root crown. A final suggestion for cutting the individual stems -- cut at a good slant, rather than horizontally, allowing for rapid drainage of moisture.



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## Burning the Woods ... Another Point of View

By Randy Kerr

In the last two issues of the FOREST OWNER, there have been articles outlining the benefits of prescribed burning of hardwood understories to facilitate the reproduction of "OAK FORESTS".

The latest one, appearing in the March-April issue would seem to encourage such practice and under-estimates the detrimental effects of fast moving fires through young hardwood stands, regardless of species. The belief that logging slash must be present to incur such damage is simply not true.

It is not the presence or absence of slash, but rather the time of year that the fire occurs that is more critical. Most serious, fast moving surface fires, usually take place during the fall season when freshly fallen leaf litter is present.

Fires travel faster in such fuels and flames created tend to be hotter and reach further up the stem. On the other hand, leaf litter compacted by winter snows create a situation where spring or early summer fires are less severe in intensity and height and will in fact, sometimes burn themselves out.

We are aware that logging slash in volume, does play a part in severe forest fires where trees of all species are consumed and killed outright.

Fire, (prescribed burning) is recognized in the south as a valuable tool in the management of pine but not of hardwoods.....nor should it be here, any time of year.

Examination of burned sites where fast moving fires have traveled along the surface will often show little or no damage for periods of 5-10 years. You might think that indeed, little or no damage exists. I have had opportunities, however, to observe hardwood stands where such fires passed

through as long ago as 30-40 years, and examination will show that nearly every stem has evidence of basal damage, appearing on the side of the approaching fire.

Although there may be isolated cases where fire used as a sivilcultural tool might be justified, I would be most hesitant to use it since there are other methods of encouraging reproduction.

So called controlled fires can quite easily become uncontrolled with no respect for boundary lines and with litigation on the horizon.

Red oak, although not as tolerant as beech or sugar maple, is a prolific sprouter and quickly re-stocks areas where holes in the overstory allow sunlight to penetrate.

Unlike most of the white oaks that germinate in the fall, the red oaks germinate the following spring which is advantageous in spite of considerable loss of acorns by insect parasites.

Natural seeding on the richer sites often produces hundreds of seedlings per acre, particularly after even a partial timber harvest.

I prefer to see Red Oak in stands associated with other species such as basswood, cherry and ash. Even Red and sugar maple.....diverse and pleasing to the eye.

I thought we had learned years ago that sivilcultural practices leading toward pure stands of whatever species was questionable. A flexible approach, without the use of fire might better be considered.

*Randy Kerr: 39 years with DEC, the first 18 years with the Bureau of Forest Fire Control....Forest Ranger, Lowville and District Ranger, Canton. Presently, Forester for Lewis County and Sec'y for THRIFT, NYFOA's affiliate for the Tughill Plateau.*

## Woodsmen Want Tree Tales

"Trees Are Our Greatest Treasure" is the topic of this year's New York State Woodsmen's Corporation's Prize Essay Contest, which is open to the public.

Entries must be less than 500 words of prose; literary work must be original and not previously published or submitted for inclusion in any publications. Deadline for entry is June 30.

Send entries to NYS Woodsmen's Field Days, Inc., PO Box 123, Boonville, NY 13309. The winner will be awarded the \$100 prize during the Field Days held August 14-16 at the Oneida County Fairgrounds.

Questions regarding the essay contest or a possible photo contest should be directed to Phyllis White, Executive Coordinator, NYS Woodsmen's Field Days, PO Box 123, Boonville, NY 13309 (315) 942-4593.



# Chapter Reports

## ALLEGHENY FOOTHILLS

Betty Densmore

The AFC was unusually busy; our Mar 21 meeting was attended by about 40 people who enjoyed Herbert Darling, Jr.'s presentation on "Saving the American Chestnut." Member Bruce Robinson participated in a seminar on Tree Pruning given by the Catt. Co. Extension. Member Bob Childs participated in a SIP Program and sign-up on Mar. 28 at the Extension in Ellicottville; member Dave Waldron was also a speaker. Members Helen and Bob Nafle were named Cattaraugus County's Tree Farmers of the year and will be honored at a dinner April 2. A Tree Planting and Culture Seminar to be held April 11 will feature members, Bruce Robinson and Bob Childs as speakers.

The AFC donated \$200.00 to the Ellicottville Arboretum to be used to improve the Pierce-Whitney Forest (a forest that will ultimately serve as a model of good stewardship practices for New Yorkers).

On May 16 we will present a "timber harvest in progress" woodswalk at the Anderson Trust property in Mayville, New York. Walk will be led by Bruce Robinson, Consulting Forester.

## CATSKILL FOREST ASSOCIATION

By Ed Thorne

CFA designed a Maple Syrup workshop to provide amateurs with information early enough so that they could try maple syrup making this year. On Feb. 8 over 30 turned out at the Erpf House in Arkville where Cliff Farnum, a local producer for 25 years, instructed the group. Plastic containers for canning were given out and buckets and spiles were sold at a modest fee. CFA gained 4 new members.

On March 13 thru 15 CFA had a booth at the Northeastern Wildlife Expo, in Albany. The exhibit was an excellent way to draw new members and promote our organization.

As of this report CFA's Wildlife Enhancement Workshop, at the Erpf House on March 28, has not been held yet. From the number of calls coming in it looks like we will have a good group. Bill Sharick, Senior Wildlife Biologist from DEC 4,

will be the guest speaker.

A busy weekend for CFA May 2 CFA will host a woodswalk at Henry Kernan's property in South Worcester. May 3 CFA will have a booth displaying our goals at the Hanford Mills Museum to help celebrate Arbor Day. The days activities include: a tree planting memorial, sawmill tour, maple syrup slide show, lecture on SIP, and an open forum.

On May 16 CFA is hosting a sawmill tour at Boiceville Lumber and a woodswalk.

Dates have not been set for a Freshwater Wetlands Program, Birdwatching Workshop, and Tour of a Nursery, later in the summer.

CFA is planning our annual meeting. This year it will be a Picnic with an educational theme held outside perhaps at a State Facility. Details should be finalized by May 1st. Interested parties call (914) 586-3054.

## CAYUGA

R. Fox

The Cayuga Chapter joined with the draft animal owners to sponsor their annual mid-winter cooperative effort now known as the Cabin Fever Festival and held in Fillmore Glen State Park. Despite a drizzly Saturday afternoon, heavy rain that night, and an early Sunday morning rescue of the temporary bridge across Dry Creek, Park Manager Tom Noble estimated attendance at 2000 people for each day.

A. A. Peppe exhibited his new wood processor in action, Lee Hopkins-his rotary saw mill products, Dick Stoyell demonstrated a newly restored Ireland shingle mill, and Gerald Reynolds displayed a restored Ireland drag saw driven by a 'one

lunger'. Special interest was stimulated by Dierk Terlow's forge and custom made-while-you-wait iron works.

While Tim Roberson and his portable band saw sawed Red Pine lumber for Bill Millier, Charlie Famoly, and Keith Batzer to use in the construction on site of the raffled utility building, Gregg Wellot across the way, hand-hewed an oak log to the finished beam required in the restoration of a historically correct building located in a nearby community. In addition to the many draft animal activities of skidding logs and hauling families, there were a number of crafts people who demonstrated and sold their products.

An interesting product which was manufactured according to approved specifications and then sold at nominal cost was Red Pine Bluebird Houses. The proceeds to be fittingly dedicated for a boulder/placque to commemorate a former U. S. Civilian Conservation Corps Camp located at the Park. The Red Pine logs were harvested from the Town of Locke Water Works Woods and probably planted in 1936 by the CCC.

## LOWER HUDSON

R. Bamber Marshall

The American Museum of Natural History in New York City is famous for exhibits of whatever natural history may be of public interest. Most people think of the Museum for exhibits especially advertised because of general demand; such as, the Planetarium, NATUREMAX and the great screen cinema, the dinosaurs, the great mammals of Africa and North America, the whales, and the great fishes. Not enough people think of forests! Very few who love

*(Continued on page 17)*

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## Chapter Reports

(Continued from page 16)

forests realize how exciting and profoundly educational can be the study of forests in this Museum's exhibits! For example, in beautiful three dimensional scenes the natural history of the Lower Hudson Valley is displayed accurately, not only as to changing land use, but also, as to geology, soils, forest types, understories, groundcover, wildlife, and even underground invertebrates. Everyman's Forest, USA, can be studied here. On Saturday, May 30th, come and see!

Schedule: 10-12 AM, Personal Options; 12-1PM, Garden Cafe; 1:30PM, Start at Museum Shop, Woodswalk thru NYS Environment and North American Forest Exhibits; 3-4PM, Personal Options; 6-7PM, Garden Cafe; 7:30-8:45PM, NATUREMAX. Find Museum and extensive Parking at W 81st St. near Central Park West. Questions?? R. Bamber Marshall, RD 3, Box 329, Yorktown, NY 10598; (914) 962-9888.

### NIAGARA FRONTIER

**Bob White**

On May 23 the NFC will visit the Reinstien Nature Preserve in Cheektowaga, New York (10:45 AM). The walk will be led by Jeff Liddle, caretaker.

On June 13 a tour of Forest Lawn in Buffalo is planned (10 AM). With over 6000 trees, an arboretum and an identified list of 157 bird species, this is a living source of beauty and peace in the heart of the city.

### NORTHERN ADIRONDACK

**Wes Suhr & Dave Forness**

Potsdam Hardwoods hosted the Northern Adirondack Chapter on a tour of their sawmill on Saturday, February 8th.

Bill Cray, mill manager and co-owner of Potsdam Hardwoods, led the tour with the mill in full operation. We were able to follow the manufacturing of lumber from log form to kiln dried stock. Potsdam Hardwoods has maintained an excellent reputation for the quality of their product, as well as for the safety and efficiency of the entire operation. They market everything from sawdust and chips to finished products. The mill's production exceeds 3 million board feet on an annual basis.

We'd like to thank Bill Cray for his efforts and compliment him on his man-

agement of Potsdam Hardwoods.

On March 21, Lewis Staats, Cornell Cooperative Extension Specialist (Maple Program), led a tour of 40 visitors on the Uihlein Sugar Maple Research Extension Field Station near Lake Placid. Cornell is at the "cutting edge" in applied research for high quality syrup production.

For example, a new plastic tubing spile, called the "Vacuspout", is found to do less damage to the stem while taping and may even provide sweeter sap, drawing from sap flow just beyond the cambial area. They are also testing a prototype sap vapor evaporator which is the first unit to receive the field sap (average sugar content = 2%), producing a concentrate with an average sugar content of 15%! This cuts the boiling time at the boiler by at least 1/5th.

The sugar bush is thinned to the proper density and the thinned areas are very clean.

An orchard is devoted to genetic research where carefully selected stock from superior parent trees have been planted. One small pole produced sap with sugar content as high as 10%! Some day, such research may result in the production of very sweet and fast-growing progeny for field plantings.

Very interesting day, and very cold. About 15 people made it to the end of the tour. Our thanks go out to Lewis for explaining the operation, and to Dave Forness who made the arrangements.

**WE HAVE A GREAT SPRING OUT-  
COMING UP!** On **Wednesday, May 13**, the Northern Adirondack Chapter of SAF (Society of American Foresters) is sponsoring a dual meeting/field tour on the Wanakena Campus, SUNY, more commonly known as **THE Ranger School**. They invite all NYFOA members to attend and brush elbows with some very knowledgeable people.

#### TENTATIVE AGENDA:

1. Registration, 9-10 am
2. Woodswalk, Dubuar Forest, 10-12 (management, silviculture)
3. Lunch (bring own)
4. Conservation Easements (classroom session), 1-3(?)

They expect to have managers and specialists participating from the Ranger School, DEC, Nature Conservancy, Wagner Woodlands, SAF and NY Equalization and Assessment. Come learn about forest management and how we can reduce our taxes.

### SOUTHERN ADIRONDACK

**Erwin Fullerton**

Our first leap year meeting was held at the Cradle Library, Glens Falls February 29th. A National Stewardship Video was shown by Laurel Gailor, Cornell Cooperative Extension Agent for Warren County. The question and answer period was led by NYS DEC Region 5 Forester John Hastings. For the forest landowner this was an interesting and challenging program, and offered choices towards the improved management of woodlands. Perhaps more of us will emphasize wildlife and recreation in addition to timber improvement.

Our next meeting is targeted for June 6th and will include processing wood products for a shaving mill, kiln drying lumber, and fuel use in Saratoga County.

### SOUTHERN TIER

**Larry Lepak**

On March 27th, approximately 60 persons attended the chapter's annual pot luck supper. No one went away hungry as the cooks outdid themselves with both gourmet entrees and deserts.

Chapter member Richard Molyneux was congratulated by the chapter for being named 1992 New York State Tree Farmer.

Russ Hamilton, an agent for Farm Family Insurance Companies, addressed the meeting on the topic of "Liability Insurance and the Tree Farm". Gerald Kachmor, DEC forester, discussed the Stewardship Incentive Program with the chapter members, who had applied for SIP funding. The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, May 5, 1992 at 7:30 PM at the Cooperative Extension building on Front Street in Binghamton. The program will address the "Do's and Don'ts of Hunting Leases". Anyone who currently is leasing their forestland for hunting is invited to share their experiences. The evening program will

(Continued on page 18)

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## Chapter Reports

(Continued from page 17)

include the viewing of a video on hunting lease considerations. Future chapter events include a woodswalk, June 13 at 10:00 AM at the Al and Moira Robert's (former Region 7 Forester) Tree Farm, Clark St. Ext., Groton, 607-656-8504. For chapter information, contact chapter president Larry Lepak at 607-656-8504 or chapter secretary and program chairperson Mike McKilligan at 607-729-6511.

### THRIFT AFFILIATE

Bonnie Colton

THRIFT may have appeared inactive for the past few months, but the appearance is deceiving. A metamorphosis has been taking place. Beginning at a "Focus on the Future" dinner meeting last spring, THRIFT has been re-evaluating its mission, its methods and its member involvement. Out of this process is growing not only a new organizational structure, but a new and vibrant way of addressing the issues we face in the Tug Hill region.

The first step was designing and refining a more effective framework for action, motivated by a broader based leadership core. The result was a Coordinating Council with representatives elected from each of the four counties in the Tug Hill region.

The Council now is in the process of getting acquainted, refining a committee structure which will help us meet our mission goals, and recruiting additional members to help with committee work. Meetings are planned in each of the four counties on a rotating basis to encourage increased member attendance at program.s

Needed committees identified so far are: Membership, Finance, Legislative, Networking, Program, Long-range planning, Public relations and Newsletter, plus temporary local committees to make meeting and program arrangements. These functions formerly were being handled by a five-member executive committee which was beginning to suffer burnout. The new format promises to be not only more efficient, but more dynamic and creative.

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### TIOGA CHAPTER

Patrick McGlew

Recent snow and below zero wind chill couldn't keep us out of the woods on March 14 & 15, when we met with the Endless Mountains Draft Horse Club for a Draft Horse Logging Seminar. The Draft Horse Club members benefitted from NYFOA members' woods knowledge, and NYFOA members learned a great deal about draft horses. It was a pleasure to see these magnificent animals working together in the woods. We saw various types of equipment and how its use will affect a team's ability to handle a hitch of logs. We learned that when talking about mules, stubborn still fits, but sensible might also enter the picture. Voice commands as well as rein control are essential for a draft horse, and might very well prevent serious injury if the driver slips behind his horse(s). Discussions on personal safety, as well as safety and care of the horses, reassured me that the Endless Mountains Draft Horse Club and NYFOA were themselves a good "team". I suspect that some of our members will get to know each other better.

The Program Committee reports that two sawmill tours are the upcoming events - one large mill and one small one. Official dates have not yet been set, but look for sometime in May. Suggestions for programs, or offers to host a chapter event should be directed towards Jim Signs at (607) 687-0330.



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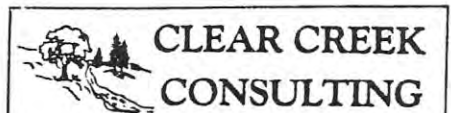
A pine forest floor in 3 minutes

A hardwood forest floor in 30 seconds

A heavily used recreation area in 30 hours

Hooray for the northern hardwood forest.

Taken from "Farming the Small Forest"  
by Lawrence Walker & WFL Newsletter



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# It's Time To Stand Up And Be Counted

By John C. Marchant  
Executive Director, NYFOA

After many promises from a lot of us SIP is finally here. We can now sign up for substantial cost sharing benefits with real dollars available at the completion of approved projects. But there are the magic words. "APPROVED PROJECTS". All SIP projects have to be approved by a DEC Service Forester. That in itself does not present a problem, most of us believe it will work quite well. The problem is the number and availability of Service Foresters to meet our needs. They have been consistently cut back for several years running, and right now their department has been the particular target for further downsizing. Well informed guesses are also saying this is only the beginning of what we can expect in the future.

So here we are, about to receive more money from the federal government than we have ever had; money that is deliberately targeted for projects of real value to us and society; and our state government is moving in a direction to deny us that opportunity. It is very doubtful that there is enough staff at this time to implement all the programs to make full use of the 1.5 million dollars available this year. Any further cuts will assure that shortfall and the continuing loss of millions more over the next five years.

So now is the time to be counted folks. Please pick up your pens and let our state government know how you feel about this issue. To be most effective write to: Governor Mario Cuomo, The Executive Chamber, State Capitol, Albany, NY 12224.

And for additional effective impact please consider sending copies to: Francis J. Murray, Jr., same address as above.

Commissioner Thomas Jorling, NYS DEC, 50 Wolf Rd., Albany NY 12233.  
Robert Bathrick, State Forester, 50 Wolf Rd., Albany, NY 12233.

Ralph Marino, Majority Leader Senate, Room 330, State Capitol, Albany, NY 12247.

Saul Weprin, Speaker of the Assembly, Room 349, State Capitol, Albany, NY 12248.

## King George Did Pine For Pine

### AN APPEAL TO HEAVEN



What could a king want from colonies that could scarcely raise enough food for the tea and rum that must be imported? King George III wanted what he did not have at home—the tall white pines of New Hampshire.

In 1634, when the first cargo of white pine masts arrived in England for the sailing ships of the world's foremost navy, they quickly replaced Riga fir from southern Baltic shores. The fir was a fairly short tree so that often two had to be spliced with a joining spindle to make a serviceable mast.

But New Hampshire pine was tall enough to equip ships whose mainmast might be forty inches in diameter and 120 feet tall and weigh up to eighteen tons. White pine weighed 25 percent less than Riga fir and was often unblemished from bottom to top.

In 1722, at the behest of the king, all white pines fit for masting the Royal Navy were declared reserved for the king by the New Hampshire General Court. In 1772 it passed a law making it a crime to harvest trees a foot or more in diameter. The governor, appointed "surveyor of the king's woods," employed many deputies who spread throughout the countryside looking for sawmill yards that might be breaking the law. They confiscated suitable logs, burned settlers' sawmills, and used spies and informers to locate illegal logs.

The response was violent. The New Hampshire Pine Tree Riot in 1772, three years before the Boston Tea Party, resisted the seizure of some 270 logs, seventeen to

thirty-six inches in diameter, from Clement's Mill Yard in Weare, New Hampshire.

When the sheriff and a deputy arrived to enforce the law, they were thoroughly beaten by twenty men with faces blackened and switches in their hands. The lawmen's horses, with manes clipped and ears cropped, carried their owners out of town with "jeers and shouts ringing in their ears."

The British militia soon arrived to find the woodsmen had fled into the forest. When they later surrendered they were fined only twenty shillings each by a Judge Mesheck Weare, who thought it prudent to demonstrate his regard for public sentiment rather than for the sheriff and the pine tree law.

At Lexington, when the colonists shouldered arms in resistance to the Stamp Act, the Sugar Act, and high duties on tea, they had the example of the men of Weare before them. The revolutionists' first flag was the famous pine tree banner, a green tree on a white field, with the words, "An Appeal to Heaven." This was the flag used at Bunker Hill, and used by George Washington when he dispatched two vessels to intercept two English munitions ships.

The tall white pines of New Hampshire are gone, as are the sailing ships that made such good use of them. They served to set a pattern for resistance to the Crown that ultimately freed the entire country.

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R.J. Fox, Acting Editor  
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## The New York Forest Owners Association

**OUR MISSION:** *The Association is organized to encourage the wise management of private woodland resources in New York State by promoting, protecting, representing and serving the interests of woodland owners.*

### OUR OBJECTIVES ARE:

- To assist owners in making decisions for the best use of their forests.
- To work to increase profitability of woodlot investment.
- To influence legislators at all levels of government to strengthen forestry as an industry.
- To unite forest owners in a common cause of improving their forest resources and forest opportunities.
- To inform the public on the value of a healthy tree growing industry.
- To network with related organizations in promoting common objectives.

As a forest landowner you have the privilege of pursuing personal goals. Good stewardship and moral responsibility will assure the preservation of the forest for future generations. As New Yorkers we can work together to protect and perpetuate our forest lands.

### TO MEET ITS OBJECTIVES THE ASSOCIATION:

- Publishes the **New York Forest Owner** bimonthly.
- Holds Spring and Fall meeting for the entire membership.
- Chapters conduct "woodswalks" and other events to stimulate enthusiasm for good stewardship, timber stand improvement and managing woodlands for other values.
- Encourages members to be active in local chapters.
- Fosters affiliation with other organizations with similar NYFOA objectives.
- Recognizes outstanding individual effort on behalf of forestry and private woodland resources in the state.

## WOODLOT CALENDAR

**May 2** - CFA-Woodswalk, Henry Kernan Property, South Worchester, (914) 586-3054.

**May 3** - CFA-Booth at Hanford Mills Museum - Tree Planting Memorial Sawmill tour, Maple Syrup slide show, SIP lecture, (914) 586-3054.

**May 5** - STC-7:30 PM Cooperative Extension Bldg., Front Street, Binghamton, "Do's and Don'ts of Hunting Leases.

**May 13** - NAC-9AM Wanakena Campus SUNY, Woodswalk Dubuar Forest & Afternoon Seminar Conservation Easements, (315) 848-2136.

**May 16** - CDC-Woodswalk. Call Irwin King, (518) 872-1456.

**May 16** - AFC-Woodswalk Anderson Trust Property, 10 AM, Mayville, (716) 557-2529.

**May 16** - CFA-Sawmill Tour at Boiceville Lumber and Woodswalk, (914) 586-3054.

**May 20** - WFL-7:30 PM, Monroe Cooperative Extension, Highland Avenue, Rochester "Genesee Land Trust" Audio/Visual presentation.

**May 23** - NFC-10:45 AM, Reinstein Nature Preserve Woodswalk, Cheektowaga, Bob White, (716) 537-2803.

**May 30** - LHC-10 AM, or 1:30 PM. American Museum of Natural History Forest Exhibits Woodswalk, NYC, Bamber Marshall, (914) 962-9888.

**June 6** - SAC-Shaving Mill, Kiln, Fuel Use, Saratoga Co., (518) 965-8257.

**June 13** - NFC-10 AM, Forest Lawn, Buffalo  
**June 13** - STC-10AM, Al & Moira Robert's Tree Farm, Clark St. Ext., Groton, (607) 656-8504.