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FOREST OWNER

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COVER:

Upper West Branch of Sacandaga River. Photo by Tim Ward

FOREST OWNER

A publication of the New York Forest Owners Association

Editorial Committee: Joan Kappel, Chair, Mary McCarty, Steve Davison, Betty Densmore, Alan Knight and Bob Sand

Materials submitted for publication should be addressed to: **R.J. Fox**, Editor, 5159 Dresserville Rd., Moravia, New York 13118. Articles, artwork and photos are invited and are normally returned after use. **The deadline for submission for July/Aug is June 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.

Spring Beauties



Along Half-Way Creek

Tim Ward

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President's Message

By Jill Cornell

Oops! I thought that my last President's message was my last one, but apparently with deadlines one month ahead, this is really my last message.

I would like to put some perspective into our stewardship of forested lands. In New York State there are 500,000 private owners of 14 million acres (85%) of forested land. In the nation there are 10 million private owners of 300 million acres (60%) of all forested land.

I like to think that our NYFOA members are the most active, managing stewards of this natural resource, but I am also sure that there are many non-members who are doing a good job of managing. We need to reach and encourage them to join NYFOA, and add their wisdom to ours. And we need to reach out to the rest of the half million forest owners to share the information we have.

Another perspective of our wonderful, renewable resource is its **equity**. As I prepared to map out a strategy for presenting our June, 1998 Resolution to the Governor and Legislators, to support funding for the equivalent of one DEC Forester for every county, I asked Sloane Crawford at DEC headquarters to work up an estimate of the value of NY's privately owned acres of growing timber. He ran some numbers, and estimated that it is **worth between 10 and 12 billion dollars**. That would be about \$714. per acre, and may be a conservative estimate, even given the enormous range of conditions.

Getting the exact value is an impossible task. Even more difficult to estimate is the value of the fish and wildlife our forests support, and the aesthetic and recreational values forests provide.

A more important point is consideration of managing the equity. **Good management can make the equity grow, as well as ensure its sustainability for future generations.** There are certainly a number of people who believe that it is fine to "just let it grow." To me, that is analogous to stuffing your money in a mattress. A much better plan for forest equity is to **manage it** for sustainability. Whatever your personal goals are for your woods: wildlife enhancement for certain species, recreation trails, and/or trying to grow veneer quality trees, you know what you want to do, and probably have a forester to help you plan how to do it. However, there are thousands of owners who need to know that management plans will help them to grow quality sawtimber while they are pursuing their personal objectives and goals.

Please invite a friend or neighbor to join NYFOA, so we can share the wealth of information about all the benefits of managed forests, **including the equity in them.**

Thank you all for giving me the opportunity to meet so many wonderful people in NYFOA, the Department of Environmental Conservation, Cornell



President Jill Cornell

Cooperative Extension, SUNY Environmental Science and Forestry, Forest Industry, the Tree Farm Program, Natural Resource Conservation Service, USDA FS, environmental organizations, and National Woodland Owners Association.

I have learned so much, and enjoyed it all!

Fragments

By Dorothy Darling

Can I be content
Here on the curtain side
Of black squares of windows
As winter stares in at me,
Framing the bleak cold night,
Shrouding earth from my sight?

But I, too, stare
Here in this secluded place,
Eyes searching through solitude
Between patterns of rug and chair,
Ironic in their temporal comfort
Against the barriers of anywhere.

Yet here I would remain
Amid a growing bounty of books,
Deep striving to raise the words
From yesterday's intent reservoir,
Sifting the struggles from my mind
That fragments of peace I may find.

NYFOA SCHOLARSHIP FUND

As of January 1999, the NYFOA Endowed Scholarship Fund that is administered by the SUNY ESF College Foundation, Inc. has a fund balance of \$17,616.

There is an additional \$740 available to fund an award for the 1998-1999 academic year. Selecting a recipient is coordinated between the Financial Aid Office and Forestry Faculty.

The Tree Farm organization is asking the U. S. Postal Service to issue a Tree Farm Commemorative stamp for their sixtieth anniversary. We should like to support this effort by obtaining petitions in support. Anonymous donors are offering prizes for Chapters (250, 150 and 50 33 cent stamps) obtaining the most petition signatures. Prizes will be awarded based on the number of signatures as a % of the Chapter membership over 100 %. Names do not need to be NYFOA members. Chapters will have forms or the one below (or facsimile) may be used. They should be sent to Box 180 Fairport, N.Y. 14450 by July 1, 1999.

We support a TREE FARM COMMEMORATIVE STAMP

NAME

ADDRESS

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

COMMON SENSE

By Tim Ward

It was one of those mid-spring days which your heart, no matter how young or old, aches for—a sunny cool day before the main black fly hatch, with light breezes and fluffy cumulus clouds.

So on this day a few years ago my wife, Mary, and I took a walk in the hills along the east side of Lake George. We parked in the Dacy Clearing parking area and descended the Shelving Rock Road. The road was gated due to serious washouts from a January flood leaving us unmolested by traffic.

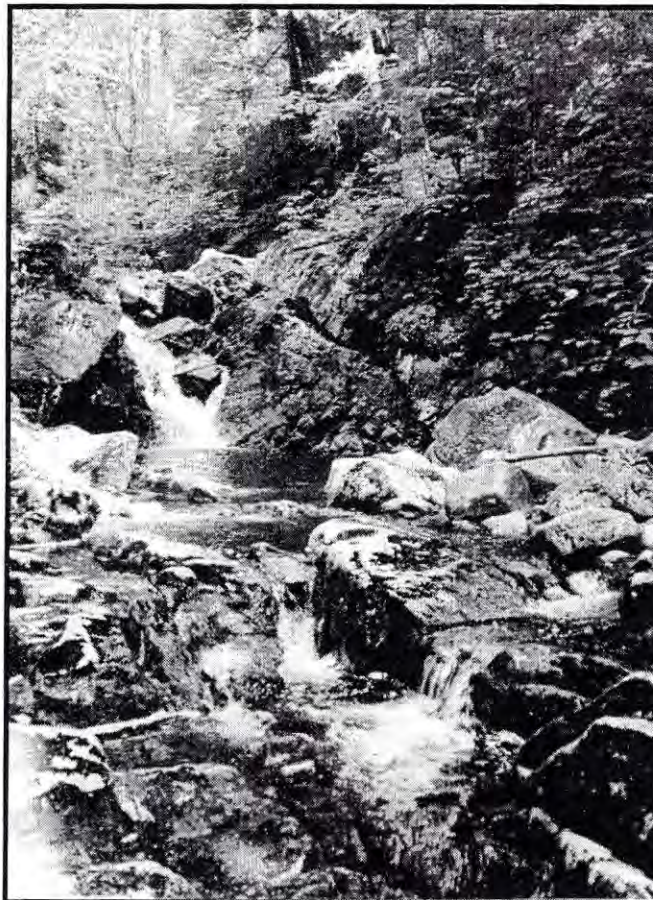
Apparently, nature has no love for roads. As we walked down we marvelled at the destructive force of water with the tons of washed out heavy gravel and cobbles and twisted destroyed culverts. As anyone knows who has lived on a dirt road for long, streams coming in on a hill sooner or later prove disastrous and the Shelving Rock Road has multiple streams on a very long steep hill. And yet, what amazes me, no matter how violent the rains pound our mountains until every gully holds a rushing torrent, just step a few feet away and on the forest floor the leaves lie unmoved and the spring flowers emerge unscathed.

A little farther down we pass the remains of several extinct farms. In May, before there's much plant growth, one can see their outlines clearly. Here was a capped well, there a broken dam, the stream looking so innocent laughing over the tumbled, once so carefully placed boulders. If only those earnest farmers could have seen the flood of all floods when about 12,500 years ago an explosively melting glacier washed any hope of lasting fertility to Lake Champlain or down the Hudson. But still for a few brief decades, the air of these mountain intervals was filled with the hum of bees and the clanking of cow bells.

Farther down we rested under towering pines, admiring the painted trilliums and prolific spring beauties. Here we found and collected several of those light tan morels. I think no one has learned to cultivate these delicious mushrooms yet.

We then followed the Shelving Rock

Brook down past the falls to the lake and soon found ourselves across from Log Island. There, all paraded out, were a whole bunch of boys and girls soaking up the sun and drinking beer on their big boats in the bay. Every time a new boat entered, a hundred heads swiveled, sizing it up, inspecting its lines and listening to its throbbing engine. In any case, we settled down among



Upper West branch of Sacandaga River

the red, pitch and white pines on the lichen covered granite and while Mary got out lunch, I got out my binoculars to more closely study the bay's wildlife.

Soon an ancient gaunt grey muzzled dog, presumably part lab, walked over, looked us over and then disappeared. After eating we continued north along the shore and found more morels. Looking back we discovered the dog following us about one hundred feet behind. As it got closer we could see it looked starved and had the most sad and apologetic demeanour. It avoided eye contact, keeping its tail between its legs, but sometimes gave us glances so forlorn

and melancholy we felt a good guilt trip coming on. Seeing no one else around, we at first thought she came from one of the camps about a half mile away. However, she had no collar, no tags, so we started thinking someone had left her off, letting her wander into her sunset in what they perceived as paradise. We told her to go home several times which was received with looks of desperation and an obstinacy not to let us out of her sight. Knowing we were returning via a four mile trail which climbed 1100 feet and observing the exhaustion of our companion, we felt somewhere along the line she would turn back.

However, there was something of extraordinary intelligence here. At last, shamed by the spectacle of protruding ribs, I set a few homemade oatmeal cookies on the ground. She slowly wandered over, sniffed them, went off the road into the brush and retched. Now we were really confused, my wife's cooking isn't that bad!

We started up the mountain on the trail. Whenever we came to a blowdown flat on the ground, even if only twelve to fourteen inches high, the dog would momentarily gaze at it and then trek off into the distance to circumnavigate the entire tree. On the level she stayed back about fifty feet, but on the hills lagged far behind.

Eventually we stopped for a break along a lively brook. How can we ever grow old and weary

if we can at any time contemplate these timeless streams, watching the crystal waters dance and play over the colored stones and the small brightly speckled trout race around like so many aquatic butterflies? All seemed well with the world. The dog, after taking a nice long drink standing in the water and nearly falling down shaking herself dry, curled up in the sun-dappled shade not far off.

All too soon it seemed we were climbing again. Here was one of those large areas on these mountains which has very little soil and yet is covered with a surprising

Tim Ward

growth of evergreens, mostly hemlocks and pines. Near us a three foot diameter white pine has found enough water and minerals to thrive in the crevice of a rock, though on closer inspection has sent a few huge roots snaking so many yards away to a pocket of sand and gravel. Usually these trees obtain all the nutrients they need with a far-flung root system in a very shallow layer of acidic decomposed needles and sand. But still, how can so magnificent a forest grow from such an impoverished soil?

The hemlocks, shorter than the pines, are very patient growers and are probably the longest lived trees in the northeast. I've seen some over 450 years old and some are said to reach 800. They seem to have good familial relationships as they spread their deep shade in nearly pure extensive stands. Now and then a blowdown lets in a few rays of sun and under its root mass the bedrock is exposed just a few inches down.

It's always pleasant to stop and listen to the calling of the chickadees, nuthatches and golden-crowned kinglets as they explore the tree crowns so far above. How much fun it would be flying among the glistening boughs in a sea of green buzzing with so many insects of so many colors and sizes and shapes. Even in these seemingly sterile deeply shaded areas with no undergrowth, close inspection will reveal a profusion of life. If one calmly observes, all nature has a long and fascinating story to tell and is endlessly entertaining.

Eventually the trail leveled off and the evergreen forest was replaced by an aspen, ash and red maple woods. These trees are old field pioneers and are much younger than the pines and hemlocks below. We started seeing piles of rock here and there where you might say the farmers "consolidated their liabilities" leaving as much ground as possible to be cultivated. Now and then a strand of fence wire protruded from a tree. We tried to visualize what it

looked like there about one hundred years ago. By 1890, most of these mountains had been stripped of their most valuable timber which at that time was white pine, spruce and oak.

The areas with deeper soils had been cleared and sustained a surprising number of families for maybe forty years. One common practice here in the 1800's was charging fees for pasturing cattle in the late spring to early fall months. Some of the cows' owners lived as far away as south of Ft. Edward.

In the case of this specific area, industrialist George O. Knapp¹ bought all the farms and allowed the occupants to remain. He bought their products and hired them for all the myriad jobs on his estate. He paid well and since the hill farmers were known to be resourceful and resilient hardworkers, apparently everybody was happy with the relationship. Around 1940, after the death of Mr. Knapp at 92 years of age, the entire estate minus 150 acres or about 7500 acres including almost ten miles of shoreline was sold to the state for \$200,000. We can all be thankful for his generosity.

After walking a short way through these more open woods, we frightened a hen grouse off her nest, which contained about ten nearly round white eggs, not fifty feet from the cellar hole of another long-forgotten farm house. At least it still had its chickens though wild.

I stopped, fearing our friend was at last ready to eat something, and sure enough she smelled the nest and headed for it. I called, which pleased her considerably, and now there was a tight hiking party of three. It seems life is so full of insolvable dilemmas.

Before too long the Dacy Clearing parking lot was reached. As Mary and I approached our truck we noticed the dog stayed back, maybe sensing this was where we'd be parting. But unbelievably, at that moment two mountain bicyclists saw her

and called out, "Hey, there's Dixie!" Well, this couple had been told by a picnicking family they'd lost their dog so they joined together in a three-hour search. They showed us a notice tacked to the nearby register with a description of Dixie. The family, who had already left for home, gave their address and phone number. The bikers volunteered to take the dog and arrange for pick up, so we loaded everything and drove them down to Welch Hollow to their vehicle.

All we could figure was the old dog was bored and on such a lovely day just had to go for a nice long walk in the woods.

¹ Historical facts found in, *From Then Till Now*, by Fred Tracy Stiles, published by the Washington County Historical Society, 1978.



Tim Ward is a Master Forest Owner ('93). He and his wife, Mary, manage a small forest along Southern Lake Champlain.

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State FWMAB Considers Controversial Topics

By Dick Fox

The NYS DEC Fish & Wildlife Management Act Board met for three days, March 25-27 in Watertown. During the course of the meeting, there were several topics of controversial significance discussed in committee and during presentations.

There was unanimous support for General Obligations Bills A3810 & S3529 (Also supported by NYFOA.) This is the same legislation proposed in 1998 and strenuously opposed by the Trial Lawyers Association!


NYS DEC Lands & Forests Chief Frank Dunstan presented a detailed description of the partnership arrangements by the State in the liquidation by Champion International, Inc. of their NY land holdings.

John Schumacher from Dept. of Ag. & Markets described a new regulatory program governing farms with some number of animal units; e.g., farms having 1000 units or more must have SPDES Permits and Nutrient Management Plans.

Rick Swensen, Natural Resource Conservation Service, described the many landowner habitat-enhancing programs such as WHIP and WRP that are cost-shared. Although funding has been reduced for some, there is good demand and a shortage of personnel to staff the programs.

Peg Sauer of NYS DEC stated that license fee increases are required to replenish the Conservation Fund. The license revenue of \$32 million per year must be increased by nearly 20% if all programs are to continue. The Governor agreed to underwrite start-up costs of computerized licensing. Also, acquisition by the DEC of some 8000 acres of the Seneca Army Depot, which has considerable timber and a resident white deer herd, is dependent on federal government clean-up of the ordnance bunkers and facility maintenance costs.

Robert Reinhardt of NYS Office of Parks, Recreation & Historic Preservation, provided a listing of parks which permit hunting. He acknowledged that virtually no management for habitat exists on state parks, and that such management is still being studied for the 64,000 acre Allegany State Park.

FWMA Regional reports relayed concern over applications for logging the bottom of Lake Ontario and inadequate funding for boundary surveys and Unit Management Plans on State Lands among others. 


WHY IS SWAMP THING TAKING OVER THE FORESTS?

Red maple, a tree species that originated in swampy habitats, is taking over eastern forests, says a researcher in Penn State's College of Agricultural Sciences. And its lowly, ordinary nature may be determining its success. "A century ago — because of its sensitivity to fire — red maple was relegated to the swamps," says Marc Abrams, professor of forest ecology and physiology. "In fact, it used to be called swamp maple. But now that we suppress forest fires, red maple has emerged from the swamps and taken over upland sites, and can be found on just about every landscape in the eastern deciduous forest." Travelers driving along highways this time of year can see the tell-tale profusion of red maple's silvery branches. This change in our forests, Abrams says, may have profound economic and ecological consequences. "Forest regeneration is a huge concern," he says. "Trees that historically dominated this region — the pines, oaks, hemlocks and hickories — no longer regenerate very well. Red maple is replacing trees that have high economic value. Its soft wood, color and grain aren't as highly valued as that of black cherry, oak and walnut. Also, many wildlife species depend on the trees that are being replaced." Oaks and hickories supply many small mammals and birds with nuts and acorns. And the oak's rough bark — unlike the maple's smooth bark — houses bark-dwelling insects for insect-eating birds. A shift in wildlife populations is likely to parallel this shift in tree species, Abrams believes. Red maple's proliferation also poses a biodiversity concern, says Abrams. "Very diverse forests — with six to 12 different species in the overstory — all may be changing to red maple-dominated stands. And stands of single species are more susceptible to total devastation by insects and disease." So how does the unassuming red maple outcompete the hardy oak? In a May 1998 article in *Bioscience*, Abrams describes the scientific detective work behind this mystery. "Through the 1700s and 1800s, the charcoal industry cut a lot of forests and burned them into charcoal," he says. "There were a lot of escaped wildfires. So we had these dramatic disturbances going on that were encouraging growth of the fire-resistant oak. "But now that we're cutting forests less and suppressing forest fires, forests are going through a natural succession or aging process," he says. "Red maple, because it grows well in shade, is a key late-successional species.

But red maple also has the incredible ability to act as an early-successional species and invade disturbed sites as well." It's red maple's low requirements for water, nutrients and light — the key resources for plants — that allow it to grow on really poor sites, or really good ones. Physiologists call such organisms "supergeneralists" — they do fairly well over a broad array of conditions, rather than have super abilities in a few specialized areas.

"By invading sites in all kinds of conditions — sunny or shady, high or low nutrients, dry or moist — red maple really is an ecological marvel," Abrams says. Red maple also has taken its unique wetland reproductive strategy to the uplands. "After spring floodwaters recede, wetland plants drop their seeds on the fresh soil layer," Abrams explains. "Upland species, on the other hand — which aren't tied to spring flooding — drop their seeds in the fall. So red maple can spend most of the growing season establishing seedlings, giving them a three to four month advantage over other plants. "Also, white-tailed deer don't browse red maple strongly during the summer, yet browse oaks all year round," he says. "In the wintertime, when food is scarce, deer will browse red maple. But it's not as harmful then, because the trees are dormant." Red maple also may have benefited from the ill effects of acid rain and global warming in this century, Abrams adds. Like the athlete who isn't the biggest, strongest or fastest, but brings other skills to the playing field, red maple prevails. "That's the real paradox," Abrams says.

"Ecologically, red maple is one of the most aggressive tree species. But physiologically, it's one of the most conservative." Normally, scientists associate aggressive behavior with robust physiology, Abrams explains.

They assume plants that photosynthesize faster, for example, will outcompete other plants. Or plants with higher nutrient levels in their leaves or better drought adaptation will have the advantage. Red maple breaks the mold. "The red maple has changed my thoughts on some basic principles of physiological ecology. Ranking species based on the usual physiological parameters may not be a good way to rank their ecological success." 

This article was obtained from the Internet, and originated from Pennsylvania State University.

RETURN OF THE FISHER

By Lexy Nichols

The first time I ever heard of a fisher cat was during the fall of 1997, when my dad returned from a hunting expedition in the back acreage of our tree farm. He was excited and quick to share his experience with the family. He had been sitting on an old stone fence, very still, waiting for a deer to pass, when suddenly a dark, furry mammal came trotting up. When only a few feet away, the mammal looked straight at my Dad, aware but without fear. Dad held his breath for fear of scaring the creature away. Instead, the animal ran up a hollow snag and came quickly down with a rodent in his mouth. Once more he looked at Dad, and then trotted away. The animal was too large to be a mink, and our mammal guide books verified what Dad had thought: it was a fisher cat (*Martes pennanti*)!

The next spring, Mom saw a fisher cat scamper across the road and into the woods next to our driveway, as she was driving in. This happened again, one time over the summer. This made me curious. I'd never heard of a fisher cat before, so I decided to learn something about it. People were surprised at our sightings, because to their knowledge, the fisher is known to be shy, elusive, and rare in our area.

Fishers are large, larger than martens. The tail is very bushy, and takes up half of their length. Fisher fur is long, dark brown to black, and darkest near the tail. The underside is much lighter. Females are smaller



Fisher by Lexy Nichols

than males, and fishers weigh between 1.8 and 7.2 kilograms. They have retractable claws, short, round ears, and a short muzzle. Their legs are short, and their bodies cylindrical.

During the settlement of New York, the clearing of woods and creation of fields and pasture replaced much of the fisher's woodland domain. Fisher cats were hunted for their fur. By the late 1800s, 8,600 pelts were taken each year, but this number declined in the 1900s. In 1903, the Hudson Bay Company sold 3679 pelts in London. People had begun to regard the fisher as an endangered creature. By 1930 harvests

were way down, and the fur began to be out of fashion. By the late 1970s, over 1000 were being harvested in New York annually (a total of over 15,000 were taken in all of North America.) The increasing numbers probably resulted from the return of woodlands on abandoned farmland. The fisher's habitat area grew from the Adirondacks to the Catskills and other forested areas of our state.

The fisher is an active and energetic hunter, whose range may be as large as twenty miles. Fisher young live with their mother from about March to November, in a den in a rock crevice or tree cavity.

The fisher has eating habits that make it interesting to tree farmers. It eats carrion, fruit, rodents, snakes, frogs, and succulent vegetation, but it is one of the only animals that eats porcupine. Porcupines are enemies of the tree farmer, because they girdle trees without any regard to their market value. They are also difficult to control—having a natural enemy living nearby, who likes to eat the pests, is an asset. If you happen to find scat on your property that has porcupine quills in it, you probably have fisher cats in residence. And if you happen to see a fisher, tell him to stick around, and eat plenty!

Lexy Nichols is the teenage daughter of Elizabeth Nichols, Newsletter Editor for NYFOA's Lower Hudson Chapter

By Richard Henry, New Paltz NYSDEC

In 1976, we began a program to reintroduce the fisher to the Catskills. Potential fisher habitat was identified and we bought live fisher from cooperating fur trappers in the northern zone for a fee slightly higher than the market value of the pelt. Between 1976 and 1979, 43 fisher were released in two locations in Ulster County. All of the fisher were thoroughly examined and eartagged prior to their release.

Fisher movements were monitored through observations by sportsmen, hikers, other outdoor enthusiasts, and our field staff. Bait stations were established each winter to determine possible fisher presence evidenced by tracks in fresh snow. By 1984, fisher were documented throughout most of the potential range. Examination of reproductive tracts from several road

kills and other accidental mortalities indicated that reproduction had occurred.

In 1985, an experimental, limited fisher trapping season was established in a portion of their range. Fisher management largely is dependent on biological information gathered from fisher taken during open trapping seasons and this information was needed to determine the success of the Catskill fisher program. From 1985 to 1987, 19 fisher were taken by licensed trappers. Mandatory carcass examinations were conducted by our biologists. All but one of the 19 fisher were progeny from the original releases, and almost all of them were taken incidental to other land trapping activities. As a result of the information gathered from cooperating trappers, annual trapping seasons were established in those Catskill units where fisher are present.

Only a limited number of fisher have

been taken in recent years. As a result of a depressed fur market, trapper participation, especially for land set species, has declined. Two cases of canine distemper have been documented in juvenile fisher. This disease became prevalent in raccoons in the 1980's and may have had an impact on fisher since fisher often eat raccoons. However, deer survey crews recently observed a strong fisher presence in much of the High Peaks region of the Catskills. That fisher now are present in southeastern New York is testimony to the excellent results that can be attained through the joint efforts of the Department and licensed fur trappers.

Excerpted From Furbearer Management Newsletter, Fall 1992, Bureau of Wildlife, Wildlife Resources Center, Delmar, NY 12054 and first published in the FOREST OWNER Jan/Feb 1993.

The Benefits of Forestry Add Value to Your Woodlot

By Peter J. Smallidge

We all hear how much busier we are currently than in years gone by, so how can you justify the time and energy required to deliberately manage your forest or woodlot. Quite simply, deliberate forest management, versus opportunistic forestry, will increase the benefits and enjoyment you receive from your forest or woodlot.

There are numerous benefits associated with deliberately managing your forest, but they can be lumped into a few groups that include increased revenue and reduced costs, greater recreational opportunities, better control over environmental and forest quality, and improved wildlife habitat. Because you plan for these benefits, know when and where they will arrive, and in what quantity, you are able to take advantage of the opportunities they provide. Also, deliberate forest management provides benefits to your community, such as good water quality, forest cover for wildlife, and a supply of high quality sawtimber. You will want to discuss your desired benefits with a Master Forest Owner volunteer, and work towards them with a professional forester from the DEC or a private consulting forester. Here I give a glimpse of what you might expect.

INCREASE REVENUE AND REDUCE COSTS

Quite often the activities that occur in woodlots are driven by economic considerations. While there is nothing inherently wrong with this, you as a forest owner will want to consider all your options. A timber harvest can provide you with a great deal of money. By carefully selecting and then working with a professional forester, you will know the market value of your timber, gauge the seasonal fluctuations of market prices, remove trees that improve the long-term quality of the forest, and select a certified logger, all of which increases your short and long term revenues. Without planning for a harvest, you might respond to an opportunity to sell timber, yet you probably don't know the current market value of the trees or how to arrange the sale contract with the certified logger to ensure the long-term productivity of your forest.

Deliberate forest management can also reduce the costs of doing business. The planning and inspection of your forested property is an example. During the planning and inspection stage, you will undoubtedly have the opportunity to walk the

boundaries of your property. Make certain your property lines are clearly marked to help prevent the accidental removal of timber during a timber sale on the adjacent property. And in the event the removal is not accidental, but rather timber theft, the marked property lines will help establish the validity of your claims. Timber theft is a cost you probably want to reduce.

RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

Aside from the "in your pocket" values and benefits such as timber harvesting and reducing costs, there are numerous other values or amenities available from your forest. While these might not help you pay your taxes, they make that burden easier because of your fond forest memories. Recreation is one of these amenities, and a primary reason many people own forests. Access is an important part of recreation. Because of the long history of land use in New York (for agriculture and forestry), there may already be access roads on your property. However, inspect the roads to see where they take you and their condition. For example, old farm roads may connect former fields together, but may not take you to your favorite bird watching location, provide a long enough cross country ski trail, or take you to your deer stand. Alternatively, your access roads may have regrown with trees. In either case, you can work with your professional forester to plan and layout access to your property. Road costs vary with terrain and length, but much of the costs may be offset if you coordinate road building with a timber harvest. Make certain your forester knows of your recreational interests to design the road system for ease of use and subsequent maintenance.

ENVIRONMENTAL AND FOREST QUALITY

The art and science of growing trees and managing forests is by nature (no pun intended) a long-term commitment. Forest management is also somewhat utilitarian, providing goods and services we all depend on for our survival and comfort, but necessarily assumes that utilization does not reduce the land's long-term productivity. Deliberate forest management helps ensure the sustainability of future benefits from forests, and the quality of the forest environment. With the New York landscape dominated by forest cover, many forested watersheds provide water to our cities and to other states. Deliberately planning for

the continued maintenance of water quality while enjoying numerous other benefits is one example of the compatibility of forest use and sustainability.

The quality of the forest, particularly following a timber harvest, is an important consideration of deliberate forestry. This consideration includes the quality of the road system and minimizing damage to the trees you hope to harvest in the future (this is the residual stand) including tree seedlings that were planted or naturally established. Certainly your forest will look different following a harvest, but deliberate planning with your forester to select a skilled and trained logger will increase the long-term benefits you receive and add value to your forest.

IMPROVED WILDLIFE HABITAT

Deliberately managing forests or woodlots for wildlife is one of the most common owner objectives, and is particularly gratifying because a little work can produce great benefits. Wildlife require food, cover, water, and space (collectively known as habitat), with different species of wildlife requiring different amounts and types of habitat. Everything you do (and don't do) impacts wildlife habitat. The potential wildlife benefits you receive will be greater if you and your forester plan for wildlife habitat based on what is currently available in your woodlot and in all the woodlots in your region. For example, ruffed grouse and chestnut-sided warblers will respond favorably to recent clear cuts in your woodlot, whereas barred owls and pileated woodpeckers will respond favorably to large areas that retain some large mature trees. If the woodlots and forests in your region are mostly mature, you may want to increase the amount of young forest on your property and discuss this strategy with your neighbors. Also, if you have a stream in your region, you and your neighbors may want to maintain extra forest cover on both stream sides to maintain water quality and provide a forested corridor that some wildlife species need for traveling.

The opportunity for benefits and increased value of your forest are numerous. Careful and deliberate planning and management will cushion your wallet and increase your pleasures now and in the future.



Dr. Smallidge is the State Extension Forester, Cornell University. This article and others are available from Cornell Cooperative News Service (the series, Forests For Tomorrow.)

Sustain, Sustainable, Sustained

By Jim Coufal

Looking for a nice, precise definition of sustainable forestry? If you think you're going to get foresters or forestry to give you one, don't! Scientists and managers have cultures that make quick agreement on anything rare, a feature that keeps science from contributing as much as it could to policy and practice.

So what does this lack of definition mean to you who own and manage woodlots? The same thing it means to federal, state, and industrial forest owners; we muddle through in face of uncertainty and risk, in a twisted web of definitions, science, policy, management, and practice. What's neat, I think, is that for most New York Forest Owners Association members, this means continuing the kinds of sound practices you have been doing while keeping alert to changes in science, economics, ethics and the other areas considered in making management decisions.

Foresters often ask, "How can we practice sustainable forestry if we can't define it? If we don't know what it is we want to sustain?" Excuse me, but me thinks we doth protest too much! We haven't agreed on what "multiple use" is, yet we have practiced it, or tried to, for the life of forestry. So what makes sustainable forestry different? It's (thought to be) new, and a buzzword in a time of many busy buzzers. Also, change just ain't easy to make, especially when environmentalists are often proponents of such change. Nothing fosters the closing of ranks around tradition more than an intransigent "foe" rising in influence.

What is sustainable forestry? I'll start with an old standard - the dictionary, and an old edition at that. Webster says the following:

Sustain - supply with food and drink, or the necessaries of life

Sustainable - Capable of being sustained

Sustained - Kept up without intermission or flagging

Seems pretty simple. Sustainable forestry is going to supply us with the necessaries of life, and do so without interruptions over time. The necessaries of life are many: wood, water, fish and wildlife, recreation, aesthetics, spiritual fulfillment, and others. A problem is that foresters have tended to

focus on wood, wildlifers on game, hydrologists on water, and so on, while non-industrial private forest landowners have often been more concerned with the forest in its totality. The professionals aren't to be "blamed;"—that's how they were taught, that's how their organizations are structured, and that's often how the reward system works. Landowners like NYFOA members have, in other words, been leaders in sustaining forests.

Forestry has always been concerned with the long-term, but we may have to extend that view...perhaps it means "seven generations..."

Professionals and landowners have long recognized that while a forest has to be capable of being sustained, every acre is not equal to every other acre. Unfortunately, some environmentalist groups and most legislators think one-size-fits-all regulations should pertain equally to unequal land. What each acre is capable of sustaining depends not only on the landowner's and society's objectives, but also on the capability of the land.

If sustainable forestry is the act of managing forests to provide the necessaries of life, we must first have sustainable forests. Bottom line, nothing has changed! The only way we'll have sustainable forests and forestry is to protect, maintain, and enhance the soil, water, air, and gene pool; or, put more directly, the fertility of and diversity on the land. These are the basics.

The German forester Cotta said, "Without utilization, the forest soil improves constantly, if used in orderly manner it remains in a natural equilibrium; if used faultily it becomes poorer. The good forester takes the highest yield from the forest without deteriorating the soil, the poor one neither obtains this yield nor preserves the fertility of the soil." He said it in 1817! Our understanding of science and equilibrium has changed, but the need for sustaining fertility has not.

So what is new about sustainable forestry? A few suggestions:

Forestry has always been concerned with the long-term, but we may have to extend that view. Perhaps this means 120 years in-

stead of 80; perhaps it means "seven generations," perhaps it means lighter timber harvests or more deer harvests. It certainly means an even greater faith that what we do today impacts our great, great grandchildren in very important ways.

Forestry has been concerned with trees, stands, and individual forest properties. We may have to think just a little less rigidly in terms of private property rights. In drawing up a forest management plan, this might mean adapting to what is going to happen on the neighbor's property, in the locality, in the region—a landscape level. More cooperation, such as a single forestry consultant coordinating the activities on several local properties and using creative marketing strategies, is an example.

As always, adapt management practices to new science, in this case, the emerging ecological understanding of how forests work. This could mean practices that even more closely mimic natural disturbance regimes and patterns than those traditionally used. This does not mean doing away with clearcuts or plantations! It does mean being sure that any practice is ecologically, as well as financially, right.

I have no fear of NYFOA members as practitioners of sustainable forestry. Long ago, Aldo Leopold wrote, "As a land-user thinketh, so is he." NYFOA members thinketh as land stewards. They might not have the science of professional forestry, but they have a sense of place that is the essence of "ownership."

I do have reservations about the great majority of non-industrial private forest landowners who do not know what forestry or foresters are, and who, in their lack of knowledge, thinketh too much of short-term expediency. In the big picture of sustainable forests and forestry, they need to be reached so that even if they don't take positive steps, they at least follow the great sustainability principle of "First, do no harm."

To paraphrase Aldo Leopold, sustainable forestry is not a job of building definitions and models to apply rigidly to the land, but of building receptivity into the human mind.

Jim Coufal is the recently-retired Chair of the Faculty at SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry and a frequent contributor to the NY FOREST OWNER.

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SPRING "HOT SPOTS" —Trailing Arbutus

By Irene Szabo

Trailing arbutus is a plant I was excited to learn to recognize only a few years ago because it was one of those things Grandpa kept promising he'd take me to see someday in the south Jersey woods, citing it with big eyes and whispered excitement like it was the holiest of rare plants and worthy of Major Expotitionary (Pooh language) Forces.

He never did. But the dramatic accretion of childhood recollections still lends excitement every time I chance upon it, an excitement barely deserved by such an unassuming and modest little Victorian of a spring flower. It has flat ground-hugging oval evergreen leaves, leathery, slightly shiny, from 2-4" in length. That's it, most of the year. In late April or sooner, depending on elevation, it puts out tiny whitish 3/8" long bells streaked with faint pink. That's it for spring bloom bombast. Big deal, eh?

However, trailing arbutus is a specialist, and doesn't grow just anywhere, so a body might as well rejoice when a lot of it can be found. It can most readily be found along the bulldozed banks of woods roads that may be only twenty or thirty years old, possibly because it favors well-drained soil, nothing mucky, and a little more light than is afforded by most forested sites. I've seen it most often in predominately oak woods, especially under chestnut oaks, and these are often logical candidates for periodic logging. For instance, the DEC dirt roads that lace Rattlesnake Hill Wildlife Management Area in southern Livingston and northern Allegany Counties have banked edges just crawling with arbutus.

"Granma's Camp," Bristol Hills Branch of the Finger Lakes Trail (Map B3), in Pig-



Irene points to a large clump of arbutus.

tail Hollow State Forest northwest of Hammondsport, is an odd semi-open meadow within forest, and used to have a fabulous spread of arbutus out in the open moss and s edges until one harsh winter mice



tunneled beneath the deep snow and dined for months on the little evergreen arbutus leaves. Now it's a scattered and puny patch.

Then this last fall I walked yet again the Bristol Hills Branch Trail portion through Boy Scout Camp Cutler northeast of Naples in Ontario County (FLT's Map B1). Never before had I noticed so many locations of trailing arbutus, admittedly small-leaved and patchy but frequent, right along the edge of the trail on a long stretch following the top edge of a hill that drops off dramatically to the east just beyond the path. Here the woods have many chestnut oaks, and have been spot-logged within the last 10 or 12 years, admitting extra sunlight as well-remembered early 1990s raspberry pricklers attested. The trail had left the dug logging roads at this point, but this skinny footpath is so heavily used that the west side is becoming a slight "bank" and thereby afforded a foothold for new patches of arbutus.

At least, I think they're new. Admittedly I didn't know arbutus from a left clavicle last time I walked here, but the many patches do seem young, with small leaves.

I learned only recently that when my mother had to move us out to New Mexico where Sergeant Daddy was stationed next, Grandpa mailed her a shoebox with nestled trailing arbutus in damp newspaper inside.



In addition to tending trails, Irene is a member of NYFOA's WFL Chapter.

A Timber Sale Turned Sour

By Andrew J. Wienczek

I would like to share my story of a recent timber sale with other landowners. I hope that others can learn from my mistakes. In July of 1994 I bought a piece of property. To help pay for the property, I intended to sell the timber. The real estate agent that I was working with suggested the name of a "qualified timber buyer."

The timber buyer (buyer #1) soon contacted me and made arrangements to walk my property. He showed up with a forester from an out-of-state lumber company. The three of us took a walk and buyer #1 offered me \$30,000 for the trees. I'm sure that they took previous walks on my property to determine the value. I questioned them because the price did seem low. Buyer #1 said that the trees were old and past their prime value because it had not been logged for over 30 years. I am a trusting person and relied on the two of them as experts in their field.

The next day, buyer #1 brought in what he called a "standard contract." He orally stated that around 900 trees qualified for the sale and that he was going to take trees that were 16"-diameter, one foot above ground level. I asked him to send me a letter stating that the trees to be cut had a fair market value to the buyer of \$30,000 and he agreed to send that letter. I also had buyer #1 add to the contract to mark my boundaries before any cutting was done, to skid 40 tree tops to my cabin for firewood, and to smooth all skid trails after cutting and skidding was done. I signed the contract and buyer #1 paid me in full by the end of August 1994.

During the next two years I was told that timber prices were down and that buyer #1 needed an extension on the contract. I agreed and asked him for added monies to extend the contract. He said that this was not an accepted practice, but did pay me \$2000 for a two-year extension. He did not mention that the trees that were 14 to 15 inches in diameter (12" above ground level) in 1994 would now qualify for the sale.

Finally in July of 1998 I received a call from the out-of-state forester (buyer #2) to say that he was going to start cutting my trees the following Monday. I was upset that buyer #1 never called me to say that he sold my contract. I asked for a copy of the contract between buyer #1 and buyer #2, but I never got that nor my letter as to the fair market value of these trees in the contract that I signed in 1994.

As he began a trail into my woodlot, I questioned buyer #2 why he didn't come in on the back side of my property where 80% of the trees were and near a road that could be used to haul out the cut trees. He said that he fought with my neighbor many years ago and did not want to go through that again. So many young trees were pushed aside to allow a road to go back 1/4 mile to a landing. He also told me that he owned the contract and was running this sale now. He did not want me in the woods at all. He was very cold and uncooperative with me - the landowner! This was the first bad experience that I had with buyer #2.


In the next four to five weeks buyer #2 told me that about 900 trees were cut that averaged 16 - 20 inches (12" above ground level). He took the best trees of course and left other trees that were of zero value although they were 16" or more. He did not appear to care about the residual growth, although the contract stated that minimum damage be done to the residual growth.

The cutting was finished about August 18 and I had hoped that all main trails could be smooth before the 22nd of August when the contract ended. Buyer #2 said that he needed time to get a bulldozer operator back into the woods to get the skid trails smooth again. It took several calls to buyer #2 to get a bulldozer operator to go over the main trails and set up water bars. The day after the job was finished, I called him back to say that many areas were still very rough. There was no way that I could take my ATV or tractor into the woods to get firewood without getting stuck in the mud. Buyer #2 came back to look at the job and was satisfied with the work that was done and left. I called the owner of the out-of-state lumber company and complained that there were still many trails that were rough with standing water on them. The owner did make his buyer come back to correct the roads. The buyer and the bulldozer operator spent 55 minutes in the woods but there was still work left to be done. I showed him all the areas that still needed to be cleaned up but he said that he was finished with me and told the bulldozer operator to leave. I was very upset and called the owner to say that his buyer did not do all the work. He told me to write him a letter about what needed to be done. Then I would need to sign a release form relieving his company, buyer #2 and buyer #1 of any and all claims. I met buyer #2 at a gas station to sign the release form but

decided that I should take this to my attorney first. Buyer #2 took back the release form and left, upset that I would not sign it without my lawyer seeing it.

At this point I called an independent consulting forester to look at my woodlot to see if the cutting had been done according to the contract. He suggested that I contact a lawyer regarding the contract and gave me an analysis of what the cleanup should have been. He estimated that four more hours of bulldozer work were needed to increase water drainage. Regarding the timber harvest he said that the radical removal of all better quality, dominant crown trees, in one harvest, would result in significant stress placed on the remaining trees. The consultant forester estimated the value of trees harvested was between \$65,000 and \$95,000 based on 1998 timber sale prices.

The owner of the timber company sent me a letter stating that he would give me two more hours of bulldozer time to finish the work and that buyer #2 would not be present. I would have to sign a release form and he would not forward any paperwork regarding the number or species and board feet cut. I have already incurred over \$800 in legal costs, and if warranted, \$1500 to get a legal appraisal of the harvest. My attorney would want \$5000 up front when and if this gets to court.

I feel that little concern was given to the residual growth or that proper harvesting practices were followed. I was taken by people that I trusted and the long-term growth, regeneration, and health of my woodlot were not considered. This so called "sweet deal" has turned sour indeed. All landowners who have trees to be harvested should pay a consultant forester to set up the contract, mark the trees to be cut and supervise the harvest. You need to contact at least five buyers, then pick the one that will meet your specifications. Get sealed bids, determining the highest bidder, get paid in advance and get a \$10,000 bond that insures that the clean up is done to the landowner's satisfaction, not the buyer's. Timber buyers need to work cooperatively with landowners. Let your attorney see the contract before you sign it. No one should go through what I have gone through these last seven months. There should be fairness in every business deal. I do plan on sponsoring a woodwalk on this property later this spring so that others can learn from my mistakes. 

Editorial—PRIVATIZING NY FORESTRY

By Dick Fox

For some twenty years the State of New York has pursued a policy that effectively decreases the role of the state in the management of forest land, both private and public for wood products.

Recommending Cooperating Consultant Foresters instead of providing NYS DEC Service Foresters is the cornerstone with which this policy began. Despite reports which have clearly shown this policy to have serious flaws, there continue to be additions which encourage the trend.

Under the current administration, the Division of Lands & Forests has been allowed to lose both personnel and vehicles resulting in a loss of morale and capabilities (See letter to *Friends of the Forest*.) A recent change¹, lobbied for by industry, added Industrial Foresters to the list of Cooperating Consultant Foresters, apparently removing the need for competitive bidding.

Studies done in other states, notably Pennsylvania², have shown that all too often the Consultant Foresters do very little silviculture, use diameter-limit marking, are primarily brokering timber, and claim that

they serve the goals of the owners.

Since most high-bidding production mills are not interested in low grade, they may not even bid on jobs with marked culls and in any event will bid less. The Consultant Forester (and the logger) working on commission is assured less money for much more work and time, if culls are marked and required to be cut and treated.

The New York Section of the Society of American Foresters formed an eleven-member committee to survey cutting practices on private lands which were brokered or harvested with the services of Consultant Foresters. This survey was started five years ago³, is as yet unpublished, and was to be done with volunteers who were discouraged from completing the sampled acreage. Preliminary results were not promising.

The popular federal cost-sharing program, Stewardship Incentive Program (SIP) was not funded in 1999⁴ due in part to the lobbying efforts opposing it by the Association of Consulting Foresters of America. These federal funds, which offered man-

agement subsidies to private landowners with a choice from ten practices, require supervision and administration by state service foresters. Hence, opposition by the private sector.

It is worthwhile to note that most timber harvests of 10 to 20 acres do not have sufficient timber values, if done with cull removals, to justify the 10-15% charged by consultants, unless they "take the best and leave the rest."

An effort to make a token inspection by state service foresters of private property enrolled in 480 & 480a was implemented in 1995⁵. Finally and most recently, a DEC policy barring service foresters from marking timber for sale on private property (except a one acre plot for demonstration purposes) was promulgated!


The only thing remaining is hiring Cooperating Consultant Foresters to mark sales on State Forests (or not have any.)

¹ NY FOREST OWNER; Jan/Feb'99, 15

² NY FOREST OWNER; May/Jun'95, 15

³ NY FOREST OWNER; Jul/Aug'94, 11

⁴ NY FOREST OWNER; Mar/Apr'95, 11

⁵ NY FOREST OWNER; Nov/Dec'95, 11 

Dear Friends of the Forest:

I have deliberated long and hard about the contents of this message. We are in the midst of a long running crises in the business of service forestry in the State of New York.

Since 1971, the Cooperative Forest Management Program (CFM) has been at risk of termination on a periodic basis. This is the program that since 1947 has rendered assistance to the private owners of the state of New York. This program has benefited many of your woodlots with federal cost-sharing for tree planting, thinning and other related activities. I will not go into all the benefits of the program for the landowner, and the environment, since most of you are well aware of it.


If the program has such merits, why would it be downsized or eliminated? Quite simply, it is a well kept secret. The staff of the DEC forestry unit have been quite busy answering requests that we have not done a very good job "tooting our horn." The landowners we assist assume that since we are government servants, that we will always be there and the programs we administer will likewise be there. Last year we saw our SIP moneys evaporate. This year we are seeing field staff do likewise. Allegany County lost Paul Kretser to re-

tirement with no replacement. The Bath office lost Dan Parrent with no replacement. This scenario is going on throughout the state. We are no longer threatened with layoffs, but instead we are dying by attrition. It is not happening because the program has little value. It is because few people know the benefits of the program.

Most importantly, The state legislators should be made aware of the benefits of programs to their voting constituency. Believe me, if the senators and assemblymen do not hear anything about this, this program is history. The same scenario is true for the federal cost-sharing programs such as the Stewardship Incentives Program (SIP) and the Forestry Incentives Program (FIP). If the federal congressmen do not hear good things about these and similar programs, they will not be funded. We saw the SIP Program zeroed out this past year and FIP was greatly reduced. The bulk of the FIP moneys went to the New York City Watershed. Why? It went there because there was a strong voice that went to the legislators for a need of funding in that area.

I'm not sure what the benefit would be today with a campaign of letters to the state and federal legislators who fund these programs, but it surely couldn't hurt. It might

also be beneficial to contact the Commissioner of DEC and the Secretary of Agriculture. These last two individuals actually send proposals for funding of various programs to the state legislature and the U. S. Congress. They do this via the proposed budgets. If items are not deemed important they are not proposed or given a low priority. I am telling you folks that if no noise is made the newest buzz phrase in forestry will be "New York forestry, It was Fun While it Lasted."

Some of you folks know who I am and for you who don't, I will introduce myself. My name is Billy Morris. I am a 29 year career forester with DEC. You may think my motive is job security. I would be lying if I said that wasn't part of it. But, that is a small part of it. My career is about over if this letter doesn't finish it! I am sincerely concerned that the unbiased information and services rendered to the public by service foresters will be lost. The availability will be limited to a certain extent to the owner's ability to pay. Maybe it is time to put this program to rest. If you think so, do nothing. If you don't, you had best make some noise to Albany and Washington, NOW. 

—Billy Morris, Bath

LETTERS.....

Southeastern Adirondack Chapter

The SAC Chapter awarded the Ken Bandel Logger Award to G. Robert Baker of Moreau for 1998. This award is given to a logger who exemplifies superlative qualities as a logger and high ethical conduct with landowners.

What are your trees worth?

While managing our timberland for over 25 years, we have done TSI on all of the property, except for one 5-acre area. That parcel borders a neighbor and is so steep that originally we considered it was too dangerous to work there. Recently our neighbor offered to buy this land for an amount considerably greater than the usual rate for property in our area. Since we had not looked at this area for years, we did so and found mature trees including sugar maple and cherry. Our forester agreed these should be harvested and after selecting and marking trees we solicited bids.

For those who have not had a timber sale we found the bidding process very interesting. We wrote our own contract and request for bids based on samples obtained from the DEC. The proposal was sent to both local loggers and industrial timber buyers. Five buyers came to see the trees that had been marked; local loggers wanted to make a down payment and pay a percentage of the amount received after selling the timber. This was contrary to the provisions in the contract requiring payment on acceptance of a bid. Neither mentioned that their bid would have meant our amount received would have been treated as income rather than capital gain, nor that this would have established an employer/employee relationship with workmans' compensation our responsibility. One of the industrial foresters who did not bid made an interesting comment "there's a lot of good trees that were not marked." The final result was to accept the bid by an industrial forester with both a security bond and for an amount twice what we had been offered for the land.

We feel this is a great example of having your cake and eating it too, since we now have money in the bank, still have the land and "all the good trees that were not marked." We learned that as part of forest management, it will pay to know the value of your trees and how to harvest and market them. —A Happy Member

TIOGA CHAPTER PLANS



The meeting was attended by: (from left to right, standing) Don Schaufler, Peter Levatic, Tim Levatic; (seated) Peter Smallidge, Bob O'Brien and Dawn Levatic.

Program planning was the main business at the Tioga Chapter steering committee meeting held on February 19. Woods walks, family forest events and field demonstrations will be held for the Chapter members in 1999. Forest Owners in Schuyler, Chemung, Tioga and Tompkins Counties will have an opportunity to learn about and enjoy new aspects of their bountiful forest environment. Notices and schedules will be sent out soon in the coming warmer days of spring.

NYFOA LOSES A FRIEND

Long-time member, tour participant and friend of NYFOA, Harold W. Kollmeyer, died January 13, 1999.

MOSQUITO MURDER

This summer we discovered why our 232 acre farm had very few mosquitos despite four ponds and a large stream. We have thousands of small creek chubs living in the waters. In the ponds they grow to about two pounds and 12 inches and are good to eat. Apparently the fish consume great quantities of mosquito larvae. We expect to work with Cornell Cooperative Extension, NYS DEC and area schools to further the use of these fish to control mosquito populations. For more information: Roger & Sarah Gregoire, 3010 County Rte 71, Jasper, NY 14855; 607-792-3884.

FOREST PROPERTY & TAXES

In the Mar/April issue of the FOREST OWNER the article "NY City Likes Forestry" the standing committee on taxation proposes a refundable state income tax credit of 80% of the school tax paid on qualifying undeveloped forest land if at least 25 acres, 10% of which may be open land.

This might work with Christmas trees but they are already considered as farm income. How will this help owners of small acreages of forest land who must pay school taxes every year regardless of income?

Political candidates are constantly quoted as supporting conservation and environmental protection efforts. But the need to preserve privately owned open space is constantly ignored by the state legislature.

—John Geisler, Verbank

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The TREE FARM PROGRAM, A NATIONAL UPDATE

By Rod Jones, Tree Farm National Operating Committee, 1997-1998

I've had the great honor of being appointed to the National Operating Committee for the American Tree Farm System for 1997-1998. My term expires this year and I'll miss the group. I've been involved with the Tree Farm program since the early 1980s and I know a lot of you are not aware of the impact that Tree Farm makes, some even think that it's quite a "Mickey Mouse" operation. I won't be able to tell you in this brief article about all the things that the Tree Farm program does nationally. But to keep you posted on some of the more recent events that have taken place, I hope to be able to encourage you in your participation in the Tree Farm program and get some others to help us in our volunteer efforts.

Over the last couple of years the focus at the national level has been to investigate the certification process of Tree Farms to make sure that it meets professional standards for the industry, develop guidelines for who is eligible to be called an inspector, and who is eligible to reinspect Tree Farms to maintain their certification. Recently, the Task Group's recommendations for inspectors is to have a minimum of a Bachelor of Science degree from an SAF accredited college, or a two-year Forestry Technician's degree from an SAF accredited college working under the supervision of a qualified forester, or anyone professionally practicing forestry and meeting educational requirements for which there is a lengthy list.

Nationally, the Tree Farm System will be developing an aggressive recruiting program directed at the thousands of professionally qualified foresters not now actively participating in the Tree Farm program. There will be an inspector training program that all inspectors must take in order to become a Certified Tree Farm Inspector.

Nationally, Trout Unlimited and the American Tree Farm System have partnered to put together projects that would promote good forest management along trout streams to assist in teaching the public about the benefits of forest management and the enhancement or maintenance of trout habitat. New York State was chosen as the first Shared Streams program at the John A. Lennox Memorial Forest in Delancey, NY.

A national campaign called "Behind the Sign" has been started for a fund raising to

promote the Tree Farm sign and the message behind the sign. Nationally they have raised \$57,805.00 from this campaign. A public service announcement of Andy McDowell regarding the importance of Tree Farming has been played across the country, including New York. The national staff is pursuing another PSA featuring Chuck Leavell.

A new quarterly newsletter has been developed called "SightLine" and it is being mailed to all Tree Farm inspectors across the country.

Another newsletter designed similarly to the Kiplinger Report called Tree Farm System Notes is an occasional newsletter which is being sent to selective forestry leadership.

A media training workshop which is designed to help people explain forestry matters to the media is being held across the country. We in New York will be having one at the winter SAF meeting. There is a national Tree Farm website that is currently being updated and changed. They have the ability to track the hits and they are substantial. The Tree Farm website is: www.treefarmssystem.org

A few years back they started an annual national Tree Farmer Convention. This year it is going to be held in Savannah, Georgia. Registrations have run somewhere between 300-500 annually.

There is a substantial number of people requesting a Tree Farm postage stamp. The U S Post Office is currently working with other members of the National Operating Committee in developing this stamp.

You are all familiar with the National Outstanding Tree Farmer of the Year contest which always receives national media attention with the President being involved along with many members of Congress. Last year's National Outstanding Tree Farmer of the Year is Dr. Ferrar Howard and this year's National Outstanding Tree Farmer of the Year is George & Joan Freeman of Knox, Pennsylvania.

There is also a National Inspecting Forester of the Year of which Dick Rommel is the past winner. This year the winner is John O'Brien from New Hampshire.


Currently, there is underway a proposition to change disaster treatment of forestry related matters under IRS rulings.

One of the most valuable parts of the Tree

Farm Program is the *Tree Farmer* magazine. They print six annually with the schedule for 1999 being the January/February magazine featuring the Tree Farmer and Inspecting Forester of the Year, the March/April magazine features wildlife, the May/June magazine features fire, the July/August magazine features wildlife and recreation, the September/October magazine features resource organizations, and the November/December magazine features taxes. The American Forest Foundation has received \$58,000 in subscriptions this year. A newly certified Tree Farmer receives his first year subscription free. After that, he receives one magazine annually free unless he subscribes.

Further, the Sustainable Forestry Initiative and Tree Farm share many of the same goals nationally and on a state-wide basis. SFI has issued a resolution endorsing the Tree Farm program while the Tree Farm program has also endorsed SFI. Here in New York, SFI endorsed the Tree Farm program long before the National Operating Committee did while the Tree Farm program also has endorsed the New York State SFI.

You have also all seen Tree Farm hats and logo items, They continue to be a source of promotion for the Tree Farm program and are currently undergoing changes of new items and new styles. These items are advertised in the magazine or you can contact the national office for a list of prices.

With the media attention on "green certification" the Tree Farm program will be a valuable program that would make the certification process a friendly process that would also maintain quality forest management. The national program recognizes this and has worked diligently in putting together a certification process that would be recognized to meet landowners' needs and industry's needs. Your support of this program is important and much appreciated. 

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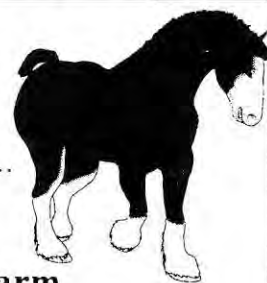
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CHOOSING NATIVE VS. EXOTIC

—FOR THE HOME LANDSCAPE

By Michelle Buckstrup & Nina Bassuk

Today gardeners enjoy an unprecedented wealth of plants to choose from in their quest for the perfect landscape. Recently some gardeners have chosen sides and expressed the opinion that native plants are better plants. In the sometimes heated discussion about native plants in the landscape, it is important to define terms. The very definition of what is "native" is elusive and is not always agreed upon. What are the problems and benefits associated with both native and exotic species?

What role should the site play in the decision about what to plant?

WHAT IS NATIVE?

How long must a plant species have inhabited a region in order for us to consider it native to that place — two hundred years, since colonization, since before agriculture began? For example, for those who consider two hundred years sufficient, Queen Anne's lace would be native — yet we know from historical records that this plant has a European origin. We generally depend on local floras, inventories of the uncultivated plant life of a given region, to tell us which plants are native.

However, these inventories are sometimes flawed and are subject to continual debate. Only fossil records can prove that a plant evolved in a certain place, and even these can be misinterpreted. If we arbitrarily pick a point in time and say "plants

in this place before this date are native," we may not be acknowledging that for centuries, indigenous peoples, traders, explorers, and botanists have impacted regional floras with their activities.

Geopolitical and ecological boundaries also play a role in defining native plants. To say a plant is "native to North America" or "native to New York State" implies that it is suitable for growth throughout North America or New York State, when in fact it may only occur naturally in limited microclimates or regions and thus only be suitable for growth in equally limited landscape situations. Ecotypes are plants of the same species that are found in different habitats and have evolved specific adaptations to their differing environments. Red maple, for example, is native from Florida to Canada, but populations have adapted to dry or wet sites, cold or warm climates.

Although technically red maple is native to a large section of North America, seed harvested from one ecotype will not necessarily perform successfully in another site because it is not adapted to the new site's conditions. The greater the geographic area of the species, the more opportunity there is for variation. For example, even though red maple is native to both regions, a red maple ecotype from the southeast US will be ill-prepared for planting in the Northeast because it has adapted to a climate and to site conditions that are utterly different.

WHAT IS EXOTIC?

Exotic plants, also known as non-native, introduced, or alien plants, are species that occur in cultivation or in the wild. These plants were transported across boundaries by people and their activities. According to *The Flora of North America*, one-fifth to one-third of the plant species encountered north of Mexico have their origins in other continents. Many exotic plant introductions, such as lily-of-the-valley, daylilies, and daffodils, have become naturalized, meaning that they have succeeded in reproducing and spreading to a limited extent on their own.

Unlike invasive plants, however, most naturalized plants are not a severe threat to other species or to an ecosystem. In fact, the ability to naturalize is often considered a desirable characteristic in horticulture.

Wildflowers can be true natives or introduced plants that have been naturalized for over two hundred years.

A small percentage of naturalized exotic plants become invasive. Invasive plants are those that reproduce quickly, displace many of the other species in their domain, and are difficult to eradicate.

Purple loosestrife in the northern US and kudzu in the southern states are classic examples of invasive plants that profoundly affect the landscape. Invasiveness can range from the minor nuisance of garden plants, such as Lamb's ears, that tend to edge out their neighbors, to the other end of the spectrum, where the melaleuca tree from Australia is literally drying out Florida's marshes to meet its high water requirements. Melaleuca is an example of an exotic species that is considered a serious invader because it enters disturbed lands, colonizes them and changes the ecology of them in detrimental ways.

PLANT SELECTION—NATIVE OR EXOTIC?

One of the main reasons people promote native plants is to avoid the devastation that invasive plants may bring on the landscape and forest. Exotic introductions that do become invasive, like kudzu, multiflora rose, and honeysuckle are a costly menace nearly impossible to control, much less eradicate. Why do a small percentage of plants exhibit invasive tendencies, while the majority of plant introductions are benign or beneficial? The answer lies in the combination of two factors: traits that invasive plant species share and traits of the site that make it susceptible to invasion. No plant is inherently invasive under all circumstances!

Although more often it is exotic introductions that invade, native plants can also become invasive pests. Native grape vines like fox grape form suffocating thickets over shrubs and rapidly climb trees, threatening to out-compete their hosts for light. Though native to eastern and central North America, wild grape is an indisputable pest. Other native plants that are often invasive include blackberries, poison ivy, wild onions and cattails. Just as with exotic introductions, it's a small percentage of native



Lily of the Valley



species that cause problems.

Native plants have an important role to play in modern landscaping.

Arguments that are made in favor of native plants include lower maintenance, regional uniqueness, biological diversity, and wildlife habitat. One theory holds that native plants are easier to care for because they have evolved in a place over many years, developing resistance to climatic extremes, insect feeding, disease pathogens and other stresses of the local environment that a non-native might not be prepared for.

This may be true in some cases; however, it's important to note that native plants placed under stressful conditions fare no better than exotic ones if the plant is not carefully matched to the site.

Also, some exotic plants actually perform better and require less maintenance because of the qualities they were selected for, and because their insect predators and disease pathogens are frequently not imported with them.

Another factor to consider is the interaction of native plants with the "built," or

non-native environment. In an urban setting, for example, there is no planting site that approximates what would have been there prior to urbanization. The original landscape in both cities and suburbs often has been remade so completely that the microclimate, soil type, soil hydrology, and insect populations no longer are what they were when the native plants of the area evolved. To put a native tree, for example, on a median strip planting on a downtown street because it is native to the surrounding countryside would be foolhardy unless the tree is known to tolerate the heat of the asphalt and car exhaust, the salt from the snowplows, a limited root zone, intermittent flooding, and periodic drought.

NOT AN EITHER/OR PROPOSITION

If native plants are used simply because they are native, without proper regard to site conditions, the results may be unsatisfactory. The most critical issue is not native vs. exotic — it is appropriate vs. inappropriate plant selection, given the constraints and opportunities of the site in mind. The more closely a plant's characteristics match the site's, the better chance for its survival and vigor. If a native plant meets those requirements, by all means use it! While we can and should strive to use plants long found in our region, perhaps the term native plants should be used with some humility.

Using diverse plantings will create beauty and prevent the susceptibility to disease that can come from large scale single-species plantings, avoiding disasters such as that of the American elm in the mid-twentieth century.

In the quest for a diverse, healthy landscape, which may be a mix of native and exotic species, references are available both to help find the right plant and to avoid the troublemakers. A little research before selecting plants can save time, money, and aggravation.

Reference guides may warn that a plant is invasive under certain circumstances, but they may not, and nursery catalogs frequently won't. Phrases like "a very vigorous grower" can be euphemisms for potential invasiveness. Treat such phrases as red flags! Be sure to look in more than one plant reference to gather more than one perspective on any species you have in mind, especially if you suspect it may be invasive. After invasive potential is ruled out, the physical limitations and possibilities of the site should be the first and most important consideration in the exciting process of selecting new plants for our landscapes.

PREPARED BY: Michelle Buckstrup, Graduate Student, and Nina Bassuk, Program Leader, The Urban Horticulture Institute, Department of Floriculture and Ornamental Horticulture, Cornell University.

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RABIES

What is rabies and how do people get it?

Rabies is an infectious viral disease that affects the nervous system of humans and other mammals. People get rabies from the bite of an animal with rabies (a rabid animal). Any wild mammal, like a raccoon, skunk, fox, coyote, or bat, can have rabies and transmit it to people. It is also possible, but quite rare, that people may get rabies if infectious material from a rabid animal, such as saliva, gets directly into their eyes, nose, mouth, or a wound.

Because rabies is a fatal disease, the goal of public health is, first, to prevent human exposure to rabies by education and, second, to prevent the disease by anti-rabies treatment if exposure occurs. Tens of thousands of people are successfully treated each year after being bitten by an animal that may have rabies. A few people die of rabies each year in the United States, usually because they do not recognize the risk of rabies from the bite of a wild animal and do not seek medical advice.

Why should I learn about bats and rabies?

Most of the recent human rabies cases in the United States have been caused by rabies virus from bats. Awareness of the facts about bats and rabies can help people protect themselves, their families, and their pets. This information may also help clear up misunderstandings about bats. When people think about bats, they often imagine things that are not true. Bats are not blind. They are neither rodents nor birds. They will not suck your blood—and most do not have rabies. Bats play key roles in ecosystems around the globe, from rain forests to deserts, especially by eating insects, including agricultural pests. The best protection we can offer these unique mammals is to learn more about their habits and recognize the value of living safely with them.

How can I tell if a bat has rabies?

Rabies can be confirmed only in a laboratory. However, any bat that is active by day, is found in a place where bats are not usually seen (for example, in a room in your home or on the lawn), or is unable to fly, is far more likely than others to be rabid. Such bats are often the most easily approached. Therefore, it is best never to handle any bat.

What should I do if I come in contact with a bat?

If you are bitten by a bat—or if infec-

tious material (such as saliva) from a bat gets into your eyes, nose, mouth, or a wound—wash the affected area thoroughly and get medical advice immediately. Whenever possible, the bat should be captured and sent to a laboratory for rabies testing (see: **How can I safely capture a bat in my home?**).

People usually know when they have been bitten by a bat. However, because bats have small teeth which may leave marks that are not easily seen, there are situations in which you should seek medical advice even in the absence of an obvious bite wound. For example, if you awaken and find a bat in your room, see a bat in the room of an unattended child, or see a bat near a mentally impaired or intoxicated person, seek medical advice and have the bat tested.

People cannot get rabies just from seeing a bat in an attic, in a cave, or at a distance. In addition, people cannot get rabies from having contact with bat guano (feces), blood, or urine, or from touching a bat on its fur (even though bats should never be handled!).

What should I do if my pet is exposed to a bat?

If you think your pet or domestic animal has been bitten by a bat, contact a veterinarian or your health department for assistance immediately and have the bat tested for rabies. Remember to keep vaccinations current for cats, dogs, and other animals.

How can I keep bats out of my home?

Some bats live in buildings, and there may be no reason to evict them if there is little chance for contact with people. However, bats should always be prevented from entering rooms of your home. For assistance with “bat-proofing” your home, contact an animal-control or wildlife conservation agency. If you choose to do the “bat-proofing” yourself, here are some suggestions. Carefully examine your home for holes that might allow bats entry into your living quarters. Any openings larger than a quarter-inch by a half-inch should be caulked. Use window screens, chimney caps, and draft-guards beneath doors to attics, fill electrical and plumbing holes with stainless steel wool or caulking, and ensure that all doors to the outside close tightly.

Additional “bat-proofing” can prevent bats from roosting in attics or buildings by covering outside entry points. Observe

where the bats exit at dusk and exclude them by loosely hanging clear plastic sheeting or bird netting over these areas. Bats can crawl out and leave, but cannot re-enter. After the bats have been excluded, the openings can be permanently sealed. For more information about “bat-proofing” your home, contact Bat Conservation International.

Things to remember when “bat-proofing”

During summer, many young bats are unable to fly. If you exclude adult bats during this time, the young may be trapped inside and die or make their way into living quarters. Thus, if possible, avoid exclusion from May through August. Most bats leave in the fall or winter to hibernate, so these are the best times to “bat-proof” your home.

How can I safely capture a bat in my home?

If a bat is present in your home and you cannot rule out the possibility of exposure, leave the bat alone and contact an animal-control or public health agency for assistance. If professional help is unavailable, use precautions to capture the bat safely, as described below.

What you will need: leather work gloves (put them on); small box or coffee can; piece of cardboard; and tape.

When the bat lands, approach it slowly, while wearing the gloves, and place the box or coffee can over it. Slide the cardboard under the container to trap the bat inside. Tape the cardboard to the container securely, and punch small holes in the cardboard, allowing the bat to breathe. Contact your health department or animal-control authority to make arrangements for rabies testing.

If you see a bat in your home and you are sure no human or pet exposure has occurred, confine the bat to a room by closing all doors and windows leading out of the room except those to the outside. The bat will probably leave soon. If not, it can be caught, as described, and released outdoors away from people and pets.

How can rabies be prevented?

Teach children never to handle unfamiliar animals, wild or domestic, even if they appear friendly. “Love your own, leave other animals alone” is a good principle for children to learn. Wash any wound from an animal thoroughly with soap and water

and seek medical attention immediately. Have all dead, sick, or easily captured bats tested for rabies if exposure to people or pets occurs.

Prevent bats from entering living quarters or occupied spaces in homes, churches, schools, and other similar areas where they might contact people and pets. Be a responsible pet owner by keeping vaccinations current for all dogs, cats, and ferrets, keeping your cats and ferrets inside and your dogs under direct supervision, calling animal control to remove stray animals from your neighborhood, and consider having your pets spayed or neutered.

Case study

In February 1995, the aunt of a 4-year-old girl was awakened by the sounds of a bat in the room where the child was sleeping. The child did not wake up until the bat was captured, killed, and discarded. The girl reported no bite, and no evidence of a bite wound was found when she was examined. One month later the child became sick and died of rabies. The dead bat was recovered from the yard and tested—it had rabies. This case demonstrates several points:

This child's infection with rabies was most likely the result of a bat bite.

Children sleep heavily and may not awaken from the presence of a small bat. A bat bite can be superficial and not easily noticed.

The bat was behaving abnormally. Instead of hiding, the bat was making unusual noises and was having difficulty flying. This strange behavior should have led to a strong suspicion of rabies.

If the bat had been submitted for rabies testing, a positive test would have led to life-saving anti-rabies treatment.

Remember, in situations in which a bat is physically present and you cannot reasonably rule out having been bitten, safely capture the bat for rabies testing and seek medical attention immediately.

Are bats beneficial?

Yes. Worldwide, bats are a major predator of night-flying insects, including pests that cost farmers billions of dollars annually. Throughout the tropics, seed dispersal and pollination activities by bats are vital to rain forest survival. In addition, studies of bats have contributed to medical advances including the development of navigational aids for the blind. Unfortunately, many local populations of bats have been destroyed and many species are now endangered.

Where can I learn more about bats?

Contact your state or local wildlife conservation agency or Bat Conservation International: Bat Conservation International, Inc., PO Box 162603 Austin, Texas 78716 <http://www.batcon.org>

To learn more about endangered bats and the Endangered Species Act, contact: U S Fish and Wildlife Service, Division of Endangered Species, 4401 N. Fairfax Drive, Room 452, Arlington, Virginia 22203 <http://www.fws.gov>

Where can I learn more about rabies?

Contact your state or local health department or the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention:

National Center for Infectious Diseases, Rabies Section MS G-33 1600 Clifton Road, Atlanta, Georgia 30333, (404)639-1050.

<http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvrd/rabies>

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MOTHS THAT AFFECT PINE SHOOTS

By Douglas C. Allen

The caterpillar stage of several species of moths destroy twigs, distort growth and discolor foliage of pines in the United States.

They never kill the host, but their damage often reduces height growth and generally deforms the tree. Below is an example of each of the three most important groups in the northeast commonly associated with trees 1 to 15 ft. tall.

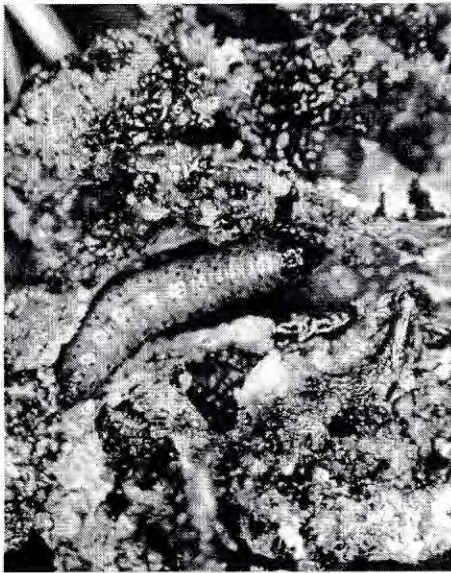


Fig. 1. Larva of pitch twig moth surrounded by a pitch mass.

Pitch Twig Moths - pitch and Scots pine are preferred hosts of the pitch twig moth (also called the pitch nodule maker), the most frequently encountered member of this group in New York. The full grown caterpillar (larva) can be as long as 1.25" and is pale reddish brown with a dark brown to black head (Fig. 1).

Feeding occurs beneath twig bark, almost to the pith or center of the shoot. The injury is covered by a conspicuous mass (nodule) of pitch which is 0.5" or so in diameter the first year and as large as 1.0 to 1.5" in diameter the second year (Fig. 2). It takes two years to complete the cycle from egg to adult, and the most severe damage occurs early during the second growing season when branch tips turn reddish brown. This "flagging" results when the larva girdles a twig. Eventually, damaged twigs break off, and in heavy infestations this may deform the tree. Each larva overwinters and eventually transforms to the moth stage beneath the pitch nodule.



Fig. 2. Undisturbed pitch mass within which a pitch twig moth larva lives.

Pine Shoot Borers - white and Scots pine are favored by the eastern pine shoot borer, though it also occurs on jack, red, Austrian, itch, and mugo pines. The mature caterpillar is 0.5" to 0.8" long and dirty white to grey with a yellow-brown (honey colored) head.

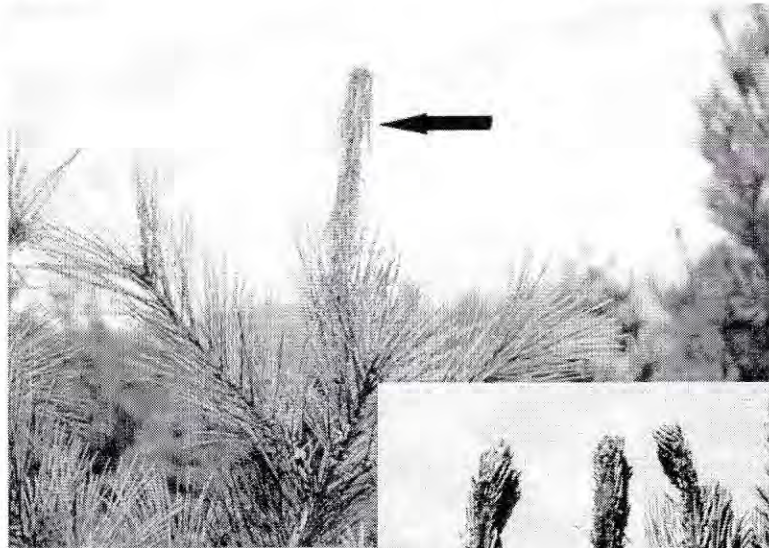


Fig. 4. (r.) Tips of Scots pine twigs damaged by pine shoot borer. Note larval tunnels in pith (arrows).

Damage to terminal and lateral twigs first becomes obvious in mid-June when the 6.0" to 8.0" tip of an infested shoot begins to droop and discolor (Figs. 3,4). Eventually an infested twig turns brown. One to as many as three larvae excavate the center

(pith) of a twig (Fig. 4). When it is done feeding the full grown larva chews an exit hole through the side of the twig and drops to the ground, where it transforms to the pupal (pew-pull) stage prior to overwintering in the litter.

Pine Shoot Moths - the European pine shoot moth is an introduced pest first noticed in the United States in New York state around 1914. Various shoot moths are associated with pines throughout North America, but this European import is the most important species.

Principle hosts in the northeast are Scots, mugo, Austrian, and red pines. The full grown larva is approximately 1.25" long and has a distinctly "chubby" appearance with a brown body and shiny black head. Each larva begins feeding as a leafminer at the base of a needle and eventually enters a terminal or lateral shoot near the base of a bud. A small amount of pitchy exudate mixed with silk occurs at the bases of both infested needles and recently invaded buds. As the larva feeds within a bud, the mass of pitch becomes quite conspicuous (Fig.5). Damage distorts leaders, causing crooked

Fig. 3. (l.) Discolored and weakened terminal of white pine damaged by pine shoot borer.

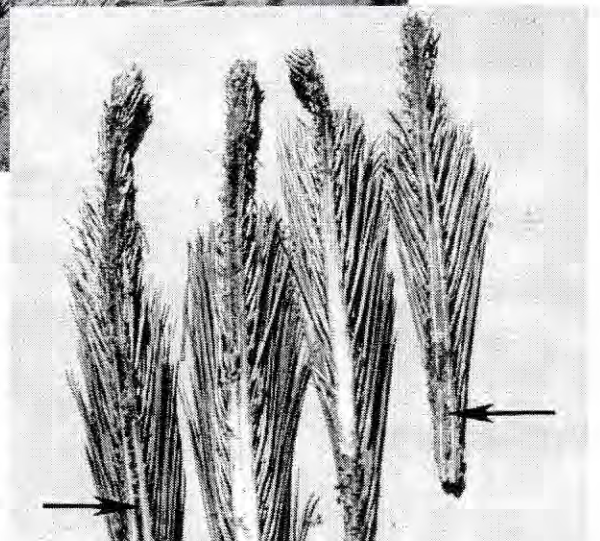




Fig. 5. Mass of pitch (arrow) at base of Scots pine bud infested with European pine shoot moth.

shoots called "posthorns" (Fig. 6), which result in a bushy tree. The insect overwinters as a larva in the bud and eventually pupates in this location as well.

Management Options - pests in all three groups are most likely to become problems in young natural stands or plantations. Of the three examples described above, by far the most serious problem in our region is the European pine shoot moth. Damage by all three moths may be confused with injury due white pine weevil (NYFO Nov./Dec. 1992) or pine shoot beetle (NYFO Jan./Feb. 1993). However, neither of these beetles are affiliated with large pitch nodules nor is silk associated with their feeding.

When European pine shoot moth threatens a Christmas tree plantation or young plantation of red pine, the area around buds

on both terminal and lateral shoots can be treated with an appropriate insecticide during mid- to late April. The other two species rarely require treatment, but it is important to distinguish between them and potentially serious infestations of shoot moth. Shearing Christmas trees can substantially reduce damage, because this practice removes many infested tips. On individual trees of concern, branch tips infested by any of these pests may be removed manually and destroyed to minimize damage and reduce moth populations.

This is the 44th in the series of articles contributed by Dr. Allen, Professor of Entomology at SUNY-ESF. Reprints of this and the complete series are available from NYFOA. It is also possible to download this collection from the DEC Web page by clicking on articles using the following address: <http://www.dec.state.ny.us/website/dlf/privland/linkspag.html>

Fig. 6. "Posthorn" resulting from European pine shoot moth damage (arrows).



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I'm Just Wild About Harry

By Jane Sorensen Lord, PhD, OTR, ND
I dunno. Seemed like a cold damp spring to me. But tell that to Harry.

The fish in the pond came up a month earlier than usual. They all rushed over when they saw me, lips smacking eagerly for food. I dipped my floating aquarium thermometer in the water and it read 45 degrees. Too early to feed according to instructions. Not until water temperature reaches 55 degrees.

We dug the pond in 1988, an acre and a quarter on the surface and 10 feet deep. Basically we dammed off two ends of a small natural valley and diverted water via six-inch accordion pipe from our own Class 4 stream. It filled beautifully with the clear blue water you see often in this area. (We're told it's a high nickel content). Then summer came, the stream stopped and the water dropped from ten feet deep to four feet or less. Our own personal swamp. I could still swim, but only the breast stroke. In a crawl my hands hit the bottom.

The breast stroke is okay and works well with a face mask and snorkel. I could see all the newts scurrying about, nice water plants, and an occasional large water bug.

One day, though, I looked down in a slightly deeper spot and saw a gigantic pair of reptilian legs sticking out of a patch of sea grass—the feet were as big as my hands! An adrenaline rush hit so hard I had to stop myself from screaming. And as I backed slowly away I could see the rear of a huge jagged shell.

I left the water immediately, called up Dick Rommel at the DEC to inquire about possible man-eating snapping turtles. He asked the wildlife people, called me back and assured me snapping turtles didn't eat people and didn't attack in the water. Yeah, right. I started swimming only in areas two feet deep, which, of course, limited my exercise even more.

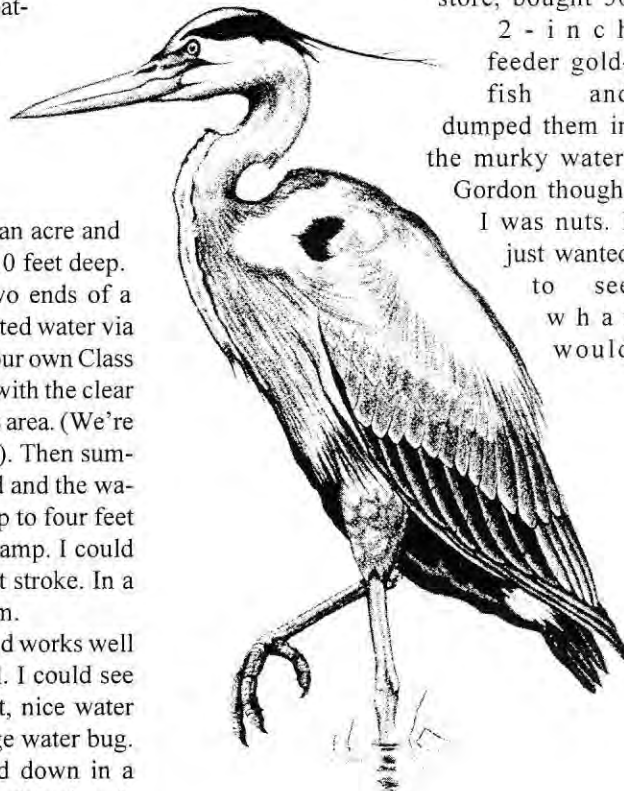
When we started to build our house, we retained an excavator to fix the pond. When we stopped the pipe flow early to drain the pond we found three snapping turtles and a four foot water snake. I gingerly captured everybody with a big fish net one at a time, put them in the back of the truck and drove over to the Bashakill Refuge a half mile away to release them.

We spread 900 tons of clay over the pond site, bammed it with a vibrating roller (neat machine), opened the pipe and waited for rain to start the stream.

The first rain filled the bottom about 6 inches. I went to the pet

store, bought 50 2 - i n c h feeder goldfish and dumped them in the murky water.

Gordon thought I was nuts. I just wanted to see what would



happen. I did it in late September. After the fall rains came and the pond filled completely, I never saw them.

In spring, April 10th to be exact, we were working on the garden on the bank. From what seemed like nowhere, thirty-three gorgeous 5-6 inch goldfish appeared swimming in a school near the surface like blues swim in the ocean! I went out and bought 100 more feeders. Well, the big ones spawned and by midsummer we had zillions of fish, all sizes.

That's when Harry first came—a young great blue heron, happily walking the edges of the pond eating frogs and newts. He got used to me in the water, just flying to the other side of the pond from where I swam. Then one day he noticed that when I swam near the goldfish, splashed the water with my hands, they surrounded me. He began to come closer and closer until he screwed up his courage, walked right near and ate one of my smaller fish. I stood up in the

water and hollered. He left post haste.

After thinking about it, I decided that a relationship with a heron was more interesting than a goldfish. Besides we now had hundreds and I knew he couldn't eat them all. So I named him Harry, spoke sweetly to him and over time I could get within a foot or two in the water. On land he always left but came back as soon as I was swimming.

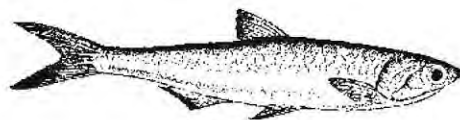
He's been coming for five years. Now he just flies to the other side of the pond when I'm on land. The last time I saw him in early winter, he was walking across the ice-covered pond. The goldfish had not gone down and you could see them just ahead of Harry under the ice. He got so frustrated he was stamping his feet.

I guess that's why he came back so early—no ice. He's having a heck of a time, though. The gold fish are close to a foot big now and swim fast. The small ones aren't up yet. But, I see him stirring up the grasses at pond's edge. I guess there are enough newts to keep him full until the little slower fish and taddies show up.

Not everyone has a pet heron, you know!



Dr. Jane and her husband, Gordon, have been Tree Farmers since 1986 and trained as Master Forest Owners. In her work as an occupational therapist and naturopath she takes care of people. Her e-mail address is: drjane@interserv.com & Webpage: <http://home.interserv.com/~drjane/index.htm>



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This annually published periodical is an excellent source of forestry news, tidbits, and research that comes from the staff at the Northeast Area office of the USDA Forest Service in Morgantown, West Virginia. Arrangements have been made with NYFOA to offer them to our members when they are available.

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