

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 2017



Member Profile: Hobbs Family

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**THE NEW YORK
FOREST OWNERS
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**The New York
Forest Owner**

A PUBLICATION OF THE NEW YORK FOREST OWNERS ASSOCIATION

VOLUME 55, 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 mmalmshe@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, 2017.

Please address all membership fees and change of address requests to PO Box 541, Lima, NY 14485. 1-800-836-3566. Cost of family membership/subscription is \$45.

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

www.nyfoa.org

COVER: Ben Hobbs operating the family sawmill. For member profile see page 21. All photos courtesy of the Hobbs family.

From The President

By the time you read this, NYFOA's new website should be up and running (<http://www.nyfoa.org>). We seek to deliver more value to our membership and this new website does just that. It is attractive and easy to navigate. Information is easy to find. News and events are prominently posted. Our old website did not work well with smart phones and other mobile



devices; the new website is mobile-friendly. Also note our distinctive new logo. Please take a look; we hope you like it.

I have some partially good news to share

about NYFOA's Restore New York Woodlands legislative agenda. Many of our members wrote the governor and their legislators last fall, urging their support for a more inclusive and less burdensome forest tax law, and for a new cost-share forest stewardship program.

Apparently our efforts and those of partner forest stakeholder organizations paid off. In his annual "State of the State" message, Governor Cuomo announced a new "Empire State Forests for the Future" (ESFF) initiative, which included most of the provisions we have been advocating on your behalf for several years. Unfortunately, the proposed budget projects a deficit, and the ESFF was not funded for 2017-2018. We understand that legislation enabling the ESFF initiative may be introduced in the second quarter of this year, with implementation contingent on budget coverage next year.

We have maintained that the many public benefits flowing from privately-owned forestlands justify public support for sustainable forestry practices and reasonable taxation of forested property. The ESFF initiative demonstrates that our message is finally getting through. If supporting legislation is introduced this spring, we will once again ask our membership to request support from their legislators.

Have you sent in your registration for the Annual Meeting in Syracuse at SUNY-ESF on Saturday, April 8, 2017? We have an outstanding program arranged with three speakers, state and chapter awards presentations, a silent auction, lunch, and great door prizes. Come and meet fellow forest owners from across New York. As additional enticement to attend the annual meeting, we are again offering some fabulous door prizes — a Dolmar/Makita 50cc chainsaw, two sets of chainsaw safety chaps, and two chainsaw helmets. Dolmar/Makita Power Products has donated the chaps and helmets, and in conjunction with Dolmar/Makita dealer Dave Nielen of Nielsen's Sales and Service in Penn Yan, they have subsidized our purchase of this great saw. It has an 18" bar, 50cc engine with 3.9HP and weighs only 11.9 pounds. List price is almost \$500. Someone is going to leave the annual meeting with a big grin and a great chainsaw and four members will leave with some important protective equipment. NYFOA thanks Dolmar/Makita Power Products and Dave Nielsen for their generous support. Registration deadline is March 31, 2017.

—Charles Stackhouse
NYFOA President

Join! NYFOA is a not-for-profit group promoting stewardship of private

forests for the benefit of current and future generations. Through local chapters and statewide activities, NYFOA helps woodland owners to become responsible stewards and helps the interested public to appreciate the importance of New York's forests.

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

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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.

An Additional Enticement to Attend the Annual Meeting

NYFOA is offering some fabulous door prizes! A Dolmar/Makita 50cc chainsaw, two sets of chainsaw safety chaps, and two chainsaw helmets. Dolmar/Makita Power Products has donated the chaps and helmets and in conjunction with Dolmar dealer Dave Nielen of Nielsen's Sales and Service in Penn Yan, they have subsidized our purchase of this great saw. It has an 18" bar, 50cc engine with 3.9HP and weighs only 11.9 pounds. List price is almost \$500. Someone is going to leave the annual meeting with a big grin and a great chainsaw and four members will leave with some important protective equipment.

You can register for the meeting on page 12.

NYFOA thanks Dolmar/Makita Power Products and Dave Nielsen for their generous support



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Welcome New Members

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

Name	Chapter	Name	Chapter
Eugene Anthony	NFC	Renee Boon & Keith Knight	WFL
Jude Bendt	NFC	Brent Maynard	WFL
Dave Bulich	CDC	Greg Muscato	AFC
Martin Clarke	LHC	Ray Passmore	WFL
Brett Davidson	NFC	Matthew Pavlick	AFC
Dan deRoos	WFL	Nicoletta & Andy Pickup	LHC
Larry Duke	WFL	Rich Pitt	WFL
Jeffrey Emerling	WFL	Antoine Rainville	SAC
Jill & Scott Fonte	CNY	Erin Schuster	AFC
Richard Forrestel	NFC	Chad Seelbinder	NFC
Joshua D. Holden	SFL	Jim Zavislan	WFL
Wallace Johnson	AFC		

Developing the Art of Stewardship

DEAN FAKLIS

Distracted is everywhere. During every minute, we juggle multiple demands. The long view suffers.

Our trees grow at a glacial pace but our forests can change drastically in an instant. A forest owner decides to sell, or dies, and the forest becomes endangered in that moment. The unfortunate cycle of high grading followed by neglect tends to continue and we must take the long view and work to stop it. Given the lifetimes involved, the long view extends beyond us; will NY's children become good stewards of our forests?

NYFOA is taking action to address the long view with NY's children and is bringing forest stewardship concepts into the classroom. It created the Woodlands Mini Grants for Educators and it supports NY's 4-H forestry invitational team. The NYFOA auction has been rekindled to help fund these stewardship programs. These programs are important and our website has all of the details (http://www.nyfoa.org/time_sensitive/

[auction2017.php](#)). That's a long link to type in, so just visit nyfoa.org where there is a link to the auction page. There you'll find a list of donors and pictures of their auction items. We are grateful for the generosity of these fine people.

NYFOA's 2017 auction effort has already received pledges of near \$2,000 towards its goal of \$5,000. Please consider the importance of the long view and make a donation today using the form at the auction website. Or send me an email (dfaklis@frontiernet.net) and I will streamline the process. Let's try to meet our goal.

NYFOA's silent auction coincides with its annual meeting on April 8, 2017 so there is not much time remaining. Your donation to the NYFOA auction of cash, services or items and your willingness to bid on items will help to develop the art of forest stewardship in NY's children. Please download the donation form, check it over and give a generous gift today. NYFOA is recognized by the IRS as a 501(c)3



organization and your donation is deductible to the maximum extent allowed by law.

The auction team considered having an online auction as well, but not for 2017, so the physical items will only be available for bidding at the annual meeting on April 8 in Syracuse. If you have interest in bidding on an item or service, but cannot attend the annual meeting, please send me an email and we'll try to make it work together. We want all of the auction items to find happy homes!

If you have questions about the auction or making a donation, please send me a note (dfaklis@frontiernet.net). If you'd like to volunteer to help implement the auction, we could use a few more hands. Given the importance of the effort, please make a donation today. Thank you! 🙏



Would you like to receive an electronic version of future editions of *The New York 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.

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 influence 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

How to Use Soils Information for Woodlot Management

Question: My forester explained the importance of soils for tree growth, but I'm not sure how to use information about soils to help with managing my woods. What should I know about forest soils that will help me? (Doug F., NFC)

Answer: An understanding of forest soils will help owners manage their woods for improved tree health and more efficient growth of trees. Forest soils should be thought of as a living layer or mantle that allows for trees to be anchored to the earth and obtain necessary minerals and water. The science of soils is as complex as the science of forestry or the science of biology; this article will only scuff the surface of the influence of soils on woodland management.

The characteristics of soils important for woodlands include their texture, organic matter, and pH. Texture is the size of the soil particles that might include some combination of fine clay, medium silt, and coarse sand. Organic matter helps hold or bind mineral elements necessary for tree growth. The soil's pH describes soil acidity and influences the availability of nutrients. These three characteristics of soils will impact which trees occur in an area, how well they grow, the limitations imposed on certain woodland operations, and the opportunities for other types of woodland operations.

Most forest stewardship plans include a discussion of forest soils. Unfortunately, most of these discussions are of limited utility to the owner, and also to anyone

lacking a strong background in soil science. These discussions often mention the name of the soil series, the depth of the soil horizons or layers, and perhaps some chemical attributes of the soil. A partial example of such a soil description from a stewardship plan might read:

"These loams belong to the Mardin series of soil, and are most commonly found in previously glaciated areas, specifically on broad hilltops and slopes that range between 0% and 50%. They are well-drained soils with a dense fragipan that begins 14 to 26 inches below the soil surface."

This information can easily be found in the county's soil survey (paper copy) or the more widely available Web Soil Survey (WSS) produced by the Natural Resources

Conservation Service (www.websoilsurvey.nrcs.usda.gov).

Specific information is also available in the WSS that would be more useful to most landowners addressing how different tree species respond to the soil, if soil conditions might limit the building of roads or landings and if the soils are prone to drought or poor drainage of moisture. If a tree species is suited to a particular soil it will have better health, better growth, and recover more quickly after a stressful event. One indicator of whether a tree is suited to a particular soil is the tree's species site index on that soil. Site index is the expected height of a tree species at a specific age, usually 50 years old. If, for example, sugar maple has a site index of 55 on one soil and 70 on another soil, the latter soil is better matched to the needs of sugar maple resulting in a tree that will grow better and have fewer problems with health. WSS provides the full range of information about the physical and chemical properties of soils.

Woodland owners now have access to two complementary and free resources on the internet they can use to understand the soils on their property. One resource is WSS, as previously mentioned. WSS is a database of soils information for all lands in the US. An owner can create a map of their property and a list of all the soils. WSS allows the owner to generate a table of soils, and the characteristics of each soil type. A second resource is Google Earth Pro (www.google.com/earth). Google Earth Pro (GEP) provides recent satellite images of the earth. GEP also includes tools that allow a woodland owner to draw and save property and stand boundaries,

Figure 1. The Web Soil Survey is an online tool that provides an abundance of information about the physical and chemical properties of soils, and the impacts of soils on woodland management.

determine the area of mapped units, draw lines, measure distance, and more. Better still, WSS can be integrated into GEP with a minimal effort.

A blog about using WSS and GEP is available at www.CornellForestConnect.ning.com and includes several videos on how to use and integrate these resources, and then how to use these resources. WSS and GEP are powerful tools, and as with all powerful tools plan to spend some time learning how to use them for optimal success.

A simple example of a woodlot in Tompkins County will illustrate some of the ways to use soil information (Figure 2). This woodlot has four different types of soils, or soil map units. The two most abundant units based on the area of interest (AOI) are Erie and Langford soils. The WSS tab for "Soil Data Explorer" allows the owner to learn the site index of specific trees (Figure 3). This example for black cherry shows that the Bath and Langford soils have a better site index than the other soils, though all are fairly good. Similarly, the soils are rated for suitability for a log landing (Figure 4) based on slope, soil strength, wetness, and potential for dust.

A couple points are worth noting for the interpretation of these soil characteristics. First, the ratings are based on the general properties of a soil type and projected onto a specific owner's property. Although



Map Unit Legend			
Tompkins County, New York (NY109)			
Map Unit Symbol	Map Unit Name	Acres in AOI	Percent of AOI
BgC	Bath and Valois soils, 5 to 15 percent slopes	0.9	4.0%
EbB	Erie channery silt loam, 3 to 8 percent slopes	11.4	49.8%
ErA	Erie-Chippewa channery silt loams, 0 to 3 percent slopes	3.2	14.1%
LaB	Langford channery silt loam, 2 to 8 percent slopes	7.4	32.1%
Totals for Area of Interest		22.9	100.0%

Figure 2. This figure shows an example of a soil map for a woodlot in Tompkins County, NY. The soil map legend references the map codes and the acreage in the mapped area, known as the Area of Interest (AOI).

Figure 3 (below). WSS allows the user to select a tree species to generate a table of site index values for species commonly found on those soils. Site index values are found in WSS under the tab for Soil Data Explorer, and then within vegetative productivity.

Tables – Forest Productivity (Tree Site Index): black cherry (Defler 1937 (750)) – Summary By Map Unit		
Summary by Map Unit – Tompkins County, New York (NY109)		
Map unit symbol	Map unit name	Rating (feet)
BgC	Bath and Valois soils, 5 to 15 percent slopes	75
EbB	Erie channery silt loam, 3 to 8 percent slopes	65
ErA	Erie-Chippewa channery silt loams, 0 to 3 percent slopes	65
LaB	Langford channery silt loam, 2 to 8 percent slopes	75
Totals for Area of Interest		

Tables – Suitability for Log Landings – Summary By Map Unit				
Summary by Map Unit – Tompkins County, New York (NY109)				
Map unit symbol	Map unit name	Rating	Component name (percent)	Rating reasons (numeric values)
BgC	Bath and Valois soils, 5 to 15 percent slopes	Moderately suited	Bath (40%)	Slope (0.50) Low strength (0.50) Dusty (0.01)
			Valois (35%)	Slope (0.50) Low strength (0.50) Dusty (0.01)
			Langford (5%)	Slope (0.50) Low strength (0.50) Wetness (0.50) Dusty (0.01)
			Mardin (5%)	Low strength (0.50) Wetness (0.50) Dusty (0.01)
EbB	Erie channery silt loam, 3 to 8 percent slopes	Poorly suited	Erie (75%)	Wetness (1.00) Low strength (0.50) Slope (0.50) Dusty (0.02)
ErA	Erie-Chippewa channery silt loams, 0 to 3 percent slopes	Poorly suited	Erie (60%)	Wetness (1.00) Low strength (0.50) Dusty (0.01)
			Chippewa (30%)	Wetness (1.00) Low strength (0.50) Dusty (0.01)
			Chippewa, very poorly drained (5%)	Low strength (1.00) Ponding (1.00)

Figure 4. One example of how management is influenced by soils are the potential for a soil to serve as a log landing. Log landings need soils that are fairly stable, not overly rocky, and relatively dry. The ratings for log landing suitability take these and other factors into consideration.

the soil maps are usually accurate, there may be variation between the map and what the owner finds on the ground. It is prudent to spend some time in the woods to verify the maps. Second, understanding the estimates of the soil properties may require a discussion with your forester and comparison among different parts of your property. Unless you know the significance, for example, of a site index of 55 versus 70, the numbers don't mean much. Finally, a soil map unit might have a low rating for some condition, but it might be the best option available to an owner. For example an owner may be confronted with a wet rating for a potential log landing; however, there might be management strategies to mitigate this limitation such as summer logging on dry ground or winter logging on frozen ground.

Dr. Peter Smallidge, Department of Natural Resources, Cornell University Cooperative Extension, Director, Arnot Teaching and Research Forest, Ithaca, NY, 14853.

Support for ForestConnect is provided by USDA NIFA and the Cornell University College of Agriculture and Life Sciences.

Wild Things in Your Woodlands

KRISTI SULLIVAN

AMERICAN WOODCOCK (*SCOLOPAX MINOR*)



Ricky Layson, Ricky Layson Photography, Bugwood.org

The American woodcock is a medium-sized bird similar in size to a dove. Its bill is long in proportion to its body, which is round and heavy. It has a short neck and a large head. Its big eyes are set high on the bird's head, giving it 360-degree vision. This trait, along with cryptic brown and black coloration, protects the woodcock from predators. Both sexes look alike. Nesting occurs from mid-March into June. Females lay four eggs in a shallow depression on the ground, camouflaged by dead leaves. The precocial chicks hatch in about 21 days, and are raised entirely by the female.

The American woodcock, also known as the timberdoodle or bog-borer, is a popular migratory game bird that overwinters in the southern states. In March, the woodcock returns to its breeding grounds in the northeast. Returning males establish territories, or singing grounds, in open fields next to thick brush or woods. They often return to the same area year after year, defending their territories against other males. Singing grounds are typically openings of about one-quarter acre in size, with a straight, 20-30 yard take-off strip that is clear of impeding vegetation.

The courtship flight of the woodcock is an intriguing aerial display that can be seen at dusk and dawn beginning in late March or early April, and sometimes continuing into May. The best time to hear and see the display is between sundown and complete darkness. The male will take off and fly 200 to 300 feet up into the sky.


His wings make a distinctive twittering sound as the wind rushes through his wing feathers. Upon reaching his upward destination, he spirals or zigzags back down to the ground, making a gurgling sound as he falls and landing back at his take-off site. Back on the ground, he sounds a nasal, insect-like buzzing call described as “peent” for several minutes, and then repeats his courtship flight.

Females seek out the males on their breeding grounds, and usually nest within 150 yards of the singing grounds where they mated. Favored nesting habitat includes damp woods near water, hillsides above moist bottomlands, old fields with low ground cover, briar patches, and edges of shrub thickets and young conifer stands. There may be little overhead cover (old fields) or up to 50 feet of vegetation (hardwood stands). The average cover height is 12 feet.

Woodcocks feed on a variety

of invertebrates and some plants. However, this bird favors earthworms, and its long bill is specially adapted for probing the ground in search of its prey. Sensitive nerve endings in the lower third of the bill help a woodcock locate earthworms. A special bone-muscle arrangement lets the bird open the tip of its upper bill, or mandible, while it is underground. The long tongue and the underside of the mandible are both rough-surfaced to grasp and pull slippery prey out of the ground. The best feeding habitat is pole-sized hardwood or alder stands with a dense overstory, fairly open ground cover, and moist, fertile soil that supports earthworms.

The best way to maintain habitat for woodcocks is to protect springs, seeps, moist depressions, and wetlands on your property. These areas provide important feeding grounds, and can be maintained by burning or mowing open grassy areas near water sources. These

are prime nesting and courting grounds because of the water source and the food they provide. Maintain shrub cover in riparian areas and adjacent to wet areas for adequate cover. Alder, hawthorns, gray dogwood, spicebush, and silky dogwood are all good cover species for woodcock. Creating or maintaining areas of young forest will also provide singing grounds, and rejuvenate brood and nesting cover. By maintaining habitat for this unique bird, you and your family can continue to enjoy the courtship flights that usher in the spring. 

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

Kristi Sullivan is Co-Director of the Conservation Education and Research Program and Director of the New York State Master Naturalist Program at Cornell. More information on managing habitat for wildlife can be found at arnotconservation.info
Funding provided by the National Institute of Food and Agriculture's Renewable Resources Extension Act.

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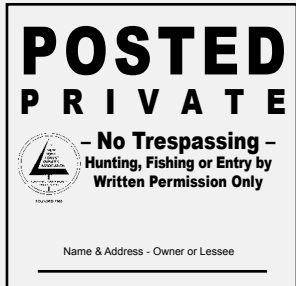
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Coppicing Black Locust: Two Case Studies

JEFF JOSEPH

Back in the spring of 2009, some friends gave me a bundle of black locust (*Robinia pseudoacacia*) seedlings. They had bought 500 or more and were exhausted with the planting effort, so gladly gifted me with their last 50. Although my property is almost entirely wooded, and so has very little open space to spare for planting, I had always wanted to experiment with coppicing (an age old technique of growing hardwoods on short rotation and regenerating with sprouts rather than seed), and with locust in particular, so I wandered around looking for a suitable spot to shoehorn them into.

It turned out that the only spot that I could spare without clearing trees as part of the effort was a large berm along our creek, which a previous owner had created to keep a section of the yard from flooding.

While easiest for me, this would be a challenge for the locust, as this berm was basically a big pile of acidic, infertile subsoil and shale. I did some reading, and discovered that black locust had been found to be one of the best species to plant in the aftermath of mining operations, which involve extreme soil disturbance and even soil toxicity, so figured my situation couldn't be much worse, and decided to go for it, and to live with the results.

I ended up planting 40 of the diminutive (12" tall, ½" diameter) seedlings, in rows on 4' x 6' spacing. I made no effort to improve the soil, irrigate (other than in year one), or to decrease competition from grasses, brambles, and such. The only attention I did give the young trees (also as an experiment) was to prune their lower trunks each spring (while still dormant) in order to ensure that they remained straight single stems for fenceposts, which would be my desired 'crop.'

Fast forward eight years, and here's what I've got: 32 saplings (eight, or 20% of the original planting died along the way), the largest of which are about 3.25" DBH, and maybe 20' in height. There are also a number of locust root suckers that have sprouted up in and around the little stand. Considering the minimal input, and pretty terrible growing conditions, I would have to

say that I am pleased with the results so far, as I should end up with a decent supply of relatively straight locust poles by the time my garden and orchard fenceposts wear out.

Of course, the real benefit (or scourge, depending on your point of view) with locust (and with coppicing in general) is that once you've established it, short of extreme measures, you've got it for good, as when harvested it will send up prolific stump sprouts and/or root suckers to become the next generation of poles, firewood, or whatever other use you may see fit to put it to.

In the lessons learned category, the primary suggestion I would offer would be—if at all possible—to isolate a black locust planting from goldenrod (*Solidago* sp.) as much as possible, as it serves as the alternate host for the visually striking yet highly destructive locust borer (*Megacyllene robiniae*). The borer was the primary cause of mortality among my young trees, which I unwittingly sited right next to a goldenrod patch. I have also since read that pruning of young locust—especially slow growing locust—encourages and facilitates borer egg laying in the callus tissue surrounding pruning wounds, so minimizing the pruning to only the most necessary stem shaping is advisable.



My small locust planting making its best effort on poor soil; note lower stems have been pruned.

So that's my little semi-success story, but I recently had the opportunity to speak with fellow NYFOA member, regional extension forester, and farmer Brett Chedzoy of Watkins Glen about his *much* broader scale experience with black locust as a coppice crop. The following are some of the (lightly edited) highlights:

- **When did you start your coppice?**

"1988. The beauty of black locust is that it can be readily regenerated from coppice and suckering – though the resulting stands tend to come in so dense that some early pre-commercial thinning (the proper silvicultural term is 'weeding' when done in sapling stands) will make a big difference in early growth and development. However, it may be worth waiting a bit longer than normal to see which stems are most affected by locust borer. Not much is known about locust borer damage in dense, young stands — an area for more investigation to create management recommendations. Coppice should be started at the end of the stand rotation. Black locust is highly shade-intolerant, so there's no point in trying to establish regeneration through suckers and sprouts until the overstory is completely removed. We regenerated some of our lower-quality stands at ~ 15 years of age after clearcutting for fence posts. Our better stands will be grown until 40-50 years of age for sawtimber (with numerous intermediate thinnings) and then regenerated."

- **How many acres are involved?** "20 acres of locust and locust/black walnut."

- **How did you initially propagate the locust?** "Original plantations were from

seedling (from a variety of nurseries, though mostly the state nursery in Saratoga). We've experimented with direct seeding, but site prep and timely moisture seems to be critical for success (as well as proper preparation of the seed – we used an overnight hot water soak)."

• **What were your initial goals?** "When we first started planting black locust on our farm 30 years ago, we saw it mainly as a nurse crop for higher-value hardwoods (mostly black walnut) and to naturalize areas (cover old field with trees and let natural regeneration eventually become established underneath). With the return of livestock and grazing to our farm, the locust has since become an important cash crop to build the needed high-tensile fences."

• **What was/is the quality of the soils you planted on?** "All of the locust plantings on our farm are on well-drained gravelly soils (Howard and Valois types). One of the plantations has a seasonally wet corner where spring runoff collects. Locust has failed to survive there. However, I've seen locust do very well in riparian areas — as long as it doesn't have wet feet. Locust seems to do well on any moderately-well drained soil. It doesn't tolerate poorly-drained or seasonally wet areas. The better the site quality, the better the growth."

• **Could you share your mistakes or offer some advice for others looking to start with locust?** "Main thing I'd do different if starting over is to seek out the best genetics available (even if I had to grow my own seedlings from seed collected from nice trees in the neighborhood) Easier said than done since 'improved' varieties are only just starting to be grown by a handful of forest nurseries. Straightness will have a big influence on the economics of growing locust for posts, poles and sawtimber. Looking ahead, it's a species that merits more work by forest geneticists to select for additional traits like borer resistance, branching (locust is susceptible to splitting and limb loss), and growth rate."

• **Have you kept any data on growth rate, harvest, etc.?** "The best trees at our farm are growing three rings to the inch (1" every 3 years). Better site preparation, genetics and management would improve this. I'm not aware of any work done on biomass growth of locust in plantations (there may be some, but probably not for the northeast), but it's certainly one of the fastest-growing



Sheep and goats enjoying spring pasture beneath thinned locust on Chedzoy farm.

trees for this area. Yield of the different products would be strongly influenced by the straightness (straight trees will yield a higher % of posts/poles than less-straight trees which will yield mostly firewood). As for harvest data, in the plantation (~ 5 acres) that we manage for sawtimber and silvopasture, we've thinned it every four years starting at 16 years of age (planted in 1988, thinned first time in 2003 when we started raising livestock and building fences on the farm). Four thinnings to date have yielded ~ 350 posts/acre. At a wholesale value of \$5/post (about half the retail price), that's \$1,750/acre. Each time we thin, we remove the lowest-quality trees to favor the best (I would estimate that we remove ~ 25% of the stocking each time, but haven't measured to say for sure). Future harvests will start to yield more higher-value products like poles and sawlogs."

• **What is the timing of the coppice rotation in your circumstance for different products?** "~ 15 years for posts, ~ 25 years for poles, ~ 35+ for sawtimber."

• **Anything else you want to add/share?** "Good site prep (and early establishment care) is a good investment; if planting more than a small area, I'd mix with some other species (we're starting to see some locust leaf miner damage in this area, which seems to prefer pure groups of locust); it may be necessary to protect new seedlings from deer; black locust works well with a variety of agroforestry systems and apiculture; **Don't plant it near areas**

where you don't want it to spread into... because it will!"

This last point—black locust's propensity to spread beyond the site of an initial planting—makes it a controversial species in certain circles, as numerous states including New York have labeled it as an invasive and/or noxious plant.

While its 'aggressive' nature certainly requires some forethought and site planning for those choosing to work with locust, in the right situation its many positive attributes—adaptable, resilient, soil improver, high Btu value, excellent rot resistance, ability to generate income on a relatively short rotation, *and* ability to renew itself without fail after harvest—all make it an excellent choice for anyone to consider when planting trees on the farm or homestead, whether for personal use for profit.

A 1-day conference on growing black locust as a timber cash crop in the Northeast will be offered here in New York sometime early this fall. Date and details will be available this spring through NYFOA, Cornell Cooperative Extension, and other partner organizations. Be on the lookout for additional stories and resources about working with locust in future issues of the Forest Owner, and in the meantime by all means share your experiences working with locust (or in coppicing other hardwoods) with us, as we'd love to hear about it. 🌱

Jeff Joseph is a NYFOA board member.



NY Forest Owners Association

55th Annual Spring Program, Saturday, April 8, 2017

21st Century, Our Woodlands, Our Watch

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

- 8:15 a.m. **Registration and refreshments.** *Check out the displays from NYFOA Chapters and forestry oriented exhibits in Nifkin Lounge.*
- 9:00 a.m. **Welcome:** Charles Stackhouse, *President NYFOA* and David Newman, *Chair, Faculty of Forestry, SUNY ESF.*
- 9:15 a.m. **Woodland Certification Programs**
Chris Nowak, *SUNY ESF*
- 10:00 a.m. **Improving Bird Habitat Through Timber Management**
Suzanne Treyger, *Forest Program Manager from NY Audubon*
- 11:00 a.m. **Taxation and Other Forest Landowner Issues**
Mike Callan, *NYS DEC*
- 12:00 p.m. **Silent Auction**
- 12:30 p.m. **Luncheon and NYFOA Annual Awards Banquet**
- 2:00 p.m. **NYFOA Board of Directors Meeting**

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

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Woodland Health

A column focusing on topics that might limit the health, vigor and productivity of our private or public woodlands

COORDINATED BY MARK WHITMORE

THIRSTY MAPLES

By PAUL HETZLER

Given that maple producers have to boil down roughly 40 gallons of sap to make one gallon of syrup, you would think that dry weather might improve things. Obviously if drought could get rid of a bunch of water for free, the sap would become concentrated and you wouldn't need to boil as much. Heck, in an extremely dry year maybe we could just drill into a maple and have granular sugar come dribbling out.

If only it worked that way. In general, a shortage of water during the growing season hampers the production of sugar and leads to lower sap sugar concentrations the following spring. Green plants have a magic formula for turning sunlight into sugar, and it calls for a few simple ingredients: water, carbon dioxide, sunlight and chlorophyll. If one item is missing, the transformation will not work. I'm told most spells fail for

want of a newt's eye or some such, but if a thing as basic and usually commonplace as water is in short supply, the miracle of photosynthesis slows to a snail's pace (which is likely used for some other spell).

On paper, 2016 was only slightly below normal in rainfall for the season. The records don't tell the whole story, though, because we experienced a very bad drought. As dairy herd managers and stand-up comics will tell you, timing is everything. Moisture is more critical during the first half of the growing season as compared to the latter, and most parts of NYS had little or no significant rain between early June and late August.

Not only do June and July have the longest days of the year, the sun's angle is steepest and its effect most intense at this time. Couple those facts with low humidity, scant cloud cover and frequent and persistent winds, 2016 saw

some of driest-ever soils statewide, and some regions broke records for low soil moisture. On rocky upland sites and other locations with thin soils, the situation was even more dire.

Average to above-average rain through September into October finally pulled most of New York from the drought-index rolls by the end of October. That was better than continued drought, but far too late to avoid damage to trees. In certain locales, wooded hillsides were completely brown by early August, and foresters do not know what to expect from these areas in 2017.

Even trees that showed few overt signs of stress will need more than a good season in 2017 to recover from last summer. Dr. George Hudler, plant pathologist and Cornell professor emeritus, says that trees may need two to three years to recover from a drought. Ironically, those brown lawns which appeared dead were merely dormant, and grew back from their slumbering but undamaged root crowns.

Apparently, bad weather will mess with one's hormones, at least if one is a tree. Prolonged dry conditions cause a shift in the production of growth-regulating hormones. Among other things, more abscisic acid comes online. This leads to stomatal closing, a plus in terms of moisture retention, but it takes a surprisingly long time to reverse. As its name implies, abscisic acid creates an abscission zone between leaf and twig. Perfect for the fall, but when the plumbing that connects a tree to its leaves starts to get plugged early, the tree will have a hard time restarting the sugar factory when the rain finally comes.

A reverse-osmosis machine helps maple producers to concentrate sap, but in a drought, reverse osmosis is not their friend. Ron Kujawski of the University of Massachusetts Agricultural Research Station explains it well:

"When a soil water deficit exists, the result may be an increase of solute concentration outside the roots compared to the internal environment of the root. Such a situation leads to reverse osmosis, i.e. a net movement of water from the cell to the soil solution. As this happens, the cell membrane shrinks from the cell wall and may eventually lead to death of the cell."

About 90% of tree roots reside in the top



Figure 1. Sugar maple borer (*Glycobius speciosus*). Doug Allen, State University of New York, Bugwood.org

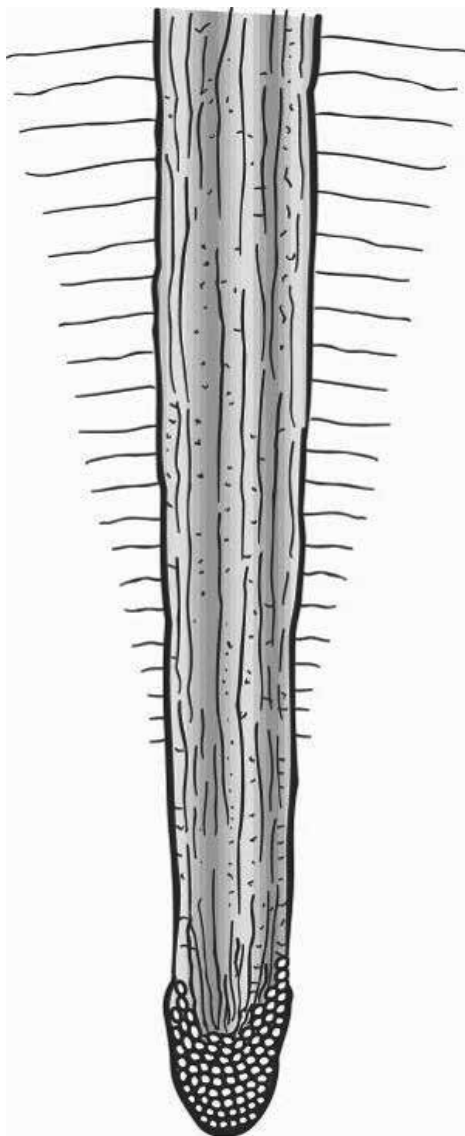
10 inches of soil, and 98% in the top 18 inches. As dry soil pulls away from roots, the root hairs, and then the fine absorbing roots near the surface, desiccate and die. Eventually, slightly larger secondary roots also die. Among other things, this means that trees have to use energy stores to replace these before they can absorb any moisture once the dry period ends.

Also, each place where a root hair or root has died is a wound into which disease can enter. For a tree, this is a bad time to have pathogens knocking at its door, because it needs water to make defensive chemicals. Again, Ron Kujawski: "Among the types of diseases likely to occur in response to drought stress are root rots, cankers, wood rots, and wilt...*Nectria* canker and *Cytospora* canker are almost always associated with drought stress... it is the inability of the plant to synthesize protective chemicals and compartmentalize wounds that allows for disease infection and development. Drought-stressed trees are also predisposed to other diseases including *Diplodia* tip blight, *Rhizosphaera* needlecast and *Verticillium*." Trees will also be more vulnerable to insect attacks, especially sugar maple borers, *Glycobius speciosus*, in the years following a severe drought.

Although no one knows for sure what this maple season will bring—and as always, much depends on the weather—Cornell's Extension Forester Peter Smallidge shared a few preliminary thoughts with me:

"There may have been some maple stands that suffered less than the average. I wouldn't be surprised if maple sap sugar was lower in 2017 than in previous years, but unless a producer has some reason to believe there was particularly acute drought stress on their trees I don't see a need to reduce tapping. My anticipation of lower sap sugar will favor those producers who have reverse osmosis (RO). If sugar concentration is low, the producer without RO will spend more on fuel to produce the same amount of syrup."

Maple producers on drought-prone sites who are concerned about their sugar bush may want to get in touch with a Cornell Master Forest Owner Volunteer, or call their local Cornell Cooperative Extension office. They can also contact authorities



5377011

Figure 2. Figure of a root tip with root hairs. By International Society of Arboriculture, International Society of Arboriculture, Bugwood.org

such as Steve Childs and Dr. Smallidge in the Cornell University Dept. of Natural Resources, or Drs. Mike Ferrell or Joe Orefice of the Cornell Maple Research Station in Lake Placid. Time will tell how our maples and other trees fare, and even the experts will be learning more this year and next about the effects of drought. 🌲

Paul Hetzler is Horticulture and Natural Resources Educator, Cornell Cooperative Extension of Saint Lawrence County.

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

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My Experience with EQIP

STEVE KINNE

For years after retiring from the USAF I looked for a piece of land that my wife, Ann, and I could afford and where I could spend time outdoors both working and playing (often one and the same thing for me). After looking at a number of properties, I finally stumbled onto a 19-acre parcel in the hilly farm country near Morrisville, NY. It was an unmanaged woodlot with large portions overgrown by buckthorn, multiflora rose (MFR), and honeysuckle. But, I could see its potential given the variety of micro-habitats found on site (dense underbrush, mid-successional woods, a poorly drained wet area, a meadow, scattered old apple trees, a hedgerow, part of an agricultural field, and a mature stand of hemlock-maple-ash). There was also plenty of deer sign, including evidence of significant deer browse.

After the purchase, Peter Cann, a good friend, MFO, and NYFOA member, suggested I join the CNY chapter. Although it seemed comical that my little 19-acre parcel would qualify me a “forest owner” I realized I could pick up some ideas on how to manage my new land. My very first meeting featured guest speakers Emily Armstrong, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Hamilton and Paul Romanenko (DEC Forester). They were there to talk

about programs available to land owners, developing land use plans, etc. A follow-up call to Paul led to an initial walk-through. I found that, from a forestry perspective, I probably didn’t have a pressing need for a formal management plan. However, he pointed out that one or more Environmental Quality Incentives Programs (EQIP) (through NRCS) might meet my wildlife habitat enhancement goals without the need for a formal plan. So my next call was to set up a meeting with Emily where we went over eligibility rules, goals, available programs, etc. Based on this meeting, she then set me up with a second walk through of the property, this time with Steve Stroka, a USDA biologist. He felt that a particularly good fit for me might be an EQIP-Habitat program aimed at developing early successional habitat (one that favored certain bird species that are declining in numbers, such as the golden-winged warbler). He also noted that the flat, wet area would, indeed, make a great seasonal woodland pond but that the EQIP program didn’t cover such work. However, he referred me to the US Fish and Wildlife’s program Partners for Fish and Wildlife (PFW), to see if they were interested in getting involved.

I spent the next few weeks honing my plan

(complete with goals, maps, diagrams, etc.) and sharing these with both Steve and Emily, who were incredibly helpful in generating the application. I was overjoyed when I was subsequently notified that I had been selected to receive an NRCS EQIP Habitat grant to develop 9.5 acres of shrubland (early successional habitat). We then worked out the details of the formal contract (8.4 acres heavy density cut, 1.1 acres with planting of wildlife-friendly trees and shrubs, control of non-native invasive species, etc.). The total worth of this contract was \$15,700 (with reimbursements to be made following completion of specific segments of work, and completed over a 3-year period).

Phase I of my project involved marking the heavy density cut areas, and flagging 6-10 trees/acre to be saved as perching trees and for regeneration. I also had a site visit by Eric Rozowski from PFW who was very interested in helping develop the seasonal woodland pond (designed as a network of channels and pools rather than a single “pond”).

Phase II involved hiring a contractor, Larry Phillips from Morrisville, to clear out the badly overgrown understory (which consisted of large amounts of buckthorn and MFR since those were plants that the deer found unpalatable and, consequently, didn’t eat!). Where Larry’s excavator was unable to pull out buckthorn trees (roots and all) I cut them by hand and treated the stumps with concentrated Roundup. Since Larry had previous experience doing vernal pond work for the DEC and was already on-site, the PFW manager subcontracted with him to excavate the seasonal woodland pond area.

Phase III involved finding someone to accomplish the high density cut. Most of the trees were ash that were declining and would be good targets for the EAB whenever it eventually arrived. But there were also some large maple, cherry, and hemlock trees that could be harvested while still leaving quality trees behind. Dan Zimmerman, a fellow NYFOA chapter member and industrial forester, volunteered to evaluate the property... and it turned out there were more sawlog trees than initially thought. We actually graded and marked all the trees that same day with Dan remaining very cognizant of my goals and concerns (particularly about leaving quality trees for regeneration and for not leaving the land disrupted by machinery). He was confident we could both meet both my needs and make the job economical-



Steve Kinne and his grandchildren.

ly viable for the logging company he worked for. In the end, I signed a contract with McDonough Hardwoods and they did a great job with this unique, small property project. And I put the money from the logging phase right back into the project.

Phase IV involved planting about 150 wildlife-friendly trees (complete with landscape cloth and tree tubes) this past spring. I also planted 200 wildlife shrubs in groups of 10 with both landscape cloth and a 5 ft. high Tenax fence ("mini-deer enclosure") around each group.

Phase V involved further invasive control (mechanical removal and chemical application) and remediation of the skidder ruts by the McDonough loggers (as per our contract).

The terms of the EQIP contract were able to be completed in a single year. My future goal is for additional tree and shrub plantings, invasive removal, adding bat and bird houses, and protecting both existing and new, naturally-regenerating seedlings from deer browsing. I initially constructed a 40x40x7.5 ft Tenax fencing deer enclosure, and recently finished constructing a second 100x150x7.5 ft enclosure using 8 strands of 12.5 gauge high tensile steel wire. I'm planning two more enclosures in key areas this spring using either the Tenax or steel wire fencing method (or a hybrid of both depending how each fares this winter).

I'm very excited to see my property evolve over the next several years and hope to share it with others. Preventing deer damage and controlling invasive plant species will be an ongoing battle, but I did purchase the land to keep me busy! And I plan to undertake two citizen-scientist research projects on the property that will go towards my NYS Master Naturalist certification... one monitoring deer browse and one tracking bird species in the newly created early successional habitat. ▲

Steve is a retired USAF physician. As an Eagle Scout, backpacker, hunter, birdwatcher, and "Stumpie" (graduate of SUNY ESF), he has always loved being "outdoors in nature" as much as possible. He and Ann have been married for nearly 40 years. He has been an active CNY NYFOA member for 2 years

People Involved

New York Forest Owners Association: speakers at first meeting discussed various governmental programs to help landowners

continued on page 18

Conservation Plan for Steve Kinne

Objective early successional shrub habitat. This plan outlines management objectives to provide vegetative structure and diversity needed to provide vital nesting, rearing, feeding, and cover habitats for early successional bird species.

A. Forest

I. Early successional habitat development/management

Heavy density clearing - Cut trees and shrubs 4-8 inches in diameter and trees over 20 feet tall to create wildlife openings. Retain 8-10 trees per acre (less than 4 inches diameter or under 20 feet height) as wildlife snags/singing perches. Note: if snags do not occur naturally, *then trees greater than 8 inches diameter may be girdled.* Cutting should be accomplished between October 1 and April 30

- *Planned amount*
 - 1.6 acres to be cut by April, 2016
 - 6.8 additional acres to be cut by December 2017
 - total high density clearing - 8.4 acres

II. Forest site preparation

Prepare land for establishing woody species by controlling weeds, removing/and debris, or otherwise altering the site conditions to favor tree establishment by natural or artificial methods.

- The planned intent is to have this done in/by the spring of 2018
- The total planned amount is approximately 1.1 acres

III. Tree/shrub establishment

Establish woody plants by planting seedlings or canister shrubs best suited for wildlife habitat. There will be approximately 115 shrubs (at least four species) and 70 trees (at least three species) per acre. Trees and shrubs must be native to New York.

- Planned amount - 1.1 acres by December 2018.

B. Schedule of operations and payment

I. Early successional habitat development and management

- Planned amount - 1.6 acres
- Unit cost- \$1,659 per acre
- Total cost - \$2,655
- To be completed in 2016

II. Early successional habitat development and management

- High density clearing planned amount - 6.8 acres
- Unit cost per acre \$1,659
- Completion date - 2017
- Total cost - \$11,282

III. Tree shrubs site preparation

- Planned amount - 1.1 acres unit.
- Unit cost - \$96.99 per acre
- To be completed - by 2018
- Total cost - \$107

IV. Tree and shrub establishment plan

- Planned amount - approx 1.1 acres
- Unit cost - \$1600 per acre
- Total cost - \$1761
- Completed - by the year 2018

C. Total cost – share or payment by year

- Year 2016 - \$2655
- Year 2017 - \$11,282
- Year 2018 - \$1868
- Total: \$15,805
- Total acres: 1.6 + 6.8 + 1.1 = 9.5 acres

EQIP (continued)

develop their property.

Natural Resource Conservation Service: discussed programs, helped with application, eventually managed program.

DEC forester: did initial walk-through (October 14) and follow-up training visit for tree thinning.

USDA biologist: did initial site visit to discuss potential programs that would fit goals. Referred to U.S. Fish and Wildlife for vernal pond area.

US Fish and Wildlife Service: Partners for Fish and Wildlife program: site visit and discussion about vernal pond enhancement.

DEC: permission for proceeding with project given status of northern long eared bat.

Contractor with excavator: cleared under-story and brush for access.

SUNY Morrisville.

Forester working for McDonough logging company: assessed property for logging, developed estimate and contract.

McDonough loggers: executed HDC plan and selective logging as marked.

Lessons learned

1. Availability of government monies — for me I had a priority— first time farmer/veteran.
2. NRCS can switch programs (EQIP to Upper Chesapeake Bay Watershed) for better chance.
3. Set goals/plan/draw maps - but be flexible. Divide work into phases (both contractual as well as functional).
4. Pay attention to Gov't Contract details... can't make (significant) changes once signed!
5. Heavy density cut for early successional habitat - 6 to 10 perching trees per acre (large)... can leave saplings that are less than 4 inches diameter and less than 20 feet in height.
6. Leave some slash in HDC area (wildlife brush piles and deer protection) — need 50% "open ground" for regeneration.
7. After heavy density cut things look pretty bad... and will for several years.
8. Buckthorn elimination — can pull out by roots (excavator w thumb, Pullerbear lever, or manual) or cut and immed treat stump with concentrated Roundup (do in fall when fluids are traveling to roots). Realize that dormant seeds will sprout vigorously after soil is disturbed.
9. Multiflora Rose — pull out by roots, repeatedly mow, or chemically treat. Regrowth potential high. Best time to treat with Roundup is between flowering and berry production.
10. Honeysuckle — easily uprooted (often by hand).
11. Vernal (seasonal woodland) pool/pothole/pond — vary depth, sloping sides. Remember importance of shade for cooling. Critical habitat

for amphibians. Salamander migration in spring.
12. Northern Long Eared Bat... now endangered. Require OK letter from DEC. Tree felling restrictions during roosting periods (1 Apr-1 Oct).

13. Bat houses — place at 12 to 20 feet in height. Need 6 hrs sunlight to maintain warm temp inside.

14. Goldenrod produces chemicals that inhibits growth of other plants.

15. Preserve milkweed as it attracts monarch butterflies.

16. "Trainer" trees (competition will result in straighter stems and trunks).

17. Releasing/pruning apple trees — gradual process to avoid stressing. Proper pruning techniques.

18. Poplar trees — cut them down when dormant (winter) and wait for root suckers in spring (if you want thickets of poplar which are good for grouse etc.). Need M and F for catkin production.

19. Sun scald — sudden exposure to sunlight after clearing can damage ... affects hard maples (usually younger trees).

20. Invasive pests — emerald ash borer, hemlock wooly adelgid, beech bark disease, tent caterpillars, asian longhorn beetles. Also several plant species including Japanese knotweed, Japanese barberry, others.

21. Hemlock shakes — big trees and wind. Separation of rings. Ruins value.

22. Plant shrubs in clusters as deer tend to eat around the outside. Consider fencing. Note: Placing landscape cloth with grouped shrubs is a challenge... develop stencil.

23. Ask for help/opinions/references... especially for logging.

24. Chipping wood vs. firewood — prices for both are down and profits are low. You need lots of trees in order for chipping to be viable.

25. Importance of a written contract and insurance with contractors!

26. During logging operations skidder can really make deep ruts, and may cause eventual uprooting of some trees.

27. Machinery must be careful when working your dead trees the vibration from the machinery can cause the roots to detach and the tree could fall on the machine operator.

28. Saw logs — ash, maple, cherry. DBH of a least 12 inches. Good prices for ash right now.

29. Not too much demand for hemlock — will take if there is enough.

30. Limiting deer browse/damage - consider fencing (e.g. enclosure). Also, dried pigs blood effective but needs to be regularly applied.

31. Brush piles for mammals and birds and even for protection of plantings from deer browsing. Note that there are proper ways to build a brush pile with long larger logs crisscrossed on the bottom and brush then piled on top.

32. Hard mast in a hurry? Consider Allegheny chinkapin and American hazelnut.

33. Hybrid poplar good for borders. Mix with spruce.

34. Don't order too many trees and shrubs to plant! Note: different places have different

choices (DEC, NH State Nursery, Erie Co S&W, Madison County S&W).

35. Bare root seedlings (BRS) vary widely in size! Couldn't use BRS planting tool on many (had to dig hole).

36. Consider ditching plants to keep viable if you can't get them in the ground quickly or refrigerate.

37. Mowing field? Birds nesting vs controlling growth of goldenrod and eliminating MFR.

38. Solid versus "open" tree tubes (latter not good for shrubs).

39. Bluebird box placement (need open field with short grass). Or consider using as chickadee boxes — make smaller hole and place wood shavings.

40. Kestrel box placement — more open area, not facing road, and facing south to avoid starlings nesting there.

41. Devising a pesticide plan... not necessary but appreciated by NRCS. Watch pesticide drift from farmer's field on windy days.

42. Mistook pokeweed for the highly invasive Japanese knotweed... removed all berries and treated plants with Roundup. Later discovered these were not an invasive but a common plant appearing in disturbed soils... and that birds like catbirds loved the berries!

43. Contrary to advice, deer have devastated some of my white pine seedlings, either by using them as a rub or by nipping off all the leading buds. The advice was to not bother tree tubing them but I wish I had!

44. Initial 40x40 deer enclosure used Tenax net fencing zip tied to a combination of trees and 10 ft. wooden poles (bolted to metal fence posts driven into the ground). This has worked well except for sagging of the fencing. This eventually required running a taut nylon line across the top of the fence posts and through the upper squares of the net fencing to take up the sag.

45. Tried Cornell Cooperative Extension's recommendation for deer fencing using 12.5 gauge steel wire strands vs Tenax polypropylene netting (reportedly as effective and significantly cheaper. Unless you have many trees to nail 8 ft. treated 2x4's to, you will need to add on expense for metal fence posts, hardware, and bracing lines. High tension more problematic... created complications.

46. Ends of the fencing cannot be just attached to 2x4's nailed to trees... under increasing strain when tightened, the nails pull out of the tree trunks. Wire strand ends need to encircle the tree making it a true endpost.

47. If there is too much space between posts, the length of the wire strands becomes more flexible, making entrance through the wires a greater possibility. This requires either placing more posts and/or using vertical wiring to connect each of the strands, thus "stiffening" the wire strands into a "unit" and making separation of the strands less likely.

48. A hybrid structure (will be tried in the spring on two new enclosures)... would use 2-3 of wire strands for a framework with Tenax net fencing attached to them.

Hardwood Log Market Conditions in the Northeast

JASON R. POST

As chairman of NYFOA-CDC, I write a column for our quarterly newsletter. My articles focus primarily on hardwood log market conditions. I feel this is of importance and interest to our members who own timber land. It also would help any of our members who are loggers, who may have woodlots lined up to cut. I have now been asked to write a brief informative article for this magazine. Please keep in mind, I am based in the Albany area, so some of my observations may not be accurate throughout the state.

Just to start the ball rolling here, I will fill everyone in on what drives the hardwood markets. It is, of course, supply and demand. "Supply and demand of what?" you ask,...kiln dried lumber (KD lumber). That's the answer! How much KD lumber is available, and how big is the demand? The amount and availability starts with the logs and the loggers. For example, if we have a long hard winter, followed by a long wet mud season, and a hot humid summer, log production will be way down. The saw mills' log inventories will be low, and green lumber productions from the mills will be down as well. In turn, KD lumber inventories will drop, raising lumber

and log prices. Now look at last year's harvesting weather. A mild winter and little or no mud season generated a large volume of logs produced. Going into the summer months, U.S. and Canadian saw mills had extremely large log inventories. Even though there was/is a good demand for KD lumber, warehouses were full from previous year recessions, and saw mills ramped up production, to keep up with the steady flow of logs available. This, in turn, kept log prices from any steady increases, controlled by the saw mills.

Then came October, the log export season for shipping logs to China. In 2016, China came on strong. The volume of logs being shipped out of this country took inventory away from our domestic saw mills. All of this should bring about an increase in log prices.

As I write this article, late in January, log inventories at U.S. and Canada saw mills are dropping. Saw mills are comfortable with the inventory they have, or slightly less, but they are dropping, all the same. Since mid-December, the weather here has been mild. Snow, rain and whatever frost we had early in the winter has come out, creating a mud season. Log production is way down for December and January.

Although KD lumber inventory has been reduced (except in thick stock red oak and ash), lumber demand is still strong, and China's demand for logs is great. All this should bring prices up, if we can get the logs out of the woods.

Hopefully, this brief introduction will give you some insight into how this industry works. In the next few articles, I will elaborate on market conditions, and which species are—and are not—in demand. 🌲

Jason R. Post is Chairman of NYFOA-CDC and Owner/Operator of Hudson River Hardwoods, LLC



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The Hobbs Family

BRIANA BINKERD-DALE

The Hobbs connection to New York forests and timber products started at least three generations ago, when Benjamin Hobbs' great-grandfather opened a saw mill in the Adirondacks. That connection continues to thrive today in Nichols, Tioga County, where two generations live and work together on a 63 acre farm. Thomas and Yvonne (Robare) Hobbs, the elder generation, grew up in Ellenburg Center, Clinton County, NY. Tom earned his B.S. degree in Mechanical Engineering at Union College in Schenectady. After working in the Chicago area at CAI for three years, Tom returned to Johnson City to work for General Electric, Martin Marietta, and Lockheed Martin, retiring in 2000.

Tom's wife Yvonne earned her B.S. in Art Education at SUNY Buffalo and M.F.A. in Sculpture and Architectural Sculpture at the Art Institute of Chicago. After working as an art educator and sculptor in both New York and Illinois, Yvonne retired from the Susquehanna School in Binghamton NY in 2000. Yvonne's latest public sculpture was funded by a Marilyn Gaddis Rose and Stephen Ross grant and done with assistance from Mechanical Engineering students and faculty from SUNY Binghamton.

Tom and Yvonne came to the Nichols farm in 1968, when their twin daughters Andrea and Erica were 8 months old. Four

years later, their son Benjamin arrived. "After several years of city life we wanted to return to a rural setting and provide a connection to the land and natural environment for our family," Tom said. They were attracted to the property due to the rural location, livable house and some usable out-buildings, as well as the meadows, woods and permanent stream. The farm overlooks the Susquehanna River valley, with a good view of the surrounding hills. Being within a reasonable commuting distance to their primary places of employment and the good reputation of the Owego Apalachin School District didn't hurt either.

Tom and Yvonne's son Benjamin received his education in the field of furniture design and woodworking at the Rochester Institute of Technology, The School of American Craftsmen, graduating with a B.F.A. Ben returned to the Nichols farm after graduation to establish Stanton Hill Studios, his furniture design and building business. Ben's wife Laura joined the family there in 1999 and helps run both the Studio furniture business and the farm itself, Heritage Pastures. The 63 acres is split almost half and half between woodland and farmland. "Everything we do here improves wildlife habitat and promotes biodiversity," Ben said. "This land is a bit of the world that we can watch over, protect and enjoy."



An example of Ben's craftsmanship.

In the early years Tom and Yvonne made the management decisions and did the work. Ben recently completed the training for the NY Master Forest Owner (MFO) program, and has now become the primary decision maker and work force, with Tom's assistance. Both generations participate in Cornell Cooperative Extension (CCE) workshops, NYFOA seminars and woods walks, and do a lot of pertinent reading. Tom and Ben enjoy hunting in the woods, and they all hike around the property and relish family work parties. They continue to be inspired to do all that they can on their land when they compare other unmanaged lands with well managed lands.

The overall makeup of the land is heavy side hill soil with some wet spots and seasonal streams. The 8 or 9 acre back portion of the woods containing the permanent stream was never farmed, and consists of mature ash, white and red oak, hard and soft maple, hemlock, a few black cherry and shagbark hickory, very few yellow and black birch and even fewer big tooth aspen. There is minimal interfering understory vegetation with the exception of a few beech trees and ferns, but the stand has poor regeneration of desirable trees due to the closed canopy. Tom did some timber stand improvement (TSI) there in the early 70s, and they are planning on hiring a consultant forester to assist them in opening up the canopy to sufficient levels to allow for regeneration.

The middle portion of the woodlot is abandoned agricultural land that they estimate to have been planted with approximately 1,000

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Hobbs family work party, splitting wood.



Ben, Tom and Tom's son-in-law Jerry putting on the house addition in 2003.

scotch pines in the late 50's or early 60's. The Hobbs experience with scotch pine is that they have poor survivability on that land and little commercial value. That stand contains many of the same species mentioned previously, though cucumber trees replaced the birch. The front portion of the woodlot is also abandoned agricultural land that Tom and Yvonne planted with 2,000 red pines and 1,000 balsam fir in 1969. "The red pine had good survivability, but they didn't put on much growth and they are of low value," Tom said "The balsam fir are not native to

this area and didn't have a strong survival rate, but have provided us with our Christmas trees for several years."

The Hobbsses abandoned 3.2 acres of meadow in the mid 1980's and over the next few years planted a few hundred Fraser fir, Norway spruce and 50 American larch. The Fraser fir did very poorly, but the Norway spruce and larch had a much better survival rate. In the last 10 years Ben has planted some black walnut, black cherry and black locust in that same abandoned meadow area, with very little success. "We've learned that

the type of soil, preparation and maintenance of the site, and terrain are all very important factors to be considered," Tom said. The abandoned meadowland was finally designated wildlife habitat as part of an EQIP grant, planted with a variety of native fruit and mast bearing shrubs, and is now performing its function beautifully.

That same EQIP grant was used to preserve the waterways and ponds on the land from animal pressure on the farm. Fencing was put up to exclude livestock, and a new well and water lines were installed to compensate for the loss of access to protected areas. Animal pressure is also used to advantage. Invasive species have been moving into the woods and hedgerows for years, and Ben has been working aggressively to combat this in the pastures and hedgerows via silvopasture. Utilizing their herd of 14 cattle, he goes in first with a brush puller to get the worst of it out and then grazes the cattle there. He has been doing this for the past three or four years now and progress is showing. Thorn apple (hawthorn) was a major issue in the early years in the woods, but they were able to successfully reduce the population via extensive manual removal; regrowth was prevented by the dense overstory. Ash yellows disease is now causing a slow die-off of the overstory, however, enabling a resurgence of the invasive species. Multiflora rose, beech, honeysuckle and buckthorn are ongoing problems, but the Hobbsses are dedicated to continued management of them.

Improvements have not been limited to the land. In 1971, Tom and Yvonne built a one story addition to the south side of their house with locally sourced lumber. That was followed in 1984 by a second one story greenhouse addition on the south side of the 1971 addition. Both of those additions were removed in 2003 and replaced with a single two story timber frame structure, using timbers and lumber that was harvested and sawed on the farm. In 2007, the deck was rebuilt as a timber frame structure, also using material harvested and sawed on the property. The Hobbsses have also fully insulated the house, put a steel roof on, replaced all of the windows, and installed an in-floor hot water heating system on the 1st floor. They have been providing all of their own heat with wood harvested from the farm since 1978; after starting with partially heating Tom and Yvonne's house during that first winter of 1968, they now have a wood



Black walnut boards harvested from the farm, on their way to the drying shed.

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furnace that heats the homes of both generations. Ben estimates that they go through 20-25 cords per year.

All building and construction work has been done in house by the family, with a strong emphasis on timber framing that began in 1995 when Ben moved back to the farm to start his furniture business. At that time, they enlarged the existing workshop in one of the farm's original buildings with a timber frame addition that doubled the workspace. In 2000, they purchased a saw mill, harvesting and sawing timber from the woods for a drying shed. The first two bays of the drying shed were built in 2003, with a third bay added above them in 2006, all timber frame construction. A barn was built in 2010, and several portable farm buildings have also been built over the past 16 years, all with timber harvested and sawed onsite. And of course, Ben also uses choice timber from the farm for the furniture he designs and builds for his Stanton Hill Studios business. "We want to be good stewards of the land, growing quality lumber," Ben said.

In the last several years the Hobbsses have inherited four parcels of mostly woodlands totaling 179 acres in Clinton County, NY. They have harvested some cherry up there, but are trying to evaluate what to do with the property given time and distance constraints, and are setting up a meeting with a forester to figure out next steps. Their biggest challenge overall is T.I.M.E., a phrase known to many Master Forest Owners as Time, Interest, Money and Energy. Advice to other forest owners? "Do attempt to learn about and to control invasive species early. Work in small manageable segments; don't attempt to do the entire area all at once. If anyone is going to start a planting learn about the soil, terrain and moisture content of the land. By all means, don't do a timber sale without consulting a qualified forester. NYFOA is a very good source of information and help." 🏡

Briana Binkerd-Dale is a student in Environmental Biology and Applied Ecology at Cornell University. If you are interested in being featured in a member profile, please email Jeff Joseph at jeffjosephwoodworker@gmail.com

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