

The New York Forest Owner

A PUBLICATION OF THE NEW YORK FOREST OWNERS ASSOCIATION

For people caring about New York's trees and forests

January/February 2014



Member Profile: John Hammer

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**The New York
Forest Owner**

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VOLUME 52, NUMBER 1

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Please address all membership fees and change of address requests to PO Box 541, Lima, NY 14485. 1-800-836-3566. Cost of family membership/subscription is \$35.

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COVER: John Hammer with Sammy the grouse “stacking firewood” at his property. For member profile see page 21. Photo courtesy of Dave Williams.

From The President

Happy New Year!

There are several important upcoming events and activities described in this edition of the Forest Owner to which I'd like to draw your attention.

NYFOA will have a presence again this year at the Farm Show, held at the Syracuse Fair Grounds February 20-22 thanks to the efforts of board member **Ron Pedersen, Hugh Canham, and Dave Skeval**. NYFOA is hosting a series of woodland-related lectures in the Somerset Room of the Art and Home Center building. Be sure to drop in when you get a chance. Please see page 19 for further details and visit



us at www.nyfoa.org for the finalized schedule.

As we did last year we will be holding our annual members meeting at the ESF school in Syracuse on March 22nd. It will be a day filled with informative programs and an opportunity to renew old friendships and make new ones. The program this year has been developed by board member **Rich Taber** and is described on page 13. Please be sure to **fill out the registration form** and get it in to **Liana Gooding**.

There will be a short business section at this meeting and one of main topics will be the announcement and introduction of new board members. A slate of four members has been developed and listed, along with brief biographies on page 12. You are encouraged to cast your vote by **filling out the ballot**

and mailing it in, whether you plan on attending the meeting or not.

In fulfilling our educational mission, there are many outreach initiatives we've already launched and more we'd like to.

Please share this magazine with a neighbor and urge them to join NYFOA. By gaining more members, NYFOA's voice will become stronger!

However, their impact is constrained by budget considerations. Currently dues accounts for only 50% of our operating expenses and at our last board meeting it was decided we need to raise our dues. The new dues structure will be for Members (no distinction between individuals and families): \$45 for 1 year, \$80 for two and \$120 for three. These rates will go into effect July 1st of this year. Members who wish to avail themselves of the old rates, even for multiple years (please see the sidebar on this page), may do so until July. As a point of reference we have not raised our dues since 2005 and, when compared to similar organizations, we find that ours are consistently below the others.

One final note, our Restore New York Woodlands initiative will continue this year but take a slightly different form. Please see our next issue of the Forest Owner for more details as provided by leaders **Kelly Smallidge and Jerry Michael**. 🌲

-Jim Minor
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 helps the interested public to appreciate the importance of New York's forests.

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The Northeast Timber Contest Heats Up!

DEAN FAKLIS AND PETER SMALLIDGE

Forestry as a contact sport? Aggression in the woods? Maples pitted against oaks? Yes!—and it is proving to be a ton of fun for all involved. This article explores the experiences of four Timber Teams as they set out last spring to create their sample plots for the timber growing contest (*The New York Forest Owner* 51:2, March/April 2013). It's too early to know who is in the lead, since some teams across the northeast are still operating in stealth mode, but some teams we interviewed are already “talking trash.”

Dale and Eileen Schaefer in Canadice, NY entered the hardwood basal area category with sample plots in the forest adjacent to their home. Oak, black cherry, and maple grow on good soil there and years of excellent TSI work is paying big dividends to the Schaefer's entry. “The contest rules were easy to follow and implement in the woods,” Dale mentioned. He continued, “There was essentially no cost since we used spray paint for marking and it only took a half day to create the plots and perform the measurements. I was skeptical at first, but it really was fun to create the plots and make the tally chart.” When asked about their chances of winning,

Dale smiled and offered exuberantly, “100%. We know how to grow trees here!”

Josh, Jeff, and Ed Piestrak in Lindley, NY entered the basal area category in a 40-acre stand of oak, maple, and ash, which has been actively improved over the years. The area had been clear cut some 50 years ago and the regeneration was great. Their team consists of three generations of Piestraks and their forester Bruce Robinson, with 18-year-old Josh in the lead position. “We used a tape measure to lay out the plots and we identified the trees with paint and numbered aluminum tags that my Dad (Jeff) made. My Grandfather and Dad made the tree measurements with a logging tape and I recorded the data. Our three plots had 111, 66, and 62 square feet of basal area per acre, respectively, and there were 67 trees in the 111 sq. ft. plot. I definitely enjoyed it and we had a great time as a family in the woods. I think we have a very good shot at winning.” Soon, Bruce will be joining the Piestraks in the woods to make additional measurements so they can enter the board-foot volume category this year. Josh thinks they may also enter the seedling height growth category too. Josh will be

continued on page 11



Josh (L) and Jeff (R) Piestrak, armed with measurement tools, show off some fine timber along the NY-PA border.

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Ask A Professional

PETER SMALLIDGE



Peter Smallidge

Landowner questions are addressed by foresters and other natural resources professionals. Landowners should be careful when interpreting answers and applying this general advice to their property because landowner objectives and property conditions will affect specific management options. When in doubt, check with your regional DEC office or other service providers. Landowners are also encouraged to be active participants in Cornell Cooperative Extension and NYFOA programs to gain additional, often site-specific, answers to questions. To submit a question, email to Peter Smallidge at pjs23@cornell.edu with an explicit mention of "Ask a Professional." Additional reading on various topics is available at www.forestconnect.info

Question: We inherited 77 acres in the southern Adirondacks. We know we need a plan, but how do we start the process of prioritizing our actions and work projects?

Answer: A forest management plan is an important tool that helps owners understand what they need to do for their property. A forest management plan might also be called a forest stewardship plan. The plan uses goals and objectives to set priorities, but an owner might start by thinking about what they value on their property. Those values can then be used to clarify goals and objectives. Collectively, the owner's values, goals and objectives are guidelines the owner should use to evaluate potential actions. DEC or private sector foresters will be an important resource to talk through values, goals and objectives. Once these are identified, they are matched with the resources of the property and a schedule of activities can be created.

Values of a woodlot

The land-based values of a woodland owner will typically reflect some combination of the condition of the woods, tangible outputs, and aesthetic qualities. In many cases, these types of values will overlap, and often the work projects or tasks will serve multiple values. The values might relate to what

the woodlot currently provides, or what the owner would like the woodlot to provide.

Each owner will have their own specific values, and those values likely won't change much through time. As the forest changes, the goals and objectives related to those values will change. Values would apply to the entire property and the entire property would be considered while planning to obtain the values.

Some examples of these types of values and how they correspond to possible

goals, objectives and work projects follow. The details in a management plan would be sufficient to explain what needs to happen and how to know when the goal is reached. The plan would also include priorities to help focus time, money and resources on the values that need the most attention. Importantly, each owner will have different values and different resources and talents to invest in how they realize their values. A family discussion of values will allow everyone to share their values, and become part of the planning and management process.

Examples of types of woodland values, goals, and objectives

Values that relate to the general condition of the woods might include forest health broadly, or specific attributes such as tree health, forest regeneration, or the types of species present. Using tree health and species mixtures as examples, knowing that the details will vary among owners and properties, corresponding goals might be to reduce the likelihood of significant mortality from pests and to reduce the spread of invasive or interfering plants. Objectives that could help satisfy this example include: (i) maintain appropriate mixtures of trees for the soils and (ii) reduce the presence of existing invasive or interfering plants. The work projects



Marking property boundaries using blazes, with or without posted signs, is an important work project that supports multiple goals and owner values such as reducing the likelihood of timber trespass, enhancing owner privacy, and helping to maintain good neighbor relations.



Many owners value the attributes associated with water, either as streams or ponds. Streams and ponds have aesthetic qualities, but also can provide tangible outputs through fishing or trapping. Strams can be maintained through buffer strips. Owners without water might consider developing a pond with technical assistance from the Soil and Water Conservation Service.

that you or your forester might undertake could include a map and inventory of different management units (called “stands”), locating and assessing the extent of existing invasive and interfering plants, and educating yourself about management strategies to control those types of plants.

Values that relate to tangible outputs might, for example, include wood products such as timber or firewood or nut and fruit crops that support wildlife. Using timber production as an example, a goal might be to produce enough timber to offset 30% of the property taxes. Examples of two corresponding objectives might include (i) maximize growth of high quality timber trees on the best soils and (ii) maintain trails for efficient timber harvesting that reduces damage to residual trees. Work projects could include determining the soil types for each stand, assessing the current growth rates of trees, mapping existing trails, and assessing the condition of water quality BMPs (best management practices) on those trails.


Examples of values related to aesthetic qualities might include wildlife viewing, recreation, and privacy or seclusion. Using wildlife viewing as an example, a corresponding goal might be to support

a diverse array of wildlife. Related objectives might include creating a mixture of ages and species of trees and trails to allow access for viewing. Work projects might include forest harvesting, mapping existing and potential trails, and trail maintenance.



Timber, in this case small scale harvesting of white and red pine, is a value for owners through direct sale of the logs or the opportunity the logs provide for custom sawing. Harvesting timber and firewood requires specific skills, and owners should be trained by the Game of Logging before considering any tree felling. Equipment such as tractors and ATVs when used for harvesting warrant particular caution.

Taking the next step

Before listing values you have for your woods, spend adequate time exploring your woods, reflecting on the attributes that are most meaningful, and having discussions with your family. A variety of educational resources will help owners and their families understand the full process of planning. Master Forest Owner volunteers (www.CornellMFO.info) are woodland owner volunteers trained through Cornell Cooperative Extension to help owners connect with forest management resources. Numerous written and webinar resources are available at www.ForestConnect.info. Other resources are available through NYFOA, especially the ability to interact with other owners. Local NYFOA chapters, located throughout the state, have regular events throughout the year that bring owners together and allow for sharing of ideas and strategies. Some owners will benefit from the online network of woodland owners where they can ask questions and learn about new resources (CornellForestConnect.ning.com). 

Response by: Peter J Smallidge, NY Extension Forester, Cornell University Cooperative Extension, Department of Natural Resources, Ithaca, NY. Pjs23@cornell.edu, 607/592-3640

New York State Tree Farm News

ERIN O'NEILL



Congratulations Chris Prentis, NY Outstanding Tree Farm Inspector

You may not have heard but this year's Outstanding Tree Farm Inspector is Chris Prentis of Lower Hudson Forestry Services! The American Tree Farm System (ATFS) annually recognizes a distinct group of

volunteer certified ATFS Inspectors for their exceptional work on-the-ground and their continued commitment to family forest owners across the country. ATFS State Committees select a state honoree to compete on the regional level. The National Outstanding Inspector of the Year is then selected from four regional winners.

Chris has been serving as the NYS Area one Chair serving fellow inspectors and

landowners in Dutchess, Nassau, Putnam, Suffolk and Westchester Counties. He has given two town wide presentations this year about Tree Farm to advocate for your right to practice forestry by speaking out against restrictive timber harvesting ordinances and he has completed over half a dozen inspections.

In his nomination, fellow Inspector John Zylstra said, "Thus far, all of our contacts within the forestry community, both private and public speak well of Chris's work, attitude and communication skills. Our review of his forestry plans and timely tree farm inspection reports reflects highly of his professional skills."

He goes on to say, "Chris exemplifies the core values of his profession and his position within the NYS Tree Farm committee." I could not have said it better myself. Congratulations, and thank you Chris!

If you'd like to learn more or find out how to become a Tree Farmer a great place to start is by contacting a Tree Farm inspector like Chris. If you live in his region, give him a call at (845) 270-2071 and 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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You will receive an email every two months that includes 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.

Kid's Corner

DEREK J. CONANT



This could be your photo here!

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, and it may end up on this page!

Not All Firewood Is Created Equal

Cutting firewood is tough and exhausting work. Firewood is a renewable resource and an economical way to heat your home. Optimally, a homeowner wants to cut the least amount of wood necessary to heat their home for the winter. To accomplish this, a person should consider the tree species they use for heating.

Different tree species give off different amounts of energy or heat measured in British Thermal Units (BTU). Typically a softwood species like pine will give

less energy than a hardwood species like oak. A few of the most desired trees for firewood in New York are oak, hickory, maple, and ash. Although these provide good wood for heating a home, three of the best trees in terms of the most energy radiated are Osage orange, hophornbeam, and shagbark hickory. These species typically produce



Osage Orange. Photographer: Vern Wilkins, 2010, Indiana University

2-8 million more BTUs per cord when compared to the majority of wood used for firewood.

Osage orange is one of the best trees to use for firewood but is difficult to find in New York State. The tree isn't native to New York and only can found growing wild in a few counties. Because of the wood's unique color and hardness it is also sought by wood crafters for making kitchenware like bowls. It has been historically used by bowyers to make the finest bows. Osage orange delivers an astonishing 33 million BTUs per cord of wood.

Hophornbeam, or ironwood, is an understory tree. Hophornbeam is very abundant in New York but it grows relatively small in size and very slowly.



Hophornbeam: Photographer: Rob Rutledge, 2010, Sault College

On average, a typical mature tree only grows to 30 feet tall and 12 inches in diameter. Because of its exceptional hardness it was used in agriculture for ox yokes and plows, hence its nickname ironwood.

Hophornbeam is notorious for quickly dulling saw chains but is worth the effort as it produces 26 million BTUs per cord.

Shagbark hickory can be found



shagbark hickory: Photographer: Rob Rutledge, 2010, Sault College

readily in all of New York except for the Adirondack Mountains. A mature shagbark hickory tree can grow to 90 feet tall and 24 inches in diameter. Because of its unique toughness

and ability to absorb shock it traditionally has been used to make items that can withstand excessive abuse such as wheel spokes and construction materials. With its relative abundance in New York, large size, and its capacity to produce 24 million BTUs of energy per cord, one may want to consider adding more shagbark hickory to their woodpile if it grows in your area. ▲

Derek J. Conant is a Program Educator at Cornell Cooperative Extension of Onondaga County.

Wild Things in Your Woodlands

KRISTI SULLIVAN

BARRED OWL (*STRIX VARIA*)



Photo: John Triana, Regional Water Authority, Bugwood.org

The barred owl is a large bird, up to 20 inches long, with a wingspan of 44 inches. It is gray-brown in color, with whitish streaks on the back and head, brown horizontal bars on its white chest, and vertical bars on its belly. This owl has a round face without ear tufts, and a whitish facial disk with dark concentric rings around brown eyes. Males and females look similar, but females can weigh about one third more than males.


“Who cooks for you, who cooks for you all?” This is the familiar call of the barred owl defending its territory or attracting a mate. If you live in or near a heavily wooded area with mature forest, particularly if there is also a stream or other body of water nearby, this sound is probably familiar. Barred owls are the most vocal of our owls, and most often call early at night and at dawn. They call year-round, but courtship activities begin in February and breeding takes place primarily in March and April. Nesting in cavities or abandoned hawk, squirrel, or crow nests, the female sits on a nest of 1-5 eggs for 28 to 33 days. During this time, the male brings food to his mate. Once the eggs have hatched, both parents care for the fledglings for at least 4 months. Barred owls mate for life, reuse their nest site for many years, and maintain territories from 200 – 400 acres in size.

Barred owls are strongly territorial and remain in their territories for most, if not all of the year. However, in times when food is scarce, these birds wander in search of prey. Barred owls are opportunistic predators, eating small mammals and rabbits, birds up to the size of grouse, amphibians, reptiles, and invertebrates, including crayfish. They sit and wait on an elevated perch, scanning the area for prey,

then swoop down silently and grasp their prey in their talons. An owl’s stomach absorbs the nutritious parts of its prey and regurgitates the indigestible matter (hair, feathers, bones, claws, insect chitin) as round pellets about seven hours later. These owl “pellets” can be found on the ground under roosts, and dissecting these pellets is a fun way to learn about an owl’s diet.

Barred owls prefer large, unfragmented blocks of forest. They are most often associated with mature and old growth forests of mixed hardwoods and conifers due to a greater availability of potential nest sites. In addition, mature forests have a lower density of branches in the lower levels of the forest, which may make hunting easier. A closed canopy also provides protection from the elements and from mobbing by other birds.

If you are a landowner hoping to encourage or maintain barred owls on your property, characteristics to pay close attention to are the size (number of acres) of forest, the age or maturity of the forest, and the number of large diameter snags or cavity trees available for nesting. Barred owls are seldom present in areas with tens of acres of forest, but are common in forests that are hundreds or thousands

of acres in size. Therefore, if you live in a region with small patches of forest, it is unlikely that you will be able to attract barred owls to your land. However, in heavily forested regions, you can encourage barred owls by maintaining mature forest stands with two or more trees per acre 20 inches in diameter or larger to allow for the development of cavity trees or snags (dead trees) suitable for nesting. You may also help create a snag or two by girdling a couple of large, live trees. Leaving dead wood on the ground can also enhance habitat by providing cover for amphibians, reptiles, and small mammals that in turn provide food for barred owls. By focusing on just a few habitat elements, you can continue to enjoy the characteristic sounds of the big woods. To hear the call of the barred owl, visit http://www.birds.cornell.edu/AllAboutBirds/BirdGuide/Barred_Owl.html 

Kristi Sullivan Co-directs the Conservation Education and Research Program at Cornell’s Arnot Forest. More information on managing habitat for wildlife, as well as upcoming educational programs at the Arnot Forest can be found by visiting the Arnot Conservation Education Program web site at www.arnotconservation.info

Timber Contest (continued)

attending Penn State next fall and plans to study forestry and surveying.

Kurt and Kristie Edwards in Mayfield, NY along with their foresters Erin O'Neill and Mike Federice entered the hardwood basal area and board-foot volume categories. Kurt and Kristie live in a log home on their 193 acres and they worked with Mike Greason to generate the initial management plan. "It was great to spend time in the woods together with Erin and Mike and we all got to know each other better. We worked as a team marking, measuring and collecting the data. We discussed TSI strategies and forest health. Teams consisting of landowners and foresters with the common goal of growing quality timber in a fun environment is really a good idea. Annual forest measurement takes the guess work out of growing timber." Team Edwards has a great site to work with and also used numbered aluminum tags to identify trees. Their children and grandchildren have shown interest in the contest and one of their sons might participate this coming year in the seedling height growth category.

Team Springwater consists of one of us (Dean), Julie Faklis and NYS DEC Forester Brice June. Six 1/4-acre sample plots were created in two different stands in Springwater, NY; hardwood and softwood. The hardwood stand includes red oak, ash, maple and black cherry in an area heavily high-graded ten years ago. The stems aren't all that pretty, but the site is good and the oaks are taking off. Plot centers were chosen randomly and trees were marked and measured by Brice. In terms of basal area, 133, 120, 134 square feet per acre was measured in the three plots. And yes... there is a lot of TSI work that is needed in there! Brice also measured the number of logs in thirty of the trees so that we could enter the board-foot volume category. Among those trees, volume ranged from 23 to 548 board feet, International scale.

It looks like Team Springwater's softwood entry is headed for last place. Three plots were arranged in a dense plantation of red pine; 240, 212, 177 sq. ft. per acre, basal area. Julie and I (Dean) created the plots, marked the trees and made the measurements. It was fun to get out in the woods as a couple and shoot the breeze while getting something done. Perhaps our trees will grow....or we'll find some use for them to make room for new stock. With paint on her fingers, a clipboard in her hand, and a smile on her face, Julie was overheard to say, "Dean, winning isn't everything, I'll still love you. But...I still want to win!"

The Timber Contest is fun and it's a great activity in the family forest, whether the forest is a few acres or a few hundred. The rules may look a bit complicated at first, but they're easy to understand and implement and we're always here to help the contestants. A tape measure, paint and a clipboard is really all that is needed to start. So grab the family, grab your tools and maybe even grab your favorite forester and get in the woods to start growing high quality timber!

Rules are located at: http://www2.dnr.cornell.edu/ext/timbercontest/Timber_Contest.pdf

Send us a note anytime with questions about the contest and we'll be happy to help get you up and running (dfaklis@frontiernet.net). Also, please send us stories about your Timber Contest experiences! 🌲

Dean Faklis is a tree farmer in Springwater, NY. Peter J Smallidge is NY Extension Forester, CCE.

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NYFOA General Director Candidates

The Nominating Committee of NYFOA presents the following slate of four nominees to fill the four openings on the statewide Board of Directors. Each opening is for a three-year term as provided by the Bylaws of NYFOA. Please complete the ballot below and mail to NYFOA by March 14, 2014.

Sid Haring, *Mayfield, NY*

Sid is a retired law professor, who moved to his 600 acre inholding surrounded by Shaker Mountain Wild Forest in the Adirondack Park. He works in the woods almost every day, with a plan to both restore the forest to something like its pre-logged condition, but with a long term plan of a sustainable Adirondack forest economy. He grew up on a six generation family farm in Wisconsin, which he helped reforest.

Stacey Kazacos, *Reston, VA*

Stacey was born and raised near Syracuse, NY. He is a retired U.S. Foreign Service Officer, who had tours in Africa (Ethiopia, Botswana, Central African Republic, and Madagascar), Greece, and the U.S. — including a three year stint in Alaska. He and his wife, Jeannine, plan to retire full time in Mt. Vision, Otsego County, NY to expand their log house and manage a 96 acre forest property. Stacey received an MBA in International Business from McGill University, Montreal, and a B.S. from Syracuse University. In September 2013, he completed the New York Master Forest Owner program offered through the Cornell University Cooperative Extension and previously took the Game of Logging chainsaw safety training.

Charles Stackhouse, *Bluff Point, NY*

Charles practiced general surgery in small communities for 28 years and is “mostly retired.” He and his wife Sarah live in rural Bluff Point, NY on a 300+ acre farm purchased in 2003. The 127 acres of woods provided a house site, firewood, lumber for woodworking, good hunting, exercise, and the impetus to learn about forest management. That impetus led to MFO training, joining NYFOA and attending many NYFOA events, and a desire to encourage more landowners to take an active role in managing their woodlands. Please Note: this candidate is to fill an unexpired term ending in 2015.

Sarah Stackhouse, *Bluff Point, NY*

Sarah has been a member of NYFOA and Master Forest Owner Volunteer since 2008 and is active in the Western Finger Lakes Chapter. She currently serves as NYFOA’s treasurer. As a member of the NYFOA board and an MFO, Sarah strives to make more people aware of NYFOA and to foster its mission of promoting sustainable forestry practices and improved stewardship of private woodlands. Sarah and her husband Charles live on their farm in the Finger Lakes where they grow grapes and hay and manage 100+ acres of woodland for timber production and wildlife habitat.

DETACH AND COMPLETE MAIL BEFORE MARCH 14, 2014

Election Form

VOTE FOR FOUR (4) CANDIDATES

Sid Haring ()

Stacey Kazacos ()

Charles Stackhouse ()

Sarah Stackhouse ()

Write-in candidate _____ ()

_____ ()

Name(s) _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____

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Chapter / Affiliation _____

Send ballot to: NYFOA, P.O. Box 541, Lima, New York 14485



NY Forest Owners Association



52nd Annual Spring Program, Saturday, March 22, 2014

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

- 8:15 a.m. **Registration and refreshments.** *Check out the displays from NYFOA Chapters and forestry oriented exhibits in Nifkin Lounge.*
- 9-9:15 a.m. **Welcome:** Jim Minor, President NYFOA and David Newman, Chair, Faculty of Forestry, SUNY ESF.
- 9:15-10 a.m. **Silviculture and Regeneration, Perspectives for Landowners.**
Dr. Ralph Nyland, Distinguished Service Professor, SUNY-ESF.
- 10-11 a.m. **The Return of the American Chestnut,** Dr. Chuck Maynard, SUNY-ESF
- 11:15-12 p.m. **Wildlife Species of Conservation Need and Woodland Owners**
Gary Goff, Cornell University, Rich Taber, Cornell Cooperative Extension, and Jonathon Cohen, SUNY-ESF
- 12-1:30 p.m. **Luncheon and NYFOA Annual Awards Banquet**
Keynote Speakers: Jerry Michael and Kelly Smallidge, Chairs, NYFOA Restore New York's Woodlands Initiative: Update
- 1:30-2:20 p.m. **Tours of the new ESF Gateway Building and other campus highlights TBA**
- 2:30-3:15 p.m. **NYFOA Annual Membership Meeting**
- 3:30-5 p.m. **NYFOA Board of Directors Meeting**

Prepared by Conference Chairperson Rich Taber, CNY Chapter

PLEASE REGISTER BY MARCH 14TH BY RETURNING THIS FORM TO ADDRESS BELOW

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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

AN UPDATE ON THE EMERALD ASH BORER IN NEW YORK STATE

BY MARK WHITMORE

The Emerald Ash Borer (EAB), *Agrilus planipennis*, is quickly developing into the most significant forest pest to hit New York since the Chestnut blight. The issues surrounding dead ash trees are becoming more apparent as infestations develop in the state. EAB has been spreading in New York and it is important for anyone with ash trees to be aware of recent developments in order to formulate effective management decisions. There is so much riding on these decisions that the more informed you are the better your decisions will be. Woodlot owners in NY should be thinking about ash management in their stands not only from the standpoint of wood production but also for regeneration of desirable species and liability issues when the trees die. We have focused on woodlot management previously (April 2011) and little has changed regarding basic management options. Now the important message is that EAB is still found in less than 5% of New York's forests and most people have time to plan before it arrives. We need to use this time wisely to minimize EAB's impacts. I've heard some disturbing reports that there are seemingly responsible professionals saying EAB is widespread in the state and this is just not true. One of the biggest problems we have in New York is the decline of White ash in areas of saturated soils and many people equate the symptoms of ash decline with the presence of EAB. There are two ways to tell the difference: 1) when EAB is

around all the trees around will be dying quickly, not the prolonged hanging on that you see with decline; and 2) you will be able to see evidence of woodpeckers feeding on EAB by flicking the bark off to find them. There are photos of woodpecker foraging on the website: www.nyis.info/eab. Of course the easiest way to locate EAB is to go to the detailed maps produced by DEC: www.dec.ny.gov/animals/82847.html. I recommend that everyone involved in forest management take time to familiarize themselves with these maps and my discussion of the infestations below when formulating your management plans.

Although first detected in New York in 2009, EAB has been established in most locations much longer than that and now populations are building to the point that they are beginning to spread across the landscape at an increasing rate. Currently there are 13 infested sites and 3 locations where

there have been trap catches but no detection of infested trees (Figure 2). The following discussion will focus on the different infestations in order of their size.

The largest EAB infestations in the state are in Ulster, Greene, and Dutchess Counties where infested trees have been found over an area more than 250 square miles. On the west side of the Hudson River the infestation has been detected from about 5 miles north of Catskill south to Esopus, and west of the river beyond the Blue Line almost to Phoenicia. EAB was just last year detected on the east side of the river in Dutchess County extending from Tivoli to just north of Hyde Park and extending east of the river in a couple spots just over 2 miles. The infestation appears to be spreading quickly to the west, north, and south at a rate of



Figure 1: Know your EAB larvae. When you pull the bark off an ash and find larvae look for the small flat head and the nested bells on the posterior part of the larva. Photo by Mark Whitmore.

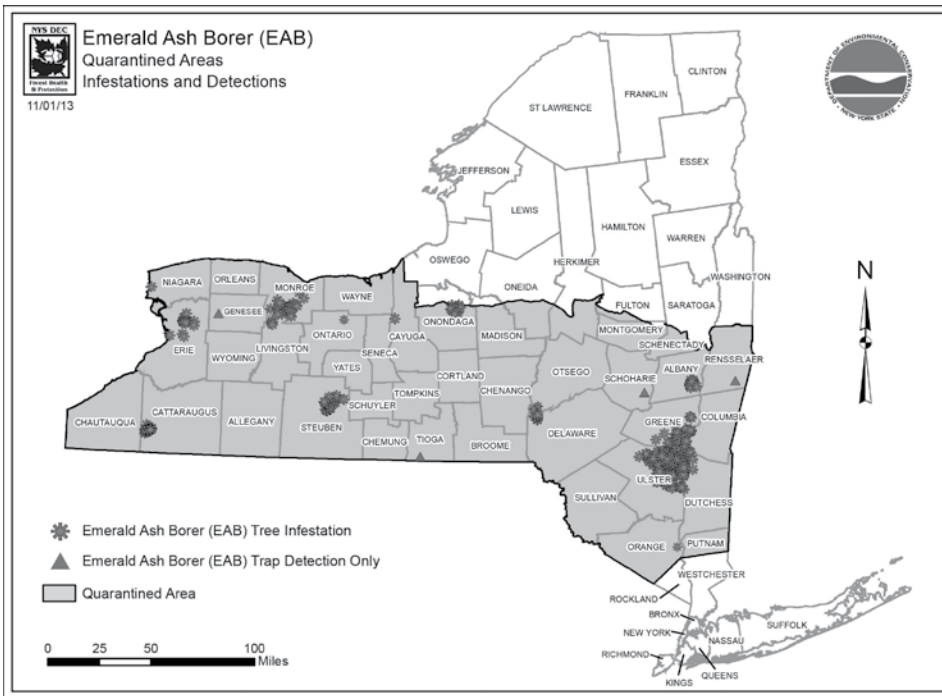


Figure 2. Emerald Ash Borer quarantined areas.

about 5 miles per year. On the leading edges of the infestation, as with others in the state, signs and symptoms are sparse. As you move towards the center mortality becomes more apparent. The most dramatic effects are being seen to the west of the river in the relatively contiguous forest between Woodstock and Ruby. In this area woodpecker foraging is easily seen and mortality is widespread. No tree mortality from EAB has yet been detected east of the river in Dutchess County. I recommend that anyone living within 10 miles of the infestation core (the black area on the maps referred to above) should have their trees treated if they wish to save them.

The closer to the core the more rapidly you should act.

The core of the Greater Rochester infestation extends southwest from downtown Rochester to just south of Caledonia in Livingston County (about 20 miles) and is about 13 miles at its widest, centered near to where I-90 passes over the Genesee River. Mortality is impressive along the Thruway near the Genesee River Bridge yet still confined to an area of about 2 miles around this center. However, spotty mortality is appearing more than 4 miles away towards Chili, south of Scottsville, and around the RIT campus. One of the big problems in this area is the high

concentration of ash in woodlands which will foster a rapid population buildup. As with all EAB infestations, it takes a couple years for trees to die and in the meantime EAB is moving further away. Symptoms appear to be moving at about 2 to 3 miles per year east and west of the center. A satellite infestation was detected 9 miles to the SW of the center, just south of Caledonia where there is still little mortality and EAB is moving more slowly. Another satellite population was detected in a small park in downtown Rochester about 10 miles NE of the center where trees were either destroyed or treated and no EAB has been found since.

The Greater Buffalo infestation in Erie County is centered in Lancaster, less than a mile SE of the Buffalo Airport. Ash is abundant in forests of the region and EAB population has increased in small woodlots, along streets, and in backyards. Mortality has just begun to show up 2 miles north of I-90 and extends south to West Seneca. To the west mortality has not been detected beyond the airport but to the south mortality has been found in Depew, 2.5 miles from the center. To the east mortality is beginning to show up in a large ash and red maple swamp 2.5 miles from the center. Mortality in a satellite population in West Seneca just west of the intersection of Transit Road and Hwy 400 is largely limited to about 1 square mile area between Lein and Bullis Roads. South Park is another satellite infestation just beginning to show mortality within the park and detections a mile south in Lackawanna. EAB has likely dispersed between these satellite infestations but mortality is not yet apparent.

The Bethlehem infestation in Albany County covers an area of about 4 square miles located between South Bethlehem and the railroad yard to the north. Right now mortality is scattered through the area with detections in the periphery near South Bethlehem. Populations are building in nearby woodlots area and this infestation will be moving north into the more urban areas as well as SW into contiguous forest.

Mortality in the Randolph infestation

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continued on page 16

Woodland Health (continued)

in Cattaraugus County is still largely confined to about ½ mile from the infestation center around exit 16 on I-86. However, detections have been made more than 3 miles from the center and mortality is beginning to appear up to 1.5 miles away, primarily to the west, south, and southeast.

EAB mortality at the Bath infestation in Steuben County is centered about 3 miles north of the village with mortality primarily limited to about half a mile from the origin. Symptoms are moving primarily to the north and northeast but a spot with mortality is found by the river near I-86 Exit 39.

The Unadilla infestation is in Otsego and Delaware Counties, centered on the Village. Mortality is just becoming apparent 1.5 miles both north, west, and south of the village.

Mortality in the recently detected Syracuse infestation is confined to a few acres near Carrier Circle but has been detected to the south and east up to 2 miles away.

The Lewiston infestation in Niagara County is still small with little mortality. It seems to be localized near the Niagara Falls Country Club although detections have been made 1 mile to the east.


Manchester in Ontario County is the most recent infestation detected and at present is confined to a small amount of mortality just south of the Thruway.

The Montezuma infestation in Cayuga County is restricted to a campground where just one tree was near death and symptoms are apparent in others in the immediate vicinity.

West Point in Orange County is very small and the few infested trees were destroyed; survey continues.

The Nichols infestation in Tioga County is limited to just a few trees in the area between Tioga Downs and the Susquehanna River.

There are three locations where a single EAB was caught in a purple trap and no infested trees have been found despite considerable survey effort: Pembroke, in Genesee County; Stephentown in Rensselaer County, and Livingstonville in Schoharie County.

EAB management continues to evolve. Planning tools like the Purdue EAB Cost Calculator and pesticide BMP's are developing and an awareness of these resources is important for management decision-making. Trees are being successfully treated with systemic insecticides in the Midwest, even after displaying considerable crown decline. The cost of protecting stands of ash is prohibitive but owners should consider treating a few choice trees to produce seed and maintain genetic diversity across the landscape after EAB moves through. Considering the value of a healthy urban tree canopy some Midwest communities are opting to treat trees rather than remove them. Local EAB Task Forces have formed throughout the state with the help of Cornell Cooperative Extension and are a great opportunity to help your communities understand and plan for EAB. Detailed EAB information and resources as well as information on EAB Task Forces are found at: www.nyis.info/eab 

Mark Whitmore 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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No Need to Flee From These Fleas

PAUL HETZLER

They aren't fleas and they're not especially fond of snow, but other than that, snow fleas are aptly named. On a sunny winter day you may notice tiny dark flecks bouncing on the snow, often concentrated near the bases of trees or collecting in footprints and other indentations. While snow fleas are the size of actual fleas, don't worry about infestation—they're not interested in either you or your pets (please don't take that personally). Try not to step on them, though, as they've given us the means to improve both organ transplantation and ice cream.

Snow fleas, a type of "springtail," were classified as insects until recent DNA sequencing pegged them as another type of arthropod called a hexapod. Apparently there's now heated debate as to whether springtails qualify as a hexapod class or are merely a sub-class. You have to love scientists. First they study an obscure arthropod to develop life-saving technology, then come to fisticuffs over labeling it.

Whatever the label, snow fleas are beneficial in many ways. As decomposers of organic matter, they're important in the formation of healthy topsoil. They and their hexapod cousins are one of the most abundant types of soil 'animals,' numbering around 100,000 individuals per cubic yard of topsoil.

Besides eating algae, fungi, nematodes, protozoa and a wide range of organic matter, they consume organisms and spores that cause damping-off wilt and other plant diseases. In fact, springtails are being studied for their potential to control plant diseases in greenhouses.


Snow fleas produce a unique glycine-rich protein that keeps ice from forming inside cells at very cold temperatures. This newly discovered molecule is unlike any previously known protein, and is the basis for research on more efficient storage of transplant organs. Organs can be stored much longer at below-freezing temps with this antifreeze protein. Eventually we may also see ice cream that never gets ice crystals no matter how long it sits neglected in the freezer.

Springtails lack a respiratory system and must breathe through their skin. As a result, they're quite vulnerable to drying out, and hop around to find moist, sheltered places as well as things to eat. A flea uses its tarsi, or toes, to vertically jump as much as seven inches, roughly equivalent to a person leaping 500 feet straight up, using only their toes. The snow flea is not nearly as athletic. It either crawls, or uses its two tail-like appendages to bounce a small fraction of a flea-jump. (Which helps me feel slightly less inadequate.)

During the warmer months snow fleas and other springtails are even more active than in winter, although without a white background for contrast they're hard to see. They forage extensively in the humus layer and move all through the soil, even deep down.

Springtails can be found throughout the forest canopy as well as on water, where surface tension keeps them from sinking. If you go out with a flashlight some June night you can see springtails bopping about on standing water.

Just the word 'flea' can set folks to scratching, so it's unfortunate about snow fleas' name. Try thinking of them as springtails, and keep an eye out on bright

winter days for these jittery critters that help make topsoil, and could one day help save lives. And ice cream, too. 

Paul Hetzler is a Program Educator, Cornell Cooperative Extension of St. Lawrence County



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NYFOA at Farm Show

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February 20-22, 2014

NYFOA will have fifteen free “Learn More, Earn More” seminars as part of its annual program at the Farm Show in Syracuse in February. Our programs are free and open to all.

We expect all NYFOA members to once again receive in the mail free tickets to the Farm Show’s exhibit buildings, courtesy of the Farm Show Organizers. Parking at the Fairgrounds is free. If you come to the Farm Show, please stop in the Arts and Home Center and say hello.

This year we will again have the expanded booth area adjacent to the seminar room in the Arts and Home Center that we enjoyed last February.

Seminar topics this year will include: improved wildlife and bird habitat, timber sales, pest control, preventing timber theft, successful tree planting, profit from portable saw mills, feral hogs, help from consulting foresters, and protecting the family legacy.

NYFOA is grateful for the range of support that makes the Farm Show programs possible. Visit nyfoa.org to see the complete list of seminar topics and speakers.

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Welcome New Members

We welcome the following new members (who joined since the publishing of the last issue) to NYFOA and thank them for their interest in, and support of, the organization:

Name	Chapter
Ken Allein	NFC
Dean & Kathleen Beh	WFL
William A. Bernatovich	WFL
Twoey Brayson	NAC
Peter T. Brennan	CNY
Chad Engler	WFL
John Farneth	CNY
Richard Ford	NFC
Rodney Gould	SOT
Zachary I. Hanan	SAC
Hacker Murphy LLC	CDC
Ian Klingbail	NAC
Karl F. Leopold	WFL
Glenn & Susan McLaren	AFC
Rusty Mehlenbacher	WFL
William Nugent	NAC
Mary Ann Randall	CDC
Steve Reichenbach	CNY
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Ken & Melinda Wiley	SOT



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For information related to the Restore New York Woodlands Initiative, visit the NYFOA webpage at www.nyfoa.org Also, visit and 'like' RNYW on Facebook

MAGAZINE DEADLINE

Materials submitted for the March/April Issue should be sent to Mary Beth Malmsheimer, 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 February 1, 2014



Member Profile:

John Hammer

MAUREEN MULLEN

John Hammer may be retired, but his days are very full. John and his wife Linda own two parcels of land in Yates County: one is a 15-acre wooded lot they live on, the other is a 100-acre wooded lot they use solely for recreation. Managing these parcels has become a full-time job for John... and he loves it!

The Hammers bought the 15-acre parcel in 1978. It was originally part of a 100-acre farmstead. At 1000-foot elevation, the parcel is mostly hardwoods: red and white oak, sugar maple, hickory, white ash, basswood, and white pine. The main invasive species John is trying to control here is the European buckthorn. The larger, 100-acre parcel was bought in 1992 and was once a potato farm. This forested parcel is at 2000-foot elevation and is made up of red and white oak, sugar and red maple, hickory, white ash, black birch, American beech, black cherry, white pine, and eastern

hemlock. When originally purchased, the parcel was only about 75% wooded with 25% open or brushy areas. Now, it is about 85% wooded since John planted some Norway spruce over the past few years. John has been trying to rid the 100-acre woods of invasive species, such as autumn olive, ironwood, and striped maple.

As mentioned at the outset, John has made managing these woods his full-time job (except during January and February when the 100-acre woods are inaccessible due to snow). Shortly after a timber harvest on the 100-acre parcel in 2005, John contacted Corey Figueiredo at Future Forest Consulting, Inc. to develop a forest stewardship plan. At Corey's suggestion, they enrolled the land into the 480a Forest Tax Law program. As John explains, "This resulted in significant property tax savings and the written [forest



Grandson Jacob enjoying a new water hole.

management] plan contained a tremendous amount of valuable information about our woodlot as well as clear direction regarding required timber stand improvement activities. I conducted all of the [timber stand improvement] activities myself which resulted in a seemingly endless amount of firewood for use in our woodstove." Through the 480a program, John met Jim Bagley, a NY Department of Environmental Conservation Forester. Jim not only helped John learn about his woodlot, he also introduced him to the Master Forest Owner (MFO) Volunteer Program. John then participated in the Cornell Cooperative Extension training and became an MFO in 2009. Through these relationships and programs, John found out about several conservation programs for which his land has since been approved for enrollment: EQIP (Environmental Quality Incentives Program), a federal grant that "helped to cover the cost of several significant improvement activities in my woodlot, including 20 acres of diseased beech tree eradication, the planting of 11,000 Norway spruce, the installation of several water bars and culverts to prevent water erosion on skid trails, and the installation of water holes for the benefit of wildlife;" and the Conservation Stewardship Program through NRCS (Natural Resources Conservation Service) "which subsidizes improvement activities to enhance wildlife habitat through the building of brush piles, creation of



Timber Harvest 2005.

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snags, preserving tree dens, and much more.”

John’s motivation for many of his forest management plans is maintaining a healthy population of wildlife. John has been involved with the Quality Deer Management Association (QDMA) and puts the QDMA’s practices to use on his own property, as well as through educating other forest landowners on the topic during his MFO visits and meetings. Several years ago, he and a friend started a QDM Cooperative in their county. John also enjoys fishing, especially when his children and grandchildren visit. He built a half-acre pond and stocked it with channel catfish, bass, perch, and crappies. Then in 2008, after a couple years of timber stand improvements and habitat creation, John was befriended by a wild ruffed grouse that moved into some prime grouse habitat in John’s woods. Sammy the grouse (named by John’s grandson Jacob) would meet John at his truck when he drove up into Sammy’s territory. From there, Sammy would follow John “like a pet dog,” perch on his knee when he sat down, fly alongside him when he rode his ATV, sit in the tree stand during a hunt, and just like a pet dog, “when I did chainsaw or other work, he would be underfoot most of the time, jumping out of the way at the last second.” As John explained, “The bond that I was



Sammy the grouse supervising my work.



Granddaughter Taylor, with skidder.

blessed to have with this wild creature was special beyond words and no one has been able to explain to me why or how it happened. It just did, and again... it was the single best outdoor experience of my life.” Sadly this last summer, Sammy failed to join John on his outings, probably lost to a predator.

John has been an active NYFOA member for several years and has been involved in NYFOA woods walks and workshops. He advises other forest landowners to join NYFOA, to learn “from the many experts that are associated with NYFOA either as professionals or as highly experienced and knowledgeable members.” His two additional pieces of advice: have a management plan developed for your woodlot and learn more about the need for deer population control. ▲

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