

The New York Forest Owner

A PUBLICATION OF THE NEW YORK FOREST OWNERS ASSOCIATION

For people caring about New York's trees and forests

May/June 2018



Member Profile: Rich Taber

Volume 56 Number 3



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FOREST OWNERS
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**The New York
Forest Owner**

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VOLUME 56, NUMBER 3

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New York Forest Owners Association

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COVER:

Rich Taber met with Cornell's NYS Maple Specialist Steve Childs to produce a video on how to evaluate your woodlands for maple production. For member profile see page 21. All photos courtesy of Rich Taber and Ashley Russel, CCE Chenango.

From The President

Despite our initial optimism, the Empire Forests for the Future Initiative (EFFI) did not make it through the NY state budget process due to objections to possible revenue losses by local taxing jurisdictions. Whether EFFI will come up again in the future is unknown; the fact remains that serious issues face private forest landowners and affect their ability to steward their land



and continue to provide environmental and economic benefit to our state. We are grateful to our members who spent considerable

time and effort writing or visiting their legislators to promote EFFI.

Please welcome the following new officers: Art Wagner, president; Stacey Kazacos, vice president; and Ed Neuhauser, secretary. Peter Tonetti remains as treasurer. A number of new directors are joining the NYFOA board. A heartfelt thanks is due to the people who are retiring from these positions. Special thanks is due to Jerry Michael who remains on the board while relinquishing the jobs of secretary and executive committee member. NYFOA has greatly benefited from his wisdom and cheerful hard work. Dave Williams and Jeff Joseph are term-limited off of the board; they both came on the board as chapter-designated directors and were two of our most active and effective board members. Both will continue to serve on vital committees.

This will be my last column as your President. It has been a privilege to meet so many of you and an honor to serve. Our woods are a source of much enjoyment and I share that common thread with NYFOA and its members. My trees provide firewood, recreation, wildlife habitat, exercise, privacy, and a small amount of wood for my woodworking hobby. This past year I built a wooden boat in my shop with some of the wood coming from my

Please share this magazine with a neighbor and urge them to join NYFOA. By gaining more members, NYFOA's voice will become stronger!

trees. While researching what wood to use for making oars, I found the following memorable quote in Boats, Oars, and Rowing by R.D. Culler: "Wood is plentiful, self replacing, biodegradable, pleasant to work with, and nice to look at. Use enough good stuff, you will waste less in the end. To my way of thinking at least, trees were made to use, especially for boats, along with some discretion and common sense, do-gooders and worrywarts to the contrary. An aging tree, like most of us old duffers, is apt to have a lot of defects in it."

-Charles Stackhouse
NYFOA President

The mission of the New York Forest Owners Association (NYFOA) is to promote sustainable forestry practices and improved stewardship on privately owned woodlands in New York State. NYFOA is a not-for-profit group of people who care about NYS's trees and forests and are interested in the thoughtful management of private forests for the benefit of current and future generations.

Join! NYFOA is a not-for-profit group promoting stewardship of private forests for the benefit of current and future generations. Through local chapters and statewide activities, NYFOA helps woodland owners to become responsible stewards and helps the interested public to appreciate the importance of New York's forests.

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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:

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Briar Creek Partners LLC	SOT
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Liz Kreitinger	SFL
Leonard Marsh	SOT
John McDonald	NAC
Edgewood Farms	WFL
Joanne Race	CNY

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and
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Please send your
suggestions to:
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or
Jeff Joseph, chair,
NYFOA editorial committee at
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Ask A Professional

PETER SMALLIDGE



Peter Smallidge

Landowner questions are addressed by foresters and other natural resources professionals. Landowners should be careful when interpreting answers and applying this general advice to their property because landowner objectives and property conditions will 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

Seasonal Control of American Beech

Question:

I have beech in my woods that I want to control, but because of my work schedule I need strategies that work throughout the year. What are my options? (Tim R., CNY Chapter; Tim P. via email)

Answer:

American beech (*Fagus grandifolia*) is a native species that has many desirable attributes, but suffers from an insect-disease complex that results in the majority of beech trees dying. When the trees die

from this complex, known as beech bark disease, the tree is stimulated to produce shoots from the roots that often result in dense patches or "beech thickets" (Figure 1). Beech that are cut using traditional practices will also typically produce thickets of root sprouts. Because deer preferentially avoid beech and browse other species, beech can become a dominant species in northeastern woods.

Before a control effort of beech is initiated, three conditions should be considered. First, the presence of beech doesn't necessarily warrant that it be controlled or killed. Control of beech is necessary especially in situations when the owner

is attempting to regenerate overstory trees, and there is sufficient density of beech stems that their shade would limit the growth of desired species. Second, if beech are already abundant, it is probable that deer are or have had a significant impact by reducing the abundance of other species. If deer impact is still high and the impact isn't controlled, then beech control won't help regenerate other desired species. Third, in northeastern woods there are scattered examples of American beech that are resistant to beech bark disease (Figure 2). These trees should be protected from herbicides, and ideally from damage to encourage their survival and perhaps propagation.

There are several good resources to help guide owners who are interested in managing interfering plants such as beech. These resources include general publications about the characteristics of herbicides, how to apply herbicides in forests, and strategies of integrated/forest vegetation management. There are also several publications about the control of specific species that have application in New York. These are all available here <http://blogs.cornell.edu/ccednrpublications/vegetation-management/>

In addition to written publications there are several webinars about beech management, and a variety of other species and related topics. Webinars cover chemical and organic options and are archived at www.youtube.com/ForestConnect



Figure 1. Beech that dies or is disturbed will produce root sprouts known as root suckers that can form dense thickets. The shade in the thicket is sufficient to limit the growth of other species. The presence of a thicket also suggests a history of deer impact.



Figure 2. The three trees in the center of the picture are beech trees at least 18 inches in diameter and free from any visible sign of beech bark disease insects or fungus. These trees are within a shelterwood harvest at the Arnot Forest. Extra care was taken with herbicide treatment of diseased beech to ensure these trees remained healthy.



Figure 3. A hatchet or another tool that exposes fresh beech wood to glyphosate or triclopyr offers a cost effective method of control. Use appropriate safety practices with sharp tools, and don't use dull tools.

There are many strategies and options to consider once you decide the need to control beech is warranted. The question of seasonally specific strategies will also include size specific strategies. The size of the beech stems influences what strategies will work. This article will consider the two most commonly used herbicides,

and the only mechanical technique that is currently thought to be effective.

The two herbicides include those with the active ingredients glyphosate or triclopyr. The use of trade names is for convenience and not an endorsement for those mentioned or insult to those not mentioned. Glyphosate is the active

ingredient in products such as Roundup and Accord XRT II. It is effective when applied to foliage or to freshly exposed wood. It will not have any effect via the bark and is not active in the soil. When applied to freshly exposed wood, glyphosate is mobile within the tree that is treated and into connected beech stems creating what is known as “flash kill.” Glyphosate doesn't move to other species. Triclopyr is the active ingredient in products such as Pathfinder II, Garlon 3A and Garlon 4 ultra. Triclopyr is effective when applied to foliage, freshly exposed wood, and via the bark on stems less than 6 inches in diameter. Unlike glyphosate it is not particularly mobile from one beech tree to another beech, nor is it active in the soil.

The previously mentioned publications and webinars make reference to the importance of reading and following the label on herbicides. I strongly encourage a high level of familiarity with and adherence to the label. Notably, the target plant species must be listed on the label for the treatment to be compliant with NYS law. All products registered for use in NY have their label posted here <http://www.dec.ny.gov/nyspad/products?0>

Growing Season Strategies

Beech with accessible foliage can be treated with a relatively dilute solution (e.g., 1.5%) of products such as Accord XRT II. Owners with a backpack sprayer can reasonably treat areas up to about 1 to 3 acres for beech less than 6 to 8 feet tall. Taller beech, up to approximately 15 feet can be treated with commercial forestry vegetation management equipment and sprayers. Garlon 3A and 4 ultra can be applied to foliage, but these are “restricted” and can only be applied by certified applicators. Pathfinder II is not labeled for use on beech foliage.

Beech that are too tall for foliar treatments can be treated by a variety of techniques that expose fresh wood to which glyphosate or triclopyr products are applied. This technique can be used most of the year, except when wood is frozen or during heavy sap flow. The common technique is call “hack-n-squirt” and uses a hatchet to puncture the bark at intervals around the stem and then the chemical



Figure 4. Basal bark treatments use an herbicide in a carrier such as water or oil that can penetrate the bark and chemically girdle the tree. See the PSU publication on basal bark applications for full details.

continued on page 18

Wild Things in Your Woodlands

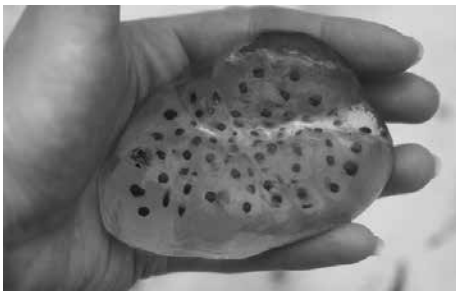
KAREN CEBALLOS

HOW TO IDENTIFY FROG AND SALAMANDER EGGS

It's the time of year that alien-looking balls of jelly start to appear in ponds, puddles and marshes. These gelatinous blobs are actually the eggs of frogs and amphibians, and are a clear sign that spring has sprung! Many of these amphibians survive the winter by hibernating underground or at the bottom of ponds, and then come out during spring and summer to breed. They lay their eggs in bodies of water, often in vernal pools because these pools lack fish that could potentially eat their eggs. After hatching, tadpoles will live aquatic lives until metamorphosing into their adult form. In this article, we will help you identify aquatic eggs you might find during the spring and summer.

Frog eggs vs. salamander eggs

We first need to be able to tell salamander and frog eggs apart. The masses of salamander eggs are surrounded by an outer layer of gelatinous material, whereas masses of frog eggs lack that outer protective layer. The extra layer of gel around salamander eggs is thought to



Spotted salamander eggs



Wood frog eggs

provide their eggs with some protection against predators.

Wood frog (eggs found during mid-March - April)

Wood frogs lay eggs (see picture in column 1) in a large globular mass about 2 to 5 inches in diameter (roughly the size of a softball). There are about 500 to 2000 eggs per mass, with embryos colored black on top and white on bottom. However, the white disappears as the larvae develops. Their egg masses are very 'cohesive,' meaning that it will hold together if you take it out of the water. Wood frogs typically attach their eggs to submerged plants and tree branches near or on the water surface. Wood frogs commonly lay their eggs near each other in "rafts," like the one pictured to the left. Wood frogs are one of the earliest breeders and thus one of the first eggs you'll find come spring.



Northern leopard frog (eggs found during April - May)



Northern leopard frogs are easily distinguishable from wood frog eggs because the individual eggs are smaller (less than a tenth of an inch, about the size of a

grain of salt) and more tightly packed. They usually lay double to triple the amount of eggs as wood frogs, even up to 6,000 eggs! However, the size of the overall egg mass is roughly softball size, similar to that of wood frogs. The egg mass of a northern leopard frog appears almost black because the layer of clear jelly that surrounds the yolk is much thinner than in wood frogs. Their egg masses are *not* cohesive, and will easily fall apart when taken out of the water. These egg masses are found an inch or so below the water's surface, attached to vegetation or even resting on the bottom of vernal pools, whereas wood frog eggs float closer to the surface.



Northern leopard frog eggs

Pickerel frog (eggs found during April - May)

Pickerel frog eggs look very similar to northern leopard frog eggs, with egg masses around 3-4 inches in diameter and embryos also salt-grain size. However, rather than the embryos being black on top and white on bottom like leopard frog eggs, pickerel eggs are brown on top and yellow on the bottom. Other than



Pickerel frog eggs



this, the eggs look pretty similar, are also laid near the water's surface on vegetation in loose globular masses.

Spotted salamander (eggs found during early April – end of May)



Spotted salamanders lay grapefruit sized egg masses, with about 50-250 eggs. The eggs are black but the egg mass is clear, opaque white, or a greenish color from algae. These dense, firm egg masses hold their shape very well, and are usually attached to sticks, branches, and vegetation below the surface of the water. Like wood frogs, you can often find large numbers of egg masses in one spot, attached to the same group of branches. A picture of spotted salamander eggs is also provided at the beginning of the article.



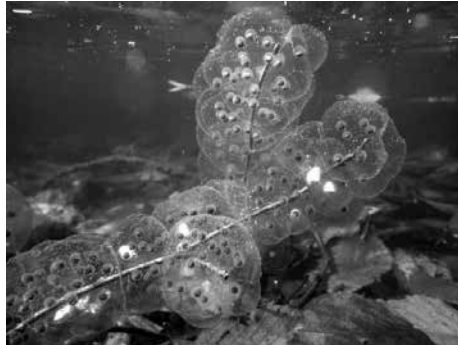
Spotted salamander eggs

Jefferson salamander (eggs found during late March - mid May)

Like spotted salamanders, Jefferson salamanders lay their eggs in clear globs attached to sticks and other vegetation.



However, each mass usually includes only 20-30 eggs, and the masses can be more sausage shaped. Females will lay multiple masses, sometimes laid down in a line down a single stick. But as these swell they will look like one long mass. Jefferson salamander egg masses are not as firm, and if you pick up the egg mass, it will likely run through your fingers rather than hold its shape.



Jefferson salamander eggs

American toad (eggs found late April – May)



American toad eggs are easy to identify because they are laid in long, coiled strands half an inch wide with 4,000 to 8,000 eggs. Because hatching and tadpole development can be completed within 4-6 weeks, toads can use very short-lived bodies of water to lay their eggs, even including dirt road ruts and large puddles.



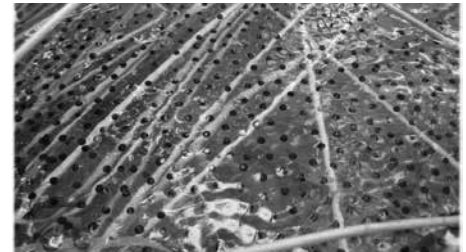
American toad eggs

Green frogs (eggs found mid May to August) and American bullfrog (late May to July)

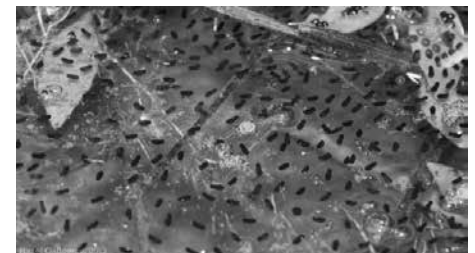


Green frog and eggs


Both American bullfrogs and Green frogs lay their eggs as a thin film floating on the water, only about one or two eggs thick. Eggs are often in vegetated areas close to the shore. Their eggs look very similar, but green frogs usually have fewer eggs. Green frog egg films are only about 1ft in diameter and contain about 1,000 to 5,000 eggs, whereas American bullfrogs can have egg films larger than 3ft in diameter, with 10,000 to 20,000 eggs each. Also, if you look at the eggs closely, American bullfrogs only have one very thin, weak jelly layer surrounding an individual egg, while green frog eggs have two jelly layers per egg.



Green frog eggs



American bullfrog eggs

To see this guide and the pictures in color, you can visit the NY Master Naturalist website at <http://blogs.cornell.edu/nymasternaturalist/resources/fact-sheets/> under the 'Wildlife' tab. 

Karen Ceballos is a New York Master Naturalist Program Assistant, Cornell Department of Natural Resources

Life's Important Decisions

ED NEUHAUSER

I have been asked how I have made some of life's most important decisions; choosing a sawmill and a tractor. I have anticipated getting and using these tools (that my wife calls the "big boy toys") for many years. So a much abbreviated summary of my thinking process follows.

Sawmills and tractors are going to need regular maintenance, parts, and service for a productive life. If I wanted the ability to have easy access to these things, I needed support within a short distance of my home.

I had visited with tractor and sawmill dealers for many years at farm shows and woodsman's field days. Whatever equipment I chose, I wanted a dealer who was going to be around for longer than I was. The only sawmill manufacturer that met this criteria in my area was Wood-Mizer. The only tractor manufacturers that fit the bill were John Deere, Kubota, and Massey Ferguson.

I wanted to saw lumber for fun, not as a business. Several knowledgeable sawyers recommended that since I mostly work alone, I should consider getting hydraulics on the sawmill. I did and it has greatly saved my back.

The next important decision to make regarding the sawmill was then what model? For life's most important decisions, I set up a 3-ring binder to organize information. Since I was spending my wife's money, I had to be prudent in my selection. So I chose the smallest Wood-Mizer hydraulic, the LT-35 HD.

For the type of woods work that I wanted the tractor to do, I decided that a 40-50 horsepower range was optimal for my needs. Any of the tractors that I test drove from all three manufacturers would have worked fine for me. Now the hard part, how to select which tractor to purchase.

Knowledgeable people have suggested that if you are using a tractor for your livelihood, get a John Deere. This may be true and the John Deere tractors were certainly very well made. But green paint comes at a 15-20% premium compared to Kubota and Massey Ferguson.

The Kubota and Massey Ferguson tractors were similar in price, so now it was time to compare the features of each to decide what tractor might work best for me. Massey Ferguson offers two tractor models in the 48 hp range I was

considering. The more expensive model has three ranges and 12 speeds, with a belly mounted PTO, while the simpler model has two ranges and eight speeds, without the belly mounted PTO. Since I did not want to cut the lawn with the tractor (since my wife cuts the lawn with a green machine) the simpler tractor would work fine for me, resulting in a savings of ~ \$7,000.

The next issue to consider is the ease of attaching equipment. I selected the skid steer attachment system for the front loader, as it is becoming the universal attachment system. This mounting system allows me to easily move from bucket to grapple in about five minutes. Many additional attachments are available with this system (Figure 1). The attachment system for the backhoe was more complex on the Kubota, so that led to the selection of the Massey Ferguson.

My original Massey Ferguson had industrial tires, based upon the recommendation of the tractor salesman. While industrial tires may have better sidewalls compared to farm tires, they have no traction in mud, even in 4 wheel drive. After talking about this disappointment with the dealer, he was kind enough to switch out the industrial tires for farm tires. Now I do not get stuck at all in the woods.

Finally, read the manual from cover to cover to safely operate any unfamiliar equipment (Figure 2). I spent three days reading the LT 35 HD manual and two days reading the tractor manual



Figure 1. Using the grapple to position logs for the sawmill.



Figure 2. Reviewing the manual before operating the new sawmill.

and it really paid off. I bought a Farmi skidding winch and the dealer told me that to operate the winch from the ground, I would have to disable the PTO

safety switch under the tractor seat. I remembered reading in the tractor manual that it was possible to run the PTO if you were not in the tractor seat if you put the

tractor parking brake on before leaving the seat. The winch salesman had sold over 400 skidding winches and had never heard of this feature. It pays to take the time to read the manuals.

The most important thing about working in the woods is safety. Since all of this starts with cutting trees, make sure you have Game of Logging training before heading out to the woods with a chainsaw. This safety training has gotten me out of many tricky situations in the woods.

One of the best things about having a small sawmill is that it allows you to interact with your friends and neighbors. I have had trucks deliver logs to be sawn that I did not even know were coming. I have one friend, who is a retired plumber, take away all of my slab wood for his outdoor boiler. He helps to keep my sawing site clean and gets free heat. I get free plumbing assistance anytime I need it. These kinds of interactions make owning a small sawmill and tractor a very rewarding experience. 🌲

Ed is a member of the NYFOA Board and cuts logs and lumber on the family farm in Groton, NY.

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Tree Identification

EDWARD PIESTRAK

During the spring of 2017 it was decided that we should get involved in a “tree identification project” on our Steuben County, Tannery Creek property. Our forester, Mr. Bruce Robinson, was contacted and he agreed to assist in the identification and marking of the various trees. We went about the property and placed temporary signs on each of the different species. The younger family members were also involved in the identification and marking of the trees (see photo below).

Approximately 20 different species were identified and we questioned Bruce Robinson why only that amount of different species were identified in over a half mile of forest trail on our property. He indicated that since the hemlock were dominant in that forest area, due to past high grading, it was difficult for hardwoods to

get reestablished. Past harvesting of hardwoods left the forest with a dominant amount of hemlock trees. What should have been done at the time is a thinning of the hemlock trees to create a more diverse and productive forest for the future. This past year a timber stand improvement was done on approximately a 70-acre parcel with the target trees being hemlock, both large and small. This will allow additional sunlight to reach the forest floor and produce an environment where hardwoods can be reseeded.

In the fall issue of this magazine, president Charles Stackhouse had an interesting experience on the west coast in identifying trees and determining what species they were. He related that Master Forest Owners (MFOs) can be helpful to educate us forest owners as to the species they encounter on woodwalks. It would



Black gum tree.

be interesting to test MFOs on tree identification. In most cases, it is difficult to identify trees in the same genus. Some examples are white oak, red oak, bur oak, chestnut oak, black oak or scarlet oak. Also, is it white birch, gray birch, or black birch? On our Tannery Creek property, we identified three different oak trees; red oak, white oak, and chestnut oak. We also have white birch and black birch. In actuality, we have all of the species of oak and birch on our property, just not all on the half mile trail area.

At times, it is somewhat confusing identifying specific trees, and this project can help us to identify various trees and refine our knowledge and understanding of the forest. We are in the planning stage of having a woodwalk in June of 2018 with the theme of tree identification. The walk would be a relatively flat road area where the trees are marked with appropriate signs. We would be walking with a stop at each marked species and Bruce Robinson and grandson Joshua Piestrak would relate the specific traits of each tree.

All of the 20 or so tree signs are in place and we would expect them to be lasting a few decades. The signs are on painted treated posts and set in concrete approximately 20-24 inches



Everyone getting involved in the identification process. Left to right: Cody Piestrak, Bruce Robinson (forester), Collin Piestrak, Ariana Piestrak, and Edward Piestrak.



Sign identifying a cucumber tree.

deep. The poles are from a deer enclosure that has served its purpose by allowing the seedlings to get 20+ feet tall.

I find that as we age, our retention of events and happenings becomes more difficult and we need a periodic reference to keep abreast on forest issues, with tree identification being an important issue. At times I stand

by a tree and know the species but cannot bring the name out. Thus, the signs really assist in this process. Repetition has its rewards! 🌲

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Restore New York Woodlands

JERRY MICHAEL

After five years, what have we accomplished, and where do we go from here?

The Restore New York Woodlands (RNYW) initiative was born of modest intentions. It started with the NYFOA board organizing a “Woods Walk Weekend” committee to plan simultaneous woodswalks throughout the state, marking NYFOA’s 50th Anniversary in the spring of 2013.

During their first meeting in 2012, the committee discussed the question of a theme for the commemorative woodswalks. Because we were all aware of the recently-published reports by Cornell University and The Nature Conservancy about the forest regeneration crisis, as well as personal observations in our own woodlots, we decided to make forest regeneration the theme for the statewide woods walks. After a month of exchanging ideas via email, Restore New York Woodlands was chosen as the name for the initiative.

The committee worked diligently over the course of the winter to develop a publicity plan, wrote guidelines for use



by chapter leaders and woodswalk hosts, and designed a special RNYW section for the NYFOA website. Peter Smallidge and others from the Cornell Extension Forestry Program wrote several technical papers on the regeneration issue for use on the RNYW web pages and for publication in the *New York Forest Owner* magazine. Publications by other authors on various aspects of the issue were also assembled for inclusion on the website.

Starting in May 2013, NYFOA chapters conducted 32 woods walks with a focus on forest regeneration throughout the year. More than 600 forest owners and members of the general public attended at least one of these woodswalks, which had been announced in statewide press releases and on the NYFOA website. Feedback on the woodswalks was uniformly positive, so the NYFOA board requested chapters to include a focus on forest regeneration in every woodswalk they conducted in the future.

At this point, RNYW was morphing into more than just a theme for woodswalks, so the NYFOA board appointed a permanent RNYW committee to focus on how to broaden our approach to the regeneration issue.

Chapters continued to offer woodswalks with a regeneration theme in 2014 and the RNYW committee announced a grant program for chapters to construct demonstration deer exclosure fences in public areas to illustrate the impacts

of deer browsing on regeneration. At the September 2014 board meeting, NYFOA board member and SUNY ESF professor David Newman offered to host a symposium on the regeneration issue in the new Gateway facility at the university. A planning committee was established with a core group from NYFOA, Cornell, and SUNY ESF, plus other forest stakeholder organizations including the NYSDEC, The Nature Conservancy, Audubon New York, the Catskill Forest Association and others.

The Symposium, entitled “The Future of New York Forests at Risk – Working Toward a Comprehensive Solution” was held in April 2015. Almost 200 diverse forest stakeholders heard from an outstanding cast of speakers representing academia, environmental organizations, state and federal government agencies, and the state legislature. The symposium succeeded in helping to move forest regeneration to the front burner as an environmental issue, and established NYFOA as a major player among forest stakeholder organizations.

Following the symposium, the RNYW committee continued to work with members of the symposium coalition on the development of initiatives and legislation to deal with the regeneration issue. Chief among these was bringing pressure on the NYSDEC to make forest health the primary criteria for establishing deer population objectives for the various management units. A proposal was also developed to implement a new forest stewardship cost share program to assist private forest owners with the control of interfering vegetation and deer management solutions. NYFOA also introduced the RNYW initiative to the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) at the state and county level. Possibly as a result, there has been a significant increase in NRCS grants for EQIP cost-share funding to cover forest stewardship practices supporting regeneration.

The RNYW initiative has been strongly supported by Audubon because solutions to the regeneration problem are well-integrated with Audubon’s focus on early succession forests – a prerequisite habitat for many bird species. Likewise, RNYW is embraced by The Nature Conservancy because they also recognize that one

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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.

overabundant animal species, the whitetail deer, is destroying the habitat required by many other species, some of which are threatened or endangered. The Catskill Forest Association, who had helped plan NYFOA's Syracuse Symposium, subsequently conducted their own convocation, entitled "The Growing Deer Debate."

During 2016 and 2017 NYFOA and our symposium partners actively promoted legislation covering the proposed forest stewardship cost sharing programs in Albany. The governor responded to our requests and these new programs were included in his Empire Forests for the Future (EFFI) initiative. Although EFFI was funded in the governor's Executive Budget for 2018-2019, it did not survive the final budget negotiations in a deficit budget year.

So where does RNYW go from here?

Certainly, our woodwalks, *New York Forest Owner* magazine, and website have increased membership awareness about the

regeneration issue, but NYFOA represents less than 1% of the state's private woodlot owners, so our reach is extremely limited. We should work to get the RNYW message more broadly distributed, but also must find a way to motivate woodlot owners to translate knowledge into action. Regeneration should be the primary management objective for any woodlot that is 75 years old; if it is not, that woodlot will probably not be a component of the third-generation forest.

Two months ago, the NYSDEC announced a new method of collecting community input regarding deer population management objectives, using a stakeholder survey developed in cooperation with Cornell University. This action was strongly advocated by NYFOA and our coalition partners following the symposium but, while it should help provide a more balanced view to guide such management decisions, it just "nibbles around the edges" of the deer issue.

Successful regeneration of valuable hardwood species in this state is only

occurring in scattered locations as the result of localized natural disturbances such as windthrow or intensive management on relatively small acreages. While providing alternative sources of nutrition for deer or excluding them from stands being regenerated may produce satisfactory results, these tactics are not practically or economically scalable to the forested landscape as a whole.

Under the RNYW banner, NYFOA must continue to press academia, state and federal agencies and the legislature for realistic state-wide solutions to the deer problem. There are none on the table at the present time. The solutions will require unprecedented compromises and economic trade-offs among the full spectrum of forest stakeholders. In the author's opinion, a failure to take adequate measures will have dire consequences for the environment, the economy, and the quality of life for all citizens of the state. ▲


Jerry Michael is a member of the NYFOA board and chair of the Restore New York Woodlands Committee.

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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

VELVET LONGHORNS

BY PAUL HETZLER

Some invasive insects appear to be trying to win us over through sly public-relations moves. Emerald ash borer (EAB), the Asian beetle killing our ash trees, arrived looking like it had just come from a Mary Kay convention, all bright, glitzy and glitter-coated. And it could have been simply called the green ash borer, but instead managed to get itself branded “emerald,” something everyone likes.

A new forest pest on the horizon seems to have taken a page from EAB. *Trichoferus campestris*, better known as the velvet longhorned beetle, has cleverly brought the cuddliness of the Velveteen Rabbit and the romantic image of Texas Longhorns together in its name. Don't be fooled by this brilliant strategy, however. Let's pull back the curtain and expose the velvet longhorned beetle (VLB) for what it really is.

Native to eastern Russia, most of China, Korea, and parts of Japan, VLB is smaller and less glossy than its cousin the Asian longhorned beetle. Its antennae, or “horns,” are also much shorter. Brown in color and ranging in length from 11mm to 20mm (about 7/16” to 3/4”), it has irregular patches of fuzzy hairs (“velvet”) on its wing covers.


The main issue with velvet longhorned beetle is that it infests and kills several tree species, including pine, spruce, willow, and birch, although its favorite is apple. It has an unusually long life cycle, in some cases taking more than two years to mature. But it really stands apart from other boring insects (in other words, is less boring than they) because it is able to infest almost any kind of dry wood. Not just dead, but powder-dry wood. In fact, it has emerged

from imported rustic furniture a full 18 months after it had been purchased, which is one of the ways it has found its way around North America.

Since 1999, VLB has been found in at least ten US states as well as one Canadian province, though most of those detections are not believed to be from established populations. The largest North American infestation may be the area around Salt Lake City, Utah, with another in the twin cities of Minneapolis-St. Paul, MN. Fortunately, VLB does not seem to have spread as quickly as Asian longhorned beetle, nor has it been as devastating.

However, much is still unknown about VLB and its potential to damage to regional ecosystems. There is some discrepancy between studies in terms of VLB's host preferences and other aspects of its biology. One of the challenges in studying it is that no one has yet come up with a reliable pheromone lure. Trapping is done by pulsing specific light wavelengths over the course of a night, a labor-intensive process that yields erratic results.

One take-home message is that we should be careful about what we take home. Any imported rustic-style furniture where the bark is still intact could harbor velvet longhorned beetle larvae, and as mentioned, it can be a year or more before one would notice anything. Another theme is that we should be wary of slick “marketing,” especially when it involves invasive pests.

Help keep an eye out for the velvet longhorned beetle, and report suspected findings to your nearest NYS Department of Environmental Conservation or Cornell Cooperative Extension office. For more information on VLB and other invasive species, visit sleloinvasives.org. 

Paul Hetzler is a horticulture and natural resources educator, Cornell Cooperative Extension of St. 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.



Velvet longhorned beetle, Trichoferus campestris. Steven Valley, Oregon Department of Agriculture, Bugwood.org

We Can Always Learn More About our Land

ED NEUHAUSER

Recently classes involving woodland management from Cornell and Ithaca College visited our property. Both professors wanted to show how a private landowner dealt with deer and tree regeneration, and to explain how we managed our woodlands. While the students hopefully were able to come away with some lessons learned, their visit highlighted to us how different our woodlands can be.

Like most woodlands in the northeast, our woodlands have been used in a variety of ways that may not be initially apparent. How these lands were used and what species of trees resulted from man's prior activity provides useful insight into how these lands could be managed today. To point out some of these differences, I will review some deer management options and the history and outcomes of the four different parcels that the students visited.

Even though we encourage deer hunting on our property, tree regeneration is very poor unless some active measures are used. Conducting timber stand improvement and making large piles of brush, while labor intensive, can work to allow some seedlings to get above deer browsing.

Another regeneration method that has worked very well is coppicing. Coppicing is cutting off small trees at the ground line and then allowing them to regrow by stump sprouting. I have found that this works best when the trees are at least 2-3" diameter breast height (dbh) and usually the original small tree is very poorly formed (Figure 1), frequently due to deer browsing. Cut the coppiced trees as low to the ground as possible. These cut trees have to be protected from deer and I use 4' high 2" X 4" wire fencing which I buy in 100' rolls. I cut the fencing in 44" pieces and form a circular cage which is staked around the tree. I don't use plastic tree tubes any more, as I have found that they grow spindly trees that don't do very well.

This method works very well with species such as black cherry and hard

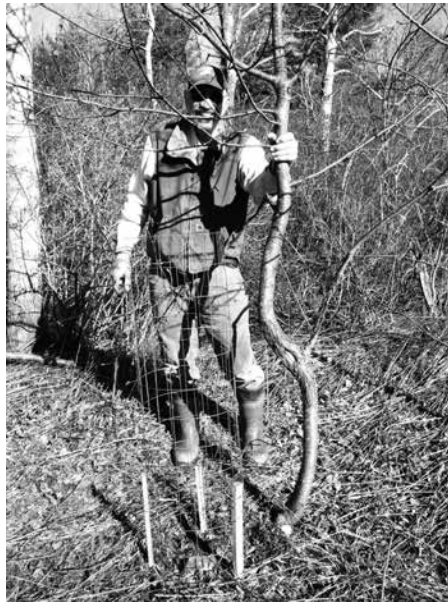


Figure 1. A poor quality cherry tree that when coppiced grew 5' in 1 year.

maple that are cut while they are dormant. I usually get the terminal leader to grow 4-5' in the first year, because the trees are growing off the root reserves. You may get 2 or 3 terminal leaders developing in the first year, which you should gradually trim down to 1 terminal leader over the next 2-3 years. I leave the fencing around the tree up to 10 years, to allow the tree to grow large enough not to be killed by antler rubbing deer.

The first parcel that was visited was the original apple orchard for our farm. When the farm was purchased almost 40 years ago, the apple trees were gone and the site was dominated by crowded white ash that was dying due to ash yellows. Some of the larger ash trees were sawn into boards and is now flooring in our house. The remaining ash was cut out for firewood and now the site is managed for black cherry and some sugar maple. These trees are well spaced and little thinning will have to be done for the next 15-20 years. As some of the larger black cherry and sugar maple die, these trees are removed and sawn into boards and the remainder used for

firewood.

The second site that was visited was originally part of a cultivated field that had sugar maple trees growing on the edge of the field. Once the field was abandoned, about 80 years ago, sugar maple seedlings dominated the site. This site had two plots set up for the Northeast Timber Growing contest. I conducted what I thought was a vigorous thinning and took two years worth of measurements. The initial results showed that I had not thinned nearly enough, prompting me to conduct a second thinning, with much better results showing up in the 3rd round of measurements. When you don't have very much sugar maple, it can be difficult to get woodland owners to properly thin it.

The third site was an area that was never plowed and was heavily harvested for sugar maple about 70 years ago. While all the sugar maple was removed, many very large hophornbeam trees were never cut and served as a large seed source. So this site was almost completely dominated by hophornbeam, with a small scattering of sugar maple. The hophornbeam was so large that some of it was able to be cut into 8" boards, not a very common occurrence. All of the hophornbeam was removed from this site and small 10-20' sugar maple trees now dominate.

The last site visited was a wet site that had never been farmed and the red maple on the site had been logged. This resulted in the site growing a lot of stump sprouted red maple and aspen. All of the stump sprouted red maple is being removed for firewood and the large aspen is being turned into barn siding. There is some black cherry, elm, single-stem red maple, and sugar maple that are being left on the site to grow into a future timber crop. It is easy to grow red maple, but it is difficult to grow good red maple. Multistem red maple exhibits poor form and frequently has extensive heart rot. I am successful in getting elms to grow into large trees, provided I leave individual elms very widely spaced.

Thanks to Peter Smallidge from Cornell and Jake Brenner from Ithaca College for making field trips to our woods. Their visits caused me to look at our woods in a whole new way. ▲

Ed is a member of the NYFOA Board and cuts logs and lumber on the family farm in Groton, NY.

Ask a Professional (continued)



Figure 5. Cut-stump treatments usually use a glyphosate product and apply it to the outer 2 inches of the stump's surface immediately after cutting the tree. Use appropriate caution and training for tree felling.

is sprayed (Figure 3). The frequency of hatchet punctures depends on the product and the concentration, but ranges from one puncture per each three inches of diameter to a complete circumference frill. Details are provided on the product labels. As an example, a concentrated mixture of Accord XRT II is applied as 1 ml per puncture. Glyphosate, if enough stems are treated or enough volume is

present, can flash kill from treated beech to untreated beech. Triclopyr does not typically flash. A caution with triclopyr is to follow the label restrictions on the total quantity per acre. Triclopyr forms a vapor, and if too many trees per acre are treated those vapors can accumulate under the forest canopy and damage non-target species.

Beech that are less than 6 inches can be treated with triclopyr using a basal bark treatment (Figure 4). Here, the product is mixed in water (Garlon 3A) or oil (Garlon 4 ultra, or premixed as Pathfinder II) and sprayed on the lower 20 inches of the tree. Basal bark results in a chemical girdling of the treated stem. The resources listed above include a fact sheet by Dave Jackson of PSU about basal bark treatments.

Beech stems above approximately 4 to 6 inches diameter can be treated with cut stump (AKA cut surface) treatments. Cut stump is simply felling the tree and immediately applying the chemical mixture to the fresh surface (Figure 5). Similarly, beech 1 to 3 inches in diameter can be cut with a brush saw and stump treated. For maximum flash kill treat as many beech stumps as is practical using a glyphosate-based product with the active ingredient strength at least 25% and as high as 50%. For minimal or no flash kill, use a triclopyr product. Glyphosate treatments can be delayed for up to 72 hours after felling with reasonably good results.

Low-stumping is a relatively new technique with limited research to describe

its optimal applications. This technique is intended for use only in July and August and assumes that all beech—that means 100% of the beech—are cut as close to ground level as possible (Figure 6A, 6B). This intensive treatment presumably capitalizes on the energy reserves of the tree being located above ground, and thus a depleted roots system with little capacity to form root sprouts. Uncut beech, or treatment during other times of the year may limit the success of this method.

Fall and Winter Treatments

Although some foliage may be present, most has stopped or significantly limited physiological activity, and thus is unresponsive to foliar treatments. This concern can begin in late summer if there is a late season drought. One rule of thumb is that foliar treatments should be ceased when raspberry foliage starts to change color.

Hack-n-squirt and injection methods using glyphosate or triclopyr are effective for control of the treated tree until the wood freezes. Little research has compared glyphosate's flash kill effectiveness in summer versus fall treated beech.

Cut-stump treatments are also possible, and flash kill has been shown to be effective on connected root sprouts well into middle November. In summer and fall, cut-stump treatments can be applied to previously cut beech by resurfacing the stump and applying concentrated glyphosate. For stumps that are one to two grow-



Figure 6A. Low stumping attempts to take advantage of the movement of energy reserves into the upper part of the crown, and may also benefit from the redistribution of hormones above ground. In areas with abundant beech, the initial appearance can be visually dramatic.



Figure 6B. One winter after low-stumping, the foliage on most stems has dropped. The visual impact is lessened, but access is still limited.

ing seasons old, there was 100% control of the stump, 50% control of root sprouts one year after the initial harvest and 70% control of root sprouts two years after the initial harvest. Root sprout control diminished with time since the initial harvest.

Basal bark treatments are effective in the fall and winter. Treatment with Garlon 4 ultra that is mixed in oil, or the premix of this as Pathfinder II, is possible all winter unless snow covers the base of the stem or cold temperatures limit the ability of the oil-based products to flow.

Low-stumping should not be applied at this time of year. The trees have begun to store energy reserves in the root system, and cutting will stimulate the development of root sprouts.

Late Winter and Spring Treatments

As with the fall and winter treatments, foliar applications are not possible. However, many of the non-native invasive species (e.g., multiflora rose, bush honeysuckle, and Japanese barberry) have early development of leaves, and this provides an opportunity for selective control with foliar treatments using glyphosate that avoids collateral damage.

In winter the wood is often frozen and treatments to exposed wood via hack-n-squirt or cut-stump will have variable though often poor effectiveness in control of the treated stem, and almost no flash kill. When the wood thaws in the spring, exposed wood treatments will be more effective than winter treatments, but heavy sap flow may limit full effectiveness relative to summer and fall treatments.

Basal bark treatments are effective throughout this time. In the resources listed above, the basal bark fact sheet by PSU provides full details for the effectiveness of different concentrations of Garlon 4 (triclopyr) on beech and other species in spring versus summer treatments.

As with fall and winter seasons, low-stumping should not be applied during this time of year. ▲

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Member Profile:

Rich Taber

DENNIS ATIYEH

Rich Taber is a retired high school Agriculture/FFA and biology teacher, a retired career Army National Guardsman, and also a forester who owns Great Northern Farm with his wife, Wendy, in Lebanon, NY, in Madison County near the Hamilton/Morrisville NY area. He currently works with Cornell Cooperative Extension in Chenango County while running the farm and woodlot. Wendy owned her own farm in Vernon, NY and was a nurse before she began farming with Rich full time, which includes running a small commercial meat business selling products from off the farm. Together, they manage their woodlot and multiple species of livestock using sustainable forestry and agricultural practices.

Rich, having grown up on a small farm, was an avid outdoorsman in Eastern Connecticut where he kindled his passion for farming and forestry. He actively participated in 4-H livestock and conservation projects, worked on multiple dairy farms, and read everything he could

get his hands on concerning nature and wildlife. “My childhood farm and woods experiences from tramping around the oak-hickory forests of eastern Connecticut and a rich tapestry of having grown up on the land and studying ecology, forestry, wildlife and agriculture at many levels lead to my continued involvement in forestry today,” Rich proudly says. After high school, Rich attended the University of Maine where he studied forestry and wildlife. His career at UMaine, however, was cut short after two years. Rich transferred to Tennessee Tech University after being offered a rifle shooting scholarship. While at Tennessee Tech, Rich was active in ROTC, and graduated with a BS in Agricultural Science while active in ROTC. Olympic style competitive rifle shooting was an integral part of Rich’s life; he competed for 40 years beginning in high school, continuing through college, the military, and his civilian life. During his undergraduate collegiate career, Rich recalls reading the novels “Malabar Farm”

and “Pleasant Valley” by Louis Bromfield that solidified his sustainable agricultural and silvicultural philosophies. “These two tomes contributed to my ‘moral compass’ on how to deal with the land. They described [Bromfield’s] efforts in restoring several degraded, eroded, and worn out farms in north central Ohio, using principles of restorative forestry and agriculture that are still as relevant today as they were when written.” Aldo Leopold’s “Sand County Almanac” also provided many guiding ecological principles for Rich’s aspirations.

After graduating from Tennessee Tech, he did an active Army tour at the US Army Marksmanship Unit at Fort Benning, Georgia. Following active duty, Rich returned home and obtained an MS in animal science as well as an agriculture teaching certification from the University of Connecticut. Soon after, he bought his farm in central New York, and once settled, obtained another teaching certification and taught science courses at the local high school as well as Agriculture/FFA for 25 years. While teaching, Rich completed another MS in multiple use forest resource management from SUNY-ESF in 1996, with particular concentrations in silviculture, wildlife, and outdoor recreation. Rich retired from the Army National Guard as a major in 1996. Needless to say, Rich is well educated and has a passion to learn and educate those seeking to practice sustainable practices. After retiring from high school teaching in 2007, Rich took on his current position as a grazing, forestry, and agricultural economic development specialist for Cornell Cooperative Extension of Chenango County.

The farm lies in a hilly region with steep slopes, reaching elevations as high as 1800 feet above sea level. Cold, snowy winters are prevalent and the growing season is short, so Rich must make the best use of his time when managing his woodlot and livestock. A stream runs through the woodlot most of the year, but disappears during the dry months. The neighboring area contains a blend of farmlands, woodlands, and wetlands, providing the perfect conditions for wildlife habitat. “There are no lakes or ponds on the farm, but the neighbor’s property which we lease has a couple of healthy beaver ponds that attract a variety of wildlife.”



Cattle and sheep are part of the integrated farm and forest enterprises of Rich and Wendy’s “Great Northern Farm.” Regenerative and restorative management practices have guided the restoration of the health and vigor of the soils, pastures, and forests.

continued on page 22



Rich enjoys spending time tending his young woods to weed the weaker and low vigor trees and concentrating growth on the best and highest quality trees.

Rich and Wendy jointly manage their woodlot and animals on 165 acres and lease 50 acres for additional grazing and hay land. There are about 100 acres of woods in one chunk, with another five across the road from their home. They primarily produce beef cattle, sheep, pastured poultry, and turkeys. “We have multi-species of livestock; a beef cattle herd, and a

commercial sheep flock,” says Rich. “We graze both species together and practice rotational grazing, on both our land and nearby rented land.” The road to establishing a healthy farming ecosystem was not an easy one on Great Northern Farm. “[I] was attracted to this parcel because it was affordable, but it was in rough shape. It had been stripped of much of its nutrients with

no additions of lime, fertilizer, or manure for years,” Rich says. “It was a typical southern tier hill top dairy farm that had not seen much management for many years. It has been a long row to hoe, so to speak, to bring this farm back into shape. I had to slowly begin to replace those inputs, which was a very expensive process.” Rich received his farm in relatively poor condition. It suffered severely from high grading and degraded pastures and fields. “The woods, as were and are so typical of many woodlots, had been pillaged of the better timber, and so I began to thin the stands and take out lower quality trees, ‘the worst first’ strategy that folks of an ethical and ecological nature abide by.” Throughout the beginning years of managing his woodlot, Rich commenced multiple forest improvement cuttings with assistance from DEC foresters. He also performed a large ash thinning in anticipation of the emerald ash borer. On the agricultural side, well-managed grazing practices have resulted in restoring soil health and productive fields once again. Today, Rich can walk through his woodlot and fields to find his sustainable management practices have made dramatic differences. “The fact that we have taken an essentially mined property and have seen it respond to ecological and benign oriented land management is quite gratifying,” Rich notes.



The mature woodlands owned by Rich and Wendy provide a variety of opportunities for them to pursue their interests in recreation, hunting, timber management and wildlife. Hard work was required to rehabilitate these woods from the previously degraded condition.

The woodlot contains many large northern hardwood species, namely sugar maple, beech, ash, and red maple. A hardwood understory lies below his stands along with thorn apple trees and other brush species. Cornell maple specialist Steve Childs recently visited the woodlot to determine the feasibility for maple syrup production. “We were producing a film for our Cooperative Extension Farm Viability Grant on evaluating a woodlot for potential maple production. We needed a woodlot to evaluate, and so we used ours, with Steve Childs assisting in the evaluation.” After evaluating the woodlot, Steve and Rich concluded maple production is possible for a hobby type operation, with many beautiful sugar maple trees present in much of the woodlot. The slope of the woodlot, however, could create many issues with machinery access and also is a long distance from a viable road. “It’s extremely steep, and located a long distance from a road, electricity, and water,” Rich says with resignation. “It’s also very wet for much of the maple season, and hauling sap up the

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A soils map is an essential tool for a farm/forest owner. Knowing the soils helps the owner decide what to grow, and the limitations that might complicate an otherwise good idea.

steep hills back to the farmstead would be onerous at a commercial level.” Therefore, Rich hopes to make the sugar bush into a hobby operation at best, maybe 100 taps or so. “At this point in our lives, we are not looking to add anymore enterprises. We would like to stop and ‘smell the roses,’ and continue to enjoy the woods for values which we find near and dear such as wildlife observation, hunting, cross country skiing, snowmobiling, hiking, camping, and the occasional harvesting of a few firewood trees and sawlogs.”

Rich has been an active member of NYFOA since the early 80’s, at the state and local central NY chapter levels, as well as the Society of American Foresters for many years. Being a member of NYFOA has proven to be one of Rich’s greatest assets. “I can’t imagine not being a NYFOA member due to all of the activities and experiences that I have had with this organization,” Rich explains. He also attributes acquiring good knowledge from his experiences with the DEC, Cornell University, and SUNY ESF. “I have gotten lots of information over the

years from NYFOA as well as the DEC and Cornell.” These organizations helped Rich continuously learn through attending events throughout his career. Also being a forest educator has exposed Rich to many new forest and wildlife experiences. In return, Rich has the tremendous opportunity to share all of these experiences with the public during his classes. Additionally, Rich has served as an MFO volunteer, assisting and advising his neighbors many times over the years.

Every once in a while Rich finds spare time to enjoy his favorite hobbies. Though farming is the primary purpose of the farm, the woodlot serves as a recreational site that the whole community gets to enjoy. Corridor C7D,

a state snowmobile trail, runs for almost a mile through Great Northern Farm where thousands of people enjoy riding through the trail throughout the snowy months, and as part of the NY State Snowmobiling system. Rich loves to train his hounds for raccoon hunting competitions on the farm. As a member of the local coonhound club, he invites other members to his farm for competitions where they all get together for a good time. Rich also makes time for hunting with friends during deer season, enjoys going for walks with Wendy through the woods, and frequently camps out in the woods to experiment with different camping equipment.

Rich found over time that one of the greatest challenges on his farm was finding the time and money to accomplish his management objectives. “Like anyone who works off the farm and also tries to farm to one degree or another, having enough time and money to get everything done is always a challenge,” says Rich. Additionally, the slope and soil type provides additional management challenges. “It is quite steep

and at certain times of the year, the land is quite wet and easily prone to damage from heavy machinery.” Farm and woodlot machinery is expensive to buy and oftentimes breaks down.

Rich offers advice from his numerous years of experience working and managing in the woods. “Be very vigilant in conducting safe operations,” Rich urgently states. Rich takes safety very seriously on the farm. He has taken the Game of Logging Levels I and II multiple times. He believes “safety precautions have been one of my biggest accomplishments” when working in the woodlot. “I had a serious chainsaw kickback accident in 1983. It ripped into my face and left shoulder, which made me extremely cautious working with chainsaws and in the woods.” As time has continued, active education has been a key part of Rich’s life, and he encourages everyone to pursue more education. “Learn all you can about sustainable silviculture, avoid high grading, and become an active NYFOA member and attend events around the state.” Rich also reminisces about a few experiences he had with loggers over the years. “I have had several loggers who ‘just happened to notice’ my maple stands when logging neighboring properties, and thought I should sell my logs right then and there to them. I had two loggers in particular who were aghast, not too long ago, when I told them that I had everything under control and didn’t need their services.” Fair warning to new forest owners: don’t let someone bully you into high grading your woodlot!

Rich and Wendy know they chose the right career paths. “Sustainable agriculture and forestry are two of our main passions in life. Over the years you learn to discern that which is good for the land, and that which degrades the land.” Their farm has been a fun, fulfilling mission that displays their enthusiasm for agriculture and forestry. “We get so much enjoyment from the farm and the woods. At times I have to force myself to leave Great Northern Farm to go elsewhere.” It has been an odyssey! 🏔️

Dennis Atiyeh is a Cornell University student and program assistant for ForestConnect. Support is provided by Cornell’s College of Agriculture and Life Sciences and USDA NIFA.

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