

The New York Forest Owner

A PUBLICATION OF THE NEW YORK FOREST OWNERS ASSOCIATION

For people caring about New York's trees and forests

March/April 2015



Member Profile: Jim DeLellis

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**THE NEW YORK
FOREST OWNERS
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In This Issue . . .

FROM THE PRESIDENT

JIM MINOR..... 3

THE FUTURE OF N Y FORESTS AT RISK SYMPOSIUM 4

ASK A PROFESSIONAL

PETER SMALLIDGE..... 6

HOMESTEAD WOODLOT

JEFF JOSEPH 8

KIDS CORNER

DEREK J. CONANT 9

WILD THINGS IN YOUR WOODLANDS

KRISTI SULLIVAN..... 10

480-A AMENDMENTS STAKEHOLDER BRIEFING

BRUCE WILLIAMSON 12

FOREST TAX LAW-MAJOR CHANGES

FRANK WINKLER..... 14

NYFOA HOSTS JAPANESE FOREST RESEARCHERS

JIM MINOR..... 16

NORTHEAST TIMBER GROWING CONTEST

DEAN FAKLIS AND PETER SMALLIDGE..... 18

MEMBER PROFILE – JIM DELELLIS

EMILY WAFLE..... 21

**The New York
Forest Owner**

A PUBLICATION OF THE NEW YORK FOREST OWNERS ASSOCIATION

VOLUME 53, NUMBER 2

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 Malmshemer, Editor, The New York Forest Owner, 134 Lincklaen Street, Cazenovia, New York 13035. Materials may also be e-mailed to mmalmsh@syr.edu. Articles, artwork and photos are invited and if requested, are returned after use. The deadline for submission for the May/June issue is April 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.

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COVER: Jim DeLellis scaling black cherry tree. For member profile see page 21. Photo courtesy of Jim DeLellis.

From The President

There's still time to sign up for our annual meeting in Syracuse on March 21st. Details and sign-up sheet can be found in the previous issue of the Forest Owner. Don't forget to vote for the board of directors as well. You can also sign up for the meeting on-line at www.nyfoa.org. To aid in our logistics we ask that you sign up by March 13th. Hope to see you there!

In preparation for his State of the State address this January, Governor Cuomo



asked the DEC to make recommendations to improve the state's position on forests and open land usage. On January 12th NYFOA met with DEC leadership in this area and

in reviewing the recommendations we applauded some of the recommendations but were quite concerned with others, particularly recommended changes to the 480a program. Elsewhere in this issue our Policy and Legislative Affairs committee co-leader, **Frank Winkler**, discusses these issues and the position NYFOA is taking on them, consistent with our mission of promoting sustainable forestry practices on private woodlands, to best represent the interests of our members and fellow NYS woodlot owners.

On another front, the New York State Building Code Council is currently considering adopting the International Uniform Building Code. This Code disallows the use of rough cut lumber in construction projects. Not only would this impact small lumber businesses but landowners, farmers, and rural

communities, who all benefit from selling and using rough-cut lumber in construction projects.

To help voice interested parties' opinions on this, Empire State Forest Products Association, of which NYFOA is a member, has set up an easy-to-use form for submission to your legislators. The form can be accessed through a link on our home page, www.nyfoa.org. You are encouraged to make your voice heard.

As of this writing plans for our Restore New York Woodlands Symposium at the SUNY College of Environmental Sciences and Forestry in Syracuse on April 25th are in place. See elsewhere in this issue for details. This information is also available in the RNYW section of our web site. This is another opportunity for members (and friends) to learn how to better address significant threats to our woodlots.

Speaking of our web site, two new sections have been added to the EDUCATION section. The new "Plans and Contracts" section currently is comprised of material on legacy planning presented at the New York Farm Show this year and gives examples of conservation easements and retained rights agreements. We hope to expand this in the future to include other examples of management plans, timber sale contracts, etc. Note, this information is not intended to be a reference for do-it-yourselfers but as a conversation starter when dealing with lawyers, foresters, and other professionals. The second new section is devoted to the unfortunately necessary topic of timber theft. We hope you find these two new sections a useful addition to your knowledge base resources.

continued on page 5

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 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.

The Future of N Y Forests at Risk

NYFOA to Sponsor a Symposium at SUNY ESF Syracuse

NYFOA launched our “Restore New York Woodlands” (RNYW) initiative in 2013 to bring the critical forest regeneration issue to the attention of all forest stakeholders. For 2015, our primary RNYW effort will be the presentation of a symposium concerning the issue at the SUNY College of Environmental Science & Forestry on April 25th.

Outstanding speakers from the US Forest Service, SUNY ESF, Cornell, the DEC and the Cary Institute will review the science defining the problem, as well as current and potential solutions. Representatives from the forest products, agricultural and tourism industries, several environmental groups, relevant

government agencies and state legislators have been invited to attend and share their views. Although NYFOA members are more than welcome to attend, the thrust of the Symposium is to engage a broad range of forest stakeholders whose active support will be required in order to successfully address the problem and assure the future of New York’s forests.

We are pleased to welcome Audubon New York, Catskill Forest Association, Cornell, the DEC, the New York Farm Bureau, SUNY ESF and The Nature Conservancy as co-sponsors of the Symposium and value their contributions in planning it. The agenda for the Symposium and additional details are available from a link on the homepage of our website at NYFOA.org.

If interested in attending the Symposium, the Registration Website is www.esf.edu/outreach/pd/2015/nyfoa/



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.



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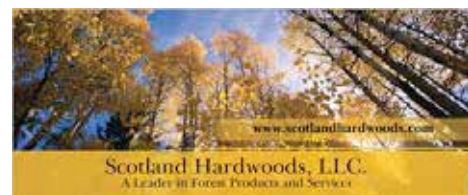
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From the President (continued)

As of this writing in mid-February, through our Gift Membership campaign we have added in excess of 140 new members to our organization. This represents a greater than 5% increase in membership! Thank you to all of our generous and supportive members. Special kudos to the ever diligent **Dean Fakis** who spearheaded this very successful campaign.

Being term-limited as a board member and consequently as NYFOA President, this will be my last swan-song, "From the President" column. During these past four years I have had the pleasure of getting to know and working with many of you. I continue to be impressed with the talent and dedication you offer in support of our organization. It has been a special privilege to work with the other members of our Executive Committee. Although I don't have the opportunity to interact with the chapters as much as I'd like, it is clear that this is where so much of the direct interaction with our membership takes place. Collectively, through their dedicated service they bring the owner-to-owner interaction that is at the heart of our organization. A sincere Thank You to all of them.

I don't know how we'd operate without the services of Liana Gooding, our office administrator. Board members (and Presidents) come and go but Liana has been a constant presence for the past 10 years.

Her experience and institutional memory are an invaluable resource not only to your board but to all members. Being on the receiving end of calls to our office, Liana is often the first person at the state level whom outsiders and our members come in contact with and serves as "the voice of NYFOA." Her friendly, supportive attitude is only exceeded by her overall competence.

As editor of this magazine, Mary Beth Malmshiemer's service dates back to June, 1999. Over the course of the ensuing years both the format and quality of this magazine has steadily improved and we have all benefited from the many talents Mary Beth brings in service to NYFOA.

A heart-felt "Thank You" to Liana and Mary Beth.

When I retired from my "9-to-5" job in 2000, I didn't miss the commutes, meetings, reports, and similar things but I did miss the camaraderie of working with a group toward a shared purpose. When I volunteered to be nominated for President four years ago it was with the hope that I could recreate that sense of belonging to a highly motivated team. I am most happy to say that my expectations in this area have been more than met and I wish to thank all of you for the opportunity to serve as your president.

-Jim Minor
NYFOA President

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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: How can I look at a seedling and know how much it grew in the previous year? (Dean F., WFL Chapter)

Answer: Knowing how much height growth occurred on a seedling or sapling in a previous year is instructive as a tool to understand environmental and biotic factors that influence tree growth. Further, one category of NYFOA's Northeast Timber Growing Contest assesses the success of regeneration by documenting height growth of seedlings and saplings.

During the summer months, trees develop buds that will expand in the following year. Buds form on the end of twigs and along the sides of the twigs. The buds that form along the side of the twig are called lateral buds. The buds that grow on the end of a twig (the distal end) are either a "true" terminal or a "pseudo" terminal bud. A pseudo terminal bud is actually a lateral bud, but occurs at the end of the twig and associated with a leaf scar and the remnant of a branch scar where the growing tip died. True terminal buds lack a subtending leaf scar, but may be accompanied by a pair of lateral buds (Figure 1). In some species, flower buds are pre-formed and may be quite large. Most species with opposite leaf arrangement, such as sugar maple (Figure 1) or ash have a true terminal and often a pair of subtending lateral buds at the end of the twig. Species with a zig-zag growth pattern of the twigs, such as elm or beech, typically have pseudo terminal buds.

For our purposes we will focus on terminal and pseudo terminal buds that elongate into the shoot that gives height growth to the seedling. Some botanists refer to these buds as "apical buds" because they occur at the apex of the

plant. These apical buds occur on the central or dominant leader. Apical buds maintain dominance over lateral branches through hormones that inhibit the ability of lateral buds to develop into branches. If the apical bud is killed, for example by the white pine weevil or deer browsing, apical dominance is lost and lateral buds develop into branches that may begin to function as branches with an apical bud (Figure 2). Terminal buds on lateral branches also elongate, but provide lateral expansion rather than vertical expansion. [Note, some authors will refer to any bud on the distal end of a twig as an apical bud.]



Figure 1: The terminal bud and two lateral buds of sugar maple are illustrated. Note the terminal bud, a true terminal bud, is typically larger than the lateral buds. The terminal bud will elongate (unless eaten by deer or otherwise damaged) into the stem of the next growing season, including all the foliage and perhaps flowers.

When the buds expand in the spring and the terminal bud elongates, it forms a "bud scale scar" that demarcates the position of the bud at the beginning of the growing season. The scar is a single or a series of stacked rings that encircle the twig (Figure 3). The new twig is usually of smaller diameter and a different color than the twig of the previous year (Figure 4).

The stem formed by the terminal bud is called the terminal "leader." By mid to late summer, when terminal leaders have stopped growing, it is possible to measure the distance between the terminal bud scale scar and the base of the terminal bud. The length of the twig is the extent of growth for that year. For some species, it is possible to historically recreate the growth over several recent years on the same twig.

One of the concerns with regeneration in our woodlots is the impact of deer on seedlings. Deer will browse apical and terminal buds, forcing lateral buds to assume a dominant role in the growth of the twig (Figure 5). As those lateral buds expand, they become "apical", but the form of the seedling becomes distorted. With prolonged and intense browsing the seedlings become miniature bonsai.

With practice, owners can use terminal bud scale scars to assess seedling height growth patterns. Practice sessions should start by focusing on a single species and learning how twig diameter and color differ from one growth season versus the previous growth seasons. Maples and ash are often good species for practice because the scars are prominent. White



Figure 2: The central or apical leader of this white pine was killed by the white pine weevil. The lateral branches have each tried to assume dominance. The cluster of branches (called a whorl) on white and red pine form at a growth node and can be used to estimate annual height growth and tree age.

pine and red pine are good also because the whorls identify the beginning of height growth for a growing season.

With sufficient practice, owners can investigate an area of their property where they can compare among species as a way to learn which are responding most favorably to sun and soil conditions. Often the shade tolerance rating of a species will be important. For example, in an area where a few scattered trees were removed for firewood, leaving small openings in

the canopy, the best growth on seedlings will be among those with better tolerance of shade. In a large canopy opening, however, the best growth will likely be on species intolerant of shade and characterized by adaptations for rapid growth in full sunlight. 🌲

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.



Figure 4: This quaking aspen twig shows a lateral branch (the vertical stem in the picture), with the new growth as light green, two stacked rings, the previous year's growth as slightly darker, also with a couple stacked rings on the base and then the main stem that is still larger and a different color. Note that in this mid-summer picture, the bud for next summer has already formed (a bit blurry) at the distal end of the lateral branch.



Figure 3: This sugar maple seedling illustrates the look of stacked rings as the terminal bud scale scar. Notice the change in color from the light stem of the previous year (2013) and the darker stem of the current year (2014).

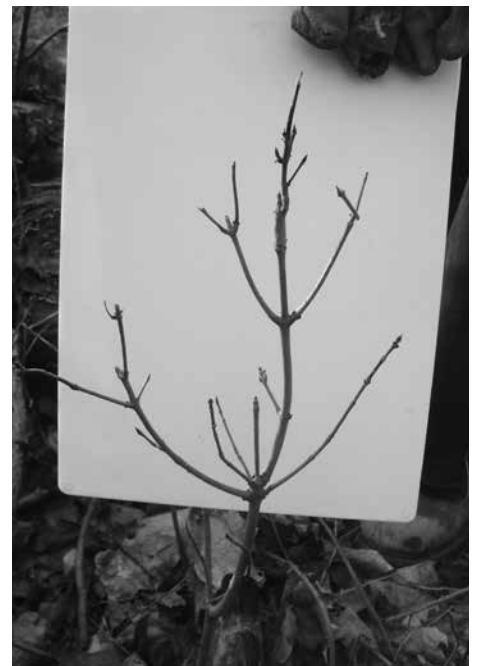


Figure 5: Deer will nip the outer portions of twigs as winter browse. While this provides some nutrition for deer, it has a devastating impact on the growth form of seedlings. Repeated browsing, common in many woodlots, distorts seedlings and may reduce the future quality of the stem for timber production.

Homestead Woodlot

Hands-on, low-tech approaches to working with your woodland

JEFF JOSEPH

PRUNING

Forest pruning seems to be something of a lost art. I would venture to guess that most of our woodlots have never been pruned at all, which is unfortunate, as timely and targeted pruning can go a long way toward maintaining tree health and increasing timber value. When viewed solely through an economic cost-benefit lens, as has traditionally been the case, pruning a woodlot is often deemed a marginal or even risky ‘investment’ of time and/or resources, as the ‘payoff’ is deferred all the way until the time of timber harvest. Viewed through a broader, or more personal lens, though, whether or not you *ever* intend to harvest or sell sawtimber, if you enjoy (or could benefit from) physical activity over the sedentary winter months, and would also simply take pleasure in tending and growing the healthiest, best quality trees possible in your woodlot, pruning is more than worthwhile, with benefits paid up front *and* into the future.

In an adequately stocked stand, many (though not all) of our hardwoods will prune their lower stems naturally over time. As the upper canopy closes and light for photosynthesis becomes a limiting factor, lower limbs die and are shed. By contrast, most of our conifers will hold branches, or at least dead branch stubs, long after crown closure. Regardless of species, persistent (non-shedding) branch stubs are a primary inroad

for infection to enter, and the knots resulting from either persistent live lower branches or branch stubs constitute a significant decrease in lumber grade and value.

A nice thing about pruning is that while it is ideally undertaken prior to a first thinning in a rotation, you can chip away at it over time and still derive much of the benefit. To maximize your productivity, focus your energies on your targeted crop trees, especially those with good stem form and healthy (and ideally released) crowns, as these are the trees that will produce the most rapid growth of clear wood as a result of your efforts. Assess these stems for persistent limbs or stubs on the first log (up to about 17’ or so).

Dead stubs can be pruned away any time of year, taking care not to damage surrounding bark in the process. Live branch pruning requires more care, and should be done while the tree is dormant. The primary caveat of pruning live branches is “NO FLUSH CUTS!,” as this type of cut (right up to the main stem) is far worse for the tree than doing nothing at all. It is *essential* when pruning a live branch to leave the *branch collar*, which is the raised, ringed area where a branch projects from the tree stem (see images). This collar is essential to a tree’s defense from infection (see Further Reading) as well as to its subsequent ability to grow healthy, clear wood over the wound.

There are any number of pruning tools available to suit your needs and budget. When I go out wandering in my woodlot looking for candidates for pruning, I usually bring a pair of Felco hand pruners or loppers, a folding (orchard type) handsaw, and a pole saw of my own creation, which is simply a 12 foot air-dried sapling stripped of bark with a curved pull-stroke pruning blade (which was a replacement blade for a much more expensive pole pruner) bolted to one end (see image). Not fancy, but cheap and effective.

In addition to simply getting out in the woods over the winter, an added benefit to dormant pruning is that without any foliage, it is *much* easier to assess the shape and health of tree crowns, as you’ll be looking up anyway while cutting (and perhaps trying to take your mind off your aching muscles). In sum, I have found it allows me to examine my trees—stems *and* crowns— at length, and in great detail, and to assess their potential as crop trees (or not). Additionally, and perhaps more importantly and enjoyably, it allows me time to take in their unique character as individuals, in a way that I likely wouldn’t experience otherwise, as with so much to do, and limited time to do it, I think we often “can’t see the trees for the forest,” so to speak.

So for a final cost/benefit analysis, in addition to maintaining the health and increasing the value of your timber, add in exercise, aesthetics, and greatly increased and *specific* knowledge of the trees in your woodlot, and I would say that pruning is a highly sound investment. 🌲

Further Reading: Alex Shigo and Harold Marx, *Compartmentalization of Decay in Trees* (1977).

Jeff Joseph is a woodworker and NYFOA board member.



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!

Fly Fishing

Every spring, many New Yorkers take to the local rivers and streams in pursuit of trout. Some choose to use a spinning reel while others prefer a fly rod. Both are extremely effective when used correctly and are highly enjoyable. For me, there is something inherent about fly fishing that compels me to choose my fly rod over my spinning reel. Maybe it is the finesse and challenge of casting or the explosion of a trout taking a dry fly. It can be the subtle grab of a nymph or the voracious strike of a giant trout on a streamer. Many times it is the gratification of catching a fish on a fly that you tied yourself.

The versatility of a fly rod seems to make it the perfect choice for most fishing conditions. In fact it

could be argued that a fly rod offers an advantage over a spinning reel in many circumstances. Its length provides for better line control when drifting and its sensitivity allows for the softest nibbles to be detected. The slightest forward motion of the wrist can subtly cast a fly in front of the most skittish fish. Or, one hefty forward propulsion of your arm can cast a heavy streamer far into a deep hole where a monster waits in ambush. With the most finicky trout, one might even tie two or three flies to the end of their leader to entice those picky eaters. Rarely is water too slow, shallow, fast, deep, or narrow that a person with the right technique and adequate skill cannot fish with a fly rod.

But it is more than the equipment that makes fly fishing successful and fun. It is the tranquility of the water and nature

around you. Your knowledge will grow from just worms and spinners to insects and trout feeding behaviors. You learn to read the water better and become more acute to where fish like to hide. And most certainly you will lose lots of flies and get your leader tangled in what seems to be every tree and bush on the stream bank, but have patience and be persistent. Even the most experienced fly fisher has this happen often.

If you are interested in learning how to fly fish, look into joining your local Trout Unlimited chapter, Children in The Stream Program, or even a local fly shop might offer lessons and guidance for beginners. Fly fishing can present many challenges but it also delivers great rewards and enjoyment to those who are persistent. 🎣



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



Visit the NYFOA website:

www.nyfoa.org

Wild Things in Your Woodlands

BY KRISTI SULLIVAN AND STEVE MORREALE

WOOD FROG (*Lithobates sylvaticus*)



The wood frog is medium-sized, with a dark brown mask through its eyes, a dark line that connects the mask to the tip of the snout, and a white stripe along the upper lip. It also has pronounced ridges (folds of skin) that extend down each side of its back. The body coloration varies from light tan to dark brown, and changes with temperature; the darker color is more common for wood frogs in cold breeding ponds. The underside is white, occasionally with gray marks. Adults generally measure from 3.4 to 7 cm (1 1/3 to 2 3/4 in.).

With the first warm rains of the year, usually in late March or early April, adult wood frogs emerge from under rocks, stumps, or leaf litter where they overwinter in the forest. They make their way through the woods to return to shallow breeding pools or ponds where they mate and lay eggs. Adult wood frogs do not remain in the ponds for long, and after a short and intensive breeding period lasting from 1 to 2 weeks, they return to the woods, where you may occasionally encounter them moving about during the day. They are the first frogs to breed, often moving to water even before the snow and ice have melted away.

Once they reach the water, males often are seen floating on the water surface with their hind legs submerged below the surface. The male's call resembles a short quack of a duck, and cannot be heard from a very great distance. Females are attracted to the males' calls and the expansion of the light-colored pair of vocal sacs on the males' throats. After being grasped by the male, females deposit from 1000 to 3000 eggs in large, globular masses, which are attached to submerged vegetation, sticks, or other substrate in the water. Often several females will lay eggs together, resulting in

very large clusters up 1/2 m (1 1/2 ft.) in diameter, containing many thousands of eggs.

Wood frog eggs usually hatch in less than 1 month. In May and June, small temporary ponds may be full of wriggling wood frog tadpoles. The tadpoles can take an average of 9 weeks to develop into tiny wood frogs, which then leave the water and take to the woods. Tadpoles feed on anything small enough, but mainly algae. On land, wood frogs are carnivores, consuming insects, slugs, spiders, and worms. They remain on land for 2 to 3 years before returning to the water to breed for the first time.

Wood frogs are common, and found throughout New York State. They have the most extreme northern range of any amphibian on the North American continent. Some wood frogs live on the Canadian Tundra; others live in Alaska, north of the Arctic Circle. During winter, they hibernate at surprisingly shallow depths under the leaf litter on the forest floor. They do not burrow deeply into the ground or retreat below the water during winter to escape freezing temperatures. Instead, they distribute high levels of glucose throughout their bloodstream,

which keeps cells from freezing while their other bodily fluids freeze. In the spring, the animal slowly thaws out, and picks up where it left off before the freeze. To learn more and watch this amazing feat happen, watch this video at <http://www.pbslearningmedia.org/resource/lsp07.sci.life.evo.frozenfrogs/frozen-frogs/>

The wood frog is an important component in both aquatic and terrestrial communities. They prey upon a variety of small animals, and are prey for larger animals such as snakes, birds, mammals and other amphibians. Because of their complex habitat requirements, wood frogs can be affected by the loss of both wooded and aquatic habitats. Furthermore, their tendency to migrate between these habitats during the breeding season makes them vulnerable to mass mortality. Roads that separate upland sites from breeding ponds are particularly hazardous.


To provide habitat for wood frogs, landowners can enhance and protect both their aquatic breeding sites and the surrounding woods. Shallow woodland pools (vernal pools) that dry up during late summer or fall (and do not support predatory fish) provide particularly valuable breeding habitat. Protecting these and other

breeding sites from pollution (chemicals, sediments from erosion) and disturbance is essential for these animals. By marking the boundaries of breeding pools during the wet season, landowners can help prevent disturbances within the boundaries of the pools during drier times.

In surrounding woodlands, maintaining a mostly closed forest canopy (> 75 percent within 100 feet, and > 50 percent within 400 feet of the pool or pond) will provide optimum habitat for the wood frog and many other amphibians. A closed canopy shades the forest floor, keeping soils moist and leaf litter abundant. Woody material (logs, tree tops, brush piles, etc.) can also be left on, or added to, the forest floor to provide safe havens for the wood frog throughout much of the year.

Maintaining minimal disturbance between breeding pools and adjacent woodlands allows wood frogs to move freely between the two habitats. Disturbances such as road construction, skid trails, or large ruts can create barriers to travel if they occur close to breeding pools and ponds. Locating skid trails away from (400 feet) breeding pools, and harvesting timber when the ground is either frozen or completely dry, provides extra consideration for wood frogs and other vernal pool wildlife.

More information on managing habitat for wildlife can be found by visiting the Conservation Education Program web site at arnotconservation.info

For more information on timber harvesting guidelines for vernal pool animals, order "Forestry Habitat Management Guidelines for Vernal Pool Wildlife" from <http://maineaudubon.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/08/Vernal-Pool-HMG-final.pdf> 

Kristi Sullivan is Co-Director of the Conservation Education and Research Program at Cornell and Director of the New York Master Naturalist volunteer program. Steve Morreale is a Senior Research Associate and Adjunct Professor in the Department of Natural Resources at Cornell University.

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

Welcome New Members

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

Name	Chapter				
Adam Aldrich	SOT	Saymme & Rob Gowanlock	AFC	John & Tracie Revette	CNY
Scott Aldrich	WFL	Richard Green	SAC	Ben & Sona Revette	CNY
Tom Allen	WFL	Robert Gregory	SOT	David Revette	CNY
Marc Ambrosi	WFL	Steve Grekin	SOT	Mike Reynolds	WFL
Clay & Emily Anderson	SOT	Zach and Ben Groet	WFL	Philip Robinson	WFL
William Arthur	NFC	Jerry & Erica Gutberlet	CNY	Peter A. Ross	WFL
Dan & Cindy Barben	WFL	Tomas & Nancy Hamilton	WFL	Steve Ross	SOT
Doug Barnard	WFL	Michele Hertz	LHC	Peter Rossi	
Debra Beck	AFC	David Hoselton	WFL	Donna & Bob Russell	WFL
Keith Becken	WFL	Russell Howe	WFL	David Schaefer	SOT
Ray & Joann Birch	NFC	John Howland	SFL	James R. Schaus	NFC
Lorie & Keith Bowers	WFL	Mr. and Mrs. John Hughes	NFC	Don Schlafer	SFL
Terence Brady	LHC	Mahlon Hurst	WFL	Dan Schlafer	SOT
Vi & Millard Brown	AFC	Tom Hyde	SAC	Tom Schwarzweller	WFL
Brian & Monica Brunza	SOT	Andy Jacobs	CDC	John Seniw	WFL
William Bryant	SAC	Brittany Hastings		Richelle Sharp	AFC
Jennifer & Bret Burrows	WFL	and Erick Jenks	SAC	Bob & Lisa Smith	SOT
Richard & Adriana Cahill	CDC	Robert Johnson	AFC	James Smith	SOT
W. Peter Camfield	WFL	Shawn Klager	NFC	Eric and Will St. John	SOT
Matt & Peggy Cannon	CDC	Robert Kutalek	SOT	Terri & Paul Stark	CDC
Tony Carapella	WFL	Junho Lee	LHC	Mary & Jeff Starr	WFL
Redel Revette and		Rick Lee	WFL	Starr Property Management	WFL
Billy Caraway	CNY	John Leva	CNY	Eric Stellrecht	NFC
Cayuga County Community		Luke Lewis	CNY	Nick & Elsa Steo	WFL
College Library	CNY	Jesse Litwinik	NFC	Sue & Brian Strauss	AFC
Matt Christopher	NFC	Bob Lonsberry	WFL	Glenn Swan	SFL
Joanne & Jay Cockle	AFC	Vincent Maralpo	SOT	Jim Tingley	WFL
Ellen Crain	LHC	Tom Matteson	SOT	Steve and Amanda Tucker	CNY
Lou, Inger, Sven Curth	SAC	Blake Mayo	AFC	Mark Van Morrelgen	WFL
Scott Curtis	SOT	Kris McShane	LHC	Ronald VanAcker	WFL
Bryan Curtis	SAC	David Messier	CDC	Tom & Mae Vandenberg	WFL
Evan Curtis	SAC	James W. Meter	WFL	Joe & Ro Vargo	CNY
Bill Demings	WFL	Bill Moeller	SAC	Charles & Joann Wage	SOT
Tom DiCamillo	NFC	Tom Moeller	SAC	Paul Wagner	SOT
Jim Dobbins	WFL	Angelique Morabito	WFL	Katie Wagner	SOT
Michael Doczynski	SOT	Andrew Morabito	WFL	Matthew Wagner	SOT
Martin Dodge	WFL	David R. Morabito Jr	WFL	Anton Wagner	SOT
Rick Donofrio	WFL	Mt. St. Francis Hermitage	WFL	Greg Way	SAC
Danielle & John Duex	WFL	Larry Myers	WFL	Pat Wheeler	AFC
Ed & Eileen Epstein	CNY	Jeff Orman	WFL	Ernest C. Whitbeck IV	WFL
Bob Eustace	WFL	Anna Revette and		Doug Whittaker	WFL
Charles W. Fedler	SAC	Jim Palma	CNY	Scott Williams	SOT
Eric Fisher	WFL	Gerald Palmer	SOT	Doug Wilson	NAC
Kathy Bauer and		Douglas Paul	SFL	Henry Wirth	WFL
Andy Flynn	WFL	Harry Pierce	WFL	Wanda & Les Wood	WFL
Nathan Follett	WFL	Michael Pond	SAC	Bob Worden	WFL
Wayne & Brenda Forrest	NFC	Brett Pulliam	CDC	Cathy Wright	SOT
Meg & Gary Gaige	SFL	Dan Ras	WFL	James Yarnell	WFL
Randy Galusha	SAC	B.G. Read	NAC	Joe Zbick	WFL
		Robert & Mary Reilly	CDC		

480-A Amendments Stakeholder Briefing

BRUCE WILLIAMSON

New York State has legislation called the NYS Forest Tax Law, popularly known among woodlot owners as 480-a. This legislation allows for a reduction in the assessed value of qualifying forest land and thus a reduction in the owner's tax liability. While the law has been favorable to the management of some parcels and owners, it has its limitations. Recently, the NYS DEC has begun an effort to propose changes to the existing 480-a requirements to account for some of the existing limitations. Because these changes would impact woodlot owners and some NYFOA members, NYFOA through its policy committee is proactively working to help its members think about the consequences of change. Changes are not inherently bad, but will result in different opportunities for owners. It is important that woodlot owners, as tax payers and property managers impacted by these changes, learn the accurate details of what will change. The DEC will be hosting informational meetings about these proposed changes in the spring and summer of 2015. The following two articles are written by

the DEC and the NYFOA Forest Policy committee. These articles are provided as a starting point to help owners begin thinking about this important topic.

—Peter Smallidge

In his 2015 State of the State message (print version), Governor Cuomo called on DEC to work with stakeholders to present him with ideas for reforming the current forest tax incentive program, Real Property Tax Law (RPTL) Section 480-a, to make it more effective, attractive and successful. The governor's message said:

"In order to promote the growth of the sustainably harvested wood products industry in New York, DEC, DAM, and ESD, as the State's representatives on the Wood Products Development Council, will bring together stakeholders from forestry management companies, environmental groups, government agencies, and private landowners to discuss the opportunities and challenges the industry faces and ways the State can contribute to the industry's advancement, including

by reforming the current property tax incentive program (480-a Forest Tax Law)."

We've had 40 years of talk about what's wrong with 480-a and what it doesn't do but should or could. Currently, approximately 3,300 landowners are enrolled in 480-a statewide, out of roughly 50,000 eligible owners (private owners of over 50 acres of forestland), or 7%. There are approximately 1.1 million acres of forestland enrolled in 480-a, out of 7 million eligible acres, or 16%. There are 100,000 landowners in NY who own between 25 to 50 acres of forestland, adding an additional 2 million acres of forestland that could participate in the 480-a program.

As recently as last summer, numerous stakeholder representatives – including forest owners, current 480-a participants, forest industry, Farm Bureau, environmental and wildlife interests and local government representatives — met, at the invitation of the Nature Conservancy, to discuss 480-a and opportunities for possible reforms. The Department met last year with additional stakeholders including the NY Tree Farm Committee and forest landowners, at the request of the Empire State Forest Products Association, to talk about 480-a and potential reforms. "Forest Property Taxation," and the need to reform 480-a, has also been a regular priority issue raised to the State Legislature, for the past 5 plus years, by the Council of Forest Resource Organizations at Forestry Awareness Day in Albany. These conversations and decades of feedback, input and field experience, have formed the basis of some draft proposals we have recently developed, at the request of the Executive branch, for discussion and consideration by all stakeholders. These are by no means "cast in stone," but we hope will serve as a catalyst and focal point for development of actual legislative language that can be presented for debate.

We want to emphasize that, for the first time in 40 years, we seem to have interest in considering actual 480-a reform legislation from the Governor's Office. We've never gotten that before

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and, consequently, have spent decades complaining about 480-a and fantasizing about how to “fix” it or improve it, or replace it, with nothing ever coming of those discussions. We could conceivably have a bill introduced THIS session to the Legislature (of course, what happens after that is anybody’s guess, but at least it would be “in play”).

We (DEC and stakeholders) have several goals and objectives in mind with these reforms and amendments to the current Forest Tax Law, which are responsive to a wide array of stakeholder interests. Specifically, we seek to:

1. Increase the acres of forestland, wildlife habitat and open space conserved and enhanced under our incentive program.
2. Reduce the barriers to landowner participation and enrollment
3. Address local government objections to the unfunded, state-mandated tax shift caused by 480-a
4. Recognize, promote and provide incentives for participation in credible, comprehensive third-party forest certification program that include science-based standards, third-party audits by accredited auditors, at the ownership level, and a written audit report documenting any non-compliances
5. Focus management and oversight attention on timber harvests by requiring “approved harvest plans” that ensure sustainable, science-based forestry which improves forests, rather than degrading them.
6. Reduce violations related to mandatory work schedule issues, which lead to increased management workload and potential for significant penalties
7. Reduce DEC’s workload in managing the tax incentive program to allow us to focus on harvesting plans and practices and on monitoring compliance to ensure public interests are being protected.

To accomplish these objectives, we have developed some draft 480-a amendment proposals, for discussion purposes, that we believe will:

- Reduce costs of enrollment and participation by eliminating mandatory elements:
 - Forest management plans
 - 5-year plan updates
 - Plan amendments
 - Annual work schedule
 - Prescribed timber harvest schedules
 - Pre-commercial stand improvement work
 - Boundary line maintenance
 - Current 6% stumpage tax under 480-a
- Reduce minimum acreage required from 50 to 25.
- Expand eligible acres beyond current “forestland” to include “other” lands (not developed or in active agricultural use).
 - Eliminate sole and mandatory focus on timber crop production.
 - Allow wildlife habitat conservation and enhancement, open space, recreation and non-timber products as management objectives.
 - Replace 10-year rolling commitment with a 15-year, fixed term commitment that can be extended.
 - Revise the assessment reductions to 70% under the forest certification and 40% for the “approved timber harvest plan” option.

As part of the discussion, various elements with fiscal implications are also being discussed, but are outside the scope of amendments to RPTL. These elements would have to be separately addressed by the Governor and Legislature, through the budget process, but could conceivably be linked in the discussions. Concepts that have been offered for discussion include:

- Continuing and updating the State reimbursement for localities experiencing > 1% tax shift due to 480-a enrollments
- Providing full state reimbursement to localities for 480-a exemptions
- Changing 480-a benefit from a real property tax assessment reduction to a refundable income tax credit to the landowner

Many NYFOA members all have been involved with 480-a discussions in the past, and we are interested in engaging you again to discuss some specific and tangible ideas for presentation to the Governor’s Office. We welcome your feedback on these ideas and input on the future of forest tax incentives in New York and will certainly keep you informed of future developments and opportunities to participate in the process. If anyone has any further questions, feel free to contact me at bruce.williamson@dec.ny.gov. 📧

Bruce Williamson, Chief, Bureau of Private Land Services, Division of Lands & Forests, NYSDEC

Got Trees? Got Questions?
Visit the Woodland Owners Forum at:
<http://CornellForestConnect.ning.com>
to share ideas, information and questions with fellow woodland owners, foresters and other members of the forest community across New York



Forest Tax Law-Major Changes

FRANK WINKLER

The Department of Environmental Conservation has recently proposed major changes to the 480-a Forest Assessment Program. We applaud them for recognizing the need to make changes, but are concerned over some of the impacts to sustainable forestry and to many NYFOA members who participate in 480-a. Most all of these changes will require legislative approval before they can be enacted. DEC has pledged to hold outreach forums across the state to gather stakeholder input.

DEC is burdened with implementing the existing 480-a program, while having less staff. They would like to lessen this burden and have more landowners participate. New York State's local governments have reluctantly agreed to losses to their tax base through reduced assessments for *working landscapes*. Existing 480-a and agricultural assessments have been designed for producing local agricultural and forestry products that stimulate the local economy. The new proposal would recognize "Open Space," wildlife and other land uses. DEC wants to accomplish this without creating more of a tax shift. The existing 480-a program has a 10 year rolling commitment. Each year you must recommit for that additional year. It helps offset the value of harvesting all crop trees, even those that need another 15 years to achieve economic maturity. It keeps the forest in a sustainable condition instead of an immediate gain that could set the forest back 40 years before the next economic harvest.

There are three categories to their proposed assessment program:

1. Maintain the existing 480-a program with about an 80% reduction in assessment only for those with over 1000 acres. This will eliminate participation for most NYFOA members. Many of these members have invested heavily to comply with requirements, and now this option will be eliminated. This does create a credibility problem with DEC; especially since they are still willing to maintain this commitment to large land owners. We have advocated to reduce the work-

plan schedule, and accomplish most timberstand improvement at the time of harvest, allow for a 10 year update of the required forestry plan, and reduce acreage requirements to 25 acres. DEC has the authority within existing law to make these changes, except for the acreage reduction to 25 acres. DEC was committed to do this for all participants until they released their new proposals.

2. Allow for an approved third party forestry certification with a 70% reduction in assessment on a minimum of 25 acres of forest. This alternative could be attractive to many. It could reduce DEC's workload while still achieving sustainable forestry if there is a 10 year rolling commitment. There would be no 6% stumpage tax on timber sales. However, currently the two approved certification programs appear to be cost prohibitive for the typical forest owner with under 1000 acres. Tree Farm may be able to fill this gap, if they can tighten requirements. We need to work with Tree Farm and DEC to try to achieve this action. DEC needs to be realistic and not create over-reaching requirements as we develop this alternative.

3. The third alternative allows for a 40% reduction in tax assessment with at least 25 acres of forest land. This could be attractive for those who want to invest less intensely in forest management. To qualify a landowner needs to undertake a 10 acre harvest according to an approved DEC harvest management plan. All land

would qualify for the reduction except for any land around buildings or fields already receiving an agricultural assessment. A 15 year fixed commitment is required. No woodlot management would be required on any remaining forest land during the 15 year commitment. A new harvest could extend the commitment. Concerns we have are that this is not a rolling commitment. A tax break could be received for the 15 years and then the forest could be abused the next day or broken into small lots. Sustainable forestry could readily be lost. Also, we need to hear from our local governments on how they will react to an "Open Space" exemption. A strong negative reaction could jeopardize other forestry exemptions.

This is an important time for membership and chapter involvement. There will be many opinions on this issue. Your feedback is important to us. We hope to keep all of you informed by posting stakeholder meetings and issue statements on NYFOA's website. We strongly encourage you to visit your local state legislative representative. Tell them your own story and your concerns. Most are very receptive and sincerely appreciate your involvement. We try to keep our mission statement (listed under the President's message) in the forefront of our decisions. 📌

Frank Winkler is a member of the NYFOA Forest Policy committee.

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NYSERDA

NYFOA Hosts Japanese Forest Researchers

JIM MINOR

This past September the author was contacted by members of a research mission for the Japanese government wanting to know how to encourage private landowners to become involved in a declining forest economy in Japan. Relaying the desire for a meeting to others, DEC's Mark Gooding said that the DEC would like to help and brought various relevant parties together at the Boy Scout's Camp Cutler, near Naples, NY, for a day of information sharing. Those present included **Tetsuo Matsushita**, a Manager at Tokyo-based Strategic Decision Initiative, Inc. and **Yuki Kagami** a Consultant at The Japan Research Institute; DEC's **John Gibb**, **Bryce June**, and **Mark Gooding**; **Sue Keister**, the private consulting forester who has been the forester for Camp Cutler for many years; **Kyle Polisse**, Procurement Forester for Wagner Lumber; **Jeff Emerling** Property Manager for Camp Cutler; **Sarah Stackhouse** a private landowner (and NYFOA's Secretary/Treasurer) representing the Master Forest Owner program; and yours truly, **Jim Minor**, representing NYFOA.

The forest issue in Japan is multi-faceted and complex. Japan's topography is 73% mountainous (very rugged) and 66% of Japan is forested (the later figure is almost the same as New York State). Its population of 128 million is crowded into ~38,000 square miles of usable land for an average population density of ~3,400 people per square mile. The population is aging and for some time there has been an exodus from mountain villages to urban areas. Those moving want to retain their families' small plots of forested land in the mountains but do not want to see them changed, i.e. managed. When polled on how they rank the uses forests should play, the top nine are as follows (with commercial interests near the bottom):

1. Prevention of disasters (Japan

has a history of tsunamis, earthquakes/landslides, and volcanic eruptions).

2. Prevention of global warming (e.g., absorbing CO₂ plus alternatives to fossil fuels)

3. Headwaters conservation (e.g., mitigation of flooding, filling reservoirs, improving water quality).

4. Air pollution and noise mitigation

5. Health and recreation

6. Wood production

7. Plant and wildlife habitat

8. Field education

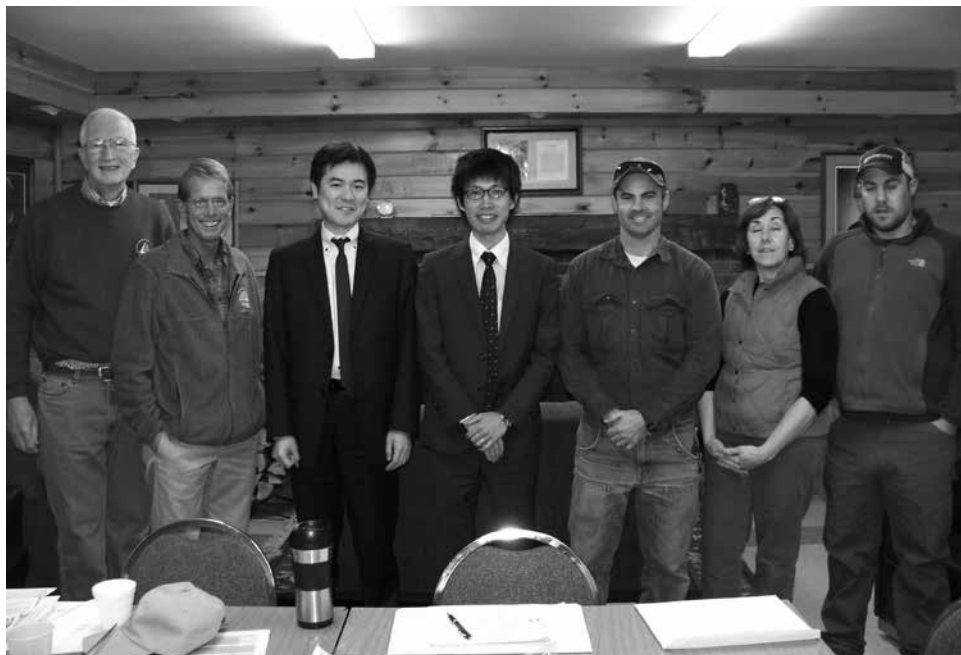
9. Forestry production (e.g., growing mushrooms).

There was a concerted reforestation program on both public and private lands after WWII and many of those trees have matured (Japanese Cedar, Japanese Larch and Japanese Cypress currently account for 78% of harvested timber). However, timber harvesting has declined since its peak in 1980 to the point that those revenues are about the same as for non-timber products such as (shitake)

mushrooms, mountain vegetables (e.g. bamboo shoots, flower shoots, Japanese knotweed), and charcoal. As 80% of lumber used in Japan is imported at globally competitive prices this also contributes to the decline.

From supplied literature: "In the forestry industry in Japan, the majority are small-scale owners, and the smaller their holdings, the less interest in forestry operation they have. The forested area owned by absent villagers is up to a quarter of all privately owned forests. The majority of forestry operators in the timber industry are small-scale, with low productivity." Working against silviculture interests are such things as illegal logging/exporting and animal damage (especially deer),

In a subsequent communication, Dr. Paul Curtis, Extension Wildlife Specialist in Cornell's Department of Natural Resources, states: *I gave a couple of deer management presentations at Tskukuba Science City, and consulted with the Japanese Ministry of Environment and national parks agency about 10 years ago. Deer damage was extensive and there was severe tree barking during winter at Nikko National Park. Very few people in Japan can get a permit to use a firearm, and it requires extensive training and background checks. Also, those few people that do hunt are looking for photographs.*



Some of the participants at the Camp Cutler meeting. Left to right: Jim Minor, Mark Gooding, Tetsuo Matsushita, Yuki Kagami, Bryce June, Sue Keister, Kyle Polisse. Photo provided by Jeff Emerling.



On a foggy afternoon at Camp Cutler, Yuki Kagami, Bryce June, Tetsuo Matsushita, and Jim Minor review an area of forest under the management plan of Sue Keister. Photo provided by Jeff Emerling.

They shoot the deer and let them lay in the woods for scavengers. There are no deer processors or infrastructure for getting deer out of the woods and having the venison processed. There is essentially no hunting culture, and little support for recreational hunting in Japan. Their deer problem is much worse than ours!

Within the confines of national budget constraints, the Japanese Government is now seeking to revitalize the lumber industry and thereby provide jobs and an expanded source of income in rural areas as well as to reduce the dependence on imports. They see this as a multi-dimensional issue and the researchers at this meeting were seeking both a confirmation of their planned approach and looking for new ideas. On this trip they visited with forestry groups in the Pacific Northwest and West Virginia as well as their visit with us in New York. Their interest spanned public-private partnerships, NGO's (non-government agencies) corporate forestry, TIMO's (Timber Investment Management Organizations), state/federal agencies, forest certification, and support for university research.

One element of the government's approach was to do a better job of educating the population[s] of the benefits of wood products and how they could

be obtained while at the same time improving overall forest health. Another was to promote/aid the logging industry in acquiring more productive equipment, building better roads in mountainous areas (targeted at concentrated areas that have the potential of supporting a forest industry), and training/certifying foresters. They are also encouraging various forest interests (planting, logging, transportation) to combine resources to become more productive overall.

At the meeting we confirmed many of their approaches, took note that the Japanese government was taking such a proactive interest, and added our own approach for government support through the DEC, education from such sources as the Department of Forest and Natural Resource Management at SUNY ESF and the Department of Natural Resources at Cornell as well as the grass-roots, peer-to-peer education from NYFOA and Cornell's Master Forest Owner program.

At one point in the discussion, when reviewing the demographics of the forest industry in Japan, DEC's Bryce June commented that many statistics looked like those of NYS. One difference between the NYS timber interest and Japan's is that both the Japanese home market and export markets are quite sensitive to "green" issues and so building a system where lumber is marked as traceably coming from a certifiably renewable source is required. Another difference was that property taxes did not seem to be a detriment to forest ownership.

Anyone interested in the 28 page report that our guests shared with us can download it (12 MB) at http://www.nyfoa.org/docs/2014-10-22_Japanese_Forestry_Issues.pdf

For a related article see "Observations on Forestry in Japan" by Howard and Richard Ward, p. 10, *New York Forest Owner*, Vol 22, No. 1, January/February 1984, available at www.nyfoa.org under Education -> Archives of the *New York Forest Owner*.

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Northeast Timber Growing Contest

DEAN FAKLIS AND PETER SMALLIDGE

2014 Contest Results

We're proud to present the 2014 summary and results for the Northeast Timber Growing Contest. 2014 marks the end of the first full growing season and the first set of adjudicated results. Here is a list of contest participants during the first season:

Edwards Family Forest: Kurt Edwards, Kristie Edwards, Erin O'Neill (Forester) (Mayfield, Fulton County, NY)

Piestrak Forest Lands: Josh Piestrak, Jeff Piestrak, Ed Piestrak, Bruce Robinson (Forester) (Lindley, Steuben County, NY)

Dale Schaefer: Dale Schaefer (Canadice, Ontario County, NY)

Team Smallidge: Kelly, Nathalie, Adelaide, and Peter Smallidge (Crown Point, Essex County, NY)

Team Springwater: Julie Faklis, Brice June (Forester), Dean Faklis (Springwater, Livingston County, NY)

Here is a list of contest participants that took their first set of measurements in 2014, getting ready for 2015 and beyond:

Blough Family Forest: Christy Blough, Gary Blough (Ontario, Wayne County, NY)

Stackhouse Family Forest: Sarah Stackhouse, Charles Stackhouse (Bluff Point, Yates County, NY)

There were three races in 2014; Hardwood – Board Foot Volume, Hardwood – Basal Area Increment, and Conifer – Basal Area Increment. The Hardwood – BA category received entries from all five teams and was the most popular category. All the entries were normalized by site index to help create a level playing field. Sites with lower site index receive a beneficial handicap.

All competitors submitted their entry materials on time and in good order. The judges met during June and July to review the results and make the necessary computations. The rules that governed the judging process can be found at www.timbercontest.com.

Congratulations to all participants!

Here are the 2014 Northeast Timber Contest results, with high score in **bold**:

Hardwood – BA	
Team Smallidge	0.0613
Piestrak Forest Lands	0.0457
Team Springwater	0.0412
Edwards Family Forest	0.0379
Dale Schaefer	0.0124

Hardwood – Board Foot Volume	
Edwards Family Forest	0.0731
Team Springwater	0.0716

Conifer – BA	
Team Springwater	0.0312

Again, all results were normalized by site index, so they are a bit difficult to compare using the typical units for board feet and basal area. To give a better understanding, here is some background on the raw data:

Hardwood Site Index	
Team Smallidge	55.44
Edwards Family Forest	60.63
Dale Schaefer	68.50
Piestrak Forest Lands	69.33
Team Springwater	70.00

Conifer Site Index	
Team Springwater	67.23

The entry from Team Smallidge had the lowest site index yet they won the category because they perform excellent timber stand improvement (TSI). Get those chainsaws out and find a good use for your less productive trees!

Hardwood – BA – Growth (average sq.ft. per acre) sq. ft. / % Growth		
Team Smallidge	2.7	3.40
Piestrak Forest Lands	2.5	3.17
Team Springwater	3.7	2.88
Edwards Family Forest	1.4	2.30
Dale Schaefer	1.1	0.85

Piestrak Forest Lands, in cooperation with their forester, Bruce Robinson, is growing very well but will need to remove its slow growing trees if it is to challenge Team Smallidge. We can be sure that the Smallidge's won't sit still over the winter, and Josh Piestrak and team can win this one in 2015!

The table above also indicates that the Schaefer forest needs a thinning as it is growing at less than 1%. Dale will need to find a use for some of his suppressed oaks that are way too nice for firewood. Dale needs a bandsaw mill and solar kiln!

Hardwood – Board Foot Volume – Growth on 20 Trees. bd. ft. / % Growth		
Team Springwater	271	5.01
Edwards Family Forest	101	4.43

While Team Springwater put on more percent growth, the Edwards Family Forest won the category because they are producing excellent amounts of wood using less productive soil. The Edward's and their forester, Erin O'Neill, are practicing good management!

Conifer – BA – Growth (average sq.ft. per acre) sq. ft. / % Growth		
Team Springwater	4.4	2.10

Team Springwater's plots are way overstocked! Dean needs to listen to forester Brice June, and get to work this winter with some serious TSI or a challenger will take this category from them.

Lesson from 2014: Through careful forest measurements, identify your "loser" trees and put them to immediate use as building materials, furniture, and firewood! Let the winners get all the light, water and nutrients.

Stackhouse and Blough will be quite competitive in 2015 in the basal area category. They have great soils and fine chainsaw skills!

Please spread the word to your forest-loving friends. Let's work together to grow participation in the Northeast Timber Growing Contest to help spotlight the importance of growing quality timber. There is plenty of time remaining to enter your forest for 2015.

It takes only four (4) hours per year to grow BIG trees and lots of help is available. There is a free contest workshop on March 14, 2015 hosted by the Southern Tier Chapter. Email Dave Williams for registration details, kdwillmill@gmail.com. The workshop will teach tips and tricks to help get you started.

Any questions or if anyone needs help measuring trees, send us a note: dfaklis@frontiernet.net. Also, check out the timber contest website at www.timbercontest.com.

Thanks and Congratulations to All! 🎉



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MAGAZINE DEADLINE

Materials submitted for the May/June 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 April 1, 2015

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Member Profile:

Jim DeLellis

EMILY WAFLER

Jim DeLellis has owned his 75 acre forest for 30 years. However, what originally attracted him to the land wasn't the beautiful hardwoods or the potential timber harvests. Rather, it was the allure of owning private hunting grounds that brought him to his property in Allegheny County.

For years DeLellis had been an avid turkey and deer hunter, and when he heard of the property for sale in a local paper he jumped on the opportunity to own private hunting land. Up until the 50's the area was composed of farmland until it was abandoned. It wasn't until the 70's that the previous owner began planting again in the area. Soon after buying the land in 1985 DeLellis began to make changes.

One of the first things he did was invest in a road system. DeLellis' new trails not only provided better access for hunting, but also a place for his two sons to ride ATVs and motorcycles. In addition, he clear cut 3 acres to create early succes-

sional habitats to benefit the wildlife in the area.

DeLellis also began planting Christmas trees in some of his clear cut areas. Initially, he planted approximately 300 white spruces and took care of them over the next 15 years. Yet, he only gave them away without selling them, and without a profit. He knew that the trees were more effort than they were worth and stopped tending to them. However, it wasn't until a few years after DeLellis bought the land that he fully realized that its value spanned beyond a place for recreation and Christmas trees.

"The forest is an asset and it's worth money. I had no idea," said DeLellis as he looks back on his few years of land ownership. It wasn't until 1990 when he met with a state forester who began to explain the additional benefits of owning 18 stands of oak, maple, cherry, and other north eastern deciduous trees. He soon learned that various land manage-



Jim's wife Maryanne highlighting a crop tree.

ment practices could not only improve the wildlife on his property, but could also be seen as a financial investment, and began to make changes.

One of the first things he did was develop a management plan with state forester, Paul Krester. DeLellis also took part in three federal cost share programs and was able to receive federal funding. After thinning several acres of his land, he was able to produce tall, straight crop trees 15 years later.

In 2008 DeLellis took part in what he calls the "worst first" timber harvest. After selling the trees on stump, he and a group of friends cut all of the trees themselves. He now recognizes that he can hire a logger to do the same job, but found the process enjoyable and educational.

Today, DeLellis' land looks very different than it did 30 years ago when he bought it. He now has two small food plots for the wildlife he likes to hunt. Both food plots are planted to rapeseed and brassica, and have proven to be very successful in attracting wildlife to his land.

In addition, DeLellis has been monitoring the beech populations on his land. Knowing that deer don't feed on beech seedlings, he sees these as a threat and a



Jim DeLellis and consulting forester Jared Kramer discussing harvest with logging operator.

continued on page 22



Construction of a pole barn for equipment storage on the DeLellis property.




Jim's son John with some cull logs going to the mill.

competition to other more valuable trees on his land. He has since been keeping beech and other less desirable plant populations down with various herbicide treatments.

DeLellis has also built a cabin, garage, and a pole barn on the land, and in 2012 he hosted his first NYFOA woods walk. He hopes to have another one sometime soon.

Currently DeLellis is mostly focusing on a selection system commercial timber harvest that will be happening on his property in the next few weeks. He is also working to implement a crop tree management plan for the next ten years.

What he enjoys most about his land is seeing how it has changed during his ownership. One day he hopes to pass the property down to his two sons, Nicholas and John, so it can be preserved and enjoyed for years to come.

If you would like to be profiled for a future issue visit <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/ownerprofile> or send an email to elw224@cornell.edu 

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