

The New York Forest Owner

A PUBLICATION OF THE NEW YORK FOREST OWNERS ASSOCIATION

For people who care about New York's trees and forests

March/April 2010



Member Profile: Ed and Wanda Piestrak

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The New York Forest Owner

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COVER: Members of the Piestrak family stand next to a fence they installed to control the impacts of deer on forest vegetation. For member profile, turn to page 21. Photo courtesy of the Piestrak's.

From The President

As I write this, it is the middle of February and we are in the midst of preparing for the annual meeting at the New York Farm Show in two weeks time. My term as president ends at the annual meeting and so I want to take this opportunity to recognize some of the people who work behind the scenes to keep NYFOA functioning. Space prevents me from enumerating all the



good people I have worked with in the past couple years but I can cover some of the highlights here.

The Central New York chapter has coordinated our presence at the Farm Show, this year as in past years. In addition to putting together forestry-related seminars throughout the show, which is no mean feat, they also take care of the nuts and bolts of our annual meeting and its accompanying board meeting – reserving rooms, coordinating schedules, and so on. Jamie Christianson and Rich Taber have been instrumental in making this all work.

Much of the activity of NYFOA takes place at the chapter level, and we should all recognize the work that goes into running a chapter. The chairpeople, treasurers, secretaries and other leaders of our 10 chapters around the state put in a lot of time and energy, and they have the most direct impact on our members and potential members. The woodwalks and other events hosted by each chapter are what make NYFOA such a diverse and dynamic organization.

One of our most visible products is the

Forest Owner, in which you are reading this column. There are many people who contribute columns and articles, and others who recognize the need for coverage on certain topics and make arrangements with the necessary writers. All of this is valuable and necessary work, but it would all be to no avail without the work of editor Mary Beth Malmsheimer. Mary Beth's perseverance and attention to detail keep the magazine production on schedule, even when contributors

Thank you to everyone who attended the NYFOA Annual Meeting. It was great to see you there!

(including, or especially, myself) forget deadlines or otherwise fail to keep on track.

Finally, I have to acknowledge the myriad contributions of Liana Gooding. Liana is nominally our office administrator, but she is involved in much more than that title implies. Board members come and go, but Liana provides a lot of the institutional memory as well as the energy that helps keep NYFOA moving forward.

To all of these people I owe a debt of gratitude for helping us get NYFOA through some difficult times. And of course I can't forget my gratitude to our entire membership, since without all of you there would be no NYFOA at all. 🌲

–Dan Cleveland
NYFOA President

The mission of the New York Forest Owners Association (NYFOA) is to promote sustainable forestry practices and improved stewardship on privately owned woodlands in New York State. NYFOA is a not-for-profit group of people who care about NYS's trees and forests and are interested in the thoughtful management of private forests for the benefit of current and future generations.

Join! NYFOA is a not-for-profit group promoting stewardship of private forests for the benefit of current and future generations. Through local chapters and statewide activities, NYFOA helps woodland owners to become responsible stewards and interested publics to appreciate the importance of New York's forests.

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NYFOA's Annual Membership Meeting was February 27 in Syracuse. Jeremy Hurst, a big game biologist with the New York State DEC's Big Game Unit spoke to NYFOA members about deer impact on forests. NYFOA's state and chapter awards were also announced – a complete list of award recipients will appear in the May/June edition of *The Forest Owner*.

Would you like to receive an electronic version of future editions of *The Forest Owner*? If so, please send Liana an email (lgooding@nyfoa.org). You would get an email every two months announcing when the current edition is available for download; and be given the URL for a webpage where you can go and get a PDF file of the publication. While being convenient for you – read *The Forest Owner* anytime, any place; this will also help to save the Association money as the cost of printing and postage continues to rise with each edition.



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Fun with a Chainsaw Mill

DEAN FAKLIS

For some woodland owners, a quiet walk along a groomed perimeter trail is the hallmark of the perfect day. For others, it's the growl of a well-tuned chainsaw. I must admit, I'm a cutter at heart but I sure love my hillside walking trails. So, if it's cull material that's too good for firewood, it can become a trail bench, bridge, lean-to or a viewing stand. First, it has to become lumber.

While certainly not the best tool for high-volume production, the chainsaw mill is ideal for low-impact milling of logs where they were dropped or when cash is tight. Most importantly, chainsaw milling is easy to learn and it provides an excellent source of exercise and instant gratification!

The casual milling of logs with a chainsaw requires only a few pieces of equipment and measuring tools. Given a suitable chainsaw, the key ingredient to sawing dimensional lumber is a fixture to hold the chainsaw in position. Other items include log handling gear, a framing square, tape measure, level, string, and a collection of chainsaw chains. We'll discuss the primary items below, in turn.

Before we start, I must say that it's dangerous work. I use a complete set of personal protective equipment, including chainsaw chaps, gloves, steel-toed boots, eye and ear protection, etc. Handling logs can be tough on the back and I use simple machines (e.g. wedges, levers, and yes, the occasional tractor) to help out.

It is important and your responsibility to keep a clean and safe work environment.

The chainsaw should be a durable model with engine displacement of at least 50cc, preferably more. The length of the bar places limits on the size of the finished lumber, but one can make an awful lot of chips with just a 16" bar. While chains designed specifically for "ripping" might be best for the saw and operator, I use my everyday chains for all tasks. I use a slightly richer fuel mix and I make sure that the bar receives adequate oil. I check the air filter frequently and I keep up on saw maintenance.

There are several milling fixtures on the *continued on page 19*



Chainsaw mill frame attached to a suitable chainsaw showing v-groove on a straight edge.

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Forest Science Becomes Forest Practice

Reviewing practical science to help forest owners sustainably manage their woodlands

PETER SMALLIDGE



A review of Recent ForestConnect Fact Sheets

Cornell University's ForestConnect program recently worked with four authors to develop a series of fact sheets that address forest health issues. We developed these fact sheets in partnership with the NYS DEC and the USFS Northeastern Area State and Private Forestry. All are available without charge from www.ForestConnect.info In this column I will review the fact sheets. Full details for each topic are available by obtaining a copy of the fact sheets. Copies can be obtained through the Internet and are often available at woodland owner workshops.

Silviculture and Invasive Insects. 2009. R. Nyland

Silviculture provides a variety of tools that will help owners and managers control the impacts of invasive insects on woodlands. Owners and managers need to learn about the biology of the insects and pay attention to where they occur on the landscape. Silviculture attempts to reduce the impact of insects by keeping trees vigorous, adjusting species composition to less susceptible species, and regenerating a desirable mixture of species.

The current big three invasive insects include emerald ash borer (EAB), Asian long-horned beetle (ALB), and hemlock woolly adelgid (HWA). Of these, EAB and HWA are known within NY's woodlands. ALB is known from the NYC area and from woodlands in Massachusetts. All three insects will result in some level of mortality of trees they infest. Death of hemlock trees will result in significant ecological and aesthetic changes to mixed

woods of NY where HWA occurs. Both EAB and ALB affect valuable sawtimber and maple syrup species and their impact will be economic as well as ecologic.

Owners and managers will need to be prepared for the arrival of the insects, act promptly when the timing dictates and response and plan for the rehabilitation of the stand after the cutting occurs. Each of these three steps includes a variety of actions that will help ensure success.

Woodland Guidelines for the Control and Management of American Beech. 2009.

P. Smallidge and R. Nyland.

American beech is a common native species throughout New York. It is an important species with many desirable qualities, such as value of wildlife, fuel wood utility, and durability and beauty in sawtimber. However, a combination of scale insects and fungi create a condition



Concentrated glyphosate is applied to wet the surface on the outer two inches of the freshly cut stump. Herbicide applicators need to be certified in most states. Glypho-sate needs to be applied at the time or the cutting or to freshly exposed active wood tissue. Photo by Mike Wine.

known as beech bark disease that severely limits the longevity (though not persistence) of beech in many woodlands.

Beech will produce suckers from the roots and stumps. These vegetative sprouts are tolerant of shade and infrequently browsed by deer. Beech sprouts can dominate a woodland and together



Woodland owners should review their ownership objectives with their forester to refine priorities that might influence forest health and how they are able to enjoy their property.

with deer browsing result in the near exclusion of other hardwood species. Owners need to consider their specific ownership objectives to determine if and how much control of American beech is appropriate. In some circumstances no control may be warranted, while other circumstances even on the same property may dictate a more aggressive control.

Strategies to manage beech can be considered based on the diameter and abundance of the larger trees. Both conventional and organic techniques are available for controlling beech, with some being more or less effective and efficient depending on the size of the beech. Owners and managers using pesticides, such as herbicides that control beech, need to adhere to NYS law, read the label included with each container of herbicide, and use all appropriate personal protective equipment.

Early Detection of Hemlock Woolly Adelgid in Small Northeastern Woodlands. 2009. M. Whitmore.

The hemlock woolly adelgid is an introduced species that has caused significant mortality to hemlock forests along the eastern seaboard and Appalachian Mountains from Massachusetts, through NY to North Carolina. Hemlock is an important component of New York's mixed woodlands, providing one of the few shade tolerant conifers in much of the state. Strategies to control the hemlock woolly adelgid, especially as it spreads into the Finger Lakes region will require early detection.

Winter and early spring are ideal times to look for the hemlock woolly adelgid. Their life cycle stages during these seasons display the woolly waxy coat. The insect is less apparent during the summer months.

The use of binoculars improves success when looking for WHA in upper branches. Binoculars allow for close-up inspection of branches that are not accessible due to topography. Because early outbreaks will have small numbers of insects, inspect as many branches as possible on as many trees as possible. Other more involved sampling procedures are more efficient for surveys on larger



Heavy infestation of the HWA. Photo by Mark Whitmore.

acreages. Streams and ravines are good places because these areas tend to include hemlock and may provide some more favorable climatic conditions for dispersal and survival.

Biology and Silvicultural Management of Sirex Woodwasp. 2009. K. Dodds.

The Sirex woodwasp is an invasive species of wasp most known for its infestation of hard pine (e.g., jack, red, Scotch).

It was first detected in NY in 2005. It occurs throughout much of the world and has a history of significant economic impact in areas where susceptible pines are common. In NY, the concern is that areas with susceptible pines will be negatively affected and that the wasp might spread to the southeastern states where much of the forest industry depends on susceptible species such as loblolly and slash pines.

Female Sirex seek weak pine trees, especially those with their crown below the main canopy. Eggs are laid by the female, plus she includes with a wood decay fungus and phytotoxic mucus. Larvae that successfully develop will feed on the fungus as they tunnel through the tree. The combination of the fungus and mucus kill the tree.

A combination of treatment strategies have proven effective at controlling the incidence and impact of Sirex in susceptible pine stands. Managed pine stands are not typically affected by Sirex. Unmanaged stands should be thinned for improved tree vigor. Two different biological control agents, a nematode and a parasitic wasp, have demonstrated success in other areas.

Response by: Peter J. Smallidge, NYS Extension Forester. 116 Fernow Hall, Cornell University Cooperative Extension Department of Natural Resources. Ithaca, NY 14853. (607) 592 3640; pjs23@cornell.edu www.ForestConnect.info



A Sirex-infested Scots pine stand in New York. Note the overstocked growing conditions and presence of suppressed trees.

New York State Tree Farm News

ERIN O'NEILL



It's the end of the winter in your woodlot.

The snow still covers the ground. The animals are beginning to recognize the longer days and are coming out of their winter shelters; the brooks are opening up and the leaf buds are starting to show. You'll notice the red maples first as they turn red for the first time this year. It's warm and sunny after the long, cold winter and it's a great time to get out on your property. If you have a motion camera, this is an opportunity to set it up along a corridor where there are tracks in the snow.

Right now is also the perfect time of year to walk your boundaries. You can see along the line further when you're out before the leaves pop and you'll be able to put your markers about a foot higher while there's still snow on the ground. This will protect them from animals and make them more visible. As the snow drops, you'll be able to find



your corner pins too, and be sure to mark them with a little extra flagging so you can find them more easily next time. Keep in mind that you should be able to see a marker on either side of you from the one you're standing on when you look down the line.

If you're posting, you'll want to remember that a legal posted sign is at least 11" x 11" and contains the word "POSTED." The signs must be visible at all corners and roadways and cannot be more than 660 feet apart along the lines. You should touch up posted signs at least once a year to make sure they are legal.

It's also a great time to survey how the winter has left its mark. Check to see if you have any trees down that you'd like to salvage timber from or if there's a section of ash that has some ice damage in the tops. You can often find a new location where the deer have been

bedding down or a place in the brook that didn't freeze allowing the animals to drink water from all winter. Don't forget to note all these observations in your management plan.

Management plans are dynamic documents and we at Tree Farm like to remind you to spend some time reviewing them each spring. Maybe you've had some circumstances change and you need to re-evaluate your harvest schedule. Maybe you did spot a new deer corridor to add to your map so you can be sure you leave a buffer during your next harvest. Did you find a spring run-off you didn't know was there that needs to be documented? Maybe you got a new 4-wheeler and you want to do some infrastructure improvements. The property is yours and the possibilities are endless!

If you'd like more information about Management Planning, help updating yours or if you are interested in becoming a Tree Farm just remember, a Tree Farm representative is only a phone call (1-800-836-3566) or e-mail (nytreefarm@hotmail.com) away. 🌲

Erin O'Neill is the Chair of the NYS Tree Farm Committee.



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Kid's Corner

KEVIN MATHERS



This photo was submitted by the Piestrak's who are featured in this issues Member profile (see page 21). The photo shows third generation Piestrak's enjoying an afternoon fishing in one of the five ponds created on their property in Steuben County.

Do you have a photo of you and your kids or grandkids in your forest? If so, *The New York Forest Owner* would like to see it! Send an electronic or hard copy to *Forest Owner* editor, MaryBeth Malmsheimer, (address on page 22) and it may end up on this page!

Whistles from Nature

One fond childhood memory is that of my grandfather making whistles with nothing more than a tree branch and his pocket knife. Making a slip-bark whistle is a great project for a parent or grandparent to share with a child. All it takes is a walk in your woods to collect the proper branch, and some work with a sharp pocket knife. The cuts should be made by an adult, and make sure to practice safe knife handling skills. Your first attempt at whistle making may take a while, but once you have made a few you will be able to craft one in just a few minutes.

The first step in the process involves selecting the proper size tree branch from the right species of tree. My grandfather preferred basswood, but willow is commonly used and other smooth bark species like striped maple may also be suitable. The time of the year to make a slip-bark whistle is in the late spring when the sap flow is strong because you will be able to easily remove the bark without damaging it. Look for a straight branch about

$\frac{3}{4}$ to 1 inch in diameter, about 6 inches long without side branches or major blemishes. The first time out you will probably want to collect a few branches in case you make a mistake.

Directions for making a slip bark whistle

Make a small notch about $\frac{1}{4}$ of the way through the branch, about $\frac{1}{3}$ of the way from the smaller end of the branch. Cut the narrow end of the branch (bark and all) off at a 45 degree angle, starting on the side opposite the notch. This will form the mouth piece of the whistle.



On the end of the branch opposite the mouth piece, about 1 to 2 inches above the notch, use your knife to score two cuts about $\frac{1}{8}$ inch apart all the way around the branch. Make sure you cut all the way through the bark. Remove the bark between the scored lines.

Using the side of your pocket knife, tap on the bark from the score line towards the mouth piece, all the way to the end of the branch. Tap the bark on all sides of the branch, but be careful to tap gen-

tly so you don't damage the bark. Grip the bark and gently twist. The bark should begin to loosen and spin around the branch. Slowly spin and pull the bark tube off the branch. Wet the bark tube and save it to put back on later.

Cut the notch deeper and longer on the branch where you removed the bark tube. Do not cut the notch too long or deep. You want to leave enough of the branch intact so the bark tube will seal both ends of the notch. The length and depth of the notch will determine the pitch of the whistle.

Carve a thin, flat sliver of wood from the notch all the way to the mouth piece. This creates a passage way for air to reach the notch once the bark tube is back in place.

Wet the whistle where the bark was removed, and carefully push the bark tube back in place so the notch in the bark is located directly above the enlarged notch in the branch. You are done!

The whistle won't work if you let it dry out, so wrap it in a damp cloth and store it in a plastic bag to protect it.

Additional information on slip bark whistles is available on the Internet, including the wikiHow page: www.wiki-how.com/Make-a-Willow-Whistle. 🏠

Kevin Mathers is an Extension Educator with Cornell Cooperative Extension of Broome County. Photo by Muu-Karhu, wikimedia Commons

Wild Things in Your Woodlands

KRISTI SULLIVAN

WOOD TURTLE (*GLYPTEMYS INSCULPTA*)



The wood turtle is a medium-sized turtle (5.5-8 in) with a rough carapace, or upper shell, and scutes that look like irregularly shaped pyramids of grooves and ridges. The carapace is grayish-brown, often with black or yellow lines on the larger scutes. The plastron, or lower shell, is yellow with oblong dark patches on each scute. The wood turtle has dark skin above, and yellow, orange, or reddish skin under the chin, throat, tail and forelimbs. A number of features can identify males and females. The most obvious feature is the concave plastron in the male, to facilitate mating. Females have a flat plastron. Males also have a thick tail, long front claws, and a wider and more robust head than females.

March and April are months when the natural world comes alive with activity. Like other hibernating animals, wood turtles emerge and become active at this time. While they spend much of the cooler spring and fall months in the water, they do make occasional trips to forage on land. Wood turtles are observed most easily in the spring because they are moving about on land and herbaceous vegetation has not begun to grow yet. They remain active throughout spring and summer and enter hibernation in September or October. During the summer months they spend quite a bit of time on land, however, they generally return to water at night and will enter the water during periods of drought.

Wood turtles are widely scattered across New York State (see <http://www.dec.ny.gov/animals/7479.html> for distribution map), except on Long Island. They are most common in the Hudson River Valley. Wood turtles require clean rivers and streams, as well as adjacent areas of floodplain,

forest, and fields for summer foraging. They hibernate beneath stream banks in among the exposed tree roots, or buried under the muddy bottom of slow-moving streams. Mating often takes place in the spring, while the turtles are still in the water. In June, the female will find a suitable site on land, excavate a nest cavity in the soil, and lay 4-12 eggs. Nest sites are near water, elevated at least 3 feet above the normal water level, and located in well-drained soils with little vegetation and good exposure to sun. Railroad rights-of-way, shale banks, exposed hillsides, and sandy patches all make good egg-laying sites. After an incubation time of about 70 days, the hatchlings emerge in late August or early September.


Wood turtles are opportunistic omnivores, feeding on a wide variety of animal and plant materials, including earthworms, snails and slugs, insects, amphibians, small fish, dead animals, algae, moss, grass, berries, and fungi. Some wood turtles occasionally

exhibit a feeding behavior referred to as “stomping.” As a turtle searches for food, it will stomp on the ground alternately with its front feet, creating vibrations in the ground. Earthworms respond, rising to the ground’s surface, and are consumed by the turtle.

The wood turtle is a species of special concern in New York and several other northeastern states. Wood turtle populations have declined because turtles are taken from the wild for pets and because their overland movements make them susceptible to road mortality. Because they take 14-18 years to mature and produce eggs, loss of adults from breeding populations, whether from increased road mortality or by collection for the pet trade, can significantly affect the sustainability of wood turtle populations.

The best way to maintain habitat on your land for wood turtles is to protect and enhance riparian habitats, stream water quality, and adjacent woodland habitats. Maintain natural vegetation along stream edges and in flood plains.

To protect your stream habitats, minimize use of riprap for shoreline stabilization and minimize the number of road crossings over streams. The more stream crossings, the greater the likelihood that streams will be directly altered or polluted. Borders of large rocks also can prevent turtles from moving between the stream and upland habitats. Actions that alter undercut banks or remove existing logs within a stream may reduce hibernation sites. You may be able to enhance hibernating sites by placing a couple large logs in suitable streams, provided that the flow of water is not significantly altered. Applying best management practices during timber harvests and careful placement of skid trails and log landings can prevent sediments from entering the water. Log landings that receive a great deal of sunlight may make good nesting sites following a timber harvest. Logging during the winter while turtles are hibernating will help avoid direct injury.

Streamside habitats within our woodlands attract a great variety of wildlife species. Take a walk this spring and you may discover a wood turtle moving about. By taking extra steps to protect these habitats you will create the opportunity to observe a variety of wildlife species during the spring, and throughout the year. 

Is there a certain species of wildlife that you would like to see featured in an upcoming "Wild Things" column? If so, email Kristi Sullivan at kls20@cornell.edu

Kristi Sullivan coordinates the Conservation Education Program at Cornell's Arnot Forest. You can find more information on managing habitat for wildlife, as well as upcoming education programs at the Arnot Forest by visiting arnotconservation.info

NYFOA SAFETY TIP

Herbicides and Insecticides In The Woodlot

The use of chemicals in the woodlot is sometimes thought of as a quick and easy means to remove a problem. The hazards of chemicals are personal and environmental. The potential for personal injury exists in the mixture and application of the chemical. It is valuable to take a class in chemical application from cooperative extension.

Chemical labels explain application mixtures and rates. They don't always suggest the type of personal protective equipment to wear. The basic recommendation is to wear gloves, long pants and long sleeved shirts. Gloves should be chemically resistant which usually means avoid latex and go with neoprene. Clothing should be laundered separately from other clothes. The need for wearing eye and respiratory protection depends on the mode of application as well as the chemical. A liquid that doesn't mist is not easily inhaled while use of a dust or mist calls for users to wear respiratory protection. A nuisance dust mask may be sufficient but a respi-

rator for organic materials may be better. Since a respirator is a restriction on breathing it is suggested that you check with your doctor to ask if it will be a problem for you. Some chemicals are applied un-mixed from the can so the hazard of opening a container and pouring it into another container and perhaps re-pouring in the applicator, is eliminated.

Chemicals available today, particularly herbicides, are less hazardous to humans than those used 40 years ago. Some are applied in minute quantities. However a spill can be a serious concern. Additionally some chemicals are mixed with a carrier, such as fuel oil, which when entering bodies of water becomes a greater problem. Controlling the chemical and being ready for potential spills is critical. With a little imagination containers can be fitted with spouts and plumbing so transfer of chemicals is done within plumbing and never reaches the air until application time. The chance to slop material over the side of a tank is gone.

Use of the proper chemical should be foremost in the selection deci-

continued on page 13

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Maple Sap:

The Delicious, Sustainable, Free Natural Energy Drink

MICHAEL FARRELL

This time of the year, when freezing nights are giving way to warm days, the sap is flowing in maple trees throughout the region. While many people enjoy pure maple syrup, far fewer have ever tried drinking the sap.

Other cultures drink tree sap regularly, including maple sap in S. Korea and birch sap in Russia. A *NY Times* article in 2009 illustrated how the Koreans drink as much as 5 gallons of sap in a day! The name of the maple they tap in S. Korea is 'gorosoe', meaning "the tree that is good for the bones". The significant amount of calcium contained in the sap make it especially beneficial for those with osteoporosis.

Sap is the life blood of maple trees, carrying sugars, minerals, and nutrients throughout the tree. Maple sap is ~98% pure water, filtered by the tree roots, with approximately 2% sugar. The two most common minerals in sap are potassium and calcium, found at concentrations of 26-75 and 8-56 ppm, respectively. Sap

also contains trace amounts (< 10 ppm) of magnesium, manganese, sodium, phosphorus, zinc, and copper. The sap also contains amino acids, enzymes and probiotics that are essential for proper health.

Maple sap can be substituted in place of water in nearly all recipes. I use sap to make beef stew, and the carrots, onions, potatoes, beef, and broth all taste just a little bit sweeter. I also steam vegetables with the sap and then use the boiling sap to make rice. The nutrients that leach from the veggies wind up in the sap and are absorbed by the rice, making the rice even more delicious and nutritious! Sap can also be used in place of water when making coffee and tea, eliminating the need to add processed sugar.

Maple sap is highly perishable, especially during warm weather, and should be consumed or refrigerated as soon as possible. In fact, sap collected during warm weather that has a yellow tinge should only be used for cooking or boiled



Andrew Farrell, 6, pouring some maple sap out of a bucket into a glass for his brother Owen, 8, at their home in Albany, NY.

into syrup. You will also not taste any "maple flavor" while drinking sap, as the traditional maple flavors are created by caramelizing the sugars under intense heat. Sap only contains 1-3% sugar and a hint of sweetness, yet drinking it provides a tremendous amount of energy. I drink about a gallon of sap each day during sugaring season, providing a steady source of energy while working in the sugarbush.

Maple sap was the spring tonic of the Native Americans and also enjoyed by the European settlers. Thomas Jefferson described sap as a "cool and refreshing drink during the harvest season." With the development of artificial sweeteners and processed energy drinks our culture has forgotten the benefits of drinking maple sap. However, it is relatively easy to tap maple trees and collect the sap, so give it a try. The Cornell Maple Program offers many resources for beginners; go to www.cornellmaple.info or contact your local CCE office for more information and resources. 🍷

Michael Farrell serves as Director of Cornell University's Uihlein Forest- a Sugar Maple Research & Extension Field Station in Lake Placid. For more information on maple syrup production and collecting maple sap, contact Michael at (518) 523 9337, email mjf36@cornell.edu, or go to www.cornellmaple.info



Owen Farrell drinking the sap right out of the spout once the sap started flowing.

Safety Tips (continued)

sion. Some chemicals are not to be used around water because something in the product harms aquatic life. It is interesting that chemical companies may have an active ingredient used on land and water but the inert ingredients in the formulation are changed to create a different product applied only to water or only on land.

Alternative application methods should always be considered. Rather than spraying material, direct application of chemical, even full-strength chemical, may be made by a wick wiper which the user wipes across the leaves of the target plants. One older tool is a hatchet device that delivers a measured chemical application as the hatchet cuts into a woody stem. The chemical travels through a tube from a container on the back of the user through the hatchet handle.

Alternatives to chemical use include doing nothing or applying mechanical controls. Plants have a natural succession

so changes are normal and doing nothing can be tolerable in the long term. If the target problem is an alien such as purple loosestrife, pale swallow-wort or gypsy moth doing-nothing is a less desirable option. Mechanical controls such as pulling up plants by the roots or cutting stems are common landowner practices. On small sites Tanglefoot placed on trees to catch crawlers or burlap wrapped around trees are quite labor intensive on a large scale but can be used to help with specific insect control.

Placing a chemical in the wrong place can pose a liability risk. Keeping the chemical in its proper place and off the neighbor's land is a priority. Any woodland owner should be certain of their property line location. In some cases neighbors must be notified before chemicals are applied. Planning a buffer is one means of controlling the extent of an application. Chemical formulations that avoid mists, for instance adding

emulsifiers to make droplets heavier, is one way to keep the chemical on target. Some chemicals are in granular formulations and merely spread at the base of the target. Granular formulations should not be placed on snow so they will stay put. Another way to avoid a chemical hazard is to contract the work to professionals. For large scale applications such as the recent tent caterpillar infestations this can be the best decision.

In the long term, landowners have the option to diversify their woodlots — by chemical or mechanical means — to make them less favorable to certain pests. Whether one's woodland goal is wood products, wildlife or recreation (or some of each), safely working in the woodlot will allow enjoyment of the woods to last longer. 🌲

Safety tip provided by Ed Wright, President, W. J. Cox Associates, Inc.



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Woodland Health

A column focusing on topics that might limit the health, vigor and productivity of our private or public woodlands

COORDINATED BY MARK WHITMORE

Big Changes from Little Bugs

BY GARY M. LOVETT

By now most forest owners in New York are probably aware of the litany of introduced pests and diseases that have affected our forests. Our area has been through the wringer, starting with chestnut blight in the early 1900s, adding Dutch elm disease, gypsy moth, dogwood anthracnose later in the 20th century, and now the emerald ash borer, beech bark disease and hemlock woolly adelgid. Waiting in the wings are the Asian longhorned beetle, possibly *Phytophthora ramorum* (which causes the “Sudden Oak Death” disease) and who knows what else? As we walk through our forests, we can see the death of trees caused by these pests and diseases, but what are the effects on the forest ecosystem beyond what we can easily observe?

The short-term effects of these outbreaks are easy to imagine. As the trees die, the forest temporarily loses productivity until new trees take over the canopy in place of those that are lost. If just a few trees within a mixed species forest die, this canopy replacement may take only a few years, but if a large, single-species stand dies, it may take decades before the productivity recovers. During this period the trees are not taking up their usual quota of nutrients from the soil, and critical nutrients such as nitrogen may be lost from the site into the groundwater. Storage of carbon in the forest will also be reduced. Carbon storage is an important process in this day and age when we are relying on forests to soak up some of the carbon dioxide we release from burning fossil fuels.

The canopy opening produces more light in the understory, which can

produce a pulse of growth in regenerating trees, shrubs, and the herbs of the forest floor. Unfortunately, as has been shown recently for hemlocks killed by the woolly adelgid in the Pennsylvania’s Delaware Water Gap, this canopy opening can also provide an inviting entry point for some nasty invasive plants such as Japanese stiltgrass, garlic mustard, and Japanese barberry. If the trees are near a stream, as hemlocks often are, the canopy opening can cause more light and higher temperatures in the stream, which can change the nature of the stream itself and reduce its attractiveness to coldwater species like brook trout.

The forest will generally recover from these impacts of tree death and loss of canopy cover within at most a few decades, because whenever a tree dies in the forest there is always a competing tree waiting to take its place in the canopy. The longer term effects of the pest invasion, then, reside in the nature of the trees that take over. I study forests for a living, but if you asked me to tell you what species will dominate our forests 50 years from now, I would be hard pressed to predict. It depends on which of our existing pests and diseases do the most damage in the coming decades, and what new ones are introduced to the forest in this period.

The shift in tree species composition is slow and subtle, maybe even invisible for someone who doesn’t know their trees very well. But the long-term species changes can have major ramifications for forest ecosystems. Some of them will be obvious for those who harvest their forest—if valuable species

like sugar maple and red oak are replaced by less valuable species, your forests are worth less. Others may be less obvious, but are nonetheless important. Tree species are unique in many different ways, so changing the species changes the character of the forest.

As an example, hemlocks killed by the woolly adelgid are being replaced by black birch in many areas. This will likely cause an increase in productivity, because hemlocks grow slowly and birches grow fast. If what you want from your forest is biomass production, this may be a good thing. But the tree species shift will also decrease the buildup of the forest floor, reduce soil carbon storage, open up the understory for shrub and sapling growth, decrease the abundance of large trees, decrease important deer yarding areas, and decrease abundance of some songbirds, like the black-throated green warbler, that use hemlocks for habitat. This is not to mention the human aesthetic response—being in a mature hemlock stand has a cool, quiet, dark, almost cathedral-like feeling that black birch will never be able to replicate.

Another more subtle example comes



The white fuzz on the bottom this hemlock twig is produced by the hemlock woolly adelgid, an insect that was introduced from Asia and is devastating eastern hemlock trees.



Wooden pallets and dunnage used in international shipping can harbor wood-boring insects that may escape to damage our forests.

from the beech bark disease. Our research in the Catskills shows that, over time, the growth reduction and death of beech caused by the bark disease has been accompanied by an increase in sugar maple. Some forest owners will cheer this news, because sugar maple is a much more valuable species than beech. And I've never had a craving for beech syrup on my pancakes.

But there are other important differences between these species. Sugar maple produces easily decomposed leaf litter that does not build up a duff the way beech does. Sugar maple forests also retain less atmospheric nitrogen pollution than do beech forests. When we burn fossil fuels in our cars, homes, and power plants, we release nitrogen into the atmosphere. This nitrogen rains down on forests, and some of it eventually may wash into streams and lakes, where it is a pollutant. However, forests do us the favor of retaining some of this nitrogen in the trees and soil, reducing the pollutant load to the streams, and beech forests do this better than maple forests.

Also, in much of New York State beech is the most important hard mast species, meaning that it produces large nuts that are an important food source for all sorts of animals, including turkeys,

chipmunks, bears, and even some larger songbirds. Beech is not going to disappear from the forest, but the larger trees are all but gone due to the disease, and these large trees produced the most copious crops of beech nuts.

It seems to me, as a forest ecologist, that the introduction and transport of non-native insects and diseases is the most serious and urgent threat facing our forests. This threat doesn't get nearly as much press as climate change and acid rain, but is causing billions of dollars of damage to our forests right now and will cost hundreds of billions more in the future. The only way to slow down this importation is through federal regulations, but this is not even on the radar screen of most congressional representatives, because they rarely hear from their constituents about it. Why? I think it is because most people feel helpless in the face of this problem, as if this is something that just happens and we have to live with it. But this problem is caused by people and can be solved by people.

The main pathways of introduction of these pests are through careless importation of live plant material by the horticultural trade and wood packing material used in shipping containers, and tighter regulation of those industries would go

a long way to solving the problem and forestalling the next major outbreak. The industries involved complain that tighter regulations would lead to trade restrictions, lost jobs, costlier products, etc. But look at it this way—all the profits engendered by our lax importation regulations go to the importers, while all the risk is borne by the general public, and particularly by forest owners. Is this fair? Help educate your federal representatives and senators about this issue, and maybe, when they hear from enough of us, something will get done. ▲

Dr. Gary M. Lovett is a forest ecologist at the Cary Institute of Ecosystem Studies in Millbrook, New York (www.caryinstitute.org). His research focuses on the impacts of air pollution, climate change, and introduced pests and pathogens on forests.

Mark Whitmore, Coordinator of the Woodland Health Column, is a forest entomologist in the Cornell University Department of Natural Resources and the chair of the NY Forest Health Advisory Council.

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Planting And Protecting Hardwood Seedlings

A Comparison Of Tree Shelters Versus Exclosure Fencing

JERRY MICHAEL

A January 2003 ice storm leveled a ten-acre stand of mature red pine on my Whitney Point tree farm in Broome County, NY. I sold the downed trees for pulp the following Summer and decided to let the land revert to native hardwoods. Since the predominant upwind seed trees were red maple, I decided to plant hardwood seedlings of more desirable species in the interest of diversity and higher timber values in the future. I also wanted to compare the relative cost and success of using exclosure fencing versus tree shelters in preventing deer browsing of the seedlings.

With the help of DEC Forester Gerry Kachmor, we developed a plan to plant 800 seedlings (200 each of sugar maple, red oak, black cherry and white ash) on a three-acre plot, protected by an eight-foot high deer exclosure fence. Another 600 seedlings (150 of each specie) would be planted on another three-acre plot and protected by five-foot high plastic tree shelters. Still another 200 seedlings would be planted with no protection against deer – as a control group.

The seedlings were purchased from the Saratoga Nursery and planted twelve feet apart in the spring of 2004. With the help of a couple of local farm boys, the fence was erected and the shelters installed by early summer.

The Fence Project

The three-acre deer exclosure included a black plastic fencing material manufactured by Tenax Co. It comes in a 10' x 330' roll and was purchased from the Gemplers catalogue. I used pressure-treated twelve-foot 4x4's and 2x4's for posts, stapled the fence to the posts, and screwed a batten board on each post for good measure. The fence is still in good shape after five years out in the weather. The total cost of the seedlings, fencing material and hired help was \$3,951.

The results of this effort have been disappointing. We experienced a serious drought the summer after the seedlings were planted. There was no shade and manual watering was impractical due to slope and clay soil. Approximately 80% of the seedlings perished that first summer. I have replaced a couple of hundred each summer for the last three years, but many have been overwhelmed by the berry bushes, red maple, pin cherry and other brush that has taken over the site.

The Tree Shelter Project

Having previously learned that deer will browse on saplings emerging from four-foot tree shelters, I purchased six hundred, five-foot high shelters from Tree Pro. I used seven foot lengths of half inch steel rebar as stakes since they are easier to drive into my rocky ground than wooden stakes. They also last forever, can be reused for multiple plantings, or can be sold as scrap for practically what you pay for them.

After installing the shelters, I used a hoe to pull a couple of inches of dirt around the base to discourage mice and voles. The cost of the seedlings, shelters, rebar and labor was \$3,965,

coincidentally almost the same as the exclosure fence, but for 25% fewer trees.

The trees planted in shelters have done quite well. Despite the drought their first summer, about 90% survived. I attribute this to the fact that overnight dew condensed on the inside of the shelters and ran down to the ground, providing just enough moisture to keep them alive in the absence of rain.

I found that shelters are not maintenance-free. Until the sapling emerges from the shelter, you have to remove the shelter every winter and dump out the dead leaves and occasional wasp nests. If you don't, the accumulated debris may deform the sapling or promote disease.

I initially made the mistake of removing the shelters as soon as the saplings emerged (most in the third year), and were out of the reach of the deer. Unfortunately, mice, voles and rabbits girdled some of the young saplings the next winter (especially the maple and ash) and several died from the injury. Many of the trees planted in shelters are now up to nine feet tall, but I will leave the shelters on until I have to cut them off.

Summary Results

Of the 200 seedlings we planted without the benefit of fence or shelter, only about five have grown beyond the reach of the deer. Most perished during the first year's drought, or were repeatedly browsed and eventually overcome by berry bushes and weeds.

Certainly the trees protected by shelters have done much better than those planted within the deer exclosure. Additional



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Jerry discussing construction of the deer enclosure fence with NYFOA Southern Tier Chapter members during a recent woodswalk. A few red pine that survived the 2003 ice storm can be seen in the background.

labor has been required to maintain the shelters, and to plant replacement seedlings within the deer enclosure. Replacement seedlings have added another \$300 to the cost of the project.


The expense of this project was partially offset by cost-share funding from the Forestland Enhancement Program (FLEP) which amounted to approximately 35% of the total expense.

Conclusions

1. This ten-acre stand will end up with a few hundred more high-value trees than it would have if left to strictly natural regeneration. As expected, most of the natural regeneration to date has been red maple, pin cherry, gray birch and other pioneer species, which will help “train” the trees we have planted. Excluding my personal labor, the total costs for this project amount to approximately \$6 per tree and, if I paid myself \$20 per hour, I’m sure the cost would be more than double that. While I wouldn’t venture to speculate about stumpage prices in the year 2100, this project may turn out to have been a worthwhile investment.

2. The project was only feasible because there was a retired forest owner, who doesn’t like golf, available to pursue it. For both silvicultural and economic reasons, planting hardwood seedlings is probably not an effective means to address the large-scale regeneration needs of our hardwood forests.

I think the use of shelters or fencing can work on both a large and small scale where you have significant natural advanced regeneration of desired species. Even if browsed by deer, well-established advanced regeneration will respond dramatically when it receives adequate sunlight and is protected from further browsing.

I am presently trying some deer enclosures around “mini-clearcuts” of about a quarter-acre where there is good advanced regeneration, and have installed scattered tree shelters over individual small saplings of desirable species. Look for an article in 2015 on the results. 

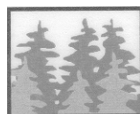
Jerry Michael is a member of the SOT chapter of NYFOA.

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<http://ForestConnect.info/forum>

to share ideas, information and questions with fellow woodland owners, foresters and other members of the forest community across New York.



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Timber Theft and How to Prevent It

HUGH CANHAM AND RONALD PEDERSEN

How Things Work Out in the Real World

NOTE: This column begins a series based on actual timber theft and harvesting experiences. For some readers, "timber theft" means criminal trespass, to others it means allowing oneself to be "stolen from" or, simply put, being financially cheated and losing future potential from their woodlot.

Our intent is to focus on some human dimensions of the advice we've been offering in this column for some months, i.e. mark your boundaries, use a forester, check references, offer marked trees, bid sales for upfront payment, monitor harvests and provide for cleanup.

Management decisions and harvesting experiences impact our lives, our feeling about our woods, and often, generations to come. We look forward to presenting this series, and hope the experiences of others will be helpful for you.

Mr. and Mrs. B live on their property that includes about 100 acres of woods. They had just learned that they needed a new furnace - a serious financial blow costing several thousand dollars. They were both retired with only modest incomes. Coincidentally, Mr. Logalot, a logger unknown to Mrs. B or her husband, approached them and said there

were trees ready to cut on their property and he would pay them up to \$10,000 for the timber. He would make payments each week, depending on how much he cut and "would not take any trees under 12 inches in diameter."

That was a welcome offer, and brought to mind their successful timber harvest some twelve years earlier. That time the timber had been sold to a local company with the trees having been marked ahead of time, the sale conducted under the guidance of a professional forester, with the money paid up front.

The B's called a retired forester they knew for advice. The B's were advised that the offer from Mr. Logalot was not in their best interest. He had said nothing about how the 12 inches was to be measured (DBH, stump top, ground) or the reason for that break-point; no indication was given how the value and amount of timber removed would be determined (cruise before cutting, roadside scale, mill scale, word of mouth); and most important, the 12 inch minimum meant their most valuable growing stock would be cut, ruining for generations the chance for future harvests. The Bs seemed to understand, but Mrs. B replied "we are both getting older and need the money now."

The Bs were urged to contact a con-

sulting forester, or the forester for the local company from the previous sale. They chose the latter and he told her that it would be better to wait a few years before having another cut. However, upon learning of the other offer and fearing that the owners might fall prey to a thief and the need for some cash now, he agreed to see if there might be some timber that could be harvested in a sustainable manner. After cruising and marking, an offer of \$4,000, check up front, was made and the B's accepted it.

Subsequently, Mr. B. learned from neighbors that Mr. Logalot had some questionable dealings in the area.

This situation turned out well because the owners made the effort to seek advice for a second opinion. The owners got the needed cash, the forest was left in good condition for future harvests, and importantly, the sale was conducted in a business-like manner with professional guidance and without vague agreements. The lesson to be learned is "Call before you Cut" as pointed out in a Cornell University Cooperative Extension brochure. Sound advice. ▲

This column is based on an actual situation. Names have been withheld to protect all parties and any resemblance to any particular person, location or company is purely coincidental. We would welcome learning of your experiences with your permission to tailor them into a future column.

Hugh Canham is a retired professor from SUNY ESF and a member of NYFOA's CNY chapter. Ron Pedersen is a past President of NYFOA and is a member of the Capital District chapter.



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Chain Saw Mill (continued)

market that are priced well below \$100. I have used products manufactured by Granberg and I hope to try other makes soon. For illustrative purposes, let's consider the Granberg Mini Mill, which is shown in the figure on page 5. It's a simple lower cost unit that I use for making posts and beams as well as edging boards. The manufacturer provides the proper instructions, but I'll try to outline the process of turning a log into a cant.

The idea behind the creation of straight lumber using a fixture is to reference the chainsaw to a known straight edge, which can be nailed or screwed to the log. The primary task then becomes the alignment of the straight edge on the log. The fixture clamps easily on the chainsaw bar and that assembly rides along an aluminum v-groove attached to a straight-edged 2x8 board (see figure on page 5).

Basic blocking (also made from culls) can be used to raise the log up off the ground to a comfortable height while holding it steady. A quick admiration of the log will reveal the rotation that gives the best first cut. This is no place

for perfection! The straight 2x8 with its attached v-groove rail is then aligned, leveled and nailed (e.g. using duplex nails) or screwed to the log. Limb stubs might have to be removed in order to get the straight edge to lie reasonably flat. (It's nice, but not necessary, to have a second unmounted chainsaw handy for touching up the log, making blocking, and squaring log ends.)

The fixture with attached chainsaw can now be used to make the first slabbing cut. Sometimes, I use wedges in the kerf to help keep the wood from binding the chainsaw bar. To make a post or beam, simply slab the three remaining sides being careful to align and level the straight edge each time to give a square timber.

Remember that chainsaw milling is about having fun in your woodlot and not about trying to make money. Plan, go slow, be safe and enjoy it. And for those big jobs, a portable bandmill with an experienced human brain is just a phone call away! 🪚

Dean Faklis is a NYFOA member, NYS Tree Farmer, and a freshly-minted MFO.

NYFOA CALENDAR

The Future of Your Woods and Wildlife

A Workshop for Private Landowners on the Rensselaer Plateau.

Saturday, March 20, 2010 from 8:30 am to 12:45 pm. The workshop will cost \$10 and is presented by NYS DEC, Cornell Cooperative Extension, Audubon NY, and the Rensselaer Plateau Alliance. Brochures will be mailed shortly. For more information contact Kristi Sullivan at kls20@cornell.edu

Sugarbush Hollow Woods Walk

April 10, 2010, 10 am to 2 pm - This will be the 8th Annual Woods Walk at the Sugar House of Sugarbush Hollow in East Springwater N.Y.

Chuck Winship will provide information on new spout technology aimed at increasing production and how the 2010 syrup season panned out (pun intend-

ed). We will tour Chuck's 5 year old, 6 acre, sugar maple and black cherry plantation. This plantation was done under the USDA Conservation Reserve Program.

Chuck has recently planted some 'super sweet' sugar maple trees that were purchased from RPM Ecosystems in Dryden. We will also have Dan Weykman or JoBeth Bellanca from the USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service in Livingston County give an overview of their numerous landowner assistance programs with the focus being on the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP). For more information contact Chuck Winship at (585) 943-3475, cw9@cornell.edu or visit www.nyfoa.org/chapters/wfl.php.

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This is an attractive option for landowners who would like to see their property used but do not have the time or inclination to get into maple production.

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Member Profile: *Ed and Wanda Piestrak*

ASHLEY DAYER

Ed Piestrak purchased his initial 265 acres of forest in Steuben County in 1989. Back then he “didn’t know a conifer from an oak.” He had grown up hunting with his father and brothers. Yet, they lived in a coalmining town where the mining companies owned most of the open land so he was not connected to the forest. Ed’s son instigated his interest in purchasing the Steuben County land. The land had been for sale for several years, and his son had hunted the property. Ed’s son invited him to take a trip to hunt there. After enjoying hunting on the property, his son mentioned the land was for sale. He encouraged his father to purchase it. Ed took out a home equity loan on his home in Pennsylvania to finance the purchase, which he paid back over the years. “Then it fell together over the years,” Ed recalls. He has since added land to almost 900 acres. His neighbors sold to him, and he would seek out land from timber companies. When one neighbor became ill, he called Ed and said “I want it in good hands.”

In 2002, Ed and his wife, Wanda, heard about Cornell Cooperative Extension’s Master Forest Owners (MFO) program. They attended an informational meeting at Arnot Forest in the spring and filled out the application to take the volunteer training in the fall. They wanted to learn more about forests because they “did not want to abuse the land.” They were accepted into the volunteer training program for the fall and became two of the now over 200 Master Forest Owner volunteers who meet with forest owners in their woodlots to discuss forest owner objectives and how to find the assistance they need.

Almost 90% of Ed’s land is wooded. His land is managed under a 480-A management plan that he updates regularly. Additionally, it has been a Certified Tree Farm for nearly ten years now. His forest started as pioneer forest with hickory, oak, and maple, and some ash and aspen mixed in too. Ed has worked hard to create a healthy forest on his land. For example, he purchased a parcel that had

been clearcut in 2000, removing virtually all the trees on over 250 acres. The deer population on the land was so great that when he visited it in the winter, he could not find a single tree with leader buds growing. “The deer had eaten them all. Deer are fussy and eat hardwood,” Ed explains. Ed has since invested in reforestation and afforestation on his property, including fencing large areas to keep out deer and allow for young tree growth.

“Bruce Robinson, our forester, he’s A+,” Ed genuinely states. “It’s so important to get the right forester working with you.” Following the management plan and advice of his forester, Ed sees results. His land “looks like a forest now.” It had been heavily high-graded in places. To restore the health of the forest, he invested in a commercial thinning, spending money to have it done well. Now he is left with desirable trees that are healthy. He manages for what is appropriate in the various areas of his property, such as hemlocks along his two creeks.

Ed’s primary goal is for sustained timber harvest on his land. His forester advised him to put in two new roads with landings to enhance the access for timber harvest and minimize impact. “The goal is to have land healthy in 20 years and then able to cut a chunk of acres every year...I’m managing for the future generation.”

Clearly, Ed does not manage his forest just for today; he believes in planning for its future. Almost a year ago, he started a Limited Liability Company for the property. He manages the LLC, while his sons and daughter have shares. He additionally plans to transfer shares to his grandchildren. His LLC agreement “puts his management plan in place.” It ensures that when he passes, his children and grandchildren “will have to work together. They can’t just sell off the land; it will stay intact for three generations.” Drawn by his interest in planning, in summer 2009 he attended the “Ties to the Land” program offered by Professor Shorna Broussard Allred of Cornell Cooperative Extension. This DVD-based facilitated workshop offers effective tools to families to decide the future of their land and land-



It is important to Ed and Wanda to have multiple generations involved with the work, planning and recreation on the property. One element is planting of corn to provide food for wildlife.

continued on page 22



The Piestrak's have been active with both a variety of harvesting projects under the guidance of their forester. Some work they do themselves, and other work is with logging contractors.

based companies. He was so inspired by the workshop that he facilitated his own workshop with the DVD for his family. He prepared folders for each of them with the LLC agreement, the forest management plan, and an outline of the key points that he found in the DVD. "My kids were speechless", he recalls, "and touched by the presentation."

His land is important to his children as well. His oldest son works the land with him often. His grandchildren come up to the land as much as they can. His family enjoys hunting, wildlife watching, hiking, and fishing on the property. They built 17 tree stands about 20 feet high. From the buildings on top with windows, they can stay out of the rain. In fall, they sit in the stands, taking pictures and watch the wildlife with binoculars.

The wildlife bring Ed and his family enjoyment, and they manage for the wildlife as well. Ed has enjoyed watching the number of wildlife and diversity of wildlife species increase on his property as a result of his efforts. The goals of timber and wildlife integrate well for Ed. He prefers oaks on his land for timber and animals who like acorns. He has seven acres of corn "for the animals" as well as a field full of turnips. His property teems with bears ("too many! they take seedlings out of the tree tubes!"), deer, grouse, and turkeys. He placed trail cameras on his property, capturing images of foxes, raccoons, and coyotes.

He additionally installed five ponds on his property for wildlife. Two they stocked with a mixture of fish for recreation. They left the other three for amphibians — frogs and salamanders. Ed explains the value of the ponds, "for the animals, the ponds are a magnet. They are always around them."

On the portion of his property that was largely clear-cut, it is re-growing and birds abound. In this young forest, Ed finds "all kinds of birds." When he visits this part of his land, he often "can't hear himself think because of all of the birds." While you hear them loudly, you often cannot see them as they enjoy the cover and bushes.

To attract even more birds, Ed and his family have erected 80 bluebird boxes. Last year all but two of the boxes were occupied. Not all were inhabited by bluebirds as swallows also are attracted to the bluebird boxes. Through his experience, Ed has learned to place the boxes on free standing poles to inhibit squirrels from taking over the boxes. And, the birds are not the only wildlife benefiting from Ed's hand-constructed homes; Ed has placed eight bat boxes on his property as well.

While Ed's forest and wildlife are benefitting from his stewardship, the future generation of the Piestraks are well-positioned to enjoy the woodland for years to come. And, there might even be hope that Ed's love for the forest will be passed on as a career to one of the young-

est Piestraks. Ed proudly explains that his 15 year-old grandson is considering forestry. Sharing his grandfather's passion, he enters trees in fairs and finds ways to focus on them for school projects. His grandson always wants to know what the next project on the property will be, and with Ed's management of 900 acres for timber and wildlife, there is always one in the planning!

Ed is dedicated to his forest. He points out that in the "Ties to the Land" DVD, the forest owner twice cites a quote, "when they go home, you hoe another row." The line resonates with Ed. He has always worked two jobs or worked while attending school. While he would "hate to be called a workaholic," he firmly believes that "with the extra you put in, you can get involved in something else." He decided to get involved in the land. Ed "really love[s] the forest now." 🌲

Ashley Dayer is a PhD student in Natural Resources at Cornell University. She studies the Human Dimensions of forest habitat and wildlife conservation.



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MAGAZINE DEADLINE

Materials submitted for the May/June Issue issue should be sent to Mary Beth Malmshemer, Editor, *The New York Forest Owner*, 134 Lincklaen Street, Cazenovia, NY 13035, (315) 655-4110 or via e-mail at mmalmshe@syr.edu Articles, artwork and photos are invited and if requested, are returned after use.



Deadline for material is April 1, 2010

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