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 2015

Member Profile: Arthur Wagner

Volume 53 Number 1

NEW YORK FOREST OWNERS ASSOCIATION
People Caring About NY's Trees and Forests
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In This Issue . . .

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Forest Owner

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Volume 53, Number 1

The New York Forest Owner is a bi-monthly publication of The New York Forest Owners Association, PO Box 541, Lima, NY 14485. Materials submitted for publication should be sent to: ***Mary Beth Malmsheimer****, Editor, The New York Forest Owner, 134 Lincklaen Street, Cazenovia, New York 13035. Materials may also be e-mailed to mmalmshe@syr.edu. Articles, artwork and photos are invited and if requested, are returned after use.* ***The deadline for submission for the March/April issue is February 1, 2014.***

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 $45.

This publication is printed on Finch Opaque, Smooth, 70 lb. text paper. Located in the beautiful Adirondacks, Finch has long understood that the viability of our business relies on the wise use—and reuse—of resources. Finch papers are made with renewable energy, post-consumer recycled fiber and elemental chlorine-free pulps. In addition, Finch Paper was the first integrated paper mill in the US to received both the Forest Management and Chain of Custody certifications from the Forest Stewardship Council and the Sustainable Forestry Initiative.

www.nyfoa.org

Cover: Arthur Wagner and his grandson Matthew checking on an Austrian Pine 5 years after being transplanted. For member profile see page 21. Photo courtesy of Arthur Wagner

From The President

I would like to remind members that, with the February 28th deadline looming, the opportunity to avail yourself of the NYFOA Gift Membership program is drawing to a close. With NYFOA's annual meeting, RNYW Symposium, and chapter spring woodswalks on the near horizon, now is an opportune time to bring new members into the NYFOA community.

For those of you that have already given the gift of membership, an invitation by you to your recipient to attend any of the aforementioned events, arrange an MFO visit or similar would help them obtain the most from their membership.

Once again NYFOA will have a strong presence at the New York Farm Show in Syracuse, February 26-28. There will be both a NYFOA booth and forest-related programs put on by NYFOA. Go to *www.newyorkfarmshow.com* for details on the farm show in general and see page 20 in this issue of the *Forest Owner* for more information on the presentations. Special thanks to Ron Pedersen, Hugh Canham, Dave Skeval, and Kristina Ferrare (the latter two from the Onondaga CCE office) for all their hard work in making this happen. Tickets to the Farm Show will be mailed to all NYFOA members. Our thanks to the **New York Farm Show Council** for their continuing support of NYFOA, as well as our partners in the NYFOA presentations: **Cornell Cooperative Extension**, **SUNY-ESF** and **NYSDEC**.

Our 53rd Annual Spring Program will be held in Syracuse at the SUNY-ESF College of Environmental Science and Forestry's Marshall Hall on March 21st. The theme of this year's meeting will be *Management Planning for Woodlot Owners*. Our thanks to board members **Rich Taber** and **Dave Newman** for all their work in coordinating this. See page 13 in this issue for program details and the registration form. Please get your registration in by March 13th or earlier, before you forget! I hope to see you there.

As part of this program we shall also hold a short annual members' meeting. A main part of this meeting will be the announcement of the election results of new board members. See page 12 in this issue for information on the candidates. Please fill out the accompanying ballot and return it prior to the meeting to Liana Gooding at the address given on the ballot.

Plans for a symposium on our Restore New York Woodlands initiative, to be held at the SUNY-ESF campus on April 25th, are being finalized. Please reserve the date and see our March/April issue for details on this event, highlighting threats to our native forests. Thanks to Board Members **David Newman** and **Jerry Michael**, and Ex-officio Board Member **Peter Smallidge** for leading this project for NYFOA.

Finally, to broaden the reach of our message promoting good forest stewardship, we have hired **BrandrethWorks** marketing organization to help formulate that message and subsequently promote it to a wider community, inviting them to join us in bringing this to reality for our New York forests. We expect to be able to report progress on this front later this spring.

–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.

Join NYFOA today and begin to receive its many benefits including: six issues of ***The New York Forest Owner***, woodswalks, chapter meetings, and statewide meetings.

( ) I/We own _____acres of woodland.
( ) I/We do not own woodland but support the Association's objectives.

Name: _____
Address: _____
City: _____
State/ Zip: _____
Telephone: _____
Email: _____
County of Residence: _____
County of Woodlot: _____
Referred by: _____

Regular Annual Dues:
( ) Student $15
(Please provide copy of student ID)
( ) Individual/Family $45

Multi-Year Dues:
( ) 2-yr $80
( ) 3-yr $120

Additional Contribution:
( ) Supporter $1-$49
( ) Contributor $50-$99
( ) Sponsor $100-$249
( ) Benefactor $250-$499
( ) Steward $500 or more

( ) Subscription to Northern Woodlands $15 (4 issues)

NYFOA is recognized by the IRS as a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization and as such your contribution my be tax deductible to the extent allowed by law.

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UPDATE: NYFOA Gift Membership Challenge 360

Welcome, New Members! And a BIG Thanks to the dozens of generous gift givers!

As I write this, we've just inched into December and we're up to 78 gift memberships given and received, spread all across the state. It's really heartwarming to see NYFOA members reaching out to their neighbors with the gift of NYFOA membership and all its associated benefits. Gift memberships are only $25 and they have a huge multiplicative effect on our forests. Collectively, our new members own thousands of acres!

During the past two months, I've heard many great new-member stories but I'm partial to the ones where little ones are involved. Our forests need children and I'm convinced that children need forests. Stewardship can go both ways and families and forestland go hand in hand.

If you're inclined to join us and give the gift of NYFOA membership, please consider gifting families with young ones. And then, if you can, please help them get out and understand the forest.

But….***we're behind schedule*** towards our goal of 360 new members. Please take a minute and give a gift (e.g. to a neighbor, family member) using the form that appeared in the November/December issue of the *Forest Owner* or online at *www.nyfoa.org*. The deadline is February 28 but let's try to achieve our goal sooner so we can get to work on achieving our important new objectives for 2015.

Be sure to check out the home page at *www.nyfoa.org* for the latest results and status of ***Challenge 360***.

If you have any questions or would like to make a special or distinguished pledge, please contact me at *dfaklis@frontiernet.net*, and we can discuss all sorts of options. Let's work together on this and make it happen!

Welcome New Members and Thank You Very Much to All the gift givers for their fine generosity!

Dean Faklis is a tree farmer and MFO living in Springwater, NY

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 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.

RNYW T-shirts.

The Restore New York Woodlands T-shirts have proven very popular. We have placed a second order and, if you missed out on getting yours last time, you have a second chance now!

You can order additional short sleeve at $11 each (S, M, L and XL) and/or get the new long sleeve version at $16 each (M, L and XL). Shipping and handling is $6 + 8% sales tax.

Contact Liana Gooding at (800 836-3566) or *lgooding@nyfoa.org* to place your order.

Want BIG and TALL Trees?
Workshop on March 14, 2015

Dean Faklis

Timber is a strategic material, and in New York, timber production is primarily in the hands of 700,000 private landowners. For many forest owners, an important objective is to grow high-quality timber, which can then be harvested sustainably and used in the forest products industry. Our soils and environment are capable, but in order to achieve the timber objective successfully, the best trees need help. This means that forestland owners ***must*** take action to address the "weeds in the garden."

But growing high-quality timber is a monumental task, isn't it? Do I cut that one? What if I make a mistake? Is that tree worth $1, $1,000 or $10? I call it Timber Stress!

The best trees and the "weeds" provide visual clues. Most are obvious and accessible with a bit of training (e.g. tall and straight black cherry, clump of gnarly red maple). However, some clues are hidden from us given our short attention spans. Separating the best from the worst requires an understanding of both the obvious clues and those clues that ***require*** inspection through measurement.

And this is why the friendly Northeast Timber Growing Contest was created. The Contest (*www.timbercontest.com*) brings in a little science with a lot of fun to help families focus on growing their best trees. Simple forest measurements reveal hidden clues and whisk away most all timber stress. And it only takes four (4) hours per year and can be accomplished at near zero cost! Most importantly, the contest framework ***gives purpose*** to your timber activities.

Dave Williams, NYFOA Board Member, on behalf of the Southern Tier Chapter, will host an excellent hands-on workshop on March 14, 2015 to train attendees on how to use the contest to grow great trees. It starts at 10 am with a 15-minute presentation indoors and then we will all head to a nearby woodlot for a 90 minute session on forest measurements. You'll learn everything needed to enter and succeed in the contest including tools, tips and tricks. We'll then head back indoors after the field work where lunch will be provided and we'll have some hearty discussions.

The workshop is free, but registration is required, and children are welcome to attend! Many of our hardwoods take upwards of 100 years to reach maturity, so we need to get our children into the woods, and the contest is a great way to do that. Kids of all ages love friendly competition. Register by sending an email to Dave at *kdwillmill@gmail.com* and he will send you confirming details.

Meet at the United Presbyterian Church of East Guilford (see directions below) a bit before 10 am for coffee prior to the presentation. Bring some inside shoes in addition to your outside attire. Rain, snow or shine, but call Dave at (607) 563 3156 if fierce blizzard conditions exist!

Be sure to check out *www.timbercontest.com* soon for the 2014 results! 2015 measurements are best completed by April 15 and the timing of this workshop is perfect! Who doesn't have four hours per year to invest in learning to grow BIG and TALL trees?

Dean Faklis is a tree farmer and MFO living in Springwater, NY.

The United Presbyterian Church of East Guilford is at the corner of County Route 35 and NYS Route 8 (about 4 miles north of the Sidney exit on interstate 88). Look for the flashing caution light and turn right. The church is on the corner. The Church's address is 2699 County Rd. 35, Mt. Upton, NY.

NYFOA STORE

Show your support for the Association! All items display the NYFOA logo.

1. Sweatshirt.....$20.00
   Green M, L, XL
   Grey M, L, XL

2. Long Sleeve T-Shirt.....$14.00
   Green M, L, XL
   Grey M, L, XL

3. Short Sleeve T-Shirt.....$10.00
   Green M, L, XL
   Grey M, L, XL

All shirts are heavy weight cotton with white lettering on the green and green lettering on the grey.

4. Baseball Style Cap.....$14.00
   Tan with Green logo, one size

5. NYFOA Member Sign.....$ 3.00
   12x12 Heavy Gauge Plastic
   Yellow with green lettering

6. Mugs.....$ 4.00
   White with green lettering

7. Cutting Boards.....$ 5.00
   Wood, 5 ½ x7 inches

Item#	Description	Size	Qty	Price	Total
Shipping and handling: $6.00					
NYS Sales Tax – add 8%					
Total:					

Name:_____

Address:_____

City:_____

State / Zip: _____

Telephone: _____

Form of Payment: ☐ Check ☐ Credit Card

Credit Card No.

_____

Expiration Date _____V-Code_____

Signature: _____

Make check payable to NYFOA. Send the completed form to: NYFOA, P.O. Box 541, Lima, New York 14485. Questions? Call 800-836-3566

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

I recently watched a webinar that mentioned forest succession. Can you tell me more about forest succession and what it means for woodlot owners? (Ellen G.)

Response

The succession of plant communities is a process that has drawn attention from ecologists, foresters and woodlot owners for decades. Succession deals with communities or groupings of various plant species in the same vicinity. Succession was one of the earliest ecological processes studied. The simple definition is the predictable and orderly progression of change in the plant species that dominate an area. The classic image is of grassy fields, followed by brush, then small trees, and finally forest. The details though are more involved and more interesting.

The cycle of succession starts with the response of a plant community to a disturbance of previously vegetated lands. Because plants occupied the site before the disturbance, this type of succession is known as secondary succession. Succession on land that did not previously have plants, such as soil exposed as a glacier retreats or a new sand bar in a river is called primary succession.

Forest succession is simply the succession or the orderly and predictable change in the dominant species of forest plants. The change in dominance occurs because the plants that are most dominate during early states of succession often die early, allowing longer lived plants to predominate. In the Northeast, most lands have gone through succession since agricultural lands were abandoned. Most agricultural abandonment happened between 1880 and the 1950s, and thus the majority of our forests range between 70 to 120 years old. In additional to agriculture, the forest might have been extensively cut-over, or disturbed by hurricanes or fire, and plants naturally regrew. All owners are observing forest succession on their property as the forest changes through time.

Forest ecologists recognize four phases of forest succession, or what is sometimes called forest development. These phases are: (i) stand initiation, (ii) stem exclusion, (iii) understory reinitiation, and (iv) steady state. Each phase has specific characteristics that are typical regardless of the type of forest that is succeeding. The timing of each phase is variable and difficult to anticipate. Each phase also has a variety of management practices that, depending on ownership objectives, are relevant and timely. In all phases, assistance from a forester will help focus effort on those activities most likely to support ownership objectives.

Stand Initiation – The stand, or plant community of a location, initiates following the cessation of the disturbance (Figure 1). Stand initiating disturbances are sufficiently intense and wide spread that large amounts of sunlight are available at or near the soil of the forest floor. The increase of sunlight provides the essential and often limiting resource that allows new plants to establish or existing plants to begin growing and

Figure 1: A clearcut is an example of a stand replacing disturbance that resets the successional process to the beginning. Many different tree and other plants species will occupy the site, but the early successional dominants, such as pin cherry, birch and aspen will form the early canopy.

Figures 2 and 3. The initial onset of the stem exclusion stage is illustrated by this 25 year old red maple community that grew into an abandoned pasture. Note the absence of an understory and the closed canopy. The picture on the right (Figure 3) shows a weak fork of a dominant tree. Often the early dominant trees develop multiple main stems above a fork, but the fork is under stress, especially with tight "V" forks.

dominate. During this phase, most plants that will occur in the developing forest will establish. Although different plant species will become more dominant or apparent through time, they all become established during the first phase. The duration of this phase is shortest, perhaps 15 to 25 years when there is abundant seed and soil resources are plentiful to the plants.

Management during the stand initiation phase might include those activities that relate to the successful establishment and growth of species of interest. Owners might need to learn to identify some new plants. An inspection of what's growing will allow the owner to assess the relative abundance of invasive plants, and the appropriate manner of control.

Figure 4. These ferns developed following partial harvests in the understory reinitiation stage, and are enhanced by high deer pressure. Additional harvests will not successfully establish tree regeneration, but rather will push the plant community to a stable fern field. Caution is warranted to avoid activities that result in dominance by interfering plants that interact with high deer pressure to arrest succession.

The invasive plants have significant reproductive output and one or two per acre can likely result in a long lasting presence. If there are a few species of particular interest occurring in low numbers, the potential for deer browsing might encourage the owner to invest in some tree tubes and black locust stakes for use in preventing browse damage.

Stem exclusion – Within the stand or plant community, as plants continue to establish and grow, a point is reached where sunlight and soil resources become limiting and additional plants are excluded. As the existing plants then continue to grow (Figure 2), their competition for sunlight results in some plants gaining an advantage over plants adjacent to them, resulting in winners that live and losers that die. Often the trees with the competitive advantage have forked stems and thus bigger crowns that occupy more space (Figure 3). These forked trees are trees that we want to remove during TSI work. The duration of this phase depends on the mixture of species and their growth rate. For fast growing and shade intolerant species, the phase may last 20 to 30 years. This phase would be protracted with shade tolerant species and poor soil conditions.

Management during stem exclusion is an economically tenuous activity. However, many owners don't anticipate their financial returns for decades and view work in the woods as a pleasure and a pastime. At this stage of forest succession, it is possible to remove poorly formed stems as a source of firewood, or simply to contribute coarse woody debris to the forest floor. The financial concern is that any work is an investment and that investment would be carried forward until there is a revenue event. In our woodlands, that revenue event may be decades away. If work is conducted, it might focus on helping stems with good structural integrity, those stems with strong wood and without weak joints, that maintain their crown in the upper canopy and access full sunlight. Stems with forks may be stressed; as the fork forms a ridge of "callus" tissue (a tree's version of a scab). The bigger the callus ridge, the

continued on page 18

New York State Tree Farm News

Erin O'Neill

The Age Old Debate: Real or Fake Christmas Trees!

Tree farming, as I have said many times before, is the act of cultivating trees and forests as a crop. Hence, many people think Christmas trees when you say it. As many of us have taken down our Christmas trees, it seems an apt time of year to take a moment to consider… did you get a real or fake tree?

There's so much to consider when making the decision! I think by now everyone can wrap their head around the environmental neutrality we've been hearing about for years. Simply, the act of having a real tree you use for the season and then dispose of vs. having a plastic tree you keep for, approximately a decade before disposing of, is easy to visualize.

There's just so much more to consider than that. Did you buy the tree from a box store that trucked hundreds of trees across several states or, like me, did you go next door (without driving at all) and buy it from the neighbour's local farm, cut it yourself and drag the thing home. Okay, I know that's the two extremes, but you get my point. How much of an environmental impact did you make getting the real tree?

Even so, there's the question of where the box store ordered their tree supply from, is it a commercial operation or a family farm? Are you supporting a hobby or good seasonal jobs for people somewhere? That's important too.

And then there's the disposal—is that real tree headed to the landfill with the rest of your trash, or do you have a local landscape company that takes them for mulch? You may want to consider standing it out in the snow and letting your grandchildren or kids smear peanut butter and birdseed all over it after you take all the ornaments off.

Another note…if you choose fake, be sure to read the label. Many of them are PVC and contain lead which is toxic to children and animals.

I might suggest the greenest way to enjoy a Christmas tree is roots in-tact from a local grower and plant it in the spring! That could be your first step toward a tree farm of your own!

If you want to join this or any debate with landowners like yourself… 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.

Kid's Corner

Derek J. Conant

Photo submitted by NYFOA members Kurt and Kristie Edwards showing their grandchildren, Kolton and Khloe Edwards and Paige Jackson on their property in Mayfield, NY. "We love to take our grandchildren out into the woods every chance we get. We have a number of large, house size rocks and this one has been split down the middle, wide enough to walk through. It is a favorite play place for our three grandchildren," stated Kurt and Kristie.

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!

The American Mink

There are few animals in North America that have the ability to swim underwater and climb a tree to catch its prey. But one animal that can is the American mink (*Neovision vison*). The American mink is a semi-aquatic, carnivorous mammal native to non-arid regions of North America. Its preferred habitat is wooded areas along rivers, streams, lakes, swamps and marshes. Mink live in dens that might be under rocks or tree roots that they excavate themselves — but sometimes mink inhabit homes from animals like muskrat or beaver, as is the behavior of many opportunistic animals. Because of its resilient nature and human intervention, the American mink can also be found in South America and Europe. These populations have been established through intentional release and escape from mink farms.

Although seemingly rare, mink populations in New York have few natural predators and are relatively healthy in number. Mink are primarily nocturnal but will be active during daylight hours as well. They breed in the winter months and their kits are born in April or May, with the average litter size being three to six kits but can be as large as ten kits. A healthy mink population will have as many 9 to 22 individuals per square mile.

American mink are great hunters. To satisfy their voracious appetite, mink are opportunistic feeders and will eat almost anything. Depending on the area, their diet commonly consists of fish, insects, crustaceans, amphibians, small rodents, and waterfowl. Mink often catch excess food and store it in their den for later consumption.

So what does an American mink look like? Well, they are closely related to weasels and ferrets so they look similar. But there are a few distinct differences. Mink fur is soft and thick and usually is a solid dark brown. Some may have a small white patch beneath their chin or on their chest. Well adapted for the water, the outer hairs of their coat are oily to help waterproof them, and their toes are partially webbed making them strong swimmers. Adults have long and slender bodies and average two feet in length. Males tend to be larger than females. Mink fur has always been a highly valued commodity in the fashion industry. Historically mink were trapped for their luxurious fur (and some still are) but today they are primarily farmed.

If you like to fish along rivers, keep on the lookout. You may see one of these agile and elusive creatures moving along the shoreline through the rocks, searching for its next catch. Or it may just be interested in stealing your catch!

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

Wild Things in Your Woodlands

Kristi Sullivan

Cottontail Rabbit

Two species of cottontails are present in New York and both are very similar in appearance. The first is the Eastern cottontail (Silvilagus floridanus), which is abundant throughout much of New York State except the central Adirondacks. In contrast, the New England cottontail (Silvilagus transitionalis) is uncommon and occurs only east of the Hudson River. The New England cottontail is a species of special concern in New York State because its distribution and abundance have declined significantly over the last 40 years. Both of these rabbits are mostly gray-brown in color, with white undersides and a small white tail that looks like a cotton ball and is most visible as they bound away. They are about 14 ½ to 18 inches in length, and weigh about two to three pounds.

As you walk along a woods edge in the winter, the sights and sounds of wildlife activity are not as obvious as in other seasons. The tracks of the cottontail rabbit, or the occasional glimpse of a rabbit bounding for cover, remind us that some of New York's mammals are still active. The woods are quiet and peaceful during winter, and the lure of finding tracks, scat, or other signs of wildlife is added incentive to venture outdoors and enjoy what nature has to offer.

Like tracks and droppings, shrubs and seedlings with cleanly nipped twigs about 2 feet off the ground are evidence that rabbits are nearby. Rabbits are herbivores, feeding on bark and twigs of species such as sumac, oak, dogwood, maple, willow, apple, and raspberry during the winter. In the spring and summer rabbits feed on goldenrod, clover, chickweed, dandelions, and many other plants, eating the more succulent vegetation parts such as leaves, shoots and flowers. Rabbits are crepuscular, meaning that they feed most actively at dawn and dusk.

As the weather starts to warm in late February or March, rabbits entertain us with their wild, leaping courtship antics prior to breeding. Breeding starts in February and continues into September. After a gestation period of about 28 days, from three to seven young are born. The young, hairless with eyes closed, are born in a nest consisting of a shallow depression in the ground lined with hair pulled from the female's belly and dead grasses. They nurse and require parental care for about 20 days after birth. A mature, healthy female can have as many as five litters per breeding season. Although a single female could contribute as many as 35 young to the population each year, only about 20 – 25 percent of the young survive a full year. Predators, weather, disease, parasites, and social factors keep populations in check.

Male cottontails are territorial and dominant males maintain territories of about eight to 25 acres. Other males can remain in the area as long as they remain subordinate, and respect the social hierarchy. Females defend a territory of about two acres in the nesting season. When local densities are high, frequent social interactions can increase stress and lead to reductions in litter sizes and survival rates.

Creating habitat for rabbits is relatively easy. Rabbits need nesting

cover in the spring and summer, and food and escape cover throughout the winter. By leaving the tops of trees cut for firewood or during a timber harvest, you can provide food at ground level as well as cover. Crooked or forked evergreens can be partially cut through and toppled over to provide "living brush piles". After the holidays, consider placing your Christmas tree out in the woods instead of sending it to the landfill. Create clusters of old Christmas trees by overlapping this year's tree with last year's tree. You can also create brush piles by placing large rocks or logs on the ground, and adding progressively smaller pieces of wood as you build up. By criss-crossing larger logs on the bottom, you create hiding spaces and prevent the pile from decaying to quickly. Old rock walls and stumps left in the ground are also beneficial. With just a few small habitat improvement projects, you can satisfy the food and cover needs for cottontail rabbits and enjoy both the springtime antics and the winter signs that are the hallmark of the this animal.

Kristi Sullivan co-directs the Conservation Education Program at Cornell's Arnot Forest. More information on managing habitat for wildlife can be found at arnotconservation.info

NYFOA POSTED SIGN ORDER FORM

Use this form to order the sign shown above. The signs are orange with black printing.

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Add Name and Address to Sign Set up cost per address			$5.00
Plus $.05 per sign		_____	_____
Shipping and Handling Cost $10.00 per order			$10.00
SUBTOTAL			$_____
NYS Sales Tax – add 8%			$_____
TOTAL COST OF ORDER			$_____

Please specify Name and Address to be printed on signs:

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Limited to two lines of type (abbreviate where possible). Type is about 5/16 inches high.

Mailing Address
(UPS Shipping Address if different from mailing address)

Name:_____

Address: _____

_____

Make checks payable to ***NYFOA***.

Mail form to NYFOA at:
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For more information
Call 1-800-836-3566

* Minimum order is 50 signs with additional signs in increments of 25.

NYFOA Board of Director Candidates

The Nominating Committee of NYFOA presents the following slate of three 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 13, 2015.

Ed Neuhauser, *Groton, NY*
Ed Neuhauser and Peg Coleman live on 132 acres of land in Groton, NY, most of which is forested. Firewood for 6 local families is harvested by conducting timber stand improvement cuts on 1-2 acres every year. Lumber is also secured from this effort by milling the larger logs on a portable mill. Current projects on the property include rebuilding and residing the barn with lumber cut from the land and working with the NYSDEC and Army COE to design a pond for the property. Woodswalks have been held on the property to demonstrate management techniques overseen by professional foresters. Ed and Peg's goals are to learn how to better manage the property and to help other forest owners see more of the future potential of their own woodlands.

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.

Arthur Wagner, *Deposit, NY*
Arthur owns 300 plus acres of woodlands, wetlands and fields near Deposit, NY. His family (including 5 generations) has owned the property since 1958 and has participated in the NYS 480-A Forestry Program since 1995. Arthur has been a member of NYFOA for about 20 years and has been an MFO volunteer since 1999. Arthur has been a pharmacist for 35 years and currently is a hospital administrator in NYC. Arthur is interested in working with The Policy and Legislative Affairs Committee and increasing NYFOA membership by reaching out to downstate non-resident forest owners.

Detach and Complete Mail Before March 13, 2015

Election Form

Vote for Three (3) Candidates

Ed Neuhauser ( ) **Charles Stackhouse ( )**

Arthur Wagner ( )

_____ ( ) _____ ( )

Name(s) _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Chapter / Affiliation _____

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

NY Forest Owners Association

53rd Annual Spring Program, Saturday, March 21, 2015

Managing Your Woodlands

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. **Management Planning Guidelines for the Woodlot Owner**.
Kristina Ferrare, Cornell Cooperative Extension of Onondaga County.

10-10:50 a.m. **Wildlife Management Activities for the Woodland Owner**. Michael Putnam, NYSDEC Wildlife Biologist, Region 7, Cortland, NY

11-11:50 a.m. **Legacy and Estate Planning Highlights for the Woodland Owner.** Dr. Shorna Broussard Allred, Associate Professor, Department of Natural Resources, Cornell University.

12-1:30 p.m. **Luncheon and NYFOA Annual Awards Banquet**
Keynote Speaker: Dave Skeval, Director, Cornell Cooperative Extension of Onondaga County.

1:30-2:20 p.m. **NYFOA Annual Membership Meeting**

2:30-3:15 p.m. **Tour of the ESF Gateway Building**

3:30-5 p.m. **NYFOA Board of Directors Meeting**

Prepared by Conference Chairperson Rich Taber, CNY Chapter
and with input from the NYFOA Executive Committee and Board of Directors

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Please Register by March 13th by Returning This Form to Address Below

Name: _____ **Address:** _____

City: _____ **State:** _____ **Zip:**_____

Chapter Affiliation: _____ **Email:** _____

Registration Fee: $20 per person $15 for students. *Please make checks payable to NYFOA or pay by credit card.*

Number Attending: _____ **Total enclosed:**_____

Form of Payment: ☐ Check ☐ Credit Card

Credit Card No. _____Expiration Date _____V-Code_____

Signature: _____

Send the completed form to: ***NYFOA, PO Box 541, Lima, NY 14485***
Map, Directions and Parking information are available online at www.nyfoa.org

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

Is Locust Leaf Miner Becoming More Common in NY?

By Mark Whitmore

I've got to say for the record that black locust, *Robinia pseudoacacia*, is one of my favorite trees. My kids would chime in that I say that about all the trees, but this one is special. My appreciation for black locust started when I moved east from my native Washington State. At first I was thinking that it was a pest, encroaching into open areas and growing in a crooked fashion. My attitude has shifted completely since then. I now realize black locust is one of the most useful trees we can grow in New York because it is easy to regenerate, can inhabit draughty sites, fixes nitrogen in the soil, and has rot resistant heartwood. Its use for fence posts is unrivaled and demand for tall poles has been increasing dramatically with the resurgence of hops farming in the state. I've a friend nearby who retired, bought a portable mill a few years ago, and decided to specialize in milling black locust. He now has two full time employees and buys logs from as far away as Long Island. His biggest customers are those using the wood to construct recreational pathways and bridges as well as gardeners like me who prefer black locust over pressure treated lumber for garden beds and fences. The biggest frustration with black locust is finding straight logs. Researchers in Europe have been selecting for straight-boled trees for over a decade and it would be great to see these trees make it to the states. But there's a catch, black locust has recently been listed as a regulated species on the New York State Invasive Species list. Admittedly it can be a problem in sandy soils and threaten critical habitat in the pine bush for the Karner blue butterfly, but it can be managed in those situations. Despite the weak argument that it is not a New York native, black locust has been established, is widespread, and is economically important in New York and we should be able to bring in improved cultivars and grow it as a forest tree.

In the past few years there have been an increasing number of inquiries in New York about the leaves of black locust turning brown in mid summer. Most of these inquiries have come from the Hudson Valley, but recently we've been seeing this spread in the Southern Tier. This symptom is caused by leafmining insects. Leafminer larvae eat the juicy inner part of a leaf, protected by the outer leaf layers or epidermis. There are five known leafminers of black locust, a beetle, three moths, and a fly. By far the most common is the locust leafminer, *Odontota dorsalis*. It is a native leaf beetle in the large family Chrysomelidae which includes such illustrious pests as the Colorado potato beetle, cucumber beetle, and asparagus beetle. Locust leafminer (LL) is perhaps the most common insect pest of black locust. I brought up the topic of our recent increase in LL activity with a colleague visiting from southern Pennsylvania and he was surprised that it was not more common. He said that where he works it's unusual NOT to have LL browning black locust leaves in mid to late summer. Indeed, he's often used the brown foliage to get an idea of how much black locust there is in a stand. So what is going on here? Why are things so different in Southern PA? It's a native tree and a native insect that have been doing the co-evolutionary dance for thousands of years, right? First, some biology.

The life cycle of LL is fairly simple. Adults overwinter is protected areas like leaf litter, bark crevices, or tree holes. Upon emerging in spring they

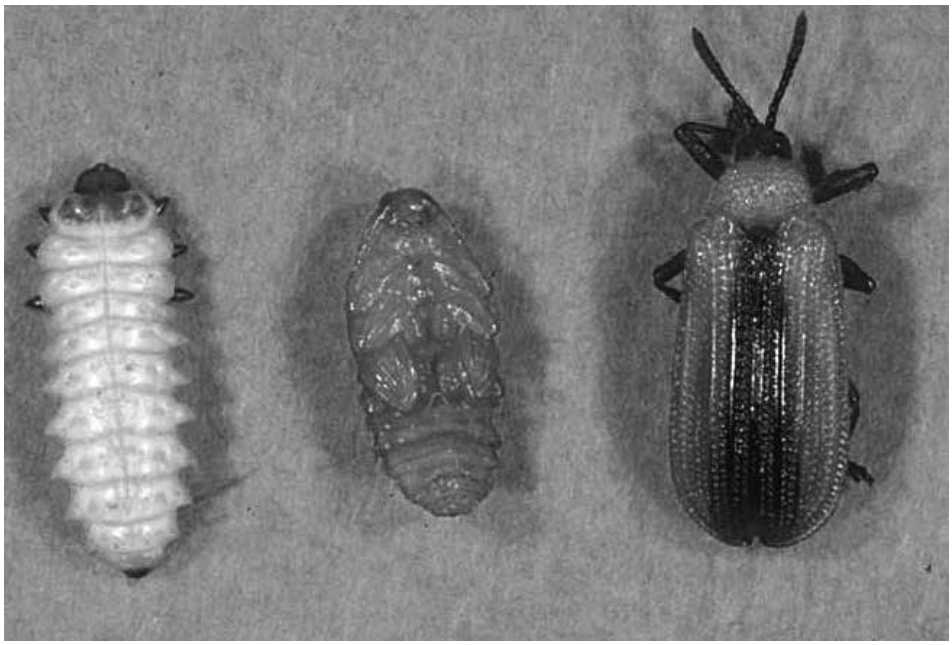

Figure 1. Locust Leafminer larva, pupa, and adult. E. Bradford Walker, Vermont Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation, Bugwood.org.

Figure 2. Larval leaf mines made by the Locust Leafminer. Jim Baker, North Carolina State University, Bugwood.org.

feed on leaves of a surprising variety of trees including white and red oaks, sugar maple, elm, hawthorn, beech, and black cherry. On the other hand, larvae feed only on a few leguminous trees and shrubs including false indigo bush, bristly locust, japanese pagoda tree, and golden-chain tree, but in our forests it is black locust.

Not long after beginning to feed on leaves in spring the adults (Figure 1) will begin laying eggs on the undersides of locust leaflets. They will lay about one clutch of 2 to 4 eggs per day on a leaflet and have been found in the lab to lay just over 100 eggs in their lifetime, though this is likely to be much less in the wild. After hatching, the larvae chew through the epidermis and into the juicy mesophyll tissue within the leaf where they construct an irregularly shaped mine (Figure 2). After consuming the tissue in a leaflet the larvae will exit and feed on another, consuming 3 or more leaflets to complete development. Late instar larvae are flattened, with a creamy yellowish body and black head and legs. Pupation occurs in the leaf mine and upon emergence adults will begin feeding on the underside of leaflets, skeletonizing them. The dried up mines and skeletonized leaflets turn brown and that is the scorched appearance you see from a distance.

From about mid-Ohio southward in its range LL usually has a second generation. This can cause problems when black locust pushes out a second flush of leaves and they are subsequently consumed. Repeated defoliation over a few years has been shown to cause tree mortality. However, this is a native insect and there is a well-developed natural enemy complex that normally inhibits development of damaging outbreak populations. I have yet to see any mortality associated with LL in New York but I have noticed that the areas with drier soils seem to be most severely affected, as others have found in southern regions. A question lingering in my mind is the interaction of dry soil, LL defoliation, and another important black locust pest, the locust borer (*Megacyllene robiniae*). Are there instances where they all combine into a perfect storm to damage the trees? What will happen with the straight-boled cultivars? And then back to the question about why we are noticing LL more in New York now. I was thinking the dry and hot summer of 2013 stressed the trees, but then LL populations need a bit more time to build up than just one growing season. I've often thought one of the first indicators of climate change will be an alteration in the delicate interaction between native trees, their pests, and the associated natural enemy complex. I can't say this is the cause of this change we've been seeing, and indeed it seems unlikely at this early stage, but it's not out of the realm of possibilities and certainly should not be ignored.

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

Engaging the Next Generation

Ed and Wanda Piestrak

Wanda and I enjoy looking out our many large windows in the living room, observing the birds and squirrels enjoying the fruits of nature. Along with that, we devise various projects that would be exciting, helpful, and of use for our lands and future generations.

We came up with a ginseng project this past summer. Wanda got on the phone and contacted multiple NYFOA members and, with a lot of help and guidance, we narrowed in on a seed provider. When we contacted a ginseng grower about information, right away they asked "Where are you from?" Steuben County was "far enough away," which led us to believe that we may not have been privy to the information otherwise. With all we were told, we concluded that it is very difficult to establish a ginseng area but we would give it a try.

First: Find a site. We needed a place where sugar maple trees are dominant and with a closed canopy. It was difficult but we found an area that provided that environment with a mix of soft maple.

Second: Seed to plant. We contacted several seed sources and came up with the most recommended and hearty seed supplier. Alleghany Mountain Ginseng, Eldred, PA. We ordered a quarter pound of seed at about $35 for the project.

Third: Prepare the site. We scraped all the leaves from the forest floor. The soil was a very dark texture and minus any stones. We put in rows of seed 1" deep and 10" apart, covered the seed with earth then the leaves that we had removed. (P.S, We put many of the seeds closer together since we had a surplus of the seeds)

Forth: We did not do a soil test so we guessed and put on a coat of lime as well as a type of fertilizer called "Humistait."

Fifth: We fenced in the area with posts and a four foot high fence.

Sixth: We did this in three different areas with each being approximately 15 feet by 30 feet in size.

Now we wait to see and ponder the results. Should the planting be successful, we will see the ginseng pop up in the springtime.

The fencing is an important part of the project. When we planted the first site and finished at dark we did not have time to fence the area so decided to do it the following day. The next morning DEC forester Greg Mueller and I were inspecting our roads and five turkeys were seen on the ginseng site. Animals have a network to know exactly what is to their liking and to know immediately where it is. This time we got the fence up before they had a chance to remove the sought after seeds.

We have been told to keep the project a secret since there are people out there that would remove the plants as they are highly desirable and quite valuable. However, we are very trusting of people and would believe NYFOA readers will respect the property of others. The saying "In God We Trust" is noteworthy and hope that the project is a success. We will follow up in the coming year with progress reports and keep you informed.

Ed and Wanda Piestrak are members of NYFOA.

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more stressed is the fork and the more likely the fork is to split (Figures 3 and 5). Crop tree management is a strategy to make sure that the trees selected by the owner as priority trees for long life and productivity are without competition on at least two if not all four sides.

Understory reinitiation – During the stem exclusion phase, the depth of the canopy elongates as fast growing trees get taller and those more tolerant of shade or in the process of dying grow more slowly. Some trees are now approaching sexual maturity and starting to produce seed. As the depth of the canopy elongates, as seeds are produced, and as some trees die, the potential for a new understory to initiate begins. The duration of this phase depends in large part on the longevity of the dominant species. If long-lived species were early dominants, their natural life span will slow the rate of their death and thus extend the duration of this phase. For example, if early dominants are poplar they might have a life span of 60 to 80 years, whereas if white pine, red oak, or sugar maple are the early dominants then the life span might be well over 100 years.

Management within the understory reinitiation phase is potentially productive, and in some cases may have a minimal positive revenue. Trees are of a sufficient size that the labor to harvest the poor quality stems might be offset by the value of the stem for firewood or for other low value products. Be cautious to avoid the temptation to harvest the fast growing high value trees using a selective or diameter limit strategy. This removes the majority of value, degrades the forest, and redirects the successional pathway. Many of the early successional dominants, such as the poplars and paper birch are approaching their natural life span. If markets or desired products can be obtained from these species, harvesting now will allow owners to utilize the wood before the stems die. Further, other species have demonstrated what they will have as a form, and owners wishing to select for particular forms of stems can continue to practice crop tree management. This is also a time when invasive plant species or native interfering plants can establish and begin to form a pervasive understory (Figure 4). Many tree harvesting activities will further open the canopy which infuses sunlight and disturb the soil surface. Sunlight and disturbed soil promote the establishment of most plants, and thus owners need to have a heightened sense of awareness of interfering plants.

Steady state – The final phase is the mature forest. Early successional dominants have died. The majority of the upper canopy are those species able to reproduce with limited amounts of light or that depend on a large disturbance for re-establishment of the dominant species. In the absence of external disturbances the forest reproduces itself among those species that can survive in sunlight available through small openings in the canopy as single trees die. The absence of external disturbances is infrequent, and thus the forest that is maintained is more heterogenous and reflects trees species that grow in small to mid- to large-sized canopy gaps. Human and natural events create canopy openings of various sizes and these favor tree species with different requirements of sunlight.

Management during the steady state will depend on the previous management and how the forest has developed. Trees are larger and have greater value, and the participation of your forester is especially important to protect your investment. Previous management may have created a forest where the owner can have sustainable partial harvests, and thinnings that allow additional growth on the best trees without reducing stand production or potential. Now, as before, careful attention is warranted to the presence of interfering plants and to avoid high-grading. Some owners will decide to restart the successional process with a regeneration harvest. This harvest should be guided by a carefully selected forester, with a logger, and with attention to the potential pitfalls of deer, interfering vegetation, and avoiding exploitive harvests. More information on these pitfalls is available on the NYFOA website through the Restore New York Woodlands (RNYW) Initiative.

Figure 5. Multiple stemmed trees often dominate early in succession because they have large crowns. However, the forks may be weak as illustrated by the callus ridge (right and left side) that bracket the main stems (top and bottom). The ridge forms as the forks is strained by wind and snow, and the straining is damage that allows decay organisms to enter. These types of stems can be removed during crop tree release to favor stems with structural integrity.

In some cases succession can be arrested and the plant community stalled in its orderly and predictable progression. Succession stalls when something prevents trees from establishing and dominating a site. In some cases arrested succession is desirable, for example your lawn or hay field that you mow weekly during the summer, or the power line rights-of-way where shrubs are encouraged to dominate and trees are removed. Often, however, on rights-of-way, the dominant shrubs are invasive and create corridors where they can spread across the landscape. In other cases, over abundant deer or interfering plants can prevent the establishment and development of the forest.

Response by: Peter J Smallidge, NY Extension Forester, Cornell University Cooperative Extension, Department of Natural Resources, Ithaca, NY. Pjs23@cornell.edu, 607/592-3640.
Support for ForestConnect is provided by USDA NIFA and the Cornell University College of Agriculture and Life Sciences.

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Farm Show 2015, February 26-28 Schedule of Events

THURSDAY FEBRUARY 26

11 AM **Creating & Enhancing Natural Areas on Small Properties**
Kristi Sullivan, Cornell University, Dep't of Natural Resources

1 PM **Getting Federal Aid for Woodlot Improvements**
Michael Fournier, US Dep't of Agriculture, Natural Resource Conservation Service

2 PM **Making Maple Syrup for Fun and Profit**
Stephen Childs, Cornell Maple Program

3 PM **Owning a Family Woodlot: Lessons Learned**
Brett Chedzoy, Cornell Cooperative Extension, Schuyler Co. NY

FRIDAY FEBRUARY 27

10 AM **Beware of Insects and Diseases that Threaten Your Woods**
Kim Adams, SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry

11 AM **How Woodlots Grow and Change**
Peter Smallidge, NYS Extension Forester, Cornell University

1 PM **Controlling Weed Trees in Your Woodlot**
Peter Smallidge, NYS Extension Forester, Cornell University

2 PM **Federal Aid for Woodlot Improvements**
Michael Fournier, US Dep't of Agriculture, Natural Resource Conservation Service

3 PM **Ever Changing Timber Markets Impact Woodlot Worth.**
Tom Gerow, Wagner Lumber Co. Owego NY and David Preznya, Baillie Lumber Co. Boonville NY

SATURDAY FEBRUARY 28

10 AM **Consulting Foresters add Health and Value to Your Woodlot**
Arthur Brooks, Consulting Forester, Central Square, NY

11 AM **Personal Experiences With Two Legacy Options: Conservation Easements, and Retaining Rights After Property Transfer**
David Gaskell and Ronald Pedersen, Forest landowners, members of NYFOA

1 PM **Quality Deer Management in your Woodlot**
John Rybinski, Central New York QDMA President

2 PM **Having a Timber Sale? Do it Right the First Time**
Andrew Metz, Consulting Forester, Tully NY

3 PM **Woodlot Management and Income Taxes**

Magazine Deadline

Materials submitted for the March/April Issue 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, 2015

Member Profile:
Arthur Wagner

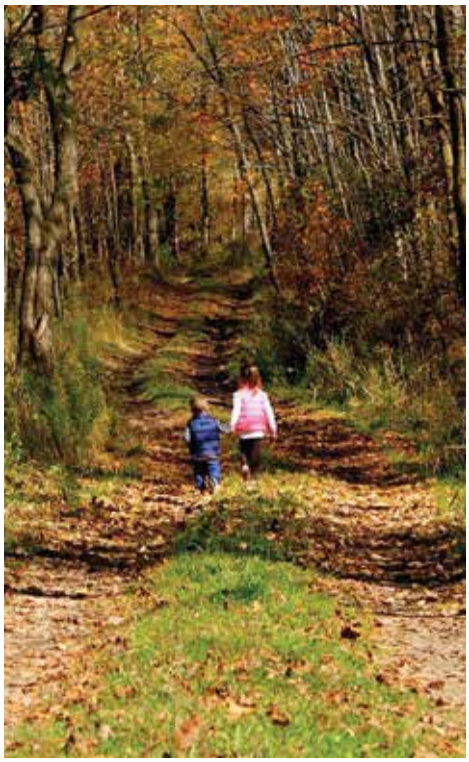
Emily Wafler

For Arthur Wagner, land management is a family affair. It all started back in 1958 when his grandparents bought some 300 acres of land in Broome County. During the summers of his childhood, Arthur frequently visited the land traveling from his home in the Bronx with his mother and siblings, Tony and Carol. In those days the land had few amenities, lacking electricity and a telephone, with the nearest neighbor located about a mile through the woods and only a hand pump to access water.

When Wagner's father passed away in the early 90's, he willed the property to his three children, and they have been co-owners ever since. Nowadays, Arthur uses the land as a means to "get away from the city" (he works in the Bronx in Hospital Administration) with his children and grandchildren.

During his first few years of ownership, Wagner mainly left his land untouched using it mostly for hiking and hunting. Then, in 1996, with the help of local forester, Rod Jones, Wagner implemented a 480-A management plan. For almost twenty years he's been keeping up with the program, maintaining boundary lines and updating the plan every five years along with other practices. In addition, Wagner began utilizing state DEC foresters for advice and a local logger to help with land management practices.

Today, 40 of the 310 acres of land are managed as fields. Used by farmers for oats until the late 70's, Wagner now maintains the fields with brush-hogging. Twenty acres is designated as wetlands, and provides a home for beavers that return every ten years. The rest of the property is forest, consisting of pine, hemlock, and various hardwoods.



This picture is 5th generation Wagner family (Caitlin 4 yrs. and Matthew 1.5 yrs.) taking a walk in the woods

Left to right: Arthur, his Beagle Hershey, and brother Tony checking on a one year old transplanted Austrian Pine. The same tree is shown on the front cover, five years later.

Wagner is also concerned with the wildlife management on his land. After working with a USDA management program, Wagner now only mows his fields after late July or early August to avoid disturbing song bird nesting season. In addition, Wagner is also looking to help with the wildlife through wetland improvement. By enhancing the maintenance of such lands, Wagner hopes to protect the habitats found in wetlands without negatively impacting the woodlot.

Yet, as a landowner one of his biggest challenge is keeping invasive species at bay. "We review the whole 310 acres several times a year to ensure nothing else is encroaching on the woods," says Wagner. "So far we've been fairly lucky, we've not had to use any herbicides or sprays." While emerald ash borer and hemlock wooly adelgid, which Wagner says are prevalent in other forests in the region, haven't been an issue on his land, there has been an increase in the number of beech

continued on page 22

The same view at the Wagner Family Tree Farm during the summer and winter.

trees within the forested areas. "We're waiting to see if the other hardwoods take over," said Wagner in regards to the new beech trees. In the upcoming years he hopes to better manage both the invasive species and the overall land by developing a better trail system. According to Wagner, easy access to such plants is important in the overall management process.

A trail system isn't the only improvement Wagner is looking to make on his land. Several years from now, as outlined in his management plan, Wagner is looking to do commercial thinning of his hardwood stands. In addition, he is currently developing a succession plan with the hopes that future generations "have the opportunities to appreciate the land, the forest, and nature as it was meant to be."

According to Wagner, the most important thing forest owners can do for their land is to get into contact with forestry professionals. "For us education is essential," says Wagner. Over the years he has taken part in NYFOA walks and has become a Master Forest Owner volunteer. In addition, he has developed a good working relationship with landowners nearby and has taken advantage of various Cornell Cooperative Extension programs.

Despite his continual improvements as a landowner, Wagner gains the most satisfaction from the aspects of the forest that are out of his control, the "…ongoing subtle changes that Mother Nature provides in the forest, on a daily basis, a seasonal basis, or over the years…it has just been interesting and enjoyable to watch those changes go on."

Attention forest owners: if you would like to be profiled for a future issue of the *NY Forest Owner* magazine, please visit *https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/ownerprofile* or send an email to Emily.

Emily Wafler, Cornell University Coop Extension, ForestConnect Program Assistant
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