

The New York
FOREST OWNER

A publication of the New York Forest Owners Association

March/April 1996



The river is contained, its freedom gone,
Waters bound by the myriad blocks of ice,
No more a joyful, bubbling flow,
A touch of shores, a jubilant journey to go.

The writer's tale is muted, his pen is still,
A block to creativity obscures his way;
His path seems irretrievably lost,
His mind distraught by night and by day.

But then a floodgate of the mind releases
The writer's pen, the lost tale to retrieve;
Nature's warming sun unlocks the river's door;
Exultant waters bubble forth, flowing from shore to shore.

MOHAWK
BREAKUP

THE NEW YORK
**FOREST OWNERS
 ASSOCIATION**

VOL. 34, NO. 2
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COVER: MOHAWK BREAKUP, one of a photographic series entitled "Winterscapes" by Patricia Kay © 1986. The poem is a collaboration by Dorothy Darling. See page 8.

FOREST OWNER

A publication of the New York Forest Owners Association
 Editorial Committee: Betty Densmore, Alan Knight, Jim Minor, Bob Sand, and Eileen VanWie.

Materials submitted for publication should be addressed to: R. Fox, Editor, R.D. #3, Box 88, Moravia, New York 13118. Articles, artwork and photos are invited and are normally returned after use. The deadline for submission for May/June is April 1.

Please address all membership fees and change of address requests to P.O. Box 180, Fairport, N.Y. 14450. Cost of individual membership subscription is \$20.

"Caught in the Act"



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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

For Christmas, Clara gave me the book, "The Road Ahead", written by Bill Gates CEO of Microsoft Corporation. In this book, Mr. Gates chronicles the development of the personal computer (PC) and the Internet and speculates on the profound changes that mass communications will have on our lives. In many respects, the future as described in the book has already arrived. In the work place, computers have replaced typewriters, a significant amount of mail arrives as E-mail, telephone systems have become digital and have Voice Mail. In our personal lives computers have found their way into our cars, microwave ovens, heating/cooling systems and televisions. The PC is fast becoming a standard piece of equipment found in the home and used as an educational tool, an extension of our work place, and family entertainment. I believe that we have crossed the threshold and entered into the "Information Age" that will be as significant as the "Industrial Revolution" and will have a very profound impact on our society.

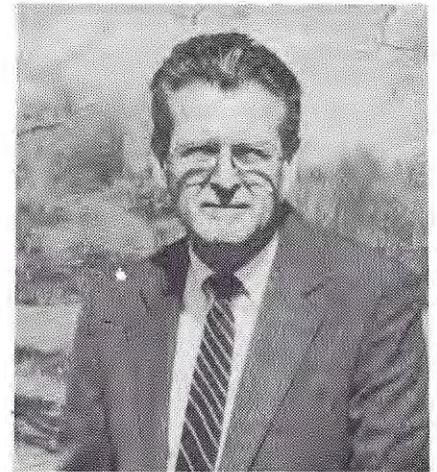
As I look to the future of NYFOA, I see opportunities for sharing information among members over the Internet and the ability to access information on a world wide basis. One of the more interesting applications on the world wide web (WWW) would be to publish an electronic version of THE FOREST OWNER. The

electronic version would be in full color and circulation would be unlimited. Electronic publications might well be the preferred method of circulating magazines in the future. Mail costs would be eliminated for all practical purposes and delivery would be almost instantaneous. Storage of past editions would be electronic and your ability to search for old articles would be greatly enhanced. Contributing authors would have an E-mail address that you could correspond to for further information or to leave a comment. With access to the world wide web we may be able to realize this dream before the close of 1996.

I search the Web on a regular basis for forestry related information. If you have access to the web through America Online, CompuServe or a connect service, check out the web page for North Carolina State University at: http://www2.ncsu.edu/ncsu/cont_ed/out_ex/ for a series of articles related to private forest lands. You may also leave comments or messages to faculty at this web site. If you would like to send me E-mail I am at:

wminerd@dreamscape.com.

I have a few items that I would like to report to you as a result of the Board of Directors Meeting that was held in Syracuse on January 27, 1996. **Jack and Harriet Hamilton**, Co-Chair of the New York State American Tree Farm System



President Bill Miner

attended the meeting as NYFOA guests to discuss the possibility of NYFOA becoming a formal sponsor of the Tree Farm program. By unanimous vote, NYFOA has joined the Tree Farm program as a sponsor. Jack and Harriet have a lot of work ahead of them in coordinating activities of Tree Farm, we are pleased to support these efforts and our members who have certified Tree Farms. Look for more information regarding the Tree Farm program in future pages of Forest Owner.

I am also please to announce the appointment of **Jill Cornell** as Vice President of NYFOA. Jill and Barry Cornell have been very active in the Capital District Chapter. I am sure that Jill will be an asset in the continued growth of NYFOA into the future. **Mary Richardson** from the Central New York Chapter has accepted the position of Treasurer. Mary has coordinated the efforts of the CNY Chapter's Family Forest Fair and has been a driving force in the continued development of the CNY Chapter.

Betty Densmore and **Charlie Mowatt** will again lead the Chapter Development and Leadership Conference scheduled for September 7&8, 1996 in Cortland, New York. Information regarding this conference will be mailed to chapter officials later this Spring.

Charlie Mowatt presented to the Board of Directors the possibility of establishing an Endowed Scholarship Fund at SUNY ESF. The Board has asked Charlie to gather more information regarding this matter for consideration at the Spring Board meeting.

Well that's it for this issue, comment and suggestions are always welcome.

NYFOA MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

When your membership application is received, it is entered into the membership database so that you will begin receiving THE FOREST OWNER magazine, beginning with the next issue published, and appropriate local information from our chapters or affiliates.

At the end of each month, a welcoming new member-letter is sent to all those who joined within that particular month. Along with the letter is sent a NYFOA decal for your vehicle. Please call the office at 1-800-836-3566, if this is something you did not receive.

Below is a sample mailing label as generated from the NYFOA office. If you live in an area of the state serviced by a chapter or an affiliate, the upper left corner indicates that local group with which your membership has been assigned and from which you will receive information concerning local activities; e.g., Western Fin-

ger Lakes. The number in the upper right corner indicates your membership expiration date, year month; e.g., August of 1996.

WFL	9608
Thomas Smith	
135 Grant Avenue	
Fairport, NY 14450	

Renewal/reminder notices are sent out twice; the first, during your renewal month or a month earlier. CFA members are not sent renewals from the NYFOA office, but are billed directly from the Catskill Forest Association. Please return your renewal notice as soon as possible to avoid a break in your membership services. Failure to respond to a renewal notice generates a Final Reminder Notice. If there is further failure to respond, the membership is transferred to the delinquent file and services are discontinued.

PLANTING FORESTS IN NEW YORK:

A History of Changing Resources and Values

By Norman Richards

Planting trees has long been the most popular forest conservation activity around the world. While tree planting usually has been accepted rather uncritically as a "good thing to do" for communities and landscapes as well as for the planters, the rational arguments for planting trees have changed over time with changing resource relationships. These changes are illustrated in New York where our history of tree planting has similarities with other regions where resource use has gone through periods of forest depletion and regrowth.

The Early Decades

Human settlement in this region in the last few thousand years at least encountered a well-forested landscape in which tree clearing was necessary for cultural advance. Apparently tree planting by the Iroquois was mostly what we would now call "enrichment planting"—establishing valued species such as fruit and nut trees and perhaps some valued woods in forest clearings. It is likely that black walnut was spread through New York by this means. Some have suggested that black locust may have been also. But more clearly, locust for durable fence posts was a common enrichment planting, along with fruit and nut trees and some shade trees in the farm settlements that cleared much of New York's forests in the early 1800's.

Apparently the first state promotion of tree planting in New York was an 1869 law giving landowners a highway tax abatement of 25 cents per tree planted along their highway frontages—elms to be planted at 70 foot spacing, maples and other species at least 50 feet apart. By then, only about 40% forest and other "unimproved land" remained in the state. In the 1870's a few New York landowners began to respond to the depleted forest landscape by making reforestation plantings; some with seedlings imported from Germany and elsewhere in Europe where forest planting was already an established practice.

Increasing concern for forest conservation in New York led to establishing the Adirondack and Catskill forest preserves in the 1885, and the NYS Forest, Fish and Game Commission in the 90's, as well as the NYS College of Forestry at Cornell.



Planting by NYS Forest, Fish and Game Commission on Forest Preserve land near Raybrook. (1908?)

The first forest plantings by the Commission, in the Catskills in 1901 and the Adirondacks in 1902, were to reforest denuded sites on State Preserve lands. This might now be called "environmental forestry" because the preserve plantings could not be managed for timber products. The first plantings were of seedlings imported from Germany; primarily our white pine that was popular in Europe by then, along with Norway spruce and Scots pine. At the same time some small state tree nurseries were started, so in a few years mostly locally grown stock was planted.

In the late 90's, the Cornell forestry college started the first nursery and experimental forest in the Adirondacks, and its director B.E. Fernow took a different view of forestry. From his European background, Fernow promoted forestry as a state-run enterprise primarily to produce timber for the future. In the Adirondacks, he urged and practiced removal of hardwoods to increase conifer plantings. This led to probably the first significant conflict of values between "tree farming" and "environmental forestry" in the country—and Cornell lost.

By 1909 the state had five large nurseries, the newest at Salamanca, and sold over a million trees to private landowners, while only 90,000 were planted on state lands. In 1911, the state agency changed to the Conservation Commission with a Division of Lands and Forests, and a new nursery

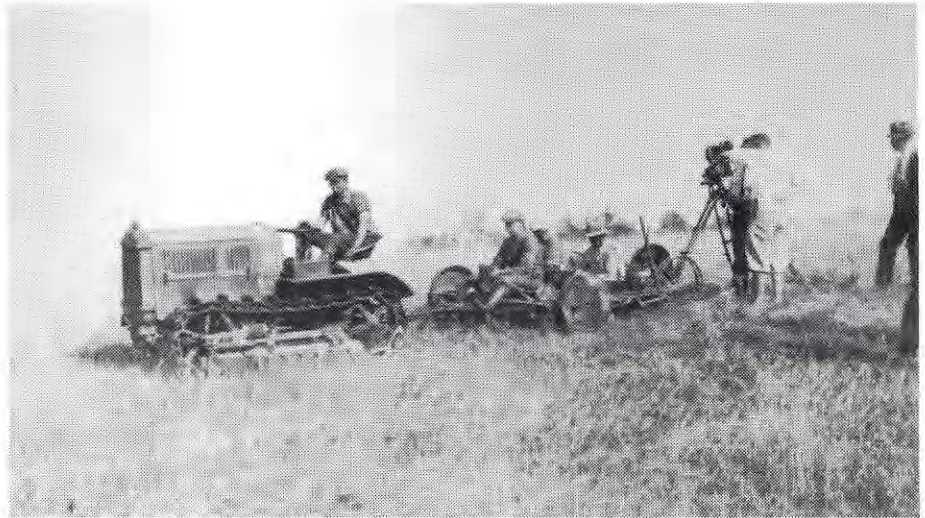
was started at Saratoga, which continues today. That year the nurseries sold nearly 1.7 million seedlings to 410 landowners, and could have sold more. The pattern of the state providing trees primarily for private plantings on land going out of farming continued through the teens and 20's. Probably the most significant private forest planter of the teens was Franklin Roosevelt who established several plantations on the Hyde Park estate with advice from the new forestry college at Syracuse. This contributed to his concerns for conservation that later led to greatly increased New York and national government involvement in forest conservation.

Increasing surplus and abandonment of unprofitable farmland in New York in the 20's left an estimated 2.5 to 3 million acres "in need of reforestation". In 1929 a State Reforestation Law authorized the state to acquire reforestation areas of at least 500 contiguous acres to be "forever devoted to planting, growth and harvesting of trees and management thereof". A constitutional amendment in 1931 mandated a million acres be acquired for this purpose. From 1930 to 1940, 412,000 acres of old farmland were acquired and the roughly 60% of open plantable land reforested largely through the manpower of the national Civilian Conservation Corps. The 30's were the all-time peak of state reforestation effort. In 1935 the state distributed 52 million trees of which 42 million went to the

state forests. A County Reforestation Law encouraged acquisition and planting of smaller areas as county forests.

From the 50's on

After suspended conservation activity during World War II, the State Reforestation Area program resumed and reached 550,000 acres by 1955. By then however, greater personal income and mobility was increasing private non-farmer purchase of unprofitable farmland, making state acquisition of such land less justified. In 1955, of 37.6 million state-distributed trees, only 6.3 million were used in the state forests while most went to individual landowners. A stimulus to private forestry at that time was the 1946 Forest Practice Act providing technical advice on forest management from state foresters, and in 1947 amended to provide free trees to cooperating landowners. Through 1955, 47 million free trees had been distributed and about 1.4 million acres of private forest were "under management" in this program. The Richards' tree farm purchased in 1954 was part of this, and like many others, we obtained more free trees than we could use effectively. In 1955, New York was 9th among states in tree planting, while the



New tree planter by Chamption Metal Company, Cortland. (Date?)

leading states in the south and northwest had increasing forest industry planting. A few New York industries began nurseries and tree planting in the early 1900's, but forest industry planting never became a significant activity here as it has been in the south and northwest.

Studies of New York's mostly small forest owners in the 50's showed diverse reasons for planting trees. Generally, planting for timber was a minor objective, and non-product, aesthetic or environmental values were much more important—as they continue to be for most non-industrial forest owners today. In the 50's also, Christmas tree growing was being promoted as an early cash return from reforestation. At that time, the Christmas tree market was mostly of wild or semi-wild trees, so it was reasonable to expect plantings of suitable conifers to yield at least some marketable Christmas trees with only minimal care before stands closed to forest conditions. This prospect was so attractive for promoting tree planting that even the state distributed some species primarily of Christmas tree value, with the expectation that some would remain for longer-term reforestation. However, as increasing private plantings were growing in the 60's, the Christmas tree market was changing to intensive horticultural production replacing semi-wild forest byproducts. So most plantings intended for early profits from thinning for Christmas trees failed to make the grade with the changing market, and an expected glut of Christmas trees in the 70's didn't materialize. To bring the Christmas tree story up to the present, high prices for good quality trees led many landowners to go into more intensive horticultural production throughout the US and Canada in the 70's

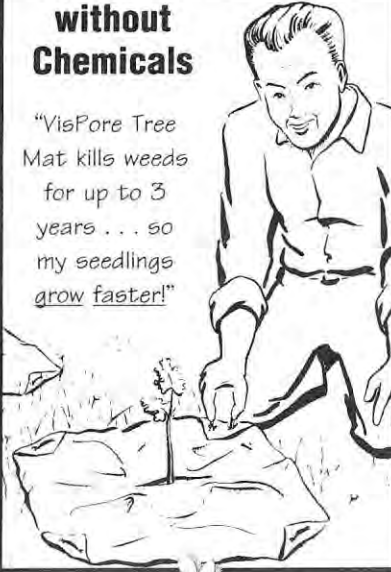
and 80's, creating an overcrowded, highly competitive market in the 90's.

Backing up to the 50's, a significant result of surplus farmland and farm production combined with increasing public conservation concerns has been the series of federal conservation incentive programs that have paid landowners to plant trees. The Soil Bank program starting in the 50's sought to get surplus cropland into long-term conservation cover including trees. While this program boosted tree planting in New York, its conservation benefits here were debatable. By then, there was much cynicism about tree planting among New York foresters even as they continued to promote it. A public motive for reforestation in the 30's had been a predicted future "timber famine", especially of conifers. But this was now being discounted because of increased conifer timber production in the south and northwest while our northeast forests were regrowing naturally to mostly more valuable hardwoods. Earlier conifer plantings in New York that could benefit from thinning in the 50's and 60's faced little demand for small trees against ample timber supplies.

By the late 50's the state celebrated having distributed a billion trees which should have amounted to about a million acres of reforestation. The state and county third of these trees could be largely accounted for in established plantations, but the majority that went to private plantings had resulted in much less than the expected acreage—although numbers of small plantings make it hard to get an accurate estimate. Later conservation programs have also included tree planting subsidies that still may be justified in some other regions, but appear a questionable use of public funds in

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the regrowing forest landscape of New York.

Ironically, now that stressed demand versus supply of conifer timber in other regions should increase demand for New York conifer timber, we have little space or motivation for planting conifers now compared to the peak years of the 30's. In 1990, nursery tree production in New York for all purposes including Christmas trees was about 7 million out of 1.9 billion trees produced nationally. The year's tree planting on only about 5600 acres of private land and 400 acres public ranked New York 32nd among the 50 states. The portion that might be considered forest planting in New York now is mostly for enhancement of landscape values such as increasing diversity by planting additional or improved tree species or maintaining a conifer component for multiple values in mostly hardwood landscapes.

Tree species

Most forest tree planting in New York has been conifer species, both because conifers were the most depleted component of our forest resources and because several conifer species are easier to plant success-



Forestry freshmen planting near Cooperstown, 1920.

fully on old field and denuded forest sites than are most valued hardwoods. However, every species has its problems or limitations, and none have been a perfect solution to various forest planting objectives. Initially popular planting of white pine as our most valued and site-versatile conifer was soon curtailed due to severe weeviling of trees in plantations. The relatively pest-free red pine was popular in 30's plantings. But by the 50's, observed unsuitability of red pine on inadequately-drained soils stopped most planting of the species even on well-drained soils where it remains very useful for poles and timber. Most early plantings of Scots pine as a tough pioneer for depleted sites were poor ecotypes for our conditions, and generally inferior to our native pines. Norway spruce, widely planted as faster growing and more pioneering than our native red spruce, appears moderately successful for pulp and low-quality timber as well as dense landscape cover, but its potential for high-quality timber is questionable. European larch, and later the more aggressive Japanese larch were planted for their rapid early height growth. While these are a beautiful addition to the landscape, their value for quality timber is uncertain. Various species and ecotypes planted primarily for Christmas trees have been left for forest cover. With the possible exception of suitable ecotypes of white spruce and Douglas-fir, most show little potential for future timber value. Careful forethought is needed in choosing species and ecotypes for forest plantings, and even then, risks of unexpected problems or mistakes are likely to be greater than en-

countered in natural forest management.

Of the many experiments with forest plantings of valued hardwoods in New York, some fairly successful plantations can be seen around the state. But generally, hardwood planting has been more difficult than conifers for several reasons. The most valued hardwoods require good soils for good growth. For example, black walnut is easily planted but grows valuable logs only on deep, well-drained fertile soils in valley or "cove" sites in New York.

Hardwoods also tend to be more susceptible to climate and other stresses encountered in open field plantings, and also must be planted more closely to encourage a straight, single central stem. Many also are readily damaged by wildlife; commonly a greater problem now than in early days of reforestation when deer and many other wildlife populations were depleted along with the forests. To counter the increased problems, hardwood plantings generally cost more to establish and have more limited possibilities than most conifer plantings. However, some pioneer hardwoods such as paper birch are fairly easy to establish by planting on open sites.

For both conifers and hardwoods, careful forethought is needed to choose species and ecotypes for forest plantings. Even then, risks of unexpected problems or mistakes are likely to be greater than encountered in natural forest management. Because of both the costs and risks, it is generally wise to consider tree planting only on at least moderately deep and moderately well drained soils; leaving shallow and inadequately drained soils to natural forest



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regeneration.

Changing Economics of Forest Plantings

Forest planting usually has been viewed as an investment that should pay off in the future. Forestry students are put through exercises of calculating the compounded costs of forest plantings compared to expected financial benefits, and usually find that forest planting is likely to pay off in simple financial terms at a realistic rate of compounded interest only if planting and management costs are modest and plantations grow quite rapidly to high value products. As all three conditions seldom have been met in New York forest plantings, one must look to more complex economics to justify most plantings. Where forests are seriously depleted, expected social benefits from increased forests may justify either low compounded interest rates for public forest plantings or public-subsidized planting and early maintenance costs on private lands. Both practices generally have been stronger and more carefully formulated in the "social forestry" of some European countries than they have been in the US. An alternative "default" economic solution



Boy Scouts and others planting 5-year white spruce near Elmira, 1933.

has been for private landowners to accept a lower compound interest rate for financial returns because of additional, non-financial values they expect to gain from their tree planting. All these alternatives are increasingly questioned in Europe as well as

the US as regrowing forest resources make personal and societal values of additional forest plantings less evident.

An alternative economic approach may now be emerging, which recognizes that most beneficiaries of forest returns have paid little of the full costs of forest growth, and therefore, the costs of assuring future values by planting or whatever means should be charged against forest benefits received now rather than charged to the future. This economic approach seems especially appropriate in regions relatively rich in forest resources as we now enjoy in New York, and should be applicable to both public and private forest management. By this view, satisfactory regeneration of forests for future values should be a condition to harvesting values today. This may justify greater expenses for specialized planting or other practices that are likely to sustain values in the future that are being enjoyed now. It may also be a rather radical idea because it could encourage greater attention to results than to well-intentioned actions in planting forest trees.

Norman Richards, Professor in Forestry at S.U.N.Y. College of Environmental Science and Forestry, has been teaching and conducting research in forest planting throughout his career at the College. He claims to have made nearly every mistake possible in over 40 years of tree planting on the Richards' tree farm in Delaware County. Historic photos courtesy of the Moon Library Archives, SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry.

April is Tree Planting Season

By John Solan

Spring is the best time to plant seedlings. Snow melt, spring rain, and cool temperatures provide the best conditions for new growth. Fall planting should be avoided because of the uncertainties of winter. Seedlings planted in the fall do not develop new roots until spring which leave them vulnerable to frost heaving and desiccation. Browsing on new seedlings is harmful and usually unavoidable, if there is a lack of snow cover. Planting stock should be ordered now, before inventories are sold out. Don't order more than you can plant and don't plant on an area that has not been prepared. Order from reputable suppliers and ask about seed source. The natural range of some species covers different climatic zones. Southern and western seed sources do not always do well in northern climates. Use northeast seed sources to be safe. If you order from southern sources, request an April delivery date. Inspect your order immediately upon receipt and do not accept plants that appear moldy or have a sour smell. This is an implication of poor handling. Contact the supplier and request

replacement or refund. Transport seedlings under cover and never leave them in direct sunlight. Soaking root systems for 8 to 12 hours prior to planting is beneficial. Plant as soon as possible but avoid hot, dry, or windy days. Roots need to be in contact with mineral soil and the soil firmly tamped after planting to eliminate air pockets. Seedlings should be planted at the same depth they were planted at the nursery. Fertilizer is not necessary at planting because new feeder roots have not developed. Don't wait until September to inspect your planting. New growth should begin within a month. Contact the nursery, if you don't see bud development and alert them of a possible problem. Most importantly, mark your planting. Mowing machines are the number one cause of planting failures. After you have taken pains with your planting, you are at the mercy of Mother Nature. **Let's hope this growing season is better than the last one!**

John Solan is Supervising Forester at the NYSDEC SARATOGA TREE NURSERY (See display ad page 24).

WINTERSCAPES: By Patricia Kay & Dorothy Darling

Photo by
Patricia Kay

© 1986

Ice House

Poem by
Dorothy Darling

Herein lingers the Fairy King of Winter,
Deep in the hills of his frozen domain,
Guarded well by formidable stilettos—
Frozen spears high above the snowy terrain.

A frozen cascade of water hovers near—
Denying an approach to friend or foe,
But where will the Fairy King finally go
When the suns of summer awaken and rise
And suddenly there is no ice or snow?

Do mystical beings secrete within the walls,
Peering through the windows of the snowy shelter,
Relishing the forced silence of the great falls
As the icy slide of waters lowers down and down
On their silent plunge to the deeper ground?

Only the Fairy King walks this white land
With the stalwart soldiers of his court,
But when season brings its changes
Winter sprites will abandon the port.



about WINTERSCAPES

This is the second issue of the NY FOREST OWNER to publish the collaborative effort of photographer Patricia Kay and poet Dorothy Darling (see NYFO Jan/Feb, cover & page 14). The remaining three pairs of photos and poems will be published during the winter of 1996-97.

NEW YORK FOREST OWNERS ASSOCIATION

34th ANNUAL SPRING MEETING

Saturday, April 27, 1996

Meeting Site: Marshall Hall, SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry, Syracuse, NY

PROGRAM

- 8:30 Registration
- 9:30 Welcome - **Bill Miner**, President NYFOA
- 10:20- "The Participatory Landscape", **Walt Aikman**, SUNY/ESF
"The NY's Forest Inventory and Analysis 1993", **USDA Forest Service**
"The NYC Watershed", **Dinnie Sloman**, Executive Director CFA
- 12:00 Lunch
- 1:00 Awards, **Bob Sand**, Chairman, Awards Committee
- 1:30 BLOWDOWN, The DEC Assessment of the July '95 Microburst, **Tom Wolf**, NYSDEC, Albany
- 1:50 Back Yard Lumber Drying, **Dave Forness**, NYSDEC, Cortland
- 2:15 Raptors, Birds of Prey, **Michael J. Gaylo**, (LIVE Falcon, Hawk, & some Owls LIVE)
- 3:15 Program Evaluation/Adjourn

.....DETACH.....COMPLETE.....MAIL.....BEFORE.....APRIL 14, 1996.....

REGISTRATION FORM: NYFOA 34th ANNUAL SPRING MEETING

Name(s): _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State _____ Zip Code: _____

Chapter Affiliation _____

Please find my check for registration(s) at \$16 each, Total enclosed: \$ _____

Send registrations to:

Debbie Gill
PO Box 180
Fairport, NY 14450

NEW YORK FOREST OWNERS ASSOCIATION , INC.

BALLOT VOTE FOR FOUR (4) DIRECTORS
Term: 3 years April 1996 - April 1999

HARRY A. DIETER _____
THOMAS ELLISON _____
RICHARD J. FOX _____
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DAVID H. SWANSON _____

Mail to: NYFOA P. O. Box 180 FAIRPORT, NY 14450
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NOMINATIONS FOR DIRECTORS OF THE ASSOCIATION.
Four Directors to be elected. Term: 3 years April 1996-April 1999

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES

HARRY A. DIETER is retired and enjoys managing the 175 acres of hardwood woodland on the 250 acre home farm. He has been a NYFOA member for over seven years and welcomes the opportunity to take a more active role in NYFOA. The Dieters reside at:
217 Rush-Mendon Townline Rd. **HONEOYE FALLS, NY 14472** Ph:716-533-2085

THOMAS ELLISON helped found and has served as Chair of the Central NY Chapter and as a NYFOA Director. He is a member of the NY Community Forest Council and serves as a Wildlife Education Instructor at the Burnet Park Zoo. Tom is a Master Forest Owner and lives with his wife and three children on his certified Tree Farm in the Town of Pompey at:
2851 Estey Road **MANLIUS, NY 13104-9531** Phone: 315-682-9376

RICHARD J. FOX was the early champion of NYFOA'S Chapter development. He was instrumental in founding the CAYUGA CHAPTER. He has served NYFOA with boundless energy as a Director, Chair of the Editorial Committee, Advertising Manager of the 1990 Directory Issue, and as a member of a number of NYFOA committees. Dick is Editor of The N.Y. Forest Owner. He is a Master Forest Owner and a member of the Region 7 Forest Practice Board. He has had a life-long interest in innovative educational and sociological programs. His address is:
R.D. # 3 BOX 88 **MORAVIA, NY 13118** PHONE: 315-497-1078

THOMAS M. GRABER graduated in 1988 with a BS from the NYS/CESF at Syracuse and is employed in the hardwood lumber business with the Baille Lbr. Co, Inc. He owns 177 acres in the Town of Cherry Creek, Chautauqua County. Tom is Chairman of the Central NY Chapter and lives with his wife and six year old son Chris at:
5717 Silver Street Road **AUBURN, NY 13021-9746** Phone:315-255-3662

DAVID H. SWANSON is a third generation Livingston County farmer in the Town of Mount Morris. Presently the Swansons have 800 acres under cultivation. His "Osage Farm" includes about 100 acres of forestland. Dave also manages for high quality White oak and Black walnut. He and his family live at:
7014 Bigole Road **MOUNT MORRIS, NY 14510** Phone: 716-658-4601

The four candidates with the highest vote margin will be elected. The fifth, will be an ALTERNATE DIRECTOR who will be appointed to fill any Board vacancy that occurs until the next annual meeting.

VISIONS FOR THE LONG TERM

By Dinnie Sloman

When I was a teenager, I took some aptitude tests to develop some general guidance and direction for my life. As part of the evaluation, I found out that everyone has a planning horizon. This is the distance into the future that a person needs to have planned. If they do not have a general idea of where they are going within their planning horizon, they feel anxious and apprehensive. While one person may need her entire life planned (or even longer), another is satisfied only with knowing where he will be in the next five minutes. Mine turns out to be about five years.

This phenomena may help to explain why more non-industrial private forest owners (NIPFO's) do not have forest management plans. As we all know, trees live a long time. Forest management, therefore, is a long term operation. It is hard for us to see the changes constantly occurring in our forests since the process is so slow. On the one hand, if our forest satisfies us now, we may not notice it changing into a less desirable state until significant changes have occurred. On the other hand, if we want to bring about a different condition in our forest, we may not be able to appreciate the success we are having, which is discouraging. Maybe for some people their planning horizon is so much shorter than the rotation of the trees in their forest that they never feel anxious about where their forest is going. Even for those who have life-long planning horizons, such a time frame still may fall short of the time required to bring about change. In the end, without planning, forest owners never articulate the reasons they own the land and what they want to get out of it.

Compare this situation with industrial forest companies and state forests, both of

which have perpetual life. They have long planning horizons and tend to take forest planning very seriously. Of course, short-term economic demands can overwhelm even their long-term forest plans.

This is not to say that NIPFO's do not plan, but merely that management is driven more by specific short-term needs than by long-term "visions" for their forest. *We need firewood, cut some trees. We need to pay bills, cut some trees. We need a road, cut some trees.* The reasons for ownership, the goals, and dreams that the owners have for the land, are not connected with management decisions. Sometimes the short-term management decisions do not conflict with the reasons for ownership. Unfortunately, some management operations and some ownership goals are so mutually exclusive that landowners have "ruined" their prop-

Unfortunately, some management operations and some ownership goals are so mutually exclusive that landowners have "ruined" their property.

erty. They can no longer get what they need from their forest. Had they stated the reasons they own the forest and the vision they have for it, they would have seen the incompatibility of the operation. Then they could have searched for alternatives to their short-term needs. *Buy the firewood. Mortgage the house. Acquire an easement from*

a neighbor. At the very least they would have known the tradeoffs between various alternatives.

So, get going! Gather everyone who has an interest in your land (most likely your family) and write down your *collective reasons for ownership* (e.g., a retreat and an investment), a *vision* for your property (a healthy forest that supports itself, lots of songbirds), the *principles* that will guide you to the vision (professional advice, coordinate with neighbors) and the *next steps* to reaching the vision (learn more about forest birds). You probably can fit this onto one page. Be sure to give a copy to your forester.

By the way, the entire country is going through this process, which is why I chose this topic. During the past couple of decades, Americans have been splintered into several different camps. Each one is promoting its own vision of what our forests should be. Preservationism, Environmentalism, Conservationism. Wise use. These labels describe just a few. To counteract this situation, the SEVENTH AMERICAN FOREST CONGRESS was held in Washington, D.C. in February, 1966. It brought together all the camps to seek common ground. The Congress will develop a vision for America's forest, the principles needed to guide us to that vision, and the immediate next steps necessary to begin the journey. CFA is a collaborating organization which helped to bring local input to the national event by convening a "roundtable" of New Yorkers in the Catskills. [similar meetings were held in Syracuse and in the Adirondacks.] *Dinnie is the Executive Director of NYFOA's Affiliate, the Catskill Forest Association. This article was adapted from CFA NEWS, Volume 13, No. 4.*



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CHAPTERS/AFFILIATES

CENTRAL NEW YORK

On **March 14**, the chapter will hold the annual Potluck Supper at 6:30PM at St. Paul's Methodist Church, Valley Drive in Syracuse.

The Third Annual Family Fair will be held at Gurnee's Woods (Marge & Vern Hudson's, Chatfield Road, Elbridge). The theme of this year's event will be "Education From The Woodlot". Profits from the fair will be dedicated to the **NYFOA Scholarship Fund**: a college scholarship for a high school graduate who pursues a career in forestry.



A clutch of turkey eggs momentarily abandoned by the hen while some logs were skidded by Tom Hewitt during the '95 Forest Family Fair. Photo by Elizabeth Mangle, Onondaga County SWCD.

SOUTHEASTERN ADIRONDACK

Several hardy NYFOA members dug their way out of a foot or more of snow January 1, to attend a winter meeting and woodswalk at **Jim and Betty Schreiner's** property in Day. The Schreiners transformed their property which overlooks Sacandaga Reservoir into a Biathlon training and racing course years ago. What started out as a course for their sons to practice on eventually turned into a non-profit business: the Saratoga Biathlon Center. The course meets Olympic standards.

The NYFOA members were welcomed to watch a Biathlon Competition that morning. Later Jim Schreiner gave two short talks on cross-country skiing and snowshoeing. Afterwards many of the members took advantage of the open invitation to cross-country ski and/or to snowshoe over miles of challenging and scenic trails.

NIAGARA FRONTIER

Coffee and donuts greeted NFC members at Carrousel Museum in North Tonawanda on Nov. 18. The chill in the air was quickly dispelled by the warmth of friendship and the wonderful world of carousels.

Following an introduction and history of the Herschell carousel plant by **Elizabeth Brick**, museum director, **Bob Zimmerman**, a member of the Niagara Frontier Woodcarvers, gave an on-hands demonstration and talk about the craft of woodcarving and how it relates to restoring the carousel horses, many built at the turn of the century.

Bob said that basswood was used for the carved animals. He noted that the basswood that the firm used was either soft or hard, depending on the soil in which the trees were grown.

In a separate museum room which has climate control in order to preserve a special collection of carousel animals, Elizabeth gave a wonderful talk on each animal pointing out details generally missed by the casual visitor.

And then the moment each of us had been waiting for: "**And no running, please!**", a ride on the merry-go-round.

March 16, we will have our maple syrup fundraiser at 9110 Hayes Hollow Road. **March 28**, there will be a joint meeting of the NFC and AFC chapters at Cattaraugus County Fairgrounds.

THRIFT

THRIFT hosted a number of well attended programs this past year particularly two: a panel discussion on Timber Theft in April and a meeting in October on "Blowdown '95". Over 100 people attended our program on timber trespass. **Art Brooks**, forestry consultant, introduced the panel of landowners, town justices, a district attorney, and a conservation officer. The different perspectives by the panelists generated lively participation from the audience.

In October we hosted a meeting with talks and a field trip to an area in Croghan which was devastated by the micro-burst storm of July. Attendees learned what they could do to begin cleanup of their own wood lots. A big thanks to program chairperson, **Craig Vollmer**.

THRIFT was proud to be the seller of the winning raffle ticket for the quilt donated by master quilter, **Betty Wagner**. Our fund raising chairperson, **Betty Woods** had suggested we use retailers; such as, farm stands, florists, etc. to help sell the tickets; this was so successful, THRIFT sold the most tickets and won the top incentive award.

CAPITAL DISTRICT

We will sponsor a talk, "Rural Land Surveys: Historical and Current Practices, How They Affect Management of Your Property" on Sunday, **March 17** at 1PM at the William K. Sanford Town Library in Colonie. **Henry Whitbeck**, a licensed surveyor, will present the talk.



Participants in a Biathlon race at the Saratoga Biathlon Center on Schreiner's forest property". Photo by Patricia Kay Photography. (SEA)

ASK A FORESTER-SOME FORESTRY TIPS

By Gerry Kachmor

What follows are the tips I share most often regarding: boundaries, land and income taxes, mowing, ponds, roads, and state land. If SIP funds are available, management plans, mowing, tree planting, and tree shelters may be cost-shared.

FINDING A BOUNDARY LINE

Look at the tax map to see if a nearby lot has a boundary which is an extension of yours. You may find extensions in both directions. Then look at aerial photos to see if that line is a visible hedgerow or field-woods border. Visit the border, and take a compass shot. Then walk back and forth along your line with a compass, looking for evidence, and making temporary marks. When you're confident of the line, call your neighbor. If you both agree, paint the line. In Broome County, the USDA has 1993 aerial photos, DEC has '77 and '55, and county Real Property has '36. For a low-cost aerial print of your land, buy a copy of your annual color slide from the USDA Farm Service Agency (formerly ASCS). Project it on a screen, photograph just your land, and get a blowup of that photo.

Many of the major divisions seen on a tax map are True N S E W directions. If I face True North (Polaris), my compass points 11 degrees to the left, at Magnetic North (Binghamton declination). Your declination is on your USGS topo map.

If you need a survey, you may get a low quote from a surveyor who has done a nearby parcel since much of the research is complete. You can call neighbors, or hike your line extensions to see if a new corner pin shows a surveyor's name. Survey maps

CAYUGA

The chapter held their Seventh Cabin Fever Festival February 9th & 10th with the usual attendance amidst typical changing weather; i.e., Saturday's crowd of 1300 about double that of Sunday's. New attractions were: a dog sled team with Iditarod experience & their owner/musher, taxidermy exhibits and demonstrations, NYSDEC Fish & Wildlife displays, pottery & weaving demonstrations, in addition to the original Cayuga Woodsmen and horse drawn vehicles. A special Sunday noon dedication (accompanied with cannon) of an American Flag (raised by NYSDEC Sr. Forester Steve Davison and his Boy Scout Troop #55) which graces the previously dedicated (by the Cayuga Chapter) U.S. Civilian Conservation Corps plaque & boulder monument.

that show magnetic bearings usually have north arrows with half heads or half tails.

FOREST TAX LAW

First, try to lower your assessment by checking per-acre values assessed to nearby similar properties in your town. If you find lower numbers, write to your assessor. Many assessors prefer to look at these requests in the off-season, so don't wait until grievance day. To calculate Forest Tax Law savings, first exclude the assessment on any buildings, open land, and non-committed forest. 480-a reduces the assessment on timberland by 80%, less if your full-value per-acre assessment is under \$200. The downside is that you pay 6% of stumpage when you sell timber, and penalties if you violate your management plan, or end up with less than 50 committed acres. For partial revocation, the price is 5 times the regular taxes for up to your last ten committed years, plus interest. For full revocation, it's 2 1/2 times. In-your-pocket savings are less than 80% if you itemize on 1040, since real estate taxes are deductible.

The 6% tax is livable, and the cost of a management plan is usually about one year's tax savings. Many owners exclude small plantations which may need a lot of work, and frontage in case they need to sell lots. Also exclude future pond or cabin sites.

INCOME TAX

When selling timber, reduce capital gain by the amount paid for the timber when you bought (or inherited) the land. This 'depletion' may require help from a forester, an accountant, and/or USDA Forest Service Ag Handbook 708. For those on Social Security, timber income, if capital gain, is not wages, and should not affect your wage limitation.

MOWING

First hunt down your browsed wild apple seedlings and tree-shelter them.

SOUTHERN TIER

The Southern Tier Chapter will hold their annual Potluck Dinner **March 22** at the Sunrise Terrace Community Center on Old Front Street across from the Howard Johnson Motel in Binghamton at 6 PM. There will be a presentation by **Gerry Pedini** on identifying local wildflowers. Bring a dish to pass and table settings; drinks will be provided. **March 23**, from 9AM until noon at the Cornell Coop Education Center, Front Street in Binghamton, there will be a workshop on Pond Management - fish & weed management, pesticide use, pond construction, etc.



Gerry Kachmor

Mowing in early August scatters any ripe clover seed and misses early-summer nesting birds. Dormant season mowing weakens target brush less, since the energy is in the roots. For large fields, leave unmowed corridors of the thickest brush connecting as many habitats as possible. S-shaped mowing facilitates sneaking up on wildlife. When radiating from your house, alternate strips of mowed and planted cover permit a view of critters from the window. Flag new plantings in spring so you don't lose them in July's tall grass.

NEW PONDS

Among the many cautions, make sure a core trench is dug below the original grade before building the dam to prevent leaks. Funnel water into the pond with ditches upslope which can be opened in drought and closed in spring. Keep the cattails contained before they explode.

ROADS

First get the drainage right with a dozer to save on top dressing. I had 500 linear feet surfaced with 22 tons of #2 crushed stone, tailgate spread two inches thick, for \$220. It doesn't break down and you don't need a dozer to spread it. This won't work if wires or heavy limbs are overhead. New roads may need a thicker base of shale or stone.

STATE LAND

You can camp up to 3 nights on state forest without a permit. Ask the DEC Forest Ranger about campfires. The shaded areas on the Big Game Hunting Guide map are state lands other than parks. For county maps showing state lands, call the county highway, planning, or chamber of commerce. Ask the DEC forester for a photocopy of the aerial mosaic of the state land you plan to visit.

Gerry Kachmor is a forester at NYS DEC, 1679 Rte. 11, Kirkwood, NY 13795. ph: (607) 775-2687

BEECH AND BEECHEN

By Henry Kernan

My forest land in northern Delaware County had a surprise and a puzzle for me in the early summer of 1956. I came home after several years abroad to find patches of yellow leaves interrupting the otherwise unbroken spread of green across my favorite stand, several hundred acres of north-facing slope that rise in conspicuous display some 600 feet above the valley of the Charlotte River. Clearly those yellow patches were out of time and season; they were fall, not summer colors, and should not have been there.

The discolorations were on the leaves of beech; and the culprits were a scale insect and a *Nectria* fungus. The harm they do to beech is endemic to Europe. The disease first appeared in the Western Hemisphere about 1890, in Nova Scotia. By the mid-century the insect was advancing into New York from New England. The advance into my woodland had been slow because the vectors were tiny, wingless and footless, and immobile except by the wind. Once lodged in the bark fissures of beech, the *Cryptococcus fagisuga* penetrates inward, feeding upon the soft parenchyma cells. In beech these cells are near the surface of the bark, thus causing the tree to be so vulnerable to attack.

The feeding of the insects alone does little harm. The damage comes about because of the tunnels the insects bore. Using the tunnels for passage, the fungus, *Nectria coccinea, faginata* penetrates to the cambium layer and destroys the tree's vital ring-layer of cells that grow and divide. The first easily visible indications of trouble are the yellow leaves withering in summer for lack of water and nutrients. Soon other wood-eating insects and white-rot fungi are attacking and destroying the dead tissue. During the full virulent stage, the disease reaches and kills about every beech of size. Aftermath stands are thereby profoundly and permanently changed.

Yet, as a killer, the beech bark disease is neither rapid nor complete. The summer discolorations lingered on in my woods for ten years or more, while the big old beech succumbed to becoming hollow boles and rotting stumps. Nevertheless the presence of beech continues strong. The rusty marscent leaves of seedlings and saplings stand out from the winter landscape. Dense thickets of root sprouts appear around old stumps. Whatever their future as timber, the seedlings and sprouts make certain that the American Beech will remain part of the eastern hardwood forest.

The beech will remain in spite of several handicaps; for one, the beech does not have the protection of outer bark (*rhytidome*). The smooth, almost spongy surface invites attack by a legion of boring and



The magnificent Beech of the Caspian Forest of Iran (early '50s).

sucking insects and of fungi. The attacking specie number more than 70 at every stage of the life cycle from seedling to patriarch. Another handicap, beech develops true, rot-resisting heartwood only after 80 years or so. Furthermore, the thin succulent bark is sensitive to sun scald, to fire, to extreme cold, and to late frost. On the other hand, most insect defoliators and animal browsers pass up the leaves.

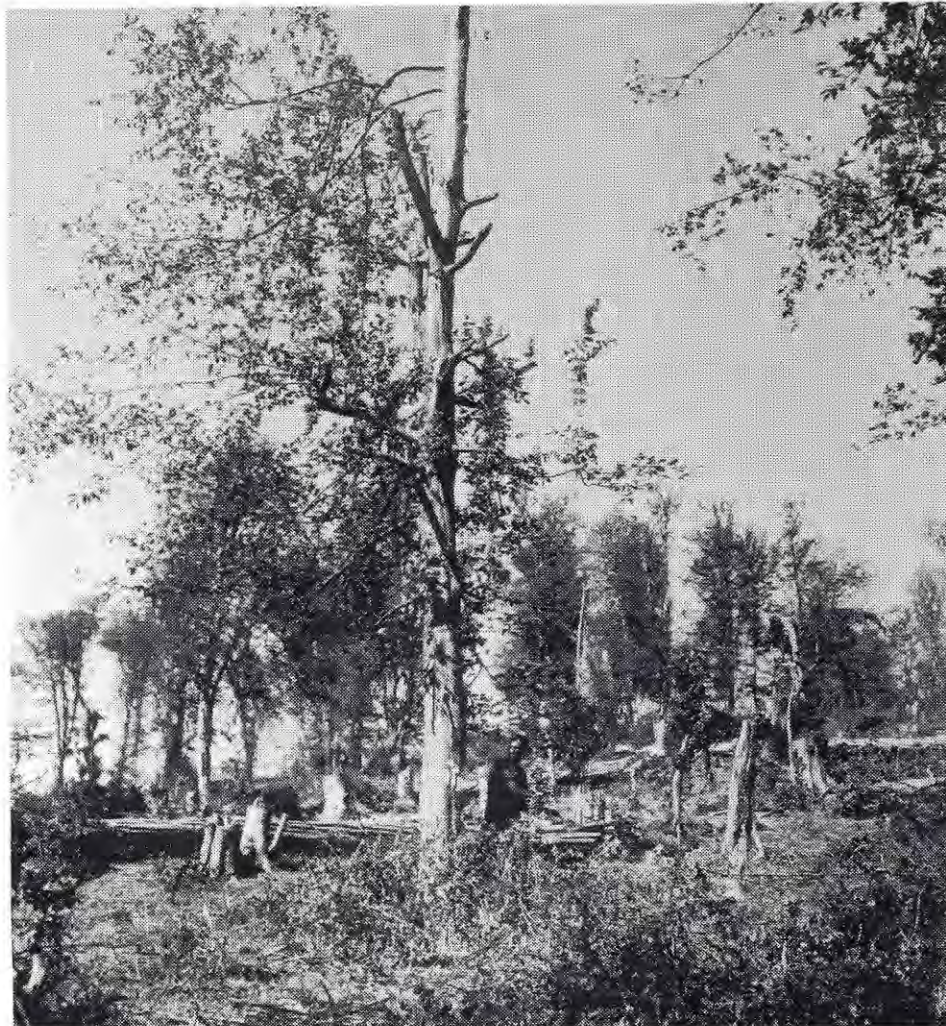
Forty years of exposure to such destructive malady have changed my woodland beech from a dominant to a minor component of the stand. The ravages have left some beech that the fungus has not harmed. There are specimens, tall, straight, and sound with the smooth, whole bark and the translucent, bluish-green tinted foliage of a healthy tree. Only a small number are in that condition, but enough to remind us of what beech can be at best.

Research has not yet wholly accounted for the degrees of survival and resistance among so much devastation. A critical chemical may be present or absent in

smaller or larger quantities. The surviving tree may have responded to the *Nectria* lesions by growing enough thick-walled cells to block and restrain them. Vigorous trees develop thicker inner bark through which the cankerous growth has more difficulty in reaching the cambium. The vectorial insects are less likely to lodge on smooth bark that lacks defects and fissures, and the protection of lichens. Other factors mitigating the frequency and virulence of attack are heavy fall rains that wash the insects off the bark and the lethal temperature of -30°F. On some beech trees the scale insect does not survive at all.

Beech bark tells a lot about what is going on inside. A woolly presence indicates the insect. Lesions on the surface are a reaction to a fungal infection. If they protrude, and if the bark shows a broken blocky pattern, the underlying defects are superficial and come off with slabs in the sawmill. Lesions sunk into the bark and patches of dead bark indicate defects deep inside.

Beech in a hardwood stand presents the



The destructive harvest of beech for charcoal in the Caspian Forest of Iran (early '50s).

owner with some interesting choices. The shortsighted practice has long been to leave the beech and take the more valuable species. The disease is thereby all the more devastating where it strikes. Salvage logging removes all the market will bear, of logs, pulpwood, chips, and firewood. The owner may want to go beyond salvage and rid the stand of beech with felling, girdling, and poison.

The aim is unattainable for so persistent a species as beech, with its sprouts, heavy crops of seed, and tolerance of shade. Moreover, beech deserves a place in the woodlot. Thirty or more species of birds and mammals look to this tree for food and shelter. Even the old logs and stumps have parts in the forest ecology. They store water; they enrich the soil; they harbor millions of microorganisms. Moreover, cutting down a beech may well result in a dense thicket of slow-growing, highly defective root sprouts. Quite obviously one should leave stand any beech which is resistant to the bark disease.

The recent inventory of New York's forests indicates that beech is more than holding out against enemies and handicaps. The 682 million stems place beech fourth in number after red maple, sugar maple, and

hemlock. Annual mortality is again fourth, after the two maples and aspen. The average net change in volume is an increase of 20 million cubic feet. The increase is about twice that of red oak and one quarter that of red maple.

Much has been written about and against beech as a forest tree and an industrial wood, pointing to the slow growth, the defective logs, and the warping lumber. Yet beech is deeply imbedded in the human psyche. During the last several millennia before our era, the beech forest was spreading across western Europe at the expense of mixed forests of oak, ash, linden, and hazel. For warmth, food, shelter, and tools forest dwellers of the Stone Age turned to beech. They must also have carved claims to territorial rights on the smooth bark of beech, bark that expands but does not slough off.

We all know the urge to inscribe on beech trees. Could that urge spring from an atavistic throw-back to the deep, dark beechen where are cultural life began?

Henry Kernan is a consulting forester in World Forestry, a Master Forest Owner, and a frequent contributor to THE FOREST OWNER.

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ELEGANT KINDLING

By Peter S. Levatich ©1996

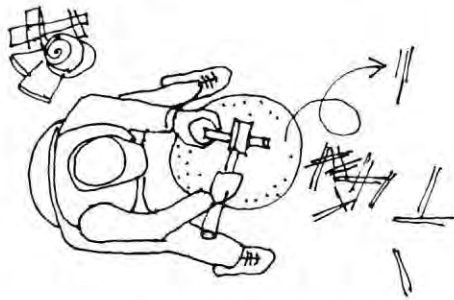
Why write about kindling? Like red pennies, it is of little consequence. No odes have been written in its praise, as far as I know. You only notice it in its absence. But there is enough to kindling to warrant a closer look. Kindling is the stuff with which



you start fires. People use the strangest things for kindling, when in need. I have seen paper trash being stuffed into the stove, or scraps of any imaginable combustible at hand. Mennonites in Nebraska used grass in 1873; that's all there was. In our Adirondack hunting camp we slosh kerosene into the cast iron stove to start things burning, both dangerous and smelly. You, too, have probably seen the most unconventional types of kindling being used. All this may be fine for solving emergencies; but let us not forget that having elegant solutions to human need is also true delight, even when it comes to kindling.

Elegant kindling solutions! First of all, it is a year-round process. Now, as winter wanes, is the time to think about the kindling process for the next season. Kindling being marginal to survival, it is best kept in the back of your mind, but all year long. You seldom have to dedicate a day to kindling. You sort of grab a kindling opportunity when it presents itself, almost at any time as you move along. My opportunities have become concentrated, after a long period of purposeful existence. When I split firewood in the spring, I clean up all those wonderful slivers, torn fibers of all sizes that litter the ground where the splitter worked. I get a couple of bushel baskets full. Next, I have a large 4x4x3 foot high box into which I throw the splittable wood scraps from my work projects all year long. I am selective here: pieces with knots go elsewhere as does plywood; old broom

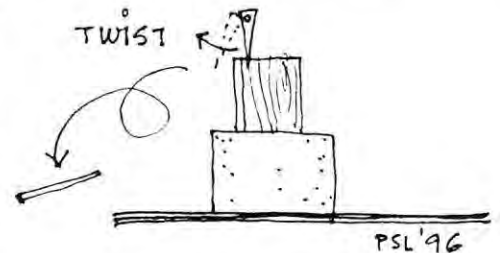
handles become garden stakes, etc. When working in the forest, an occasional conifer is felled. These I buck, cutting out the branch whorls, and take the straight grain sections home with me. White pine, fir, and spruce split well after some drying. All this goes on peripherally to my principal tasks. My only specific effort in kindling resource procurement occurs early in the fall when artificial logs, like "Pine Mountain", or "Duralog", show up on store shelves. These are sawdust-with-wax chunks people use in fireplaces. I buy two of them.



We heat our house and the shop building entirely with wood. I build 2-3 fires each day. Kindling must be handy and ready for quick work. Some kindling preparation is needed, of course. So, on rainy days, from time to time during the year, I deal with the kindling resource. The splitter slivers only need to dry in the shed, they are ready to use. The wood scraps need to be split. I will tell you only how I do it. But do not mimic me! Find your own way of doing it, so I am not responsible for your fingers, because splitting is always dangerous work. You probably will hit your finger with the hatchet. Most people do. I did, early on... once. The artificial logs will be discussed, after I tell you how I split kindling.

I sit on a 12 inch high stool with a 14 inch high section of a maple tree, about 16 inches in diameter, the anvil, in front of my knees. Both stool and anvil are on the concrete shop floor. I rest my right elbow on my right knee holding a very sharp, heavy hatchet about half way up its handle so it balances well in my right hand. I hold a piece of wood to be split in my left hand about half way up with my two fingers. I rest the bottom end on the anvil; the wood grain is vertical. I hit the top end with the hatchet a 1/4 inch from the right edge. While I do this, I am ready to let the wood go with my left hand. If a split occurs, I

stop the hatchet partway, withdraw it, execute an immediate second split a little further to the left, then a third, etc....and in no time the piece of wood is turned into many pieces of kindling. This process is improved if I give the hatchet a little twist, turning the edge towards the right, as it touches the wood. This makes the split-off piece fly to the right. If the wood does not split, I let go with the left hand, raise the wood, which is now stuck to the hatchet, and hit the bottom of the wood against the anvil. A split will eventually occur and I catch the left segment with my left hand before it falls to the floor, ready to continue. Easy work, as long as I stay alert. Elegant results, when the resource material is free of knots and is a long grain species. The conifer species mentioned above are excellent. Oaks, ash,



redwood, cedar, locust are fine. Dense hardwoods like sugar maple, cherry, and beech tend to split unpredictably and I think them more dangerous to split.

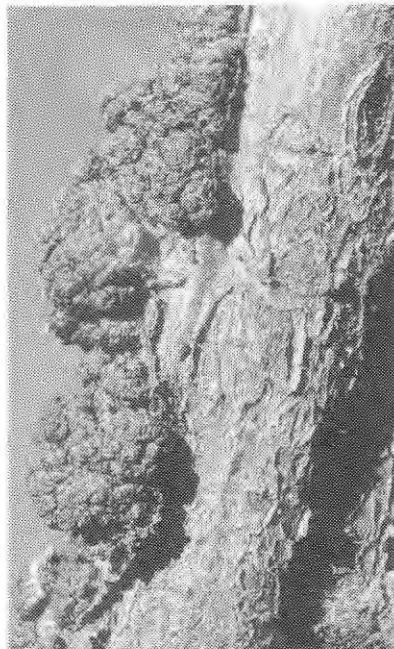
Now to the artificial fireplace logs. At this point you may rightly wonder if I might be cheating. *Artificial* logs, you may ask? Am I abandoning Zen and the Art of Kindling Making? Is it still elegant and a delight? Read the following before you judge. One of the concerns with all this wonderful kindling is that you have to store it somewhere to dry and then transport it to near the fire and store it there again unless you want to run for it each time you need it. Our kitchen is small, the wood stove is small, and there is no real good place for a kindling basket. So I adopted a neat solution of a friend who used these artificial logs. First he cut the artificial logs with a heavy serrated knife into 1x1x2-inch pieces. He kept a few pieces in a former ash tray near his fireplace in the living room. He called them "starters". He kindled his fire by standing one starter on end in the ashes of his hearth and then held a 'farmer's match' to it as long as his fingers

could stand it. Sure enough the starter took the flame. He then placed split firewood on each side of his burning starter taking care to be very close without knocking the starter over; he put firewood over the flame and smiled. He was confident that the logs would catch on. They did because the starter puts out a very hot flame long enough to spread the fire to the dry firewood. We use this method of kindling in the kitchen now. It is a clean, safe, and space- and cost-efficient method.

And what about you, dear reader? Surely you have your own way of kindling your fires. It is an ancient ritual after all, and a very personal one. It brings you into intimate contact with a most ancient creative force of the universe. Starting a fire has always been a moment of pride and delight. Continue and be elegant about it!

Peter, a representative for Tompkins County to the NYSDEC Region 7 Forest Practice Board and a Master Forest Owner, is a frequent contributor to the NY FOREST OWNER.

SPECIAL



Black Knot of Cherry

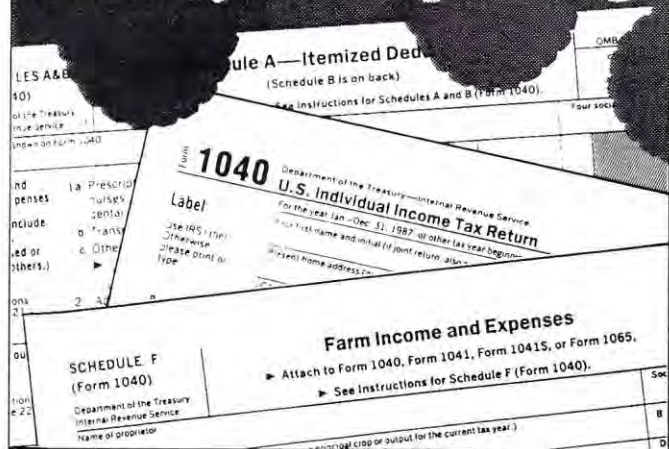
A recent publication of SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry: "Stewardship of Northern Hardwoods: A Forest Owner's Handbook" is now available.

Authored by K.B. Adams, D.C. Allen, P.D. Manion, & L.P. Abrahamson, the 84, 8 1/2 by 11, glossy pages contain 32 black and white descriptive photographs intended for identification purposes and 67 color photographs detailing a principal diagnostic feature of tree disease. Nine trees and their problems are appropriately keyed.

It is written expressly for the forest steward and a must-have guide to management of anybody's woodlot.

Make the check out for \$10.00, payable to Research Foundation of SUNY and mail to SUNY/ESF; 133 Illick Hall; 1 Forestry Drive; Syracuse, NY 13210. The manual was produced under the auspices of the Stewardship Incentives Program of New York; revenues will be dedicated to future reprints.

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RETURN OF A NATIVE - THE RIVER OTTER

By Bob Gotie

On October 5, 1995, the return of river otters to central and western New York in over 100 years was realized with the release of the first two of 21 otters that would be liberated during the fall of 1995 at the northern Montezuma Marsh Project Area. This historic moment in natural resources management resulted from a year long partnership between a private not-for-profit organization called the New York River Otter Project, Inc. and the New York Department of Environmental Conservation. For me, watching these two beautiful creatures swim rapidly away in their new environment, represented a career high as a wildlife biologist with the NYSDEC. How this came about and how you can help the project to continue is the topic of this article.

WHAT IS A RIVER OTTER

For the uninformed, the river otter is the largest of the mink tribe which occur in New York. Otters are long, sleek, and richly furred mammals. Powerfully built and masters of aquatic habitat; they are uniquely adapted for life in rivers, lakes, and streams. When they exhibit their enormous repertoire of play behavior, otters charm those people lucky enough to observe them.

In the wild, otters live for 10 - 15 years. Adult male otters weigh between 10 and 20 pounds and are about 3 - 4 feet in length. Females are somewhat smaller. They den along streams, rivers, and lakes using old beaver lodges and bank dens, muskrat houses, log jams, and overturned trees. In New York the average litter size is two, born usually in April.

Until now, the river otter occupied about 19,000 square miles of eastern New York. They are commonly found throughout the

watersheds of the Adirondack and Catskill regions. Rarely are they seen in western New York and on Long Island.

Otters are known to travel many miles daily and seasonally. Individual otters spend their lives in home ranges that may exceed 50 square miles. Adapted to a wide variety of aquatic habitats, otters are most abundant in areas with extensive unpolluted waterways and minimal human impact.

Otters eat a wide variety of animal life. Fish are the most frequent item in the otter's diet, followed by crayfish, insects, and amphibians. They are "opportunists", preying upon the easiest of animals to obtain. Fish like carp, suckers, and bullheads are at the top of the list. If trout are easy to obtain or represent the most common fish in a stream, then otters will prey on them to meet their nutritional requirements.

WHAT ABOUT THE PAST?

Historical records tell us that otters could be found in every watershed of the state. Like many other species, otters disappeared from most of New York during the 1800's. Unregulated exploitation and drastic changes in land use due to human settlement were primary factors affecting the disappearance of otters in western New York.

In 1936 New York passed legislation completely protecting the river otter. By 1945, river otter populations had recovered sufficiently enough for the Legislature to grant the Conservation Department authority to open a limited trapping season. River otter fur has long been considered a valuable commodity. Demand for it in the world fur market remains strong even today. Since 1945, the NYSDEC has regulated the annual trapper harvest of this species by varying seasons and catch limits. Every otter pelt taken by trappers each year must also be inspected by a NYSDEC officer and tagged with a plastic pelt seal. Over these past 50 years both the distribution and the harvest of this species have steadily increased in eastern New York.

From before 1985, NYSDEC biologists have entertained thoughts about returning otter to the watersheds of central and western New York. It wasn't until early 1995, however that this dream would be realized. It was then that the not-for-profit organization - The New York River Otter Project - was formed and actively began to secure funding and political support for this major undertaking.



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HOW ABOUT THE PRESENT?

The New York River Otter Project, Inc. (NYROP) is an organization of industries, nature and educational institutions, conservation and sportsmen's groups, and individuals with the expressed purpose of re-establishing a healthy river otter population throughout central and western New York. Their fund raising activities thus far have succeeded in paying for the release of 21 otters in one of the nine release locations identified in central and western New York. Long term plans call for the release of between 180 and 270 animals over a period of up to 10 years.

The current source of otters for release is the Adirondack and Catskill range. Otters are being live trapped by trained private trappers licensed by the NYSDEC. After capture, otters are being transported to a Cornell Univ. Veterinary facility near Ithaca, NY where they are cared for until their release back to the wild. Most of the animals released this past fall came from the Adirondack region. However, one otter worthy of note was captured within 30 miles of New York City and now plies the waters of the Seneca river near Savannah, NY.

WHAT ABOUT THE FUTURE?

Much remains to be done if we are to succeed at releasing otter in eight other locations. The most important task at hand,

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NYS DEC Wildlife Biologists carrying the otters to the release site.

however, is obtaining enough money from outside sources to continue this project.

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Public meetings held during the winter of 1994 revealed strong support for this project, but those attending directed the NYSDEC to fund it from outside the traditional Conservation Fund. That's where the NYROP comes in. The total project cost is expected to be about \$300,000. This cost includes technical services, live trapping and transferring of the otters, medical screening, and care before release and transportation to the release site.

The NYROP has done yeoman service in finding revenue this first year of the project. They are well on their way with money for a release of 40 otters in 1996. Nonetheless, much more money is still needed for the future. The success of this ambitious project ultimately will depend on the generosity of people like you. Any level of financial support you or others can make will greatly add to the successful return of this native New Yorker.

The river otter once roamed the rivers and lakes of western New York and it could live here again. Help us bring it back to the aquatic habitats of central and western New York. If you wish to support this effort, please make checks payable to:

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Rochester, N.Y. 14604

Bob Gotie is a Sr. Wildlife Biologist at the NYSDEC Cortland Office.

NEW DECISION SOFTWARE AVAILABLE

Scientists at the Northeastern Forest Experiment Station of the USDA Forest Service have completed the first two modules of the Northeast Decision Model (NED). NED provides site-specific recommendations that integrate multiple values of forests.

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The user can "cut" or treat variously and compare various growth simulators. Treatments can be compared by "uncutting" or "ungrowing" the stand in a matter of minutes.

The second module available, the Forest Stewardship Planning Guide (FSPG), runs in the Microsoft Windows environment and guides users step-by-step through the process of determining what they want from their forests. From five planning options, the user is asked a series of questions which lead to limited management recommendations for goals and conditions.

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USING FOREST SERVICE INVENTORY DATA TO ASSESS THE HEALTH OF NEW YORK'S FOREST

By Douglas Allen

Introduction

The U.S. Forest Service, in cooperation with the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation and forest landowners, periodically inventories New York's forest resources. The fourth, and most recent, inventory was completed in 1993. The final report includes summary statistics on such things as ownership pattern, amount and geographic distribution of forest land by forest type and tree size classes, growing stock volume by species, and annual net growth. Recently, I reviewed results from New York's latest inventory to see what they might suggest relative to forest health.

I propose that we think of a healthy condition, in general, as a situation where abiotic and biotic influences; i) do not threaten their ability to recover from natural or human-related stresses like insect defoliation, fire, disease, or air pollution and ii) do not imperil ownership objectives presently or in the future. The objective of this article leads me to a more focused definition that interprets health in terms of susceptibility to pest outbreaks and (or) vulnerability to damage. Any assessment or decision about forest health, however, requires that we compare present conditions (e.g., species composition, growth, crown condition, level of mortality, pest activity) to conditions that we normally might expect to encounter for a given set of site conditions, stage of forest development and geographic location.

The concept that damage has both economic and ecological components embraces concern for a wide range of commodity and non-commodity values. This view is evident in a common definition of "pest" as any agent (or combination of agents) that can prevent a landowner from optimizing values of interest or that is capable of eroding ecological conditions. In other words, we do not assume that wood products are the prime objective for, or even are of interest to, every forest landowner.

Application & Interpretation of FIA Data

In its present form, information derived from the U.S. Forest Service Forest Inventory and Analysis (FIA) provides insight into some aspects of forest health. Useful interpretation in the context of forest pest problems, however, depends in large measure on the degree to which we understand a forest pest's life system and how the pest interacts with its host(s) and the forest community of which it is a part.

Recently a U.S. Forest Service scientist used FIA data on tree species composition

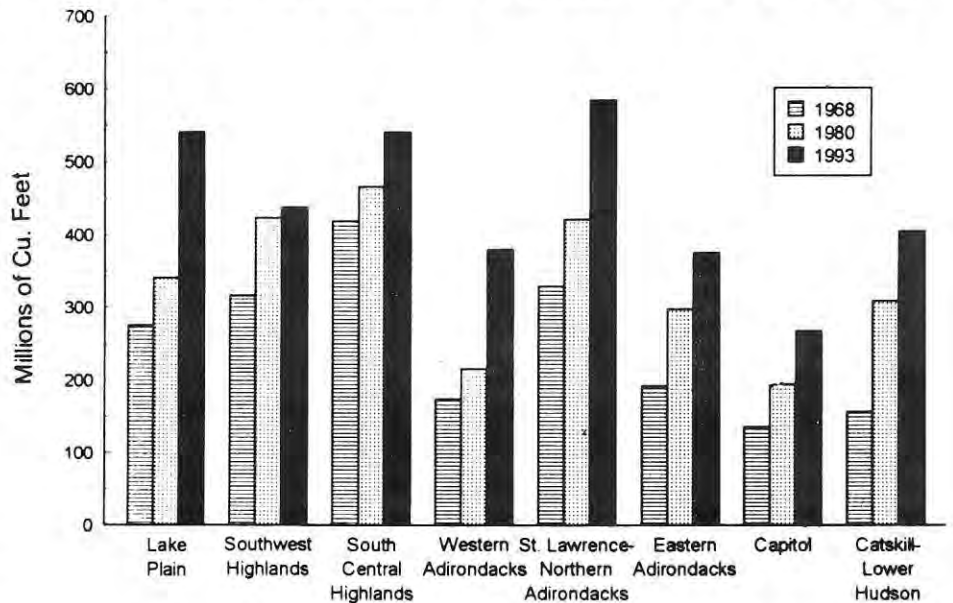


Figure 1. Trends in net volume of sugar maple growing stock on timberland in New York's forest regions.

and species abundance to improve our ability for estimating the likelihood that forest stands in south-central Pennsylvania will be defoliated by gypsy moth. Similarly, the Maine Forest Service has utilized FIA information on species composition, stand location and stand age to design damage surveys and to estimate the impact of specific agents that can threaten forest health; such as spruce budworm, hemlock looper and brown ash dieback.

Hazard Rating

One of the most useful forest pest management tools is based on a concept known as hazard rating. The ability to describe forest conditions that are most susceptible to a specific pest problem or most vulnerable to damage allows the landowner or forest manager to apply limited resources for survey, control and (or) preventative measures to those stands where there is a high probability that damage will occur. This tool builds, in part, on a knowledge of pest ecology in relation to forest conditions such as the relative abundance of tree species, tree density and the occurrence and distribution of different age (size) classes.

In many instances we know very little about how changing the character of a forest will influence pest populations. Nonetheless, even for those poorly understood situations data currently provided by FIA may reveal potentially troublesome situations.

Changes in Species Composition

The most recent inventory, for example,

indicates a substantial increase in sugar maple (Fig. 1) and red maple (Fig. 2) growing stock in each of New York's eight forest regions since 1980. A similar, though less dramatic, pattern also is evident when one compares data from the 1968 inventory to that of 1980.

Undoubtedly, several events have influenced this trend. To begin with, even though the amount of timberland has remained about the same since the last inventory, the area occupied by northern hardwood groups (i.e., forest types that typically contain maple) has increased by approximately 500,000 acres. A legacy of selective cutting that discriminated against economically more valuable species, such as ash, birch and black cherry, also has contributed to shifts in species composition. Additionally, red maple seedlings readily establish on many sites following a disturbance, and red maple stumps sprout prolifically. Both characteristics often give this species a competitive advantage. In many regions over the past three decades most of the large beech was removed from northern hardwood stands by beech bark disease, and the relative dominance (basal area) of this tree has been reduced even though it remains well represented in smaller diameter classes. Whatever the cause or causes, the continuing increase in maple abundance revealed by current FIA data suggests to me that future outbreaks of pests associated with sugar and red maple may be more frequent and (or) more damaging.

Experience with a variety of forest insects over the past several decades indicates

that whenever one tree species or age class dominates a forest or landscape, there is a higher probability of more frequent or more damaging pest problems compared to conditions characterized by a mixture of species or more diverse structure.

One must be careful, however, when interpreting the significance of changing stand composition or shifts in the relative abundance of species. Whether or not these changes are significant from a forest health perspective depends on what is expected for a given time, site, geographic location, and forest type. The mere fact that a species is "gaining or losing ground" in terms of relative stocking does not necessarily signify a health concern. Such a change may, in fact, be a normal response to changing stand and/or site conditions.

Stand Density

With the exception of beech and yellow birch in four of New York's nine forest regions and in a single region where ash and black cherry growing stock has decreased slightly since the 1980 inventory, the growing stock of all other major species associated with maple also has increased. This suggests that many stands are fully stocked and soon may be overstocked. Persistent overstocking encourages insects and disease-causing organisms that favor weakened or stressed trees.

Shift in Balance of Age Classes

The most recent FIA report indicates that in all of New York's forest units there is substantially less area of hardwood timberland in the sapling/seedling size classes compared to the 1980 survey. Accompanying this change is an increase in the area occupied by the sawtimber class (trees 11" or larger in diam.) in all units and an increased area of poletimber (trees greater than 5" but less than 11" in diam.) for five of eight units. This implies, of course, that the forest landscape is aging but also suggests that our northern hardwood forests are becoming more homogeneous structurally. As mentioned above, homogeneity in any form is thought to increase the probability of forest pest problems. An imbalance

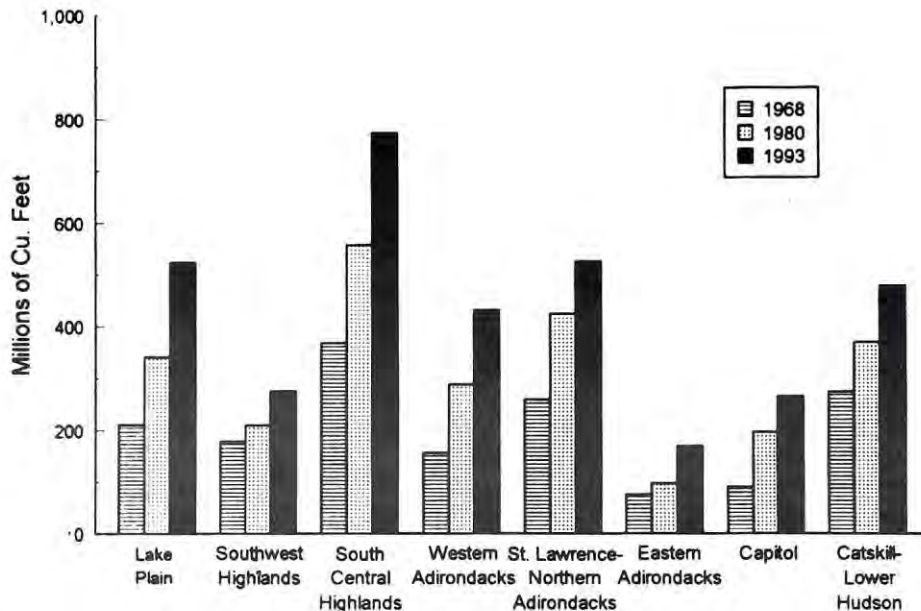


Figure 2. Trends in net volume of red maple growing stock on timberland in New York's forest regions.

ance in the relative abundance of age classes also can have significance in the context of aesthetics, wildlife or timber.

Conclusions

FIA was designed primarily to sample timber resources, but it is utilized frequently to evaluate other resource issues. From a forest health perspective, changes in stand stocking, density, distribution, age, and species composition may foreshadow potential forest pest problems. An example is the increasing abundance of red and sugar maple in New York's forests, which could set the stage for more frequent outbreaks of pests associated with these species.

What does this mean to the forest owner? Two things come to mind: i) whenever possible, a forest owner should take deliberate silvicultural steps to encourage species and/or age class diversity in their northern hardwood stands and ii) it will be prudent for forest owners to become familiar with potential maple pests in order to facilitate early detection of problems that can threaten owner objectives. To accomplish the latter, I recommend the following references:

Houston, D. R., D. C. Allen and D. Lachance. 1990. Sugarbush Management: a Guide to Maintaining Tree Health. USDA Forest Service. Gen. Tech. Rep. NE-129. 55p. (no charge)

Adams, K. B., D. C. Allen, P. D. Manion, and L. P. Abrahamson. 1995. Stewardship of Northern Hardwoods: a Forest Owner's Handbook. SUNY ESF. 84p. (\$10.00, check payable to "RF of SUNY")

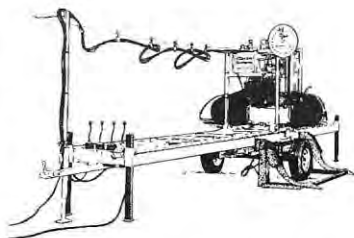
[Both publications are available from the SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry, Tree Pest and Disease Service, 133 Illick Hall, 1 Forestry Drive, Syracuse, NY 13210. (315)-470-6745]

A copy of the results of New York's most recent forest inventory is available from the USDA Forest Service, Publications Distribution, 359 Main Road, Delaware, OH 43015 (Alerich and Drake. 1995. Forest statistics for New York: 1980 and 1993. Resour. Bull. NE-132. 249 p.).

This is the 25th in the series of articles contributed by Dr. Allen, Professor of Entomology at SUNY/ESF.



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AN HERB IS NOT A DRUG an' a little dab 'll do ya

By Jane Sorensen Lord, Phd, OTR, ND

With interest, I have read lately, in publications as diverse as THE READER'S DIGEST and DISCOVER magazines, herb horror stories. Our editor sent me an article from his local paper describing several herbs that either damaged kidneys or livers of the imbibers.

I have had disturbing reactions to herbs, myself, ranging from profuse sweating to difficulty catching my breath. I have even caused painful cysts from apparent overdoses, and have seen reactions from herbs, both belly and bowel, in my clients who self-dosed.

Since I consider myself a clinical researcher, and I use, on myself first, some less researched herbs, unexpected reactions are part of the trade. I am not working in total darkness; my physicians are aware, interested, and supportive. My interest allows me to order and take any lab tests I want, to determine the effects of dosage. Unfortunately, lab tests are very expensive and I don't do tests as often as I would like.

It would be great, if herbs could be researched in this day and age with the same trials (and zeal) that accompanies newly synthesized chemical combinations. But herbs and other natural products cannot be patented like drugs, so they could not be profitable enough to merit millions of dollars in corporate investments. These realities make herb research more like anthropology than a hard science. Information is derived from an oral tradition. Also, almost

all folk healing involves a participation of the patient in some form of thought or behavioral healing ritual. The herb (or the combination) is meant to affect body, mind, and spirit, because sickness is recognized as disrupting and involving the whole organism.

Natural medicine is not like modern prescriptions where the doctor writes what, when, and how. You plunk down your money to buy a bottle of pills and take them by the clock, often not interrupting any aspect of your life. And it is not uncommon to take drugs for years with the belief that the given drug affects only one organ or system in the body.

Modern technology has perfected herbal extraction where in a dose is a great many times greater than the dose provided in a cup of tea. This further complicates the interpretations of dosage for herb use from the traditional herbals (books of herbs and their usage), for example, 20 drops of a homemade tincture is far weaker than 20 drops of an extract. Most of the herbals give dosages for teas and decoctions (simmered leaves or roots and twigs)

Couple the dosage dilemma with the reality that the people in this country have a love affair with drugs to serve as elixirs of youth as well as magic bullets. With some personalities, I purposely tell them to take less, because they have the belief that "If one is good, two is better!"

I recommend teas most often, because they are safe; but I have had people use



Dandelion

tablespoons full instead of teaspoons full. Only with the foreign born have I been able to say, "Use three drops twice a day", and they did.

What you need to remember is that herbs are foods, but are like spices and condiments, not the main course. There has been talk for years of the Food and Drug Administration regulating herbs. I think that even if they did, they could not police it. I've written many times about the herbs that grow wild in your yard. How about getting busted for taking dandelions for your liver, or mullein for asthma?

And, just because pharmaceuticals are controlled and doled out by physicians, doesn't mean they are safe. I am treating the second woman in her early sixties this year who had a massive stroke from prescribed, widely used medicine. I don't think that herbs are that potent!

If you self-administer herbs for common colds and aches and pains, because you read one article, just don't take it for more than a couple of weeks (stop immediately if you have any strange reactions). If you want to try herbs for something more serious, or in place of a prescription drug, track down someone who has worked with herbs for years. Sadly, these are not usually health shop sales folk.

If you can't find someone with whom to consult, compare the herb's use in at least four books. That will get you past any magic. A must have: GUIDE TO MEDICINAL PLANTS, Schauernberg & Paris, Keats Publishing (NE W Canaan, CT, 1990). Be careful. Good health. Have fun.

Dr. Jane, a regular contributor, is a Master Forest Owner and certified Tree Farmer. She has a private consulting practice in Occupational Therapy and Naturopathic Medicine. She teaches on the Faculty of Health at Indianapolis University.

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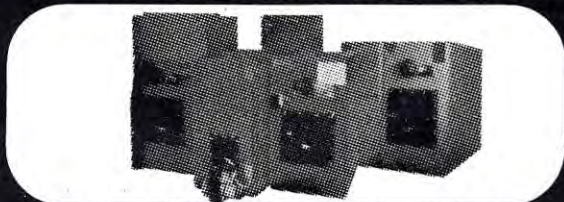
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MAR 17: CDC; 1PM; Rural Land Surveys; Sanford Town Library, Colonie; 518/753-4336.

MAR 21: WFL; 7:30PM; TBA; Coop Education Ctr, Highland Ave, Rochester.

MAR 22: STC; 6PM; Potluck Dinner; Sunrise Terrace Community Ctr, Binghamton.

MAR 23: STC; 9AM; Pond Mgmt. Workshop, Coop. Ed. Ctr., Binghamton.

MAR 28: NFC/AFC; Joint Meeting; Cattaraugus County Fairgrounds.

APR 27: NFC; Spring Waterfalls Walk at Elberta Barberi's, Holland.

APR 27: NYFOA's ANNUAL SPRING MEETING; Marshall Hall, Syracuse (see page 9).