

*The New York*

# ***FOREST OWNER***

A publication of the New York Forest Owners Association

September/October 1992



**Pat Kernan**

*Large Twayblade*

# THE NEW YORK FOREST OWNER

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**Stuart McCarty, President**  
4300 East Avenue  
Rochester, NY 14618  
(716) 381-6373

**Donald Wagner 1st Vice President**  
RD #1, Box 203C  
Utica, NY 13502

**Robert M. Sand, Recording Secretary**  
300 Church Street  
Odessa, NY 14869-9703

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East Aurora, NY 14052

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(716) 377-7906

**Deborah Gill, Administrative Secretary**  
P.O. Box 180  
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(716) 377-6060

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## COVER:


Large Twayblade (*Liparis lilifolia*), a composite by Patricia Kernan for the Biological Survey of the New York State Museum.

# FOREST OWNER

A publication of the New York Forest Owners Association  
Editorial Committee: Betty Densmore, Richard Fox, Alan Knight, Mary McCarty  
Norm Richards and Dave Taber.

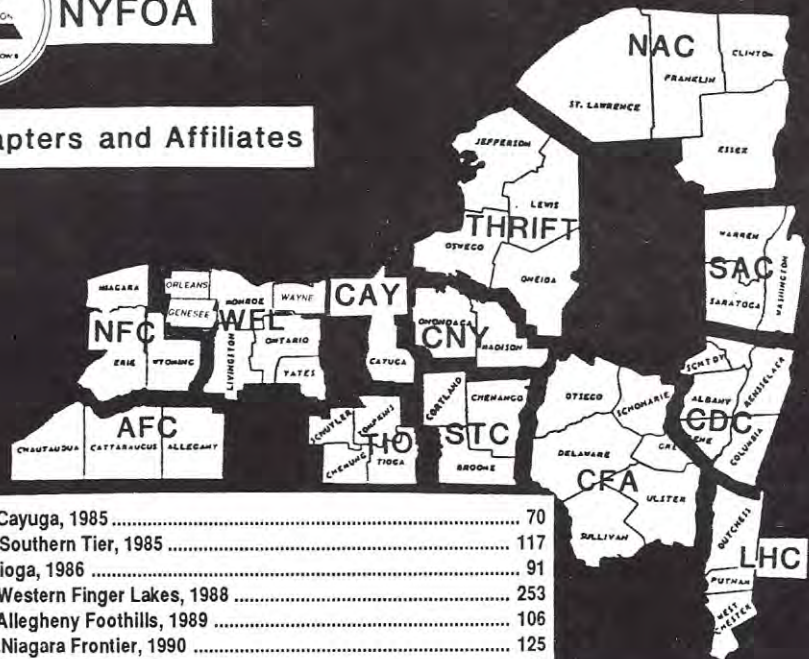
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**NYFOA**

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With membership as of August 1, 1992.

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# President's Message

By Stuart McCarty

The late George Nakashima, an internationally known American woodworker, has given me new insights on how to look at trees in a woodlot or forest. As an amateur woodworker I suspect that only a few of us look at a tree and say "would that ever make a great table!" I have a tendency to visualize the possible use of a good looking oak or cherry, but I must admit my imagination is pretty limited when it comes to the final product.

One of my hobbies is making adaptive equipment for the handicapped. This includes trays of all sizes and shapes for wheelchair bound patients. When I pick out a piece of birch plywood at the shop to cut it for a tray I look at the grain and decide which side would be the most pleasing to the eye and which way the grain should run. I hope that the patient will enjoy the beauty of the wood in the tray and sometimes he or she actually does comment on it!

Going to the other end of the spectrum of enjoying beautiful wood and spotting a potential piece of furniture in a standing tree is found in George Nakashima's work. Much of it shows the outer silhouette of the tree and in some cases the flaws. One of his tables might be quite irregular in shape to use the natural flow of the tree as it came off the bandsaw cut into slabs two inches or more thick. As described in the dust jacket of his book, "The Soul of a Tree," he impresses us with his devotion to discovering the inherent beauty of wood so that noble trees might have a second life as furniture."

It is fun to know that there are people such as George Nakashima who appreciate our trees from start to finish and have the talent to fashion that appreciation into something of beauty. In your next walk into the woods look at some of your mature trees and try to visualize how he would have used them for unique furniture. It might lead to something special and a bit more understanding and appreciation of those unusual trees in your woodlot.



*Three of the dedicated volunteers who build adaptive equipment in the woodworking shop at Monroe Development Center for the one-of-a-kind needs of the handicapped: Howard Rogers, Herb Chamberlain, and Stu McCarty.*

## HONOR ROLL

### ANNOUNCING A NEW INCENTIVE

Beginning on September 1st, for each new member enrolled the referring person will receive \$3. Thanks to an anonymous gift of \$300 specifically for this program, there will be no cost to NYFOA. The plan will run until December 31, 1992 or until 100 new members have been recruited, whichever is earlier. What an opportunity for NYFOA!

For the past two months (through July) new members signed up has waned. Summer doldrums? The following deserve our thanks for enrolling one member each during this period:

Jack McShane, CFA	7
Ron Cadieux, SAC	2
Stephen Eaton, AFC	1
Rita Hammond, NFC	1
George Hutchinson, AFC	1
John Krebs, WFL	1
Bamber Marshall, LHC	1
Mrs. Elmar Nuth, WFL	1
Daniel Parrant, NFC	1
Wes Suhr, NAC	1
Joseph H. Walter, NFC	1

# Chapter Award

R. Dean Frost has recently been awarded the first Service Award from the Southern Tier Chapter of the New York Forest Owners Association (NYFOA). Dean operates Frosty Mountain Farm, located on Bull Creek Road in the Town of Barker. The Service Award is for his lifelong commitment in promoting proper forestry and land stewardship practices on lands located throughout New York State.

Dean was the founder of the Southern Tier Chapter of the New York Forest Owners Association and is active with the Broome County Christmas Tree Growers' Association. He is Chairman of the New York State Forest Practice Board, a statutory board defined by representation from the 9 NYS DEC Regional Forest Practice Boards, the members of which are appointed by the respective counties. The State Board advises the New York State Department of Environmental Conserva-



*Chapter President Lawrence Lepak presents R. Dean Frost with Southern Tier Chapter Service Award.*

tion on forestry issues. Dean is an active tree farmer with a choose and cut and

wholesale Christmas tree operation, located at his Frosty Mountain farm.

## Letters.....

RE: SIP hardwood tree planting progress

Dear Editor:

I decided to try my luck at planting hardwood seedlings on some abandoned pasture as part of my SIP Forest Stewardship Plan. I purchased 200 black walnut seedlings and 300 hybrid poplar rooted cuttings from the NY State Saratoga nursery. This Spring I cleared the brush and prepared 2 acres for planting. I used a 12" dia. posthole auger on my John Deere 40 to drill 2' deep holes. This worked out quite well allowing me to hold the seedling at the proper level while pushing loose soil back into the hole. I spaced the walnuts 10' apart in the row with 12' between rows and staked a 5' Tubex tree shelter over each tree to prevent wildlife damage and provide the other benefits of tree shelters. I am using stakes without tree shelters for the poplars hoping they will grow fast enough to get out of reach of the deer.

I also planted about 150 red oaks after being inspired by Wes Suhr's column in the Forest Owner last year. The consulting forester at Tubex convinced me that planting sprouted acorns directly on the site and

protecting them with Tubex shelters was feasible and would eliminate the transplant process. I collected red oak acorns last fall from both Liverpool, NY and Tichborne, Ontario. I somehow got the acorns mixed up during the stratification process in the leaf pile last winter so I will never know whether any given tree is of New York or Canadian heritage. Most of the acorns sprouted and with help from all the rain I have found only 3 or 4 oaks and maybe 10 walnuts that have died.

I have been quite busy mowing and trimming and so far have not used any herbicide although I may need to apply some next year when I increase the size of the planting. Trimming around each tree takes so much time.

I wish to thank Bill Burlingame my DEC forester for his advice and ideas. Also I appreciate the education I receive by reading the Forest Owner and communicating with other NYFOA members.

Bob Sykes

Dear Editor,

Thank you for granting the Canadian Forestry Association permission to use Dr. Allan's paper on Biodiversity in our next special issue of Forestry on the Hill on Biodiversity and Monocultures.

The Canadian Forestry Association is a non profit organization and we have been promoting forest awareness over 90 years. Recently, we started publishing special issues of our bi-monthly publication of Forestry on the Hill on controversial subjects such as Clearcutting, Herbicides and now Biodiversity and Monocultures. In the fall we will be preparing another on Fire in the Forest.

In October, Don and Bonnie Colton of THRIFT will be hosting the Canadian Forestry Association's 24th Annual Woodlot Extension Specialist Seminar. We are pleased to be able to have our seminar in Lowville, and from the cooperation and hospitality that Don and Bonnie have shown us so far, I'm sure that we will have a good one.

Mrs. Roxanne Comeau  
Program Co-ordinator  
Canadian Forestry Association

# NEW LEGISLATION?

By: David J. Colligan

The heightened interest in ecology and the environment by the general population has created many new legislative initiatives aimed at "protecting" the environment through further regulation and limitations. As private land owners, most of these regulations and laws will in effect limit or otherwise hinder the use of our properties. In New York State alone, there are thirty-three laws pending in the State Legislature which mention "Forestry" in the bill context.

We, as members of NYFOA, should not view this current legislative onslaught in a completely negative context. Many of the laws introduced have the best of intentions and will in fact further the goals of both the members of our organization and the public at large. Therefore, your writer will attempt to comment on legislative occurrences from two points of view. First, recent legislation, both in this state and other states, will be reviewed for the purpose of identifying exceptional (good or bad) that has actually become law. Second, I will try to identify current legislation that may be of some interest to our members. Occasionally, a salient piece of legislation that needs support or a troublesome piece of legislation that needs further input from members of our organization will be identified and highlighted.

This writer agrees with the National Woodland Owners Association (NWOA) which recognizes that regulation is coming, but it must be reasonable for land owners to continue to make investments in good forestry. They have identified select bills which help assure public benefits while protecting private concerns. Each year they recognize the best new state laws effecting forestry and forest practices. The 1991 winners were both developed and passed with the support of NWOA's state affiliates. The 1991 co-winners are explained below: (The texts of both of these laws have been obtained from the local state foresters and can be copied and sent to any member requesting a copy.)

Oregon was singled out for SB1125. The bill revised the Oregon Forest Practices Act in five important ways:  
1) Logged areas must be regenerated

sooner; 2) Expanded protection for fish habitat zones; 3) Improved residual habitat for wildlife; 4) Size of harvest areas regulated; and 5) Forest corridor management zones established along 29 state scenic highways. The Law was signed by Governor Barbara Roberts on August 7, 1991.

Across the nation in Connecticut, Governor Lowell Weicker signed, on June 28, 1991, a bill regulating forest practices and certifying forest practitioners. The new law has four thrusts: 1) It requires certification of foresters, forest technicians, and loggers; 2) It empowers the state Bureau of Forestry to regulate forest practices; 3) Will allow municipalities to regulate forest practices only if their ordinances conform with statewide guidelines; and 4) Establishes a Forest Practices Advisory Board to help draft and implement the program.

The 1992-93 National Woodland Owners Association Position Statement in Non-Industrial Private Forestry Issues was recently published in that organization's newsletter, *The Woodland Report* (August 1, 1992 Vol. 9, No. 5). The National Woodland Owners Association maintains positions on the TOP TEN issues affecting the practice of non-industrial private forestry, and updates them every year. The date in parenthesis is the year the position was first adopted. The number in brackets [I] is the ranking of the issue last year. This year TAXES remain number one, but by a slim margin. PRIVATE PROPERTY RIGHTS moved up from eighth to second place:

## **1. FEDERAL INCOME TAXES -- TIMBER (1986) [1]**

NWOA supports federal and state capital gains treatment for timber, or a forestry reinvestment tax credit. NWOA also supports the deduction of annual forestry expenses (passive losses).

## **2. PRIVATE PROPERTY RIGHTS (1991) [8]**

NWOA recognizes the public interest in non-market resources (wetlands, wildlife habitat), but strongly maintains that legitimate private property rights must be up-

held under the law, with just compensation for takings.

## **3. BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES (1988) [3]**

NWOA prefers *voluntary acceptance of BMP's*, but recognizes that *mandatory regulations* may be necessary so that all landowners provide environmental protection at the time of timber harvest.

## **4. RIGHT-TO-PRACTICE GOOD FORESTRY (1985) [7]**

NWOA endorses the passage of laws at the state level that recognize the benefits of good forest practices and the rights of landowners to manage & harvest trees.

## **5. FOREST STEWARDSHIP (1989) [2]**

NWOA supports the expanded objectives of *forest stewardship* and urges full federal funding.

## **6. PROFESSIONAL FORESTRY ADVICE (1985) [4]**

NWOA encourages multiple sources of forestry advice and supports licensing and continuing education of foresters. NWOA continues to provide forestry referrals.

## **7. LANDOWNER LIABILITY (1987) [10]**

NWOA supports the development of a model landowner liability statute that all states can use for their insurance rules and regulations relating to non-industrial private woodlands.

## **8. FORESTRY EXTENSION EDUCATION (1985) [5]**

NWOA supports appropriations for forestry under the *Renewable Resources Extension Act (RREA)*, and other programs.

## **9. LOG EXPORTS AND FREE TRADE (1990) [6]**

NWOA believes that America has a worldwide advantage in timber growing and supports free markets for logs and other forest products.

## **10. FORESTRY ON WETLANDS--SOIL CONSERVATION (1986, revised 1992) [9]**

NWOA strongly maintains that forestry is a compatible use of wetlands, and urges that wetland definitions be clear, reasonable and not unduly restrictive of forestry. NWOA also urges that professional forestry expertise be available "in house" throughout the Soil Conservation Service.

*David Colligan is the legislative liaison for NYFOA and a member of a Buffalo law firm.*

## BOOK REVIEW:

### "You Were A Little Boy"

By Howard O. Ward

This paperbound 127-page book contains 26 chapters and a like number of photographs from the period of 1922-1935 of Howard Ward's boyhood. Howard was the founder of the Tioga Chapter and honored with NYFOA's Service Award. The book covers a time in the early part of this century when most work was accomplished by hand and back; and the tools were universally wood and metal. The animals, the land and its produce, and man were intimate. However, the intrusion of technology with its impersonal chemistries and the direction of the future were also evident in Howard's childhood.

The special charm of this work arises from the tales told of Howard's playful and sometimes serious boyhood efforts, such as, building a boat, or an automobile, or even an airplane. The tales had been repeatedly told to his own growing children. The stories, then, derive a unique personal quality that adds warmth and innocence to a time of fundamental cultural change from hand tools to mechanization, a direction which continues unabated today. Howard's interest as a boy in "always building things" provides an appreciation for the time and its culture, and why Howard became a professional engineer. Not mentioned in "You Were A Little Boy", but notable in Howard's career (See NYFO M/J 1988) was a special assignment during World War II with the construction of the world's largest propellered airplane, "The Spruce Goose" on display in California.

"Howard enjoyed writing", according to Bob Sand; he provided many pleasurable articles for the NY FOREST OWNER. After reading, "You Were A Little Boy", Lfee Signor remarked that Howard could and should have written much more. This particular writing effort, Stories and Memoirs of Howard O. Ward, according to the four children to whom it was dedicated was the "last most loving project" of their father: April 3, 1918 - June 21, 1991.

For those in NYFOA who would enjoy a warm and gentle breeze from the past, easy on the eyes, and from the life of one of NYFOA's best, send \$6.50 to: Margary Ward, 240 Owego Street, Candor, New York 13743. - R. F.

# ENDANGERED

By Henry S. Kernan

**G**rowing concern for the environment and biodiversity caused Congress to pass the 1973 Endangered Species Act. The purpose was to protect animals and plants whose survival the increasing pace and mobility of human activities have put at risk. The thought was that each species has an irreplaceable value whose loss diminishes forever the breadth of our natural heritage. Survival often needs more than man's non-interference alone. Many plant species at risk, especially orchids and ferns, are specific to disturbed conditions such as those which fire, grazing, mowing, soil erosion and the removal of forest cover bring about. Absent these, and the species that require those conditions for survival, are likely to disappear. The problems of survival thereby extend beyond isolation from human factors alone.

The act gave the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service the charge to designate and list for protection species as endangered, threatened or under review only after careful study, a process particularly slow with plants. Animals and birds receive most attention, grizzlies, timber wolves, condors and the like. Only in 1978 did federal law list the first plant for protection on all project sites which involve federal funding. Listed for further study are over 3000 more than receive protection, many of which may disappear in the process of study.

Much responsibility therefore rests with state and local governments, with those who own land, and with those whose actions and interests allow them to influence plant life. New York followed Congress in

1989 with amendments to the conservation law which protect plants in four categories of urgency; namely endangered (89), threatened (78), exploitably vulnerable (273), and rare (142), making a total of 582. By common law plants belong to the owner of the land on which they grow. The law does not restrict landowners. Their legal rights in regard to plants differ from those regarding wildlife, which is public property. A notable exception is ginseng, a commercial crop that is regulated by New York State and others.

As a matter of right and public order, landowners protect their property, including plants, from trespass and damage to an extent they cannot do in regard to wildlife. In their aid and in the public interest conservation law gives them additional rights to prosecute violators who take or damage plants without permission. The fine is \$25 for each plant stem illegally taken, applicable to the 582 species on the protected list. The law is difficult to enforce and therefore requires for effectiveness the interest and cooperation of landowners. For example many of the species on the vulnerable list are common enough to be secure at present except from collectors who take them without permission for sale and private use. The first listing of New York exploitably vulnerable plants appeared in 1974 as a discouragement to illegal collecting. Examples are flowering dogwood, pinksters and wake-robin.

Current lists of endangered, threatened and rare species present a different problem. By definition the plants are too infrequent to be exploitably vulnerable for sale or household use. Many of them grow in odd places which the routine activities of agriculture and logging, or even most outdoor recreation, do not reach: ledges, mountain meadows, chasms and swamps. An example is the beautiful northern monk's-hood, the first New York plant to receive protection under federal law. This member of the buttercup family is known from less than twenty locations throughout the world. In New York the habitat is along a few remote Catskill streams where subterranean ground water percolates through the soil to keep the roots and tubers cool and damp. Such a condition for survival is infrequent, a relic of the Wisconsin glacier that spread over New York and then re-

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# AND THREATENED PLANTS

treated northward some 15,000 years ago.

That glacier's influence explains the presence of many protected plants. Many of them need full sunlight and low temperatures, the very conditions which existed in the wake of the retreating glacier. The first plants to follow the glacier came into the state from prairies to the southwest. As soils built up and the climate became warmer, spruce and fir of the boreal forest type advanced from the south and suppressed the plants requiring sunlight.

Some rare plants persist under post-glacial conditions of cold and sun on the flatrock around eastern Lake Ontario. The botanical designation for such vegetation is alvar. An example is the scarlet Indian paintbrush *Castilleja coccinea*. The gradual suppression of post-glacial conditions does not mean that New York's flora is becoming less varied. Appalachian species are still arriving from the south. Human mobility aids the process, as does the species' ability to land seeds in favorable conditions, grow there and spread.

The families that spread most readily and are most numerous on the protected list are orchids, with their tiny, wind-blown seeds, and ferns, whose spores are likewise numerous, tiny and carried by wind. The rarity of some is due to the highly specific conditions needed for survival. Most of them are not on post-glacial alvar sites, but result from natural or man-made disturbance. With time, the effects of disturbance are almost certain to decrease and the site become less favorable. Beaver ponds become beaver meadows; old fields lose their warm, sunny bogs, dry up and go to brush and trees; with time, fire scars disappear and eroded banks become stable. For such reasons orchid and other rare plant populations are often ephemeral. A

species appears, increases, dwindles and disappears. but in the meantime millions of seeds have blown about and found other sites to colonize. Orchids colonize well but compete poorly. Burning, cutting, grazing, mowing and even herbicides may be their allies in survival.

Unless that fact is understood, and unless a species' site requirements and cycles of growth are understood and measures taken accordingly, a rare plant population can be destroyed as surely through misdi-

forest, the orchid must find other sites to colonize.

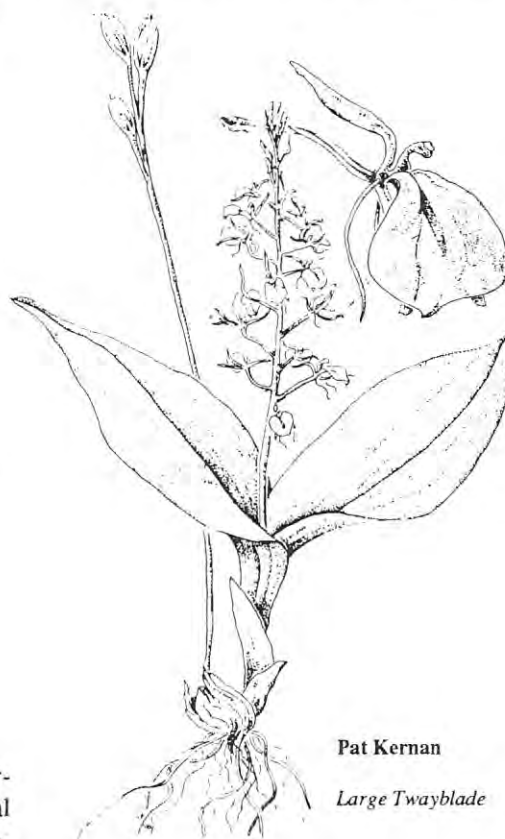
Most commonly the forest toward which old fields and pastures are evolving is a cover of birch, beech, maple and hemlock, the northern hardwood type. The association originated in tertiary times some sixty million years ago and similar woodlands once encircled the globe. The trees are shade-tolerant, long-lived and stable. Hence, rare species are few among them compared to zones between more unstable associations, like pines and poplars.

Favored sites for rare plants in New York are limestone formations such as those between Utica and Cherry Valley, and the sandy, marly soils of northern Dutchess county. Oddly, the highest concentrations are near centers of population: the Long Island counties of Nassau and Suffolk, the environs of Buffalo, Rochester, Syracuse, Watertown and the length of the tidal Hudson. Heavily forested Allegany county has not one rare species indicated on the map. Evidently rarity is somewhat compatible with the human presence.

The case for rare plants has less of economics than of sentiment, the fascination and concern for what is unusual and perhaps about to be gone forever. So long as land managers learn to favor diverse habitats, fisherman need not give up their beloved trout streams in the Catskills nor hikers their mountain meadows, provided they control their heavy boots and itching fingers.

Awareness and restraint are a small price for protecting our rich and beautiful heritage of plant life.

*Henry Kernan is a private consulting forester and a member of NYFOA's affiliate, The Catskill Forestry Association. A listing of protected native plants may be obtained by request of NYS DEC Bureau of Forest Management, 50 Wolf Road, Albany, N.Y. 12233-4253.*



Pat Kernan

Large Twayblade

rected attention as through neglect or vandalism. An example of the process is the large twayblade (*Liparis lilifolia*), an orchid secure in the mid-west but imperiled in New York. The principal habitats are old fields and abandoned pastures in thickets of hawthorn and forest tree saplings, both temporary conditions. As they change to

**Dr. Clifford A. Siegfried, Chairman of the Biological Survey Team for the N.Y.S. Museum and Patricia Kernan have agreed to provide a series of illustrated articles drawn from the publications of the Survey. The NY FOREST OWNER thereby highlights the valuable research efforts of this branch of the State Education Department in return for becoming more informed on New York State's natural heritage.**

# Woodsman, Share That Tree!

By Bonnie Colton

**A**re loggers really "bad guys"? In this area, where hundreds of people earn their living, either directly or indirectly, from the harvesting of timber, it would be hard to convince most folks that loggers are the villains of the ecosystem.

But one doesn't have to go far to find individuals who think no trees should be cut. Some extremists even go so far as to "spike" trees to spite those who fell and saw them.

This means actually driving spikes into the trees. The results can range anywhere from severe damage and downtime for equipment, to severe injury or death for saw operators. Not only that, but spikes aren't healthy for the trees, either.

So where are these extremists coming from intellectually? Certainly it's not the trees they care about, or they wouldn't purposely damage them. And even if they are ignorant of the damage they are causing, which isn't likely, their actions are far from noble.

First, they are trespassers; no one spikes his own trees. Second, if equipment is damaged, they are guilty of malicious mischief and of wilfully destroying the property of others. And third, if someone is injured or killed, they are guilty of assault and battery or homicide.

The sad fact is, most of them will never be apprehended. They are the terrorists of the forest. They do not love trees. They simply hate people who think differently than they do. And they love notoriety--as long as they can remain anonymous. In short, they are social misfits as surely as pyromaniacs and serial killers are. And in their twisted logic they fancy themselves saviors of the world's forests.

I realize that forests are living at the center of widespread controversies today. Honest minded preservationists on one side say the earth's forests are disappearing at an alarming rate, which is partially true. Timber harvesters say trees are a crop we need to harvest to fuel our economy, build our houses and furniture and supply our paper industry needs, which also is true.

So where does the answer to this dilemma lie? To begin with, it lies in sound education about the nature of forests and their effect on the environment

In this area, we have largely mixed northern hardwoods. They are as different from tropical rainforests as our culture is from the culture of those who people the Amazon jungles. The ecological practices

needed for the rainforests to survive and thrive are entirely different from the ecological practices required for northern hardwoods.

There are many bandwagon environmentalists who think a tree is a tree, and all should be treated alike. Since they have been the most vocal activists, they have influenced legislators to put more and more forestland into State Forest Preserves. This means no trees may be cut in such designated areas.

Over time, the result of this practice is far from the park-like environment such people imagine. Treetops eventually expand to form a thick canopy, shutting off sunlight from the forest floor. Shrubs, grasses and tree seedlings, deprived of needed light, soon die off, leaving wildlife without the necessary browse to sustain life, animal populations diminish. The trees, which are intended to be protected by this type of non-management, are left vulnerable to fast-spreading disease, insect or fire damage.

At the opposite extreme is the clear-cutting of forests, wrought by greed, such as we see in the rainforest crisis. There, trees are often slashed down and simply burned to make way for grazing land which is soon depleted of its nutrients and abandoned. This also destroys the habitat of countless animals, plants, and birds. No wonder the environmental activists are up in arms!

But Reason and Common Sense know a better way. That way is through working with the environment, both to reap the benefits of abundant wildlife and forest products, and to improve those resources while we are at it!

A working, managed forest begins with a vision and a plan. The vision must include the broad view of any forest's benefit to society, not just to the individual landowner. Those who own forest land hold more than a valuable resource; they hold a public trust, for their trees purify the air their neighbors breathe, their trees hold the topsoil from blowing away, purify and hold groundwater, and their forests add immeasurably to the beauty of the landscape.

The plan depends on the characteristics of each individual forest and on the goals of the landowner. Some manage for timber production, some for maple syrup, some for wildlife habitat, some for firewood and fenceposts, some of recreation - hiking, fishing, snowmobiling, photography, cross country skiing, hunting, bird watching. Some plan for multiple use forests.

Nearly eleven years ago, we joined a

forest landowner group called THRIFT. The letters stand for Tug Hill Resources - Investment For Tomorrow. Our membership has given us a continuing education in woodland potentials, management practices, forest and wildlife ecology, and the history of the region.

THRIFT eventually became affiliated with the New York Forest Owners Association (NYFOA), a statewide organization which has grown to over 1600 members. THRIFT provides quality educational programs and monthly newsletter to all NYFOA/THRIFT members in Jefferson, Lewis, Oneida and Oswego Counties.

I tell you all this because I am truly concerned about the health of our forest. They give us life and beauty. We need to learn more about how to care for them wisely.

*I* own a lovely woodland  
Where snow lies quiet and deep  
And lilies-of-the-valley  
Are snuggled in winter sleep,  
where timid deer are hiding,  
Where crystal waters run,  
And leaf buds wait in patience  
For warming springtime sun.

And yet I do not own it --  
I'm just a passerby.  
the ages own my woodland,  
My hill, my trees, my sky.  
And I am but a steward --  
I use my mind and skill  
To make the best still better  
In my woodland on the hill.

*Bonnie and her husband, Don received the 1992 Heiberg Memorial Award at NYFOA's Annual Spring Meeting.*

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# Invasion of Beaver Disrupts Peace and Quiet of Pond

OSSIAN - There is a working beaver pond, complete with a large beaver lodge, on my wildlife farm in this Livingston County town.

These ambitious rodents used to cause me a great deal of annoyance. Gradually, that changed to acceptance and then to almost affection.

All this began about 28 years ago when my late wife, Agnes, and I spent nearly \$1,000 to have a pond dug about a quarter of a mile back at our farmhouse. The pond was stocked with small-mouth bass and fathead minnows - fishing paradise in the making.

Hours upon hours were spent smoothing and raking a lawn around the pond where we planned to sit and fish, watch wildlife and enjoy the ever-changing moods of nature. More hours were spent hauling stones and logs to build a bridge across the tiny stream feeding the pond.

Finally all was ready to enjoy. Then a beaver moved in.

This was disconcerting but we finally decided to accept our visitor. After all, this was a wildlife farm and one beaver would add to the charm. Little did we know what was ahead.

Our new tenant spent all that first summer enlarging the pond. The dam the bulldozer left wasn't good enough. Gradually the crest grew higher and our pond increased in size. First to go was my bridge.

Then, as fall approached, the beaver changed its tactics and began cutting down trees. This didn't bother us too much because it selected only aspen and aspen is mostly a worthless tree. In fact, we found it a little amusing that only one tree species was cut.

Later it became apparent our one beaver had become a colony. A tiny lodge, not much larger than a muskrat's abode, appeared at one end of the pond. Never did we dream that one day it would be about 15 feet across and 5 feet high so beavers could sit in there communing and combing each other's fur.

Long before the lodge reached its present size we had decided to shelve our exasperation and enjoy. In fact, Agnes was charmed one day when she found a little beaver building miniature ponds downstream from the main pond, apparently as a kindergar-

ten exercise.

Don't believe everything you read about *Castor canadensis*. Unless beaver habits change dramatically with their territory, there is a lot of misinformation printed about them.

For example, I read in an esteemed publication awhile back that beavers seldom venture more than 30 or 40 feet from their home pond. That is nonsense. I can show you on my farm where beavers have gone a good half-mile to cut a favored aspen tree and dragged the branches back to the pond in an arrow-straight path.

Beavers eat mostly grass in summer, and so there is virtually no tree cutting then. Their diet changes back to trees in early fall, just about the time leaves start to turn.

When our beavers changed their tactics, we decided to change ours and really learn about them.

I started by feeding them aspen branches. We had loads of small aspen trees and I would cut them, load them onto a trailer and pile them at just the edge of the pond. Agnes and I would come back just before dusk and sit down in easy chairs close by where we could keep an eye on the brush.

You can almost set your watch on when the beavers come out at night. It's always just as dusk is drawing its veil across the land. The first thing you will notice will be a small head in the water with a V-shaped wave trailing out from it. The tiny crest of the wave makes the head appear smaller than it is.

It has been said the first beaver out in the evening always makes a complete circuit of the pond to check on any leaks. That may be so in an ordinary pond but it sure isn't if food is piled on the bank.

Our first beaver took one look at all that food, gave the surface one mighty whack with its tail and submerged. I have no idea why it did this, but it soon showed up with two others and they tackled that pile of brush. It was fun to see a tree branch moving mysteriously across a pond under the full moon.

We did nothing that first night except watch and then left quietly. By morning, every branch had disappeared. I repeated this day after day and each night we would move our chairs just a little closer.



Floyd King at NYFOA 1989 Fall meeting.

RREP photo by Taber.

By following this technique, you can almost make a pet out of a beaver. I got to a point where a beaver would tug on a branch I was holding. They also get so used to you that you can watch one felling a tree if you are quiet and careful.

Consider those two pair of large front teeth every beaver is born with. They last a lifetime and are kept the same length and almost razor sharp by regular gnawing. (Rodent incisors grow continuously and must be gnawed down.)

Then consider those front feet and legs. The feet are heavily clawed with two claws especially designed just for grooming. The other claws have excellent dexterity for handling small twigs and branches and for dam building. The back feet are entirely different, being fully webbed to offer propulsion in swimming.

Special respiratory equipment enables a beaver to stay submerged for periods of up to 20 minutes. During this underwater period a beaver's special valves close to prevent water from entering the ears, nose and throat.

As the largest rodent in North America, a beaver will reach a weight up to 60 or 70 pounds. Actually it seems everything about a beaver is unique.

From the Rochester Democrat and Chronicle, May 30, 1992

# CHAPTER REPORTS

## ALLEGHENY FOOTHILLS

Our annual picnic held this year at David Mowatt's in Franklinville on July 18 was a resounding success. 32 AFC'ers met to tour the Ischua Creek Small Watershed Control Project dam across the street then adjourned to barbecue meat and enjoy a summertime treat of the myriad dishes provided by each attendee. Besides the general good time and high spirits, an award was made to Charlie and Marian Mowatt for outstanding service to the AFC. We also discussed possible fundraisers and collected a long list of those willing to join in when we have a firmer schedule of activities.

On Sept. 26 at 10 A.M. we will meet at Price Corners on Rte. 394 for a "Pleistocene Foray" led by Dr. Steve Eaton. We will tour various parts of the county to examine the effects of terminal moraines on our county flora and fauna. While this sounds painfully technical, it's a good bet that Dr. Eaton will expand our knowledge and we will have a great time learning. A bonus will be the chance to enjoy the beautiful Fall foliage!

## NORTHERN ADIRONDACK

NAC staff is in the mad planning/ near action state. Don Brown has set up a great outing for Saturday, September 5 (10:30 am), combining a field walk through the Fernow Plantation with a "bring-your-own" picnic at DEC's Fish Creek Campsite. Fernow, "the man who brought forestry to America", directed the planting of the conifers in 1904. The plantation is on the State's register for historic trees. It's located just west of State Highway 30, about 2 miles north of 30's intersection with State Highway 3 (6 miles NE of Tupper Lake). Why don't "ya all come" to the North Country for this superb outing?

Our next woodswalk on October 3, planned by Dave Daut, with Dave Forness assisting, will be in Clinton County at the Macomb Reservation State Forest (meet there at noon, have your own lunch, followed by tour). This is south of Plattsburgh and just west of Schuyler Falls. Join us to see the colors and to learn about a Lake Champlain timber type of pine/oak/northern hardwood which has been managed for 40 years

NAC NEWS(letter) was distributed the last week of July, so NACers should have their copy by now. Let us know what you

think of it -- we know it can be improved

It seems strange to many of us why NYFOA (that's us!) cannot attract more members. We know the organization has a lot to offer woodland owners, regardless of their management objectives. I feel each member has an individual responsibility to at least identify NYFOA to their friends and neighboring land-owners. In this process of identification, your chapter can supply you with a very descriptive NYFOA brochure which defines our mission, objectives and activities. Present this to your contacts, and tell them what NYFOA has done for you.

We prize our members so much in NACLand that we're offering them a little award when they sign up a new member this year. The award is a free cap with NYFOA emblem (\$5 retail value), plus a free NYFOA patch (\$2 retail value). The cap and patch are really nice, Kelly-green against white. If other chapters are interested, give me a ring (315-848-2136).

## CENTRAL NEW YORK

On August 29 a walk was held at Heiberg Forest. All aspects of woodlot management were discussed. The staff from ESF discussed timber management, firewood harvesting, sugarbush management, genetic research and wildlife management.

On September 12 we will again have a walk at Heiberg Forest. We will talk about the topics from the August walk and feature Road, Pond and Trail development on your woodlot. Experts from the ESF college will comment on forest management practices in Heiberg Forest as we walk. The walk will last from 10 a.m. to about 3 p.m.. We may cover as much as five miles so wear comfortable shoes! Also bring a bag lunch. Heiberg Forest is in Tully, New York; information and directions can be obtained by calling 315-682-9376.

In October we hope to have a discussion on Bird watching and wildlife habitat improvement, local experts will lead the walk. All details have not been worked out but information can be obtained by calling 315-682-9376.

## CAPITAL DISTRICT

Our Fall woodswalk is scheduled for October 17 and will combine an inspection of an active logging operation and a

tour of the local sawmill that will eventually receive the logs. We'll start at 1:00 pm from Stempel's sawmill which is located on Stempel Road, off Sawmill Road in the Town of Berne, Albany County.

Our Chapter is also alerting our members to a possible windfall of SIP money that may come along in August from a re-allocation of funds originally set aside for other states. Constant contact with local ASCS and DEC offices will be useful as will an up-to-date application.

Our summer woodswalk was a modest success in terms of attendance. Members who didn't make it missed an outstanding trip through a well-managed woodlot with an abundance of wildlife that has been cared for by the Weinheimer family for many years.

## SOUTHERN TIER

A meeting of the chapter officers and board members will be held on Wednesday, September 9th at 6:30 P.M. at the NYPENN Trade Center on Main Street in Johnson City. This meeting is to plan and co-ordinate chapter events for the next year. The meeting is open to all chapter members. If anyone has ideas and/or recommendations for the next year's programs, please contact Larry Lepak at 607-656-8504 so that these ideas can be included. Tentatively, a fall afternoon woodswalk is being planned for October. Chapter members will receive a meeting notice for the first fall meeting.

## WESTERN FINGERLAKES

There is a walk planned for Saturday, Sept. 12 at Rush Oak Openings. The attraction here is a few acres of remnant eastern prairie grasses that flourished in the oak openings throughout the North East. Mark Keister is the DEC person in charge of the attempt to perpetuate some of these nearly extinct grasses. He, along with someone from the Nature Conservancy, will lead the tour.

After the prairie grasses the walk will proceed by auto to Log Cabin Road in Fishers, New York to examine a 20 acre parcel that is reputed to have some of the oldest old-growth timber in the state.

Carol and Phil Fox have taken over the responsibility for the chapter's video and print library. The Foxes live on Calm Lake Drive in Farmington, New York. We're pleased to have the Foxes assistance in operating the chapter.

## SOUTHEAST ADIRONDACK

Our chapter sponsored a progressive "Car Hop" in Saratoga County July 6. At the first stop John Hastings, Forester, showed us a 2 acre experimental poplar plot which is three years old with different varieties planted on agricultural land. Some trees grew to a height of 18' indicating possibilities for pulp wood use.

Next stop was Ernie Spencer's (MFO) red pine plantation showing active thinning and pruning of a 25 year old stand. The 10 inch average diameter trees were being culled, loaded and taken to a shaving mill. After lunch under misty skies we followed a truck loaded with 4 foot wood to Howard Clark's shaving mill.

Here we watched a one man operation with wood placed on a rack then rolled into a shaving hopper. A diesel motor operated planer cut the shavings which were blown into a pile for loading into trucks. The operator ably described the operation and selling of pine shavings for bedding.

At our last stop Richard Boice showed us his wood processing and drying shed for firewood. The hardwood logs were fed to the processor at one end of a post and beam building where the logs are chain sawed, split and elevated to a dump truck. From there the wood is taken and piled on racks for drying, then sold for firewood to homes and campsites. This was a very impressive, clean setup with the equipment under one roof and wood being dried in an open shed. The emphasis here is on satisfying the customers with clean, dry firewood, delivered when and where they want it.

This tour showed how our poor quality trees can be used giving the forest owner some income.

## THRIFT AFFILIATE

On July 18 Dick Mark led sixteen THRIFT members and guests on a woodwalk at Joe Stephenson's woodlot, which consists of 85 acres located near Osceola. We observed red and white pine that Joe planted 70 years ago in 1933. This is a living statement that Joe was a "Tree Farmer" long before it became the "in" thing to do.

Mr. Mark gave a quick lecture on the tent caterpillar's life cycle. We observed the damage they had done to deciduous trees but noted they are recovering new leaves.

After two and a half hours of Tug Hill hiking we shared lunch at Cedar Pine restaurant. A well conducted, instructive woodwalk enjoyed by all.

## CATSKILL FOREST ASSOC.

After a very busy July and August, Sunday September 27, CFA celebrates its 10th anniversary with a picnic at the Frost Valley YMCA camp, complete with a cook-out and auction. Hikes, tours and talks will fill the day where you choose the activities you prefer. If interested, call CFA and we'll send a flyer and directions.

Also planned for September is a trip to Bob Bishop's property in Andes to observe his various seedlings and use of tree shelters. We will be able to see the improved growth and protection provided by the shelters. A workshop on bluestone quarrying or stone wall building will be incorporated into the same day.

## Lower Hudson

As I write this Chapter Report I am just finishing up a review of the evaluation sheets distributed to attendees of the "I Love Hudson Valley Forests Legislative Bus Tour" held on Thursday, July 23. As readers may recall, this was a "Stump to Showroom" tour in which we attempted to mix local, state, and federal legislators with forest landowners for a day to foster discussion of forestry related issues near and dear to our hearts. All in all I would have to say that the tour was a great success! Some 90 legislators and landowners (as well as 10 or 15 DEC foresters and biologists and other interested parties) came along for the ride in spite of the rain that day. In fact, we couldn't have asked for a better mix. The ratio of legislators to landowners attending was approximately 1:1! Among those attending were Town supervisors, EMC and CAC representatives, representatives of several state assemblymen and U.S. Congressmen, assorted legislators from each of 7 Hudson Valley Counties, NYFOA members, Region 3 Forest Practice Board members, representatives from the Nature Conservancy, Scenic Hudson, The Black Rock Forest, and the U.S. Army (West Point).

Both landowners and legislators learned a great deal about each others concerns regarding the preservation of open space -and particularly working landscapes - in a rapidly "suburbanizing" region. Many myths surrounding forest practice were dispelled during a tour of a DEC forestry demonstration area and a visit to an active logging operation on the property of a local NYFOA member. Additional insight was gained during tours of both a lumber mill and furniture factory. In fact, many of the legislators attending commented that this day's outing gave them a perspective on forestry and forest based industries that they never had before, and were grateful for the opportunity to view firsthand operations that had only been described to them (usually in unfavorable terms) by various groups opposed to tree cutting. One even bought a chair at the showroom!

Many thanks are due those people who worked alongside members of the Lower Hudson Chapter to make this tour possible: Sean Flynn of J&J Log and Lumber Corp., Shelby Hunt and Keith Bowlby of Hunt Country Furniture, Dan Weller, Bob Herberger, Pat Vissering, and John Gibbs of DEC, and Dean Ryder of the Region 3 Forest Practice Board. Thanks also to NYFOA member Peter Woytuk and his family for graciously allowing us to tour their farm, and to Peter's forester, Doug Ramey of East-West Forestry Associates, and logger, Glen Rhodes of Turner Mountain Logging, for their assistance and interpretive efforts during the tour.

In addition to the rave reviews we received from both legislators and landowners alike, we also received some excellent suggestions as to how to improve upon our present efforts in future tours (currently the LHC is considering hosting this event on a regular, biannual basis). We would be happy to share these suggestions, as well as other lessons learned as a result of our experience, with other Chapters planning similar outings. Interested parties should contact me at 914-831-3109 for information.

At this time I have no further activities to announce - I think I need a bit of a rest after this last one - though I expect we'll organize something between now and September. Chapter members will receive announcements in the mail. I hope to have a newsletter up and running sometime this fall, though that will depend on how much enthusiasm is generated among the membership. I'll let you know what develops. - Robert Davis

# A Right-To-Harvest Law in New York State?

By Peter S. Levatich

As I work in my forest I often pause to look up at the sky through the treetops at the bigger pictures, thinking about larger issues. It is important!

One issue that frequently comes to mind circles around the RIGHTS of the forest owner, you and me. Somewhere, a long time ago, I read that rights come with corresponding responsibilities, just as privileges carry with them undeniable duties. It made things a lot clearer for me then, like a light bulb turned on. Accordingly, the privilege of forest ownership means that you have the duty to pay property taxes; fair ones. The right of forest ownership requires, of course, responsible ownership. We are proud to be responsible forest owners, stewards of the land: we do what we can for the quality of the soil, the water which passes through, wildlife, wetlands, the interested public (as long as they behave responsibly also), the aesthetic qualities of the entire domain, biodiversity, and of course the trees. Now, if rights demand corresponding responsibilities, then the reverse should be true. Correct? You, the responsible forest owner, should have

rights. What rights?

One such right should be the RIGHT TO HARVEST your trees. For firewood, for lumber, for space to plant new trees, for income. You do not have to harvest, but you should have the right to harvest. Well, you say, that is obvious: that is how it always was, that is what the person did from whom I purchased the land; society needs fibre. Harvesting is part of the renewable resource concept. Besides, the right to harvest springs from one of the most important rules of the Constitution(\*).

I had thought so, too. I was annoyed a few years ago when all the noise about the equal rights amendment came to my ear. Surely, I thought, the Constitution already gave everyone equal rights. Later I was persuaded that, as times change, rights need to be defined in greater detail, sometimes need to be reemphasized. Sure enough, we see many folks settling in the countryside today who grew up in places with few trees. They don't know much about them, let alone about the forests, or forest ownership. Their definition of a renewable resource is the vegetable garden at best. So, if all at once, unlike the corn crop being harvested annually before their eyes, a change takes place in their fine view with trees being cut down, they will think of the destruction of the rain forests and similar things and will get very upset. These folks need to be reminded of rights, even if they are already on the books in some form, lest misconceptions escalate into action. Such action is indeed going on around us: laws have and are today being passed in towns and counties restricting the cutting of trees, and the harvesting of forest products. Never mind the historical forest practices, your management plan, the work you have invested toward a future

harvest of your renewable resource on your land! ..... And you thought you had rights?

What to do? Much has been tried in various forms with various results(\*\*). Several states, among them Connecticut and Oregon in 1991, have passed state laws to supersede municipal codes so that uniform and better laws apply statewide. The best of these attempts was promulgated in New Hampshire in 1990, the landmark "RIGHT TO HARVEST" law. It, in effect, mandates that communities may not "unreasonably limited" forest activities on private lands through the use of zoning and planning powers.

You ought to take the time some fine day soon to look at the sky through your treetops. Ask yourself: Is it necessary in New York State to redefine your rights as a responsible forest owner? is this the time to do it? Should we have a good RIGHT TO HARVEST LAW here in New York State? What is it that you the responsible forest owner, should be doing to cause this new definition of your rights to happen? Think about it, discuss it, take appropriate action, all of which are your rights also. Your rights are like your treetops; you lose them if you don't use them.

(\*) The Constitution of the United States, Amendment 5, "...nor shall private property be taken for public use, without just compensation."

(\*\*) SEVEN YEARS OF OUTSTANDING FORESTRY LEGISLATION, National Woodlands, April 1992, pg. 5.

*Peter Levatich, a past director of NYFOA, represents Tompkins County at the 9 county NYS DEC Region 7 Forest Practice Board, where right to harvest laws have been discussed recently.*

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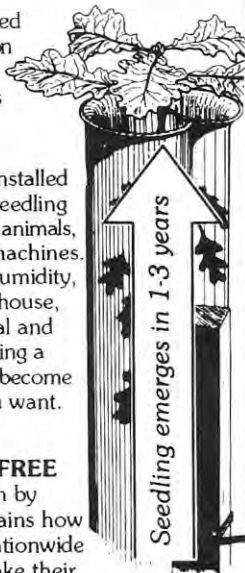
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# Landmark Tax Ruling: Can't Assess at Speculative Value

By Martin Harris

Farmers everywhere who struggle with a property-tax system that favors non-landed urbanites should be fascinated with this court decision. It may yet become a classic precedent.

Let me start by repeating what everyone already knows: the property-tax system doesn't work well any more because it no longer reflects income and ability to pay. It may well be that two condo-dwellers, one taxed twice as much as the other because his condo is twice as big, fare well under this system. In suburbia, dwelling size almost always reflects income level.

But it's far more certain that large-scale rural land owners -- farmers, mostly -- are forced to pay taxes based not on income but rather on the conversion value of their land to more urban uses. The polite phrase is fair-market value. Those less polite might call it speculative value.

## Urban subsidy

The property-tax problem hasn't been one that politicians have wanted to solve. After all, there are more urban and suburban voters than rural land owners in most states. Even in Vermont, still most rural of the fifty states, urban voter power has kept in place a state-aid-to-education system that sends far more money, on a per-pupil basis, to high-income urban and suburban districts than to lower-income rural districts.

A shift of use-value would, after all, commit the unpardonable political sin of eliminating the rural subsidy of urban education; and so, much as they might extol it in theory, legislators have in fact treated use-value as a form of leprosy, keeping safe distance from its advocates and offering only enough recognition to forestall outright tax rebellion in rural areas. Vermont's use-value formula, for example, has always been set up to value farmland at far more than the actual profitability of its crops would justify. And typically, now that the State spending spree is over and retrenchment unavoidable, use-value is taking one of the major cuts.

But condemnation of tawdry policies sometimes comes from strange places. You'll recall that the progressive land-grabbing of the planning fraternity was dealt a pair of severe blows by the courts in

1987, when a pair of benchmark cases reminded social activists that individual property rights still exist, are still protected under the Fifth Amendment, and governmental takings must be compensated.

That was the U.S. Supreme Court, dealing with cases known as "First English" and "Nollan." This time, it's the New York State Supreme Court, in a case labeled *Goldman v Commissioner of Finance*. And this time, a major court has made just about the clearest statement in support of the principle of use-value rather than FMV (fair market value) in property-assessment matters. Not that Goldman's land is farmland; it isn't. It's apartment house lots in Manhattan. But they're residential lots which may some day be re-zoned commercial, and so the speculative value of the land already reflects that probability. You can guess that New York City assessors were quick to assess, re-assess and re-assess again based on each increase in FMV. That's just what typically happens in rural America all the time.

But this time the owner went to court, and this time the court ruled that such assessment was illegal. The court criticized the city for assessing "based on a still non-existent theoretical use of the prop-

erty." Goldman's lawyer summarized the ruling this way: "the court said you have to tax based on current use."

The widespread practice of constant re-assessment (everywhere except California, where Proposition 13 keeps assessments level between property sales) is not proper, said the New York State Supreme Court, pointing out that Goldman's assessment had almost tripled over seven years while the actual land use remained unchanged. (What rural taxpayer couldn't identify with that experience!)

Will the courts give rural America the use-value tax formula that urban-oriented politicians have been too vote-hungry to adopt? I hope so. And perhaps it's not just pure hope. After all, no one expected that the US Supreme Court would ever again place constraints on the land-use planers and force them to accept fiscal responsibility for their actions.

*Architect and one-time heifer producer Martin Harris champions rural causes from his Vergennes, Vermont, home.*

*from New England Farmer, Mar. '92 by permission of the author and the editor Alan Knight.*

## Region 7 and Forestry Laws

The 9 county NYS DEC Region 7 Forest Practice Board (Chairman - Donald Steger from Cortland County) has recently undertaken several initiatives directed at the New York State Legislature. At the 1991 Annual Fall Meeting held in the Danby Town Hall (Tompkins County) the Board unanimously recommended consideration of a RIGHT TO HARVEST LAW in New York State. At the 1992 Annual Spring Meeting held at Richard Molyneaux's Tree Farm/Xmas Tree Plantation, there were two more remarkable resolutions passed.

One of the resolutions challenges the method currently used to assess Real Property; that is, according to "highest and best value". This resolution proposed Real Property be assessed according to its present use and current income only. The second significant resolution passed by the regional board recommends that all forestry grown crops be declared by law, an agricultural commodity. The Chairman of the State Forest Practice Board, Dean Frost from Broome County is one of Region 7's two representatives to the State Board. Vernon Hudson from Onondaga County who serves as the State Forest Practice Board Treasurer is the other.

These laws purport to remove nuisance barriers to harvest and thereby decrease costs; and provide more equitable taxation policies which would retain lands in open space and economic productivity.

# Hidden Crisis in the Forest

By Carl P. Wiedemann

In a recent article in the Journal of Forestry, Ralph Nyland stated that exploitation and greed were dominant influences over timber harvesting practices during the 1980's in eastern hardwood forests. Dr. Nyland, who teaches at the Syracuse College of Environmental Science and Forestry, was referring to "high-grading" - the removal of the largest and the most valuable tree species from the forest. High-grading is not easy to recognize. This type of logging only removes the largest trees. From a distance many trees remain. The casual observer may not even realize that a timber harvest has taken place.

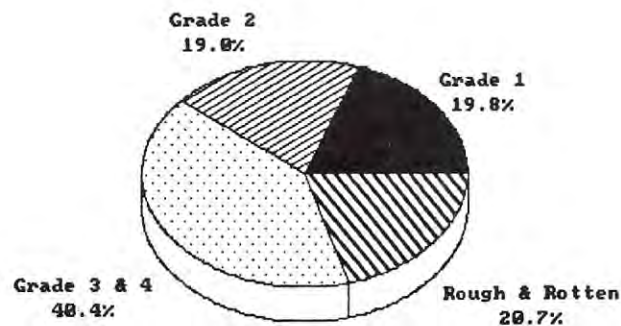
The consequences of high-grading are insidious because the cut over forest usually appears healthy. But many of the individual trees which remain after a woodlot has been high-graded are defective. In fact, according to the latest forest survey statistics, nearly 80% of the mature trees on forest land in New York State have defects which significantly lower their timber value.

Today, most logging in New York State is some type of partial cut. This is in part because markets for trees smaller than 12" in diameter are limited. Consequently, a typical logging operation removes only the biggest specimens of the most valuable species. These are trees with straight, branch free logs which have little or no internal decay. The residual trees are often smaller, of poor quality, or of species, such as beech, with a low timber value. These trees are the ones that will eventually grow into the openings left where trees were cut. They also provide the only seed source for new seedlings. Dr. Nyland's concern is that we may be unintentionally damaging the future productivity of our forests by this type of selective removal of the best growing stock.

One analogy I heard a few years ago compared "take the best and leave the rest" logging with the execution of the fastest horses at the derby. If a horse breeder had each win, place and show horse shot after every race, how long would it be until his stable had only held the slowest horses in the race? To a breeder, that would be a very destructive system for managing racing horses. Yet, this is essentially how many landowners manage their woodlots.

Should anyone care about timber pro-

## TIMBER QUALITY From NYS Forest Survey - 1980



trees over 15" diameter

*This chart shows that only one tree in five is good enough to make grade #1. Poor quality trees take up a large percentage of the growing space in New York Forests.*

ductivity? For many individual forest landowners, timber is often not high on the list of their reasons for owning the land. There are many important values of forest land which are not related to whether or not there is good timber growth. These include rare and endangered species, wildlife habitat, and aesthetic values. Yet we, and future generations, all have an interest in maintaining the productivity of timber from forest land. Even though timber production is not usually considered an important environmental issue, it should be. There is an indirect but undeniable linkage between society's economic health and its ability to protect environmental quality.

Our continued economic health is essential if we are to be able to afford clean air and water, protection of rare species, parks, and wilderness areas. In poverty stricken countries, the protection of natural resources and environmental quality is often a low priority. The basic necessities of food and shelter come first. Would New York State have been able to maintain the Adirondack and Catskill Forest Preserves, protect wetlands from development, create dozens of state parks and build thousand of miles of recreational trails without a healthy economy? We need a healthy economy, and timber from local woodlots currently contribute billions of dollars to it.

There is another reason to keep our

woodlands as productive as possible. Certainly, New York's economy is probably robust enough to survive even if our forests never produced another log. However, the market demand for timber products will remain no matter what happens in this state. The volume of wood not harvested from local woodlots will simply come from other forest areas around the nation and around the world. How much of this timber will be harvested using environmentally sound cutting practices from well managed forests is less clear. We have the opportunity to produce timber using sound harvesting methods which enhance the environment. Consequently, we can feel good about exporting our home grown wood products to international markets where they will help offset the demand for logs coming from more environmentally sensitive areas of the world.

It is important to point out that a woodlot which is growing high quality timber also provides wildlife habitat, recreational benefits, watershed protection and aesthetic values. With careful control, it is even possible to allow logging in sensitive areas and not harm endangered species or significant habitats. Some rare species depend on a certain amount of disturbance to create and maintain the environmental conditions necessary for their survival. As John Marchant, Executive Director for

The New York Forest Owners Association puts it: "Good forest management is really a case of having your cake and eating it too!"

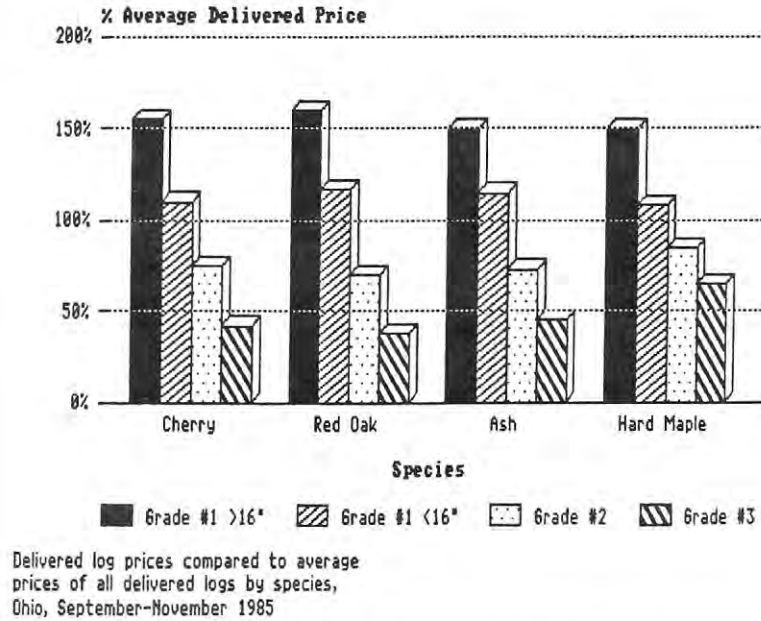
By failing to consider the long-term implications of logging practices which only remove the biggest and the best trees, we are robbing future generations of a basic natural resource. Future timber crops will be less valuable. It usually takes at least sixty or seventy years for our hardwood trees to develop to their full potential value for sawlogs or veneer. Most landowners don't own their woodland for more than a fraction of that period. When the trees are big enough to cut, some landowners only think of the immediate income, not about what effect their harvesting practices will have on future timber quality.

As a result of past high-grading we have thousands, perhaps millions of acres of forest land in New York State covered with what one forester calls "green junk." Don Peterson, a consultant who has spent over 40 years in forestry, compares high-graded woodlots to empty factories. From the outside, the factories may appear productive. However, if the machinery from inside has been removed, it is only an illusion of productivity. Many of our forests are in the same condition. They look good from the road but not so good on a tree by tree basis.

Assigning the "blame" is probably not a productive exercise. Many landowners, loggers, and even foresters have been caught up in the economics of timber harvesting which in some cases do not allow many alternatives. Loggers and procurement foresters know that in order to pay top dollar for cutting rights, they cannot afford to leave valuable timber behind without lowering the price they pay the landowner. A landowner may get 10 to 20% more income from high-grading than by following more conservative methods. When a landowner needs or wants money, he or she may not be willing to leave future growing stock or go to the expense of removing inferior trees that take up growing space.

We have an opportunity as well as an obligation to turn things around. New York has over 15 million acres of forest land which are privately owned by individuals. Most woodlots have the capability of producing high quality logs from species that are in demand around the world. For example, nearly 20% of the world's supply of sugar maple grows right here in New York State. In forestry, landowners today reap

## LOG PRICES - By Species and Grade



*Timber quality is a very important factor in the stumpage value of a woodlot. High grade logs can be worth 2 - 3 times lower grade logs of the same species.*

the benefits or suffer the consequences of cutting practices that took place 15, 50 or even 100 years ago. Future woodland owners will either benefit or suffer from the actions we take today.

The recently announced Forest Stewardship Program incorporates both education and financial incentives in an attempt to motivate forest landowners to practice better forest management. Forest Stewardship is not limited to timber production, but includes wildlife habitat, endangered species protection, recreation, and esthetics.

Forest landowners can start by having a Stewardship Management Plan prepared by either a state forester or a private consultant forester. Once the management plan has been prepared, landowners are eligible for partial reimbursement of the cost of forest improvement practices they undertake including timber stand improvement. Timber stand improvement practices include the removal of inferior growing stock and thinning crop trees to accelerate their growth. Cost sharing will be part of a federally funded Stewardship Incentives Program (SIP).

For landowners with mature timber to sell, the Stewardship Program provides an opportunity to get advice from a professional forester before deciding what trees are to be cut. Hopefully, the landowner will recognize that good stewardship means that logging practices should not be al-

lowed to compromise future productivity. A forester's services can include marking the trees that should be cut, advertising the sale, and supervising to make sure only marked trees are cut and there is no damage to the residual stand.

If you are interested in having a Stewardship Plan prepared or enrolling for cost sharing, contact your county ASCS office or the nearest regional office of the DEC. The ASCS office is listed in most telephone books under United States Department of Agriculture - Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service. DEC is listed under New York State Department of Environmental Conservation.

*Carl Wiedemann is the Regional Forester for the nine county NYS DEC Region 4.*

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# Common Tent Caterpillars

By Douglas C. Allen

The caterpillar stages of moths and butterflies produce silk in modified salivary glands. This material is used for a variety of purposes: orientation (everywhere the caterpillar goes it lays a single strand of silk, which allows it to "back-track" to a nest or to relocate food, or the silk may provide a trail for siblings to follow); as a "parachute" that facilitates wind dispersal of small caterpillars; moth caterpillars build a cocoon of silk to protect the immobile and defenseless pupal stage within which the caterpillar transforms into an adult (raw silk for cloth comes from the silkworm cocoon, which is composed of a single stand over 1000 yards long!); and, finally, silk is used by a few species to build conspicuous nests that provide shelter from adverse weather and many natural enemies.

## Eastern Tent Caterpillar

The most common tent maker in New York is the eastern tent caterpillar. The caterpillars of this species are gregarious and spend daylight hours in a dense silken "tent" that the colony spins in a stem or branch crotch (Figure 1), usually on cherry, apple, or flowering crabs. The white tents first become visible in late April or early May in central areas of the state. Larvae



Figure 1. Typical shelter spun by a colony of eastern tent caterpillars.

leave the nest to feed at dusk and through the evening hours.

## Forest Tent Caterpillar

The closely related forest tent caterpillar does not build a nest, so its common name is misleading. During the day, these caterpillars aggregate on a matt of silk spun on the bole of the host tree, often near the ground. Unlike its cousin the eastern tent, which is primarily a pest of ornamentals and shade trees, in the northeast forest tent can be a serious defoliator of sugar maple, black cherry, and aspen.

## Description

Caterpillars of both species are 1.5" to 2.0" long when full grown. Each is sparsely clothed with long, fine, light brown hairs. The hairs do not arise from wart-like spots (as in the gypsy moth) nor do the hairs occur in tufts (like those of tussock moths). Fully grown caterpillars are often marked with distinct blue and orange lines. Figure 2 illustrates the most conspicuous difference in the appearance of these two pests. Eastern tent caterpillar (Fig. 2) has a solid white to cream stripe along the center of its back; the back of the forest tent caterpillar



Figure 2. Full grown tent caterpillar larvae: Left: eastern tent; Right: forest tent.

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(Fig. 2) is distinguished by a row of "foot-step" or "keyhole" markings.

Eggs are deposited in shiny, cylindrical, compact masses that encircle twigs (Figure 3). Both species overwinter in the egg stage. Eggs hatch and larvae initiate feeding in early spring shortly after host foliage begins to expand. Hence, defoliation occurs very early in the growing season. Usually, feeding is completed by late June. Heavy defoliation in early summer often stimulates the host to produce another complement of leaves. This second attempt to grow foliage stresses the tree and makes it very susceptible to drought, lethal secondary agents, such as root rot fungi, and other disturbances.

### The Damage

If an outbreak of forest tent caterpillar threatens your woodlot, a decision to take action depends on: i) whether or not the stand has been stressed recently; ii) growing conditions that season; and iii) landowner objectives.

Protecting foliage (i.e., spraying with a chemical or biological insecticide) may be critical if the woodlot was subjected to another major stress factor during the past 2-3 years. Heavy defoliation that occurs immediately before, in concert with, or following another disturbance such as drought, a late spring frost that kills the young foliage, or a silvicultural activity such as thinning will at a minimum reducediameter growth and cause crown dieback. Often, a combination of these events will kill a tree.

Typically, light to moderate defoliation occurs for a year or two before an outbreak mushrooms and removes 75% or more of the foliage. A vigorous stand ordinarily will tolerate this sequence of events. Usually, it is only after the second or third years of severe defoliation that significant crown dieback and, eventually, mortality of some trees occurs. A major reduction in annual diameter growth will occur after a single year of severe defoliation. Owners of an operating sugarbush or a northern hardwood stand that has been exposed recently to another major stress factor should protect foliage before the first year of severe defoliation.

### Control Options

Two tools are registered for use against forest tent caterpillar in woodlots and operating sugarbushes: a synthetic organic insecticide called carbaryl and a microbial

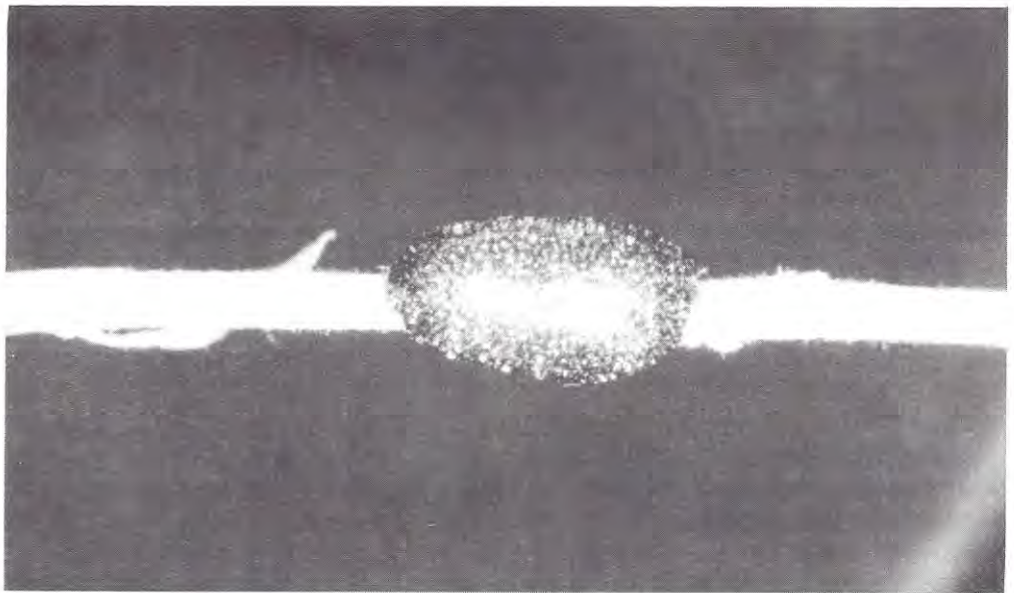


Figure 3. Tent caterpillar egg mass (actual length 0.4 to 0.5 inches).

insecticide, the bacterium Bacillus thuringiensis ("B.t.").

Carbaryl (trade name Sevin) is a relatively inexpensive contact insecticide that consistently provides high levels of caterpillar mortality. It can, however, temporarily depress populations of nontarget insects, including beneficial predators and parasites. B.t., sold under various trade names, such as Thuricide and Dipel, usually is more costly to apply on a per acre basis compared to chemicals. The microbial also is less reliable. That is, it is difficult to predict results because many events related to weather, foliage condition, insect vigor, and timing determine how successful an application will be. The bacterium will not affect natural enemies, but it is lethal to other caterpillar species that consume it - and B.t. must be consumed, it has no contact toxicity. If applied at the proper dose, at the correct time, and under suitable weather and pest population conditions, it will do a good job of protecting foliage. Carbaryl, on the other hand, has achieved

high levels of caterpillar mortality and foliage protection consistently under a wider range of conditions.

Several other chemical insecticides are registered for aerial or ground application against both tent caterpillars on forest (non-sugarbush) and shade trees. Should you desire to take action, consult with your regional office of DEC, county extension agent or call the Extension Office at the SUNY, College of Environmental Science and Forestry in Syracuse (315-470-6751).

I thank L. P. Abrahamson for reviewing this article and providing helpful suggestions.

*Professor Allen is a forest entomologist with the Faculty of Environmental and Forest Biology at SUNY ESF. This is his fifth article in the continuing series of informative articles Dr. Allen has provided for the readers of the N.Y. FOREST OWNER.*

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# THE FORGOTTEN LAND

By Bruce Penrod

As a youngster I used to wander the fields and forests of the Finger Lakes. Roaming the countryside I encountered creatures large and small, as well as a host of plants I grew fascinated by. I constantly leafed through the pages of Mother Nature's landscape trying to learn what lived where and when you could expect to see a particular wildlife character. The sum of these experiences sent me on my way pursuing wildlife biology as a career and hobby. Biologists are always trying to figure out why some natural dilemma is the way it is, was, and will be.

Today's quandary is the decline in distribution and numbers of wildlife species associated with grasslands. Why? Not because of a sinister toxic waste dumper's plot to make a few bucks. "Because nothing succeeds like succession", as one of my college professors used to say. Most of the land in New York, and the rest of the Northeast, eventually wants to have some kind of tree growing on it. From hay field to shrubs to saplings; you know the rest. There are many accounts that describe why we are losing grasslands. The retreat of agriculture due to soils and markets too weak to sustain economic viability is probably at the top of the list. Over 60% of the State was forested in 1980 and that number is not on its way down. If you consider that less than 40% of New York was forested not too long ago, the decline of grassland wildlife species is no surprise. Sounds like good news for forest owners.....more woods.

Certainly it's not bad news if forests are your thing, but there is obviously more to the story. It is very clear to me that the rank and file of NYFOA are not just interested in trees. Members have often indicated their wildlife resources were more important than a \$5,000 timber sale. That reflects an enlightened owner attitude as well as an

opportunity to make more people aware of the situation grassland wildlife faces today.

To shed a little more light on our collective view of wildlife habitat, take this test. What have you done, or what are you going to do, for wildlife on your property? The most frequent response would be: plant trees or shrubs. There is nothing wrong with that except that nobody is talking about grasslands. Not the members, nor those you seek technical assistance from. (God bless those who are!) If you like bob-o-links, northern harriers (or marsh hawks as we used to call them), mallards, blue winged teal, bluebirds, ring-necked pheasants, the list goes on and on .....you probably ought to think about grasslands. Grasslands are critical as nesting, roosting, foraging or escape cover for many species. To some the presence or absence of grasslands is the bottom line. No grass, no critter. Other species can get by without it, but it enhances their well-being; deer and turkey are good examples.

Researchers on different fronts are seeing the decline of wildlife associated with grasslands. My experience with ringnecked pheasants for the State of New York is not atypical. Loss of grassland is not the sole reason for the decline of the wily ringneck but it's at the top of the list. Predation and weather are major factors in New York, but a good deal of their impact is related to the lack of high quality grasslands. For the pheasant, as for other species, the tale of woe is quite a bit more complex than a one sentence explanation. The key for the ringneck is the presence or absence of good residual cover, especially as it relates to the nesting season. Thus it's not so important what the grass looks like when it is growing, rather what structure it provides when it is dormant. Each species has different problems and many solutions still elude us.

Generally it can be said that the grass-

land community and the wildlife it supports is overlooked by laymen and professional alike. It has and will continue to suffer from neglect. What can be done? Just reading this article will do some good. At a workshop I once gave, a participant summed it up quite simply, "It's no easy problem." Certainly an understatement of how far we have to go in raising public consciousness and unearthing the unknown critical needs of grassland species. We do have a long way to go, but true stewardship of our natural resources has to come from a public that understands the problems and seeks sound ecological and practical solutions. Let's take the first step! You can help by learning about the grassland community, talking with fellow landowners, and expressing your concern for the related natural resources. Communicate with those in technical, management and legislative positions to express how you feel and to learn what's going on.

It's our resource. An African chief once said, "I conceived the human race to be one large family: a small number who have died, a few who are living, and many more yet unborn." Perhaps it is time to think about the rest of the family.

*Bruce Penrod is a wildlife biologist graduated from the College of Environmental Sciences and Forestry who has worked for 20 years with the Dept. of Environmental Conservation. He has worked on wild turkey and pheasant research and conducted a trap and transfer program moving fisher from the Adirondacks to the Catskills. He lives with his wife, Julie, and three daughters near Hemlock Lake near Springwater. He enjoys the outdoors including, hunting, fishing, trapping and woodswalking.*



Rooted, emergent plants that commonly grow along the shores of New York lakes. From Siegfried, C.A. 1986. Understanding New York Lakes. New York State Museum Educational Leaflet 26.

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# Ask A Wildlife Biologist

By Dr. William F. Porter

I'm frequently asked, "How much impact are coyotes having on deer populations in the Adirondacks?" Dr. Rainer Brocke and I recently completed a study on the Huntington Forest to answer this question. The results surprised us, and I think they will surprise you, as well.

Our study involved putting radio-collars on about 20 coyotes and nearly 150 deer. The radios allowed us to track the movements and the survival of these animals for about 5 years. Each spring we also radio-collared coyote pups and deer fawns.

Studies done over the past 30 years suggested that deer constitute an important food resource for coyotes during nearly every month except July and August. This deduction was based on the observation of deer hair in the scats of coyotes. What is uncertain is whether coyotes are killing and eating deer, or simply feeding on deer that died from other causes.

Without doubt, coyotes in the Adirondacks are capable of killing deer.

However, it appears that to kill a deer requires special circumstances. For instance, during the winter when coyotes are able to drive deer out onto open ice, they can be very effective at killing deer. We hoped that our radio-telemetry study would give us an indication of the rate at which coyotes kill deer at other times of the year.

Interestingly, coyotes killed very few of our radio-marked deer. Of a total of 148 deer radio-tagged, 38 died from some cause. Of those that died, coyotes were responsible in 10 cases.

We suspected that coyotes might be very efficient at killing fawns. We were able to catch 48 fawns that were less than 10 days old, and radio-tagged them with break-away collars. Of these, 19 fawns died within the first 30 days of life, and in 12 cases the cause of death was predation. However, coyotes did not figure heavily. Bears were the number one predator, taking 10 of the 12 fawns. A fisher took a fawn, and coyotes took one.

There may be localized situations where

coyotes do take a significant number of deer. However, our study suggests that coyotes are not the major predator in the Adirondacks.

For further information, contact the Adirondack Ecological Center, SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry, Newcomb, NY 12852.

Wes Suhr, helmsman for the NY FOREST OWNER's "Ask A Forester" column has proposed an "Ask A Wildlife Biologist" column. Bill Porter has graciously offered to undertake the task; and he will respond to reader's questions on the subject. Dr. Porter is a member of the Faculty of Environmental and Forest Biology, SUNY ESF, Illick Hall, Syracuse, New York 13210; and Director of Research at the Adirondack Ecological Center at the Huntington Forest near Newcomb.

## The Eastern Coyote - At a Glance

**Description:** The Eastern coyote looks like a medium-sized German shepherd dog, with long thick fur. The tail is full and bushy, usually carried pointing down. Ears are erect and pointed.

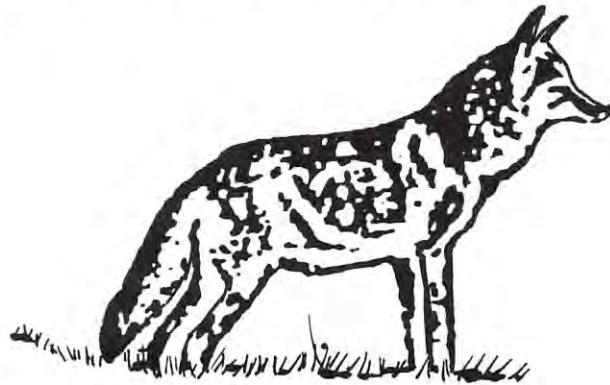
**Length:** 48 to 60 inches (including tail)

**Weight:** 35 to 45 pounds (males usually larger than females.)

**Color:** Variable, from blonde or reddish blonde to dark tan washed with black. Legs, ears and cheeks usually reddish.

**Habits:** In winter, coyote pairs establish territories, and keep other coyotes out. The pups, usually born in April, are normally driven out of their parents' territory the next fall or winter. This territorial behavior limits the numbers of coyotes that can live in an area.

**Food:** Coyotes kill some animals and also eat dead animals they find, as well as significant amounts of plant materials. Small animals and plants are important in the warmer months; while carrion and larger animals are used more in winter. An analysis of coyote droppings found 54 different food items. The most frequently found items were: varying hare, plant material, deer, chipmunks and squirrels, small



rodents, and insects.

**History in New York:** There are two theories to explain the presence of eastern coyotes.

The first is that they were here before Europeans settled North America. Early settlers, who had no word for coyote, wrote of "large wolves" and "small wolves." When settlers cleared most of New York's forests the coyote nearly disappeared along with such animals as the wild turkey and beaver, and later rebounded when conditions improved.

The second theory is that the eastern coyote is a relatively new species in New York. This theory suggests that western coyotes hybridized with timber wolves and formed a distinct subspecies. As habitat conditions became more favorable, they spread to the eastern U.S. through Canada.

Whichever theory is true, coyotes are firmly established over the northeastern U.S. They are here to stay.

*NYS DEC Furbearer Management Newsletter, Wildlife Resources Center, Delmar.*

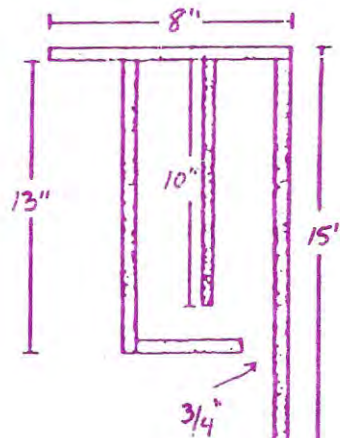
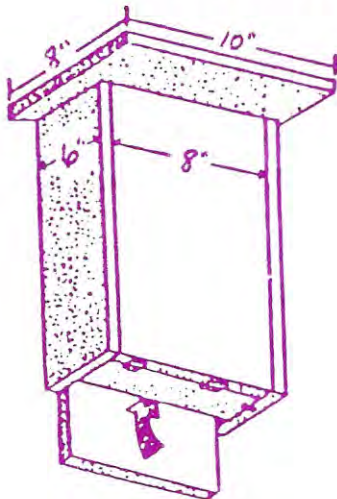
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**Sept. 12:** CNY - 10 a.m. Heiberg Forest, Tully, N.Y. Road, Pond & Trail Development for your woodlot. Call 315-682-9376.

**Sept. 12:** WFL Rush Oak Openings and prairie grasses.

**Sept. 26:** AFC - 10 a.m. Price Corners, Rte. 394, "A Pleistocene Foray" led by Dr. Steve Eaton. Call 716-557-2529.

**Sept. 27:** CFA 10th Anniversary Picnic, Frost Valley YMCA camp. Call 914-586-3054.

**Oct. 3:** NAC - Macomb Reservation State Forest. Call 315-848-2136

**Oct. 9, 10:** NYFOA FALL MEETING, Cornell's Arnot Forest. - See Insert.

**Oct. 17:** CDC - 1 p.m. Logging in progress & Stempel's Sawmill Tour. Stempel's Road, Berne, N.Y. Call 518-872-1456.

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