



Capital District Chapter Newsletter

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Chair's Message



Jason Post

What Species to Harvest and When?

I am often asked this question. The answer is pretty much cut and dry. Winter months are best for all species. The harvest season rule of thumb is mid-September through late May. Once the warm weather sets

in, things slow down quite a bit. Keep in mind, that trees are plants. Like any plant, flower or vegetable, they stain, dry out, wither and rot, once they are picked, harvested or cut from their root base.

Now, getting to the species...

Maples, especially Hard Maple, lose their demand once the sap starts to flow. By mid-March, this season starts to wind down. Manufacturers like the winter-cut, paper-white color of Hard and Soft Maples. Sap movement, in spring, turns the wood an amber or manila color. The price then starts to drop rapidly. Given the right temperatures and humidity, Maples also stain quite easily and quickly. This usually happens within a few days of being cut.

According to Joe...other species to stay away from during the summer months are Hickory and Ash. Though these species resist stain better than most all others, they split and crack almost immediately. Hickory will "pop" open even on the landing while the logger is bucking the log. Loud pops and cracking

sounds are frequently heard from both species, while logs are piled on the landing or in the log yard. Metal S irons or plates hammered into the ends of the logs where a split is forming, can help reduce the damage here, but is an added cost to the logger. There is also a paraffin wax that can be applied to the ends of logs, to slow down the drying out process. Keeping moisture in the logs will help reduce end-checking. It will also prevent some of the splitting that occurs.

Oaks will split and stain, but not as easily as the species mentioned above. Red and White Oaks are the primary species to concentrate on cutting in the summer months, if at all possible. Beech, Birch, Cherry and Poplars are also okay for summer harvest, as long as they keep moving and do not sit on a landing or log yard more than a couple of weeks.

Another factor to keep in mind is shipping these logs overseas. Just imagine the temperature and humidity inside an overseas shipping container, stacked on the deck of a boat, on the ocean for six weeks. Logs are in pretty rough shape by the time they arrive at a Chinese saw mill. As you can appreciate, prices drop in the summer to offset the loss of valuable lumber produced from these logs.

In a nut shell, winter months are by far the best time to harvest any species. If the trees must be cut in the summer, stick with the Oaks as much as possible.

Hope to see you all at our annual picnic (July 23rd) this year! P. S. My offer still stands, Lower Hudson Chapter. ☺

Jason

The Chapter Picnic

Sunday, July 23, 2017 from Noon – 3:00 p.m.

Our annual chapter picnic will be held at the Glen Doone picnic area in Thacher Park. The site has spectacular views of the capital district from the Helderberg escarpment. The BBQ chicken will be served around 12:30 or so. Please bring a dish of your favorite picnic accompaniment to share with others. The cost: only \$6 per adult which includes the park admission, a chicken half, drinks and “dinnerware”. As an extra incentive to members of the Lower Hudson Chapter, Jason offers to buy the first 10 dinners, for any LHC members that decide to make the trip. Please RSVP to Laura Pisarri (mslphf@hotmail.com) ASAP.

After lunch Gerry McDonald will talk about the Shiitake workshop and growing mushrooms on wood in general. He hopes to bring a couple examples of logs that have active mushrooms growing on them. However, mushrooms can be fickle sometimes, dependent on the weather.



Thacher Park Escarpment View

Newest Members

The chapter welcomes the following new members:

Mike Carrano	Hannacroix, NY
Leroy Post	Leeds, NY
Kaylee Resha	Ghent, NY
Kristen Schnepf-Giger	Warren, Pa
Aron Sotnikoff	Craryville, NY
Tom Wormell	Saugerties, NY

Chapter Service Award

– submitted by Laura Pisarri

Mr. Tracy Lemanec has received the 2017 Capital District Chapter Service Award. Tracy has been a chapter member for over twenty years. He is a lifelong advocate dedicated to forest sustainability. Tracy Lemanec was born with a love for the outdoors. His family inheritance included the beautiful Shinglekill Falls in Purling NY, where he has so graciously hosted one of our steering committee meetings. As a child he was fishing, trapping and hunting whenever possible.



Tracy Lemanec

At the age of 16 he was chosen by the Department of Environmental Conservation to be in a short film that demonstrated woodland management and stocking streams.

As a young man he worked for the Forestry Service, but opted for a career in the sciences, spending the bulk of his professional career working at GE in Schenectady. Throughout his career he stayed involved with his interests in the outdoors. For thirteen years he wrote the Outdoor Column for the Schenectady Gazette. He has maintained and tended to his own forest property in Rotterdam NY, where he has held Woods-walks for NYFOA.

Tracy has stayed active in environmental groups and organizations and has always been happy to share his extensive knowledge with others. He excels at foraging for edible plants and mushrooms. If you ask him a question about any of the local flora or fauna, be prepared for a fascinating 40 minute (or more) dissertation on the subject. He continues his studies of forest management attending seminars, speeches, films and classes related to forestry.

You will always find him outside, among the trees he loves, swimming at Shinglekill Falls, or playing in his garden. He's a true outdoorsman, and an asset to the New York Forest Owners Association

Report on Recent Events

April Forest Mushroom Workshop

Gerry and Carol McDonald hosted a Shiitake mushroom growing workshop at their home in Coeymans Hollow, Albany County on April 2nd, 2017. Seventeen participants came from as far as Orange County to learn firsthand how to turn fresh cut hardwood into food. The majority of participants were new to NYFOA.

It all started in the McDonald's kitchen over coffee and snacks where Gerry provided a brief overview of the roles of various groups of fungi in our woodlands, a discussion about Shiitake mushrooms and about NYFOA and the benefits membership can provide.



Oak Logs Sprouting Mushrooms

Shiitake (*Lentinula edodes*), a saprophytic or wood decomposing fungus, takes about a year to colonize freshly cut wood. Gerry cut the red oak used in the workshop about 2 weeks prior to ensure the maximum amount of sugars and moisture in the wood. Logs, also called bolts, were generally between 3 and 6 inches in diameter and 36 inches long.



Shiitake Mushroom Spore Plugs

The miserable weather turned nice all the work happened outside in brilliant sunshine and warm temperatures. Participants hammered hardwood dowels into 5/16 inch holes they had drilled in a pattern to allow for adequate distribution of the Shiitake inoculums. The dowels were purchased from Field and Forest Products, a mushroom supply house in Peshtigo, Wisconsin. In all participants inoculated about 40 logs with almost 2000 dowels.



Participants Inoculating Logs

Fun Times at New Baltimore AgFest Chapter

– submitted by Laura Pisarri

Another fun year was had by all, at the New Baltimore AgFest, June 3-4 with Horse & Wagon Rides, Children's Activities, Tractor Pulls, Rob VanEtten's Air Show, an Antique Steam Tractor, and the ever popular Silent Auction.

We were blessed with a beautiful weekend, although NYFOA-CDC members Phil Walton and Gerry McDonald struggled to hold on to their hats on Saturday. Chairman Jason Post and Secretary Laura Pisarri were kept busy on Sunday, answering the many questions of the curious spectators. Thanks, to all who donated their time. We look forward to next year, and new ideas!



Jason Post & NYFOA Exhibit at AgFest

Saratoga Woodworkers Show

- submitted by Laura Pisarri

NYFOA CDC members Phil Walton and Ron Pedersen, along with Chairman Jason Post and Secretary Laura Pisarri, manned the booth at the Saratoga Woodworker's Show, once again this year. Our booth had a steady flow of interested passer-byers, who stopped to gather information from our knowledgeable volunteers. A few long time members graced us with their presence and shared interesting stories of their experiences in their woods. One of them being SAC member, retired DEC Forester Rodney Nielsen, who we learned is an avid woodworker, to boot.

Our own CDC member, Gerry McDonald displayed his talent at the show, and proudly accepted a blue ribbon for his craftsmanship. Lots of talent in the air here. If you didn't make it this year, next year is a must!

Thanks, again to all the faithful servants on our team.



Chapter representatives at the Woodworkers Show – Jason Post, Ron Pederson, Laura Pisarri, Phil Walton

Woodscaping: Landscaping for Your Woodlot

By Joe Rankin

Dave Ireland has worked in the woods since he was a teen growing up in Howland. His dad and granddad were loggers. He started logging with a cable skidder full-time after graduating from high school in 1986 and in the late 1990s moved into mechanical harvesting.

Now he's doing a completely different kind of logging. Some people might even say it's not real logging at all. But there is a word for it - "woodscaping." Woodscaping is a term that has been banging around for a while. Think of woodscaping as landscaping for your woodlot. You might equate the result with those perfectly manicured forests in Germany.



Completed & chip dressed recreational trail

Woodscaping often focuses less on harvesting timber and more on the other things landowners say they want from their woodlot - improved recreation opportunities, better wildlife habitat and a healthier forest. For the on-the-ground woodscaper that can mean things like removing blowdowns, thinning

unmerchantable stems to improve overall tree growth, battling invasive plants or putting in recreation trails.

Ireland's company, Woodland Restoration, Inc., does all of those things and more. He works on and around Mt. Desert Island, including smaller islands, where landowners tend to be much more concerned about enhancing and preserving the visual appeal and value of their property than getting a few dollars from a timber sale. He charges by the hour. If there is any timber sold, the money goes to the landowner. "My average client is interested in aesthetics. No timber value. Just cleanup," he said.

Dave Ireland has been doing woodscaping for eight years. He sold his cable skidder in the 1990s and got into mechanical harvesting. In 2009 he took a hard look at his life and work and decided he wanted something different. The economics of large-scale harvesting were changing - fuel prices were skyrocketing and it was getting harder to sell logs.

"There was an emphasis on large volumes of wood, a lot of clearcutting. I wasn't really into that," Ireland said. "I wanted to reduce my carbon footprint."

He sold his feller buncher and bought a Forcat (today called Oxtrac) mini track skidder. "Everybody told me I was crazy when I bought that little skidder. It fits in the back of a pickup truck," he said.



A "mini" skidder & forwarder which helps minimize logging impact

He began pitching his services to landowners with smaller parcels whose objectives didn't focus on turning standing trees into cash, but were willing to pay out-of-pocket to get their woods looking good.

His big break came when he was hired by Rick Smith, a forester and MDI landowner, to clean up blowdowns on his property on the Latty Cove Road in Tremont, on the "quiet side" of the island. Then he created a walking trail. Three months later the job was finished and Smith threw a party to showcase the work. "I ended up getting work from everybody on that road," Ireland said.

Ireland has a dozen regular clients and works pretty much all year. Summer is especially busy. He employs two other guys. He now owns two mini-skidders with rubber tracks, a brace of mini-forwarders that can be towed by the skidders, a Kubota with a dump body and two tow-behind chippers. Low-grade wood, blowdowns and slash are chipped and spread on trails to provide a nice walking surface, he said.

Ireland points out that all of his equipment together cost way less than the \$243,000 he paid for his first feller-buncher, and orders of magnitude less than the \$400,000 or so you'd pay new for a similar machine now.

And that carbon footprint? Well, let's just say that it's a fraction of what it was.

"I don't harvest a lot of timber anymore. I had a market for biomass at Bucksport, but when that mill was closed that disappeared," he said.

Ireland's crew cleans up blowdowns, chips slash, cuts and mulches walking trails. He builds wildlife dens, installs birdhouses, does thinning of overstocked stands. One of the big benefits of his work, he said, is reducing wildfire danger. He has even broadened his services to include some traditional landscaping work, such as digging ponds and even mowing lawns. Most of the parcels he works on are small. The largest is about 75 acres.

"I love it. I do think more timber should be harvested and more management should happen on these lots down here," Ireland said. But wood markets

aren't all that good these days, particularly those for low grade wood. And a landowner paying \$20,000, \$40,000 or even \$60,000 a year in property taxes, well, a few hundred bucks worth of wood chips isn't a factor.

"That type of clientele is what you'd have to target to build a niche business like mine. You've got to hit those coastal towns where the real estate is worth a lot of money," said Ireland.

Mount Desert Island, which has the highest property values in Maine, is ideal. But there are opportunities for building such a business in other coastal communities or really anywhere in the state "where the landowner demographics include less of a need for the woodlot to pay for itself," said Andrew Shultz, the landowner relations forester for the Maine Forest Service. Especially for established landscapers who already have a customer base and want to add woods work to their menu of services, Schultz said.

But Shultz cautions that many loggers might find it difficult to make the same shift Ireland did. It's a different type of work, different clientele, equipment, objectives, marketing. "For many loggers out there this isn't really going to expand their business a whole lot," he said. "Still, some entrepreneurial loggers and/or arborists, who can see themselves as service providers, may be able to blend these desired woodland outcomes with the value of the wood commodity products removed, and come up with a pricing strategy that's viable."

Ireland has another warning: it's hard work. It's not like sitting in the climate-controlled cab of a mechanical harvester, listening to tunes and working the joystick. "You've got to have the right equipment to do it, but 90 percent of it is physical labor. All the trees are harvested by hand, the slash is fed into the chipper by hand. It was kind of back to the old days of logging for me," he said.

At the end of the day, or the end of the job, he's glad he made the change he did. "I look around and actually feel happy and proud instead of thinking, 'it's going to be 100 years before we can touch this again,'" he said.

Credit: Forests for Maine's Future and used with permission.



A "woodscaping" logging job with log bridge

Visit NYFOA's Booth at the Following Events This Summer

What: Philmont Community Day

When: July 8th

Where: Village of Philmont

This is a celebration of the historic Village of Philmont, Columbia County. Events will be held all day and fireworks in the evening! Philmont, NY. The community day includes a parade, food, children's games, fireworks, car show, a tractor pull, and exhibits.

What: Old Time Days

When: August 19-20th

Where: The Showgrounds, 3 miles east of Rip Van Winkle Bridge, Fingar Road, off Rt. 9 and 23. Hudson, NY

See historic machinery and tools in action. Step back in time and learn how things were done before computers. Antique Tractors, Working Print Shop Demonstrations, Blacksmith Demonstrations, Antique Cars, Steam Engines, Tractor Pulls, Flea Market, and much more!

Steering Committee Members

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Next meeting - Tuesday, July 11th – 6:30 p.m.

This meeting will be at Tracy Lamanec's Shinglekill Falls property at 508 Mountain Ave, Purling, NY. If the weather is good come early to explore the property and have a picnic.

Your Membership

Helps Support Sustainable Forestry

Forests cover more than 60% of the state providing important benefits including watershed protection, wildlife habitat, wood products, recreational opportunities, clean air, and beauty. The New York Forest Owners Association is a not-for-profit organization established to encourage sustainable forestry practices and sound management of privately owned woodlands. Members include woodland owners and all others who care about the future of New York's trees and forests.

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