

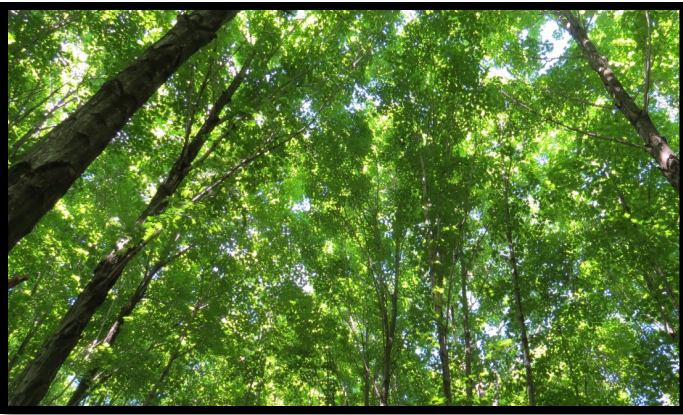


NYFOA
New York Forest Owners Association

FALL 2018

NIAGARA FRONTIER CHAPTER

Forest Regeneration Project: Mid-stage Development



NFC Member Ken Gaines hosts the Niagara Frontier Chapter of the New York Forest Owners Association (NYFOA), along with NYS Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC), U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), Cornell Cooperative Extension (CCE) of Erie County, and Pioneer Forestry for an informative Fall Woodswalk. Participants will observe the mid-stage of a 10 year Forest Stewardship Plan and learn more about forest regeneration, timber stand improvement, deer management, ticks, and much more.



- Attendance is free, but please let us know you are coming so we can plan for parking and handout materials. Everyone is invited. Attendees are asked to dress for the weather and wear boots or shoes suitable for walking on woodland trails, some of which are on hilly terrain. Participants are encouraged to bring a hard hat, clipboard, foldable chair, pencil and paper.

- Lunch will be provided - hot dogs, salad, brownies, and water!

FOR REGISTRATION or more INFORMATION:
https://reg.cce.cornell.edu/CCEErieWoodsWalk_214 or call Erie County Cornell Cooperative Extension at (716) 652-6400 or Ken Gaines, landowner, at (716) 998-3951.

Date: Saturday, October 13th, 2018

Time: 10:00 AM– 2:30 PM, arrive 9:45am

**Location: Zoar Four Property, Erie County
14161 Trevett Road, Springville NY 14141**

Directions: GPS directions will **NOT** lead you to the correct location for the Walk. Follow Route 39 directly to Trevett Road. Head South on Trevett Road for 2 miles. The driveway entrance is just before the CLOSED road barrier.

Please RSVP to:

pfglidden@verizon.net

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Forest Regeneration Project: Mid-stage Development cont'd

Zoar Four Property – Erie County Woodswalk
14161 Trevett Road, Springville NY 14141

Saturday Oct. 13, 2018

10 am—2:30pm. Coffee and sign up 9:45am.

If you are a woodlot owner and want to be more engaged with your woods, this is the perfect workshop for you. The program is intended for woodland owners with beginner to intermediate knowledge and/or skill, as well as anyone interested in learning about sustainable forestry practices, forest health, and restoring your woodlot.

It will examine basic silviculture principles, including pruning, thinning, and harvesting to manage the stock, density, composition, growth, health, regeneration and overall quality of a forest stand. Additional topics will include cost share programs, deer management, emerging forest pests, and information about ticks, Lyme disease, and other tick-borne illnesses.

The goal is to help folks understand the benefits of forest management and give them some ideas of projects that they might like to implement on their own properties. Forester, Eric Stawitzky will provide info about forest management and DEC assistance for private forest owners. Ken has had three different logging projects, and these will be highlighted on the walk. Ken will also include any other work he's done or plans to do. This is a good

opportunity to market the role of the private consulting forester. Presenters before the walk will include:

Pat Marren, Forrester / DEC ;

Eric Stawitzky w/ Pioneer Forestry;

John Whitney w/ NCRS(USDA);

Sharon Bachman w/ CCE, Erie County;

Ken Allein w/ Tick Talk association.

Also, we will be discussing NYFOA membership, our management plan activities since the prior woods -walk in May, 2013, along with cost sharing programs and Lyme disease control.

To encourage attendance and boost membership please let your neighboring property owners and friends know about this great event planned. Ken has additional flyers available if you would like to help promote!

A special thanks to :

Laura M. Bailey

Natural Resource/Watershed/Invasive Species Educator

Cornell Cooperative Extension

Yates County

for the marketing of this event, including press releases and flyers!

Chairman's Corner by Bob Glidden

Fall 2018

We have one event left for our NFC Chapter and it will be a very well attended event. We have had marketing support from Cornell Cooperative Extension plus we have a great group of speakers lined up for NFC member Ken Gaine's Woodswalk. Hope everyone enjoyed the variety of events we planned for 2018! We will be having a Directors meeting in early December for planning of the 2019 calendar. Any suggestions please let me know.

I always like to share my progress on my own property which fortunate for me I live on! I got my food plots in by late July, thanks to great advice from Jason Engel – Shamel Milling at our July 14th event. The food plots are coming along nicely despite the little rain here in Niagara

County. I guess when you deal with mother nature you have to expect some setbacks.

I myself, also had a setback as I had quadruple bypass surgery on Sept 5, 2018. Coming along good, but it's just going to take some time. No tractor til the spring! Walking is good, so I am already taking some nice hikes on the trails. I have a long list started of my "delayed" projects so I will be very busy come spring!

If you are interested in attending our planning meeting, for 2019, send me an email: rkgidden@verizon.net and I will be sure to notify you of the time and place.

Member's Corner by Mark Gallo

Tie a Yellow Ribbon Around the Old (and young) Oak Tree.

One thing you should always take on walks through your woods is yellow ribbon, or orange, or red. I am forever marking young seedlings of desirable types and even ephemeral plants. The trees are marked so I can come back and clear up around them and give them a good head start towards my future forest and I mark the plants so I know where not to disturb or alternatively where to look for seeds or divisions for multiplication.

We hear about releasing valuable trees from competitors but they are typically already pretty far along by that time; you are giving a known tree some breathing room. Recognize that a very small percentage of trees ever make it to the sapling size, and fewer still ever become a harvestable timber log. I look at it this way, if I do nothing then less than 1% of my new trees will be a desirable species like a white oak. With my minimal intervention I increase those odds over ten or maybe even twenty-fold. And boy does it change their growth rate. I have had some young cherry trees respond by growing several feet this year since they were blessed with golden rays of



sunshine.

I almost always have one tool (implement of destruction) with me when I walk through the woods. A shovel is my choice after a rain to open up culverts to divert water away from my paths. Hand pruners are the tool of choice when pruning those shrubs closing in on your trail, the chainsaw on a stick helps to get rid of those limbs that hit you when you are driving your tractor. I recently purchased a brush chain saw, and I do like it. I was hoping for a lightsaber or laser to cut down woody materials but I



guess it will have to do. My favorite tool is still my arborist's chain saw. They are sometimes called top bar saws and have short bars, a mere 10 or 12 inches. I was chided recently by someone and wanted to know if I bought it at Toys R Us, but then they saw it in action and wanted to know how much it cost so they could buy one. They are light and can be handled with one hand, I really like to use it for limbing. Did I say it was light? Because of the short length you can maneuver it easily as well. I think it is a magnesium case so it is lightweight. (Get the feeling I hate lugging my main chainsaw around after a few hours?)

I have tried dropping pins and waypoints so I can find objects of interest again on my phone but invariably I forget to do it. That's where the ribbon comes in handy – I can mark trees or lines where I want future trails too. It's much easier to spot the same tree again if it is flagged. So take the time to walk your land, and don't forget to carry along some ribbon.

Mark A. Gallo, Ph.D.

Professor of Biology

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Recent History of Forest-Deer Interaction

by Mike Zagata
NYFOA's Director of Organizational Development

Historical documents tell us that, when they came ashore, our early settlers found very few deer inhabiting the mature forest. Anecdotal information leads us to believe that Native Americans, in an effort to improve upon their hunting success, used fire to create openings in the mature forest thereby allowing sunlight to reach the forest floor. That provided the sunlight necessary for plant growth and the resulting vegetation provided a food source within the reach of deer and led to more deer and higher hunting success.

If we fast-forward to the 1940s, we are confronted with a landscape largely devoid of forests as a result of logging for lumber, bark and ship masts and clearing to accommodate agriculture. That was about to change as an estimated 100,000 family farms, unable to compete, were forced to abandon their farms. As a result, about 10 million acres went fallow. What happened next is just what should have happened to a landscape that had been dominated by hardwood forests – it began the process, via plant succession, of returning to a landscape dominated by a hardwood forest.

However, it didn't jump from bare soil or grassy-pasture to mature forest. The progression involved grasses being replaced by taller plants with woody stems that allowed them to grow taller and shade out the shorter, shade intolerant grasses and annual "weeds". Over time, woody stemmed even taller plants or "brush" shaded them out and so on until we reached a stage where mature, tall trees shaded out the brush. Trees like aspen were relatively short-lived "pioneer" species that, along with longer-lived species like oaks, cherry and shag-bark hickory, invaded the landscape. The seedlings of these species were not able to flourish in the shade of the adult trees (shade intolerant) and thus they eventually were replaced by trees like maple, beech, yellow birch and hemlock that produced seedlings that could grow in the shade of the adult trees that produced them, i.e. they are shade tolerant. The forest that results from the presence of shade tolerant trees is called the climax stage because it is able, without the influence of deer on its regeneration, to perpetuate itself.

It was during the brush stage of forest succession where all sorts of wildlife, including deer, prospered. Hunting license sales were high and the total deer kill from hunting was high relative to what it is today. We know, even if we weren't ecologically aware, this happened because the Winchester Model 94 in 30-30 caliber was the predominant deer rifle of that era and was affectionately known as a "brush gun". It fired a slow-moving bullet that had the ability to penetrate brush without disintegrating.

Today, on the same piece of ground, a hunter would be more apt to use a fast-moving, flat shooting cartridge fired from a rifle bearing a 3X9 power scope at a target much farther away. Why – because today that same ground is covered by a mature forest with a dense canopy and, as such, there would be no understory or brush to get in the way.

The march of the vegetation toward becoming a mature hardwood forest continued and, over time, nature's goal - a climax hardwood forest composed of tree species like oak and ash that eventually would give way to the shade tolerant species and maple, beech, yellow birch and hemlock that

were able to perpetuate themselves by being shade tolerant, was achieved. It is the seedlings of these species, except for beech, that constitute forest regeneration and are the commercially valuable – the ones being over-browsed by deer – except for beech.

As the plant succession progressed toward the climax stage, or shade tolerant stage, a forest composed of more shade tolerant species was formed. The canopy, or overstory of leaves during the growing season, began to close. When this happened that canopy blocked sunlight from reaching the forest floor. No sunlight meant no shade intolerant green plants like forbs and brush – what used to be food within the reach of deer. As food became less available, deer, in order to survive, turned to the more shade tolerant and commercially valuable species for their food. Over time, deer began to destroy their own habitat by over-browsing those species and thus destroying the ability of the forest to regenerate itself. That's where we are today. If the current deer population is left unchecked, we face the potential of losing those species that deer prefer – they may be absent from the future forests.

It wasn't plant succession alone that enabled this progression. During the 1960s, the environmental preservation movement swept the nation. People were feeling guilty for having exploited our natural resources as part of settling the country – the time of "Manifest Destiny". As is often the case, the pendulum over-swung its target and we, based upon what we now know, went a tad too far. As a result, the "canaries in the mine" or certain wildlife species that have "spoken" by being unable to maintain historic population levels in the face of declining young forest habitat. Their declining numbers sounded an alarm much like that sounded by Rachel Carson's "Silent Spring".

During the 1960s when brush dominated much of the landscape, the forest was able to regenerate itself in spite of high numbers of deer. Is that because of the abundance of remnant seeds from the pre-clearing era? Is it because of the reachable food associated with brush combined with the additional early stages of forest succession produced via agriculture and logging? We don't know the answer, but the fact that it happened gives us reason to explore the option of using agriculture and timber harvesting, including seed tree cuts, shelterwood cuts and clear-cutting, under the umbrella of the "Young Forest Initiative" to reduce the deer pressure on today's hardwood forests by increasing the availability of reachable browse and giving deer the option of eating plants other than maple, ash and oak – the species we need in order to maintain our commercially valuable hardwood forests.

Doing that would also help address two other pressing issues. First, it would help produce the target levels, established by TNC and Audubon, for the percentage of forestland described as "young forests". Meeting those targets would help those wildlife populations that are in rapid decline after having been evicted from their homes/habitats as they were replaced with later stages of plant succession due to our "no-cut" policies. These species include the new England Cottontail Rabbit and 43 species of neo-tropical or migratory songbirds. The golden Winged Warbler is the poster child for this group of birds.

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Recent History of Forest-Deer Interaction, cont'd

The second issue that would be addressed is associated with the process of hi-grading – also described as “cut the best and leave the rest”. Hi-grading may have been practiced in some of New York’s hardwood forests for decades and the reasons for that are too numerous to fully discuss. However, the end result is that the overall value of the standing timber in many of today’s forests has been dramatically reduced. There is no easy solution to rejuvenating those forestlands, but starting over via heavy cutting, including clear-cutting, while simultaneously reducing the deer population is a viable option – and one that would benefit both wildlife and the forests. It is important to clearly state that no one is recommending the entirety of New York’s hardwood forests be clear-cut all at the same

time or even over several generations. It will take time. It will also require that markets for low-grade wood, including it for biomass to produce energy, be developed. By reducing the number of deer now and beginning the process of rejuvenating many of New York’s forestlands now, we may be able to create an environment where regeneration is enabled and deer have something to eat other than the regeneration of key species.

However, as Jerry Michael has so eloquently detailed in the paper “The Elephant in the Room”, to do nothing to address the negative impact deer are having on forest regeneration will have the ultimate adverse impact – the loss of our hardwood forests as we know them.

Highlights from NFC 2018 Events



June 9, 2018



Highlights from NFC 2018 Events



*Family Picnic
August 25, 2018*

Vic and Deb Bandinelli hosted our Annual Family Picnic with a woodswalk led by Eric Zawitsky. Mike Zagata also joined our group and did a great presentation on 'Recent History of Forest-Deer Interaction.'





Niagara Frontier Chapter

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"Odditree" Corner

Here is a photo of a "Four Legged" hemlock at the IBM Glen Forest Preserve in Endicott, NY. I presume it came about as follows:

A former tree broke off at a height of about five feet above ground level. The top of the high tree stump gradually rotted and created a hospitable seedbed for a hemlock seed that landed there years later. The new hemlock seedling extended its (4) roots down the sides of the rotting stump where they then rooted into the soil. Eventually the original host stump completely rotted away (but you can still see remnants of it at the soil line).

Jerry Michael—State Board Member



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