

The New York Forest Owner

A PUBLICATION OF THE NEW YORK FOREST OWNERS ASSOCIATION

For people caring about New York's trees and forests

November/December 2017



Member Profile: Jonathan Farber

Volume 55 Number 6



www.nyfoa.org

**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 6

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



www.nyfoa.org

COVER: Jonathan Farber suited up in some of his personal protective equipment, ready to go harvest firewood.. For member profile see page 21. All photos courtesy of Jonathan Farber.

From The President

When the leaves change to their fall colors, many NYFOA members begin to think of deer hunting. White-tailed deer are New York's most popular game animal, providing much in the way of healthy food, sport, and fond hunting memories. Deer hunters provide a huge financial benefit to upstate New York. However, as most of NYFOA's members know, too many deer also



can be a threat to forests. New York's Department of Environmental Conservation has published a fact sheet for landowners titled "Deer and Ecosystem

Health," a link to which is found on NYFOA's website (<https://www.nyfoa.org/news/statewide-news/dec-releases-deer-and-ecosystem-health-flyer>).

This fact sheet lists some of the profound and long-lasting ecological damage deer can cause and lists signs that a forest may be suffering from too many deer.

If you have too many deer on your land, this fact sheet states "allowing hunting on your land is the easiest way to reduce deer numbers and ecological damage. Hunting must focus on female deer to be effective." Some landowners don't personally hunt deer and have not allowed others to hunt on their land. Because of their concerns about allowing deer hunting on their property, their woodlands may be suffering much harm. This fact sheet clearly addresses some of these concerns such as "I don't know

any hunters," "I am worried about safety," "What about liability," or "I don't want any animals hurt or killed."

A common complaint among deer hunters is that it is getting harder to find a place to hunt. A number of hunters have given up and ceased hunting. Many states have effective programs to help private landowners who open their lands to hunting. A good example is Michigan's Hunting Access Program which not only pays landowners to allow hunting but also helps landowners with wildlife and habitat management. New York state needs to seriously consider enacting such a program.

NYFOA's *Forest Owner Magazine* seeks to bring interesting and informative articles to our members and we are justly proud of our magazine. From time to time, the editorial committee's well runs dry and they have to scramble for articles. We encourage our members to suggest topics for future articles, or better yet, to write an article themselves. Tell our members about a management project you have done on your land, what worked or failed to work in solving a problem on your land, or about something in your woods that gave you particular enjoyment.

We encourage our members to regularly visit our website www.nyfoa.org to keep up-to-date with news from NYFOA and its chapters. Many complements have been received about our new website and its appealing look and ease of use. I would like to thank our webmaster Jim Minor for his continued efforts on our behalf.

—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.

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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**Getting The Most Value
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Silent Auction a Big Success. Now What?

DAVE WILLIAMS

For several years we have bemoaned the fact that most woodland owners have gray hair or none at all. As property owners we all would like to instill in our children and grandchildren an appreciation for nature; and in particular, a love for the land and its trees. A great concern for all of us is a lack of interest on the part of our heirs in the woodlands we have worked so hard to improve. Just how do we go about stimulating interest and educating the next generation of forest owners?

The 2016-2017 Membership Committee, under the enthusiastic leadership of Dean Faklis, challenged NYFOA members to donate items for a silent auction to be held at the annual meeting in April. Proceeds were targeted to support youth forestry initiatives in the form of mini grants. The bar was set high—\$5,000 to be exact—and naysayers were quick to say it couldn't be done. Thanks to all our members, friends, and business people who made donations and also to those of you who bid on items.

As most of you recall, the goal was met and doubters ate crow. As a result we have been able to support the New York State 4-H Forestry Invitational Team with \$1000 and a \$100 NYFOA Woodlands Mini Grant to the Cassadaga Valley School District (CVSD). CVSD

students under the leadership of Cheryl Burns are going to participate in the Northeast Timber Growing Contest. In addition to the cash grant, NYFOA members Otis Barber, Jim Barber and Tony Pingitore are serving as resource persons for the students. It seems that we should be patting ourselves on the back, doesn't it? Hold on, the work isn't done.

True, we met our goal and we have helped two groups, but only two. That means that we have \$3900 remaining to be invested in programs for young people. We need your help. You may have an environmental science program or an FFA chapter in your school district whose members could benefit from our funds in order to enhance a forestry activity. You can help by directing educators to our website to read the particulars, download and submit NYFOA Woodlands Mini Grant application (details are here: goo.gl/djKCWb). Please help promote this opportunity and perhaps you might go the extra mile volunteering as a woodland owner mentor for the teacher and students.

Who could have predicted that the hardest part of this endeavor is finding recipients so we can get rid of the cash? Help us influence future forest owners. You will be glad you did. 🌲

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
Tom Adkins	CNY
Kim Buker	NAC
James Christopher	NAC
Dan Ciszak	NFC
Cliff Conklin	SOT
Edward Covert	LHC
Kenneth Crocker	SOT
Mark Delaney	CNY
Ted & Deborah First	AFC
Mayda Flip Lo Guidice	AFC
Larry Gagler	LHC
Antonia Gilligan	WFL
Terry Hafler	WFL
Phyllis John	LHC
Sonya Marker	WFL
Donald Mower	CNY
Ashley O'Keefe	CNY
Jim Papin	WFL
Nancy & Mike Perfetto	SOT
Nathan Piche	CDC
Dean Roczen	CNY
Jay Schissell	SFL
Kevin Schrader	WFL
Theodore Schulz	NAC
Van Buren Point Association	AFC
Robert Spampata	NAC
Aaron St. John	SOT
Glen Stratton	CNY
Bruce & Tammy Zimmerman	SOT

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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



Figure 1. A snowy winter road illustrates any number of ownership objectives that might include hiking, hunting, collecting of maple sap, or firewood collecting. Most ownership objectives are compatible, but they need to be written down.

Strategies to Improve Your Woodland

Question: I would like to know what I can do to improve my woods. (Anonymous. AFC)

Answer: This is a common question among woodland owners, and illustrates an interest and commitment by the owner to be more fully invested in their property. It is worth noting that I don't think I know a woodland owner who believes their woods have achieved full improvement. This is a never ending, but endlessly enjoyable quest. The question is broad because "improvement" will mean different things to different people. However, there are several practices you can use to cover a broad range of interests.

The first and absolutely essential step as an owner, and to improve your land, is to identify your ownership objectives. Some people might call them goals. Whatever the label, the important questions to ask yourself and your co-owners include: "Why do you own the land?" "Why do you keep paying taxes on the land?" "What does the land give you (tangible or intangible) now or in the future, that you want and need?". Your ownership objectives usually won't change much in the short-term, but might change some over many years or decades. It is important that your spouse, mature children, and others who have a stake in the property go through the same process (Figure 1).

By knowing your objectives, you will be able to assess the importance or suitability for any action that might occur on your property. Your objectives will help gauge your reaction to a boundary line that isn't surveyed, an eroding trail, or the request by a neighbor to harvest firewood.

No one starts the journey of woodland ownership knowing all they need to know. It is helpful to have someone that has been in your shoes talk about your options. Cornell University Cooperative Extension offers the Master Forest Owner volunteer program. The MFO volunteers are woodland owners who have

been trained to use their varied talents, knowledge and experience (Figure 2) to help other woodland owners learn about their property. The volunteers don't provide technical assistance, but can share educational resources and networks about groups like the New York Forest Owners Association. Most people look for advice from those who have shared the same



Figure 2. Master Forest Owner volunteers are trained in key principles of tree identification and tree measurement. They offer non-technical advice that can help other woodland owners get started with improving their woodlands.



Figure 3. One of NYFOA's ten chapters is visiting a private woodland and learning about strategies to manage invasive plants from one of Cornell's Regional Extension Foresters, and sharing their own experiences.

questions and trials, so the MFO volunteers provide a peer who will make a free visit and get you started on improving your property for your objectives. Request a free visit from an MFO volunteer here www.CornellMFO.info

You may know, or the MFO volunteer may tell you, that your interests will benefit from the technical assistance of a forester. There are many types of foresters. A good starting point is with the NYSDEC foresters who will visit your property and provide free technical assistance. These public service foresters arrive "pre-paid" by your tax dollars, but more importantly don't carry any bias of what they recommend. They can provide a plan, and guide you to the outcome you desire. In my experience the DEC foresters are all capable, sincere, and a treasure to have walk in the woods with you. You can find your DEC public service forester here <http://www.dec.ny.gov/lands/97398.html>

Once you reach the point that you want to improve your woodlands, you are also likely eager to learn about your woodlands, the habitats, and the features you see. There is an enormous amount of information and resources to help with this. As part of its Land Grant mission, Cornell University offers assistance through offices of Cornell Cooperative Extension in each county, and through the statewide program ForestConnect. ForestConnect helps connect people to their woods through applied research and the development of

educational materials. This information is systematic and strategic to address concerns of woodland owners through a variety of delivery systems that help woodland owners find the answers they need. ForestConnect is found at www.ForestConnect.info and includes hundreds of pages of free publications, and links to scores of webinars at www.youtube.com/ForestConnect. You can also network with other woodland owners at <http://CornellForestConnect.ning.com>

Another important educational resource for woodland owners is the NY Forest Owners Association (www.NYFOA.org). NYFOA is an association of woodland owners for woodland owners. In addition to the bi-monthly magazine, a powerful resource is to connect with your local chapter. Chapters host regular events and newsletters that provide opportunities for woodland owners to further learn from each other (Figure 3). Joining NYFOA is an important step in improving your woods.

The size of your property will influence the types of action you can take, and should take, to improve your woods. Smaller properties are more easily managed, but lack some of the options available on larger parcels. There is no threshold for small and large (see www.nyfoa.org issue January/February 2017), but rather it depends on the desired activity. The important truth is that every property can be improved.

Many owner interests that relate to improvement depend upon the types and sizes of trees. The first step is to be able to identify the trees and plants on your property. Many of the MFO volunteers know the common trees and plants. You can also watch the tree identification webinars for hardwoods and conifers on www.youtube.com/ForestConnect. You can also use a good book such as Cornell's "Know Your Trees" or "Trees of New York: Native and Naturalized" by Professor Don Leopold.

The trees and plants that grow on your land depend in part on the soils. We can't really change the soils in the woods, but we can make sure that we favor those species that are adapted to soil we have. Two resources to help you learn about your soils are Google Earth Pro and Web Soil Survey. These are free, online tools that will open your eyes to a new way to look at your property. I have a blog about how to use these, plus tutorials <http://cornellforestconnect.ning.com/profiles/blogs/google-earth-and-web-soil-survey>

Finally, any discussion about improving your woods should include a discussion about those factors that have a primary role in degrading our woods. The primary factors include deer browsing, interfering plants, and exploitive harvesting. At the 50th Anniversary of NYFOA, they recognized these three factors and started an initiative called "Restore New York Woodlands" to call attention to the problem and work with partners to create solutions.

Deer are perhaps the single biggest detriment to our New York woodlands. In most areas of the state, the number of deer exceed the carrying capacity of the land. It isn't so important to know the number of deer per square mile, but rather the impact of deer on the vegetation (Figure 4 on page 18). Deer preferentially browse desirable trees and herbs, but don't browse most undesirable plants. The other two degrading factors, interfering plants and exploitive harvesting, are aggravated and compounded by deer browsing. You can learn more about deer, and a simple method to assess the impacts of deer at a Cornell website <http://AVIDdeer.com>

Interfering plants are those plants that interfere with one of our ownership

continued on page 18

Wild Things in Your Woodlands

CORY SNYDER

CEDAR WAXWING (*BOMBYCILLA CEDRORUM*)



*The Cedar Waxwing (*Bombycilla cedrorum*) is a small- to medium-sized bird. It has broad wings with pointed ends and a short squared-off tail. Arching over its head lies a crest that often droops backwards. Cedar waxwings are revered for their beautiful coloration. These birds feature a pale yellow chest. The top half of their body is a soft brown color that shifts into a light gray on their lower half and out the wings. The tail is tipped by a band of brilliant yellow. A similarly showy band of red can be seen on the wings of these birds. This red color is not the color of their feathers however. This red comes from waxy droplets that form on the end of the wings. These drops are, in part, where they get their name. This little bandit of a bird also has a prominent black mask with white outline around its eyes. Cedar waxwings are of modest size with a maximum length of 6.7 inches and wingspan of about 12 inches. Adult cedar waxwings weigh in at just 1.1 ounces.*

Along the edge of a small babbling brook, a flock of cedar waxwings can be seen fluttering through the branches of the overhanging trees. Cedar waxwings can be found in a multitude of types of forest including deciduous, coniferous, and mixed stands. They tend to favor areas that occur on the edge of wooded areas especially near water. Edges near streams, lakes, rivers, or ponds all make for ideal habitat for the cedar waxwing. Along with these forested locations, cedar waxwings have become more and more common in small towns and suburban areas. In these areas they can be found in many parks and garden areas near people's homes.

Cedar waxwings get their name from two places; their appearance and their behavior. Along with waxy red droplets at the tips of their wings, these birds are named for one of their favorite food items. As frugivores, waxwings feed mostly upon fruit for the entire year. In the winter months these birds are commonly seen eating the fruits of the cedar tree. Along with fruit, waxwings will also prey upon insects. During the warmer months cedar waxwings can be seen dipping and diving through the air as they catch things like mayflies and stoneflies that are emerging from the water.

Cedar waxwings use their habitat to their advantage. By locating


themselves near the water, cedar waxwings are in a prime location for catching insects. Numerous species of insects have life stages that are closely tied with water. As these insects progress through their development, and emerge from the water, there is always a steady stream of them for the waxwings to prey upon. Cedar waxwings have been becoming more common in more populated areas in the past few years. This is because of the high number of fruiting tree and shrub species that are used as ornamentals. These birds' primary food source is fruit and we have been planting trees that produce a stable and reliable food source making these beautiful birds a more common sight

in our backyards. Cedar waxwings are found across North America. They can be found year-round in New York State. Their summer breeding range extends north into Canada while individuals may fly as far south as Panama to spend the winter.

Cedar waxwings nest in the spring and summer months. A pair of birds, male and female, will look for the ideal nesting site together. The female usually chooses a location anywhere up to 50 feet off the ground where there is either a good horizontal or sometimes vertical fork in the branches. Once a suitable location is found, the female does most of the work in constructing the nest. Over a period of 5 or 6 days the birds will make over 2,500 trips to and from the nest in order to gather enough materials. The nest is typically woven using string, hair, grasses, sticks, and other materials. The nest is typically cup-shaped, about 5 inches wide and 3 inches deep. They typically have between one and two clutches of eggs per season. One brood may contain between 2 and 6 eggs.

The diet of the waxwing can have some interesting and unintended side effects. Some species of birds are nest parasites. They lay their eggs in the nest of other birds and let the other birds raise the young. One such species is the brown-headed cowbird. This is obviously an effective strategy in most cases, but not always with the nest of a cedar waxwing. Because of the high fruit diet of waxwings, other species of birds that parasitize the nest often lose their chicks because they cannot sustain themselves on the same type of diet. The fruity diet can also lead to the changing of the bird's coloration. Some cedar waxwings have an orange band at the base of the tail as opposed to the typical yellow color. This is due to them eating a large number of berries from a non-native species of honeysuckle. The berries contain a type of red pigment where the more berries from this honeysuckle that are eaten while the tail feathers are being grown, the darker shade of

orange will be shown in the feathers. One last interesting side effect of the high fruit diet is that cedar waxwings are one of the few species outside of humans to die from alcohol poisoning. If the birds eat over-ripe berries that have begun to ferment they can become intoxicated from the alcohol contained in the fruit. If too much over-ripe fruit is eaten, these little birds can die as a result.

The cedar waxwing is not an endangered or threatened species. It is listed as a least concern species but these birds have some threats. Fruit trees that these birds frequent are often planted along roadsides and near residential areas. As such, these birds are at high risk for collisions with both automobiles and glass windows or doors on homes. 

Cory Snyder is a recent graduate of Cornell University, with a major in Environmental and Sustainability Science.

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

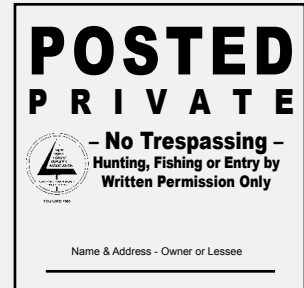
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An Upstate New Yorker's Long-term Investment in Trees

It was 1962, the phone rang one sunny morning in California for Dick Patton as he was putting on his uniform and heading out to join the rest of his Marine Corps battalion. It was his father. He and two other family friends were looking at purchasing some land near his hometown in upstate New York and wanted to know if Dick was interested in being a part owner.

Dick thought back to his favorite childhood memories of hunting and running the trails and he thought of his son, who was expected to be born in just a few months – he wanted to give him the same experiences he loved as a child. ‘Yes, count me in.’

Though he was committed to serving in the Marines for some time, he immediately started thinking of what life would be like living back home near the newly purchased land. He would take his son hunting, help manage the stands, and be able to spend time with his family.

His time in the Marine Corps kept Dick and his family in California for nearly 10 years, only visiting the property once a year. But he continued to be a vocal part owner and soon, a move to the East Coast meant longer visits in the summer for Dick and his family.

When Dick was able to retire after 25 years of service, he and his family made plans to move back to New York. He wanted to be able to enjoy the outdoors, but he also needed to make the property profitable. He still had a family to support and kids in school. So in 1979, he and his wife Carol bought an additional plot of land (he had also bought out his father and friends, and was now full owner of his first property), bringing his total to 360 acres.

His woods had lots of potential – he had quite a bit of cherry, maple and oak that had been growing for about 40 years already – all of which could someday be worth a profit if managed and cared for right.

But while Dick knew conifers from hardwoods, he did not have the full expertise needed. He learned the hard way, making mistakes and then trying other methods. On one of his early projects, he had visions of opening up a couple stands to help the strongest trees grow. He knew he needed to thin out some of the trees, but he didn’t know which trees, so he didn’t take enough, and the thinning didn’t help as he had hoped.

Knowing he needed a bit more technical expertise, he attended Cornell’s Master Forester Program and joined the New York Forest

Owners Association. Having formal training and meeting often with other landowners helped him considerably. He learned quickly and soon was regularly conducting thinnings and timber stand improvement annually, replanting, encouraging natural regeneration and more to keep his stands healthy. A few good timber sales even helped pay for his kids to attend college.

Dick put in extensive hard work for more than 30 years. He kept his woods healthy and productive for wildlife and clean water. He weathered wind storms and bad winters. He said no to individuals who offered to buy sections of his property. He even made it through the rise in property taxes as vacation homes began popping up around him.

In just the past few years, much of his timber has gotten to a place where it is






mature and ready to be harvested. But unfortunately markets aren't what they used to be. Many of the small family mills have closed, and the paper mills are disappearing. Some of the hardwood markets are picking up, but the timber is mainly going overseas for less than it did 10 years ago.

Dick knows it will be a challenge to

find a decent price for the timber he managed for more than five decades. He wishes there were better markets or more opportunities for wood, so that he can continue to afford to keep the land productive. He hopes his children will be able to keep the land in trees someday as well.

Managing and growing trees is an

investment, and helps the ecosystem and communities around them. Markets are a key to this, both today and in the future. 

This story originally published by the American Forest Foundation. For more family forest owner stories, please visit www.forestfoundation.org

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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.

The Green Lie (Or How We Spent Our Summer Vacation)

GREG AND KATHY LESSORD

The year started out simple enough. A query from Emily Staychock at a winter seminar asking if we would host an MFO public woods walk at our place? Sure! No details would emerge for many months. In the meantime Kathy and I pondered what to tackle during the spring. How about any and all invasives in two key areas of stand number four on our property? Each area is about two acres in size. The first area encompassed the southwest region, which included a narrow long knoll surrounded by low, predominantly wet ground. The second was the north central region, which included a small gravelly hill where

the trees and brush formed a large horseshoe around a sizeable wildlife food plot, which this year would be alternating rows of corn and black oil sunflowers every 15 inches on center. So it was decided.

The Green Lie in a nutshell: “everything is so nice and green, all must be right in the woods.” Not so fast. As luck would have it we are “blessed” with nine main invasive plants: swallow wort, multi-flora rose, honeysuckle, autumn olive, privet, garlic mustard, Oriental bittersweet, barberry and European buckthorn. (Note: for our EAB trials and tribulations see Jeff Joseph’s The

Impact of EAB: Members stories, Part I in the *New York Forest Owner*, September/October 2017, volume 55 Number 5).

Monroe county seems to be exceptionally afflicted with invasives compared to other areas we have visited. However the problem is pervasive across the state and often involves other species, plant and animal. At a recent WFL chapter board meeting, Peter Muench, the WFL activities coordinator, stated for 2018 our chapter woods walks would focus on invasive species management and possible demonstration of mechanical controls.

We began our attack on the invasive species in earnest as soon as the snow melted, and never let up until the completion the third week of August.

The areas began as impenetrable tangles where a separation of a dozen feet meant losing sight of one another. As we worked away, the Virginia creeper, grape vine and poison ivy also



Kathy Lessord on the outside edge of the property prior to the “attack” on the invasive species.



Kathy as we muscled on through to the north.

became targets of our wrath. When the dust settled, quite literally, we were left with barren soils and intermittent native trees and shrubs.

The means to this end required the loader tractor to uproot all that we could without collateral damage and to move and pile debris at two skid landings. Small stuff was pulled by hand. Large buckthorn were girdled and treated in those wounds. Large plants, not accessible to the tractor, were cut and stump treated. Vines were cut loose and whenever possible pulled down to get their weight off tree limbs. Our lab Boo meticulously supervised every aspect of the operation and rode shotgun on the Gator guarding both tools and break time snacks.

We sought input from NYSDEC forester Gary Koplun as to regeneration strategies. All around our property the majority of tree and shrub species seem to be in overdrive producing fruits and nuts not seen in years. With the high volume of new seeds available natural regeneration is a viable option.

Existing seed took advantage of the newfound sunlight. We were elated to find little sugar maple, red and white oak, and staghorn sumac seedlings starting to pop up. We quickly utilized the honeysuckle and other woody debris to build hutches over them in an attempt to keep the deer at bay. To date this has kept the deer and rabbits from browsing them.

Come spring we are leaning toward two approaches: allowing nature to reseed the southwest area and we will plant seed and seedlings in the north central location. In both areas we will protect young plants from deer and rabbits utilizing brush hutches, tree tubes and chicken wire. All while making regular rounds erradicating any invasives or vines. It will be about five years before an accurate comparison can be made.

Re-enter Emily Staychock. Kathy and I would host a public woods walk sponsored by the Monroe county Cornell Cooperative Extension Master

continued on page 14



Looking west from the same spot as the previous image.

Forest Owner volunteer program. The afternoon of Sunday, September 17th was chosen and we were blessed with a beautiful, warm sunny day. I believe once again the weather was controlled by Peter Muench. Last year's woods walk held here enjoyed post card perfect weather for the fact Peter graciously danced naked under a full moon in the rain while sacrificing a chicken — so the legend has it!

DEC forester Gary Koplun and the Monroe County Soil and Water District's (MCSWD) Jeremy Paris graciously donated their Sunday afternoons to lead the walk and discussion. Also on hand was Livingston county MFO volunteer David Deuel.

We had the pleasure of showcasing our woodlots to 22 participants of all ages. It was especially nice to see the younger people showing interest. They hold the key to forests of the future.

Among topics covered were the "green lie," invasives — both plant and animal — wildlife habitat, pending timber sale, forest restoration and viewing the devastation from the Emerald Ash Borer (EAB). Jeremy also enlightened the group on soils and their relationship to trees, agricultural and wetland/riparian areas.

We had the opportunity to speak with some attendees about a week post-walk. One would be asking for MCSWD to visit. Another couple was cutting down a European buckthorn they had been pruning and mulching around at their driveway entrance. Another was also cutting buckthorn. A young lady contacted Gary for a site visit and I accompanied him. Gary is now in the process of creating her forest stewardship plan!

Once the weather cooperates and the timber harvest is complete, we will host a post harvest woods walk. We hope to see you there! 🌲

Greg and Kathy are members of the WFL chapter of NYFOA. They purchased their property in 2003 and grew up a "stones throw" away from it. Greg is retired and Kathy works for a large CPA firm.

Homestead Woodlot

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

JEFF JOSEPH

The Wood in Your Woods

As woodlot owners, I imagine that the majority of us have developed some skill in identifying the trees around us, using characteristics such as leaves, bark, buds, seeds, tree form/silhouette/size, and habitat preferences. A related but perhaps less developed skill for many of us is the ability to identify the same trees from the inside—by the distinct character, properties, and uses of their wood. While this knowledge would have been a critical survival skill for the indigenous people who inhabited this landscape, as well as for the early European settlers of our region, today, with the ready availability of lumber from all over the world (as well as the ubiquity of steel, plastics, and composite lumber) there is less ‘need’ for such knowledge, and so less opportunity to learn about it.

There are dozens of tree species of all shapes and sizes in New York’s forests, yet the commercial market is really focused on just a handful. There are obvious economic reasons for this limited focus in the marketplace—demand, market prices, and harvesting efficiency for starters—but there is no doubt that that with such a limited focus we are leaving behind a whole lot of unique, useful, and often very beautiful wood.

Even for those inclined or simply curious enough to make the effort to seek them out, no single region of our state, and certainly no single woodlot, will have the habitat diversity to contain anywhere near all the tree species possible, so searching out some of the less frequently encountered species (or even samples of their wood) can be difficult. In my case, to the best of my knowledge my woodlot contains 34 distinct (native or fully naturalized) tree species; so far I have milled or otherwise worked with 21 of them.

So while I still have some ways to go as far as learning about the lumber I have available here at home, I would also very much like to get my hands on all kinds of wood that I don’t currently have access to (native or not), and/or to hear from others who have milled, dried, and worked with them in some (any!) fashion. For example, what is it like to work with black gum, cucumber magnolia, hackberry, or pitch pine? How different from each other are the woods of the various hickories, spruces, ashes, or oaks? Anyone have experience working with the less common fruit woods (persimmon? mulberry?), or have access to any timber-sized Osage orange?

What uses have **you** come up with for our less common tree species? If you have any stories to share, we would love to hear from you. Keep in mind that a tree considered common in one part of the state may be non-existent in another region, so don’t be shy about sharing your experiences, even failed ones, as they will most likely be helpful to others. If there are enough responses I will

compile them into a future article so that we can all benefit from the hands-on knowledge of our members.

In the meantime, a related piece of news is that a proposed addition to NYFOA’s new and improved website is a classified ad section, so that members can buy/sell/trade woodlot and forestry-related goods and services. This would be a great way to enhance our community, as well as a means to share the wealth to be found in our woodlots. Give us your thoughts on whether this would prove useful to you. Thanks. 🌲

Resources:

Sloane, Eric, *A Reverence for Wood*, Ballantine Books, New York, 1965.
NYSDEC Stumpage Price Reports:
<http://www.dec.ny.gov/lands/5259.html>.

Jeff can be reached at jeffjosephwoodworker@gmail.com or at (607) 659-5995.

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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

THE NEW YORK STATE HEMLOCK INITIATIVE IS LOOKING FOR VOLUNTEERS!

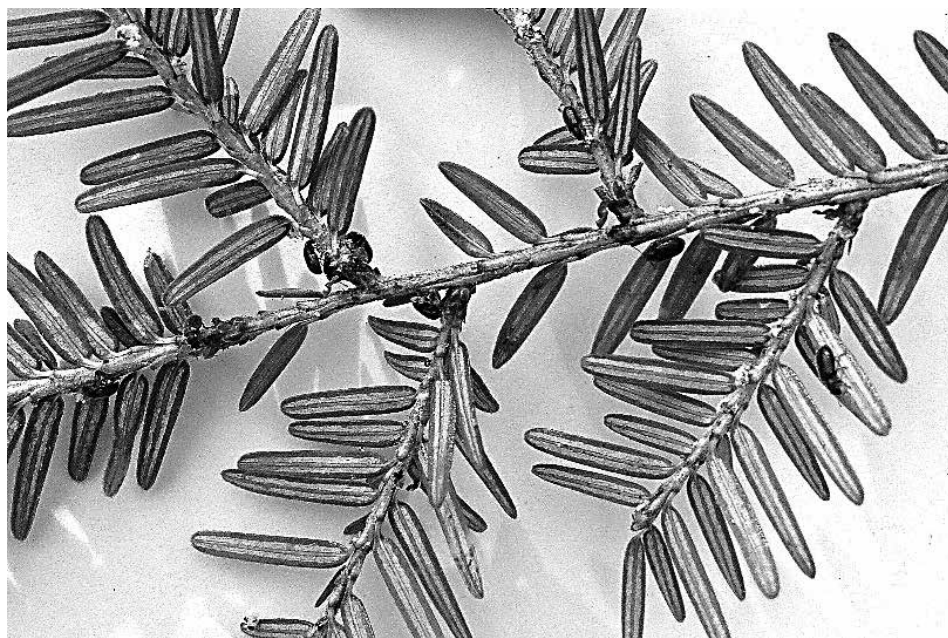
BY CHARLOTTE MALMBORG AND MARK WHITMORE

As many forest owners know, invasive pests represent a large threat to the wellbeing of the forests we call home. One of these pests, the hemlock woolly adelgid (HWA, *Adelges tsugae*), has the potential to be incredibly devastating to New York's forested lands. Coming from Japan, where HWA is native, this insect exclusively preys upon hemlock trees, using its sucking mouth parts to gorge on valuable nutrients, resulting in decline and eventually death of the infested tree. Hemlocks affected by HWA die slowly but steadily, transforming ordinarily verdant glens and gorges into unrecognizable places.

Eastern hemlock (*Tusga canadensis*) is an iconic tree in New York. It is the third most common tree in the state, and

New York has more hemlocks than any other state in the country. Many of us are familiar with the feeling of stepping into a hemlock stand—the cooler temperatures, the clean smell of the deep green needles, and often the sound of a stream not far off. The ubiquitous nature of hemlocks is, in many ways, their downfall. In many places hemlocks are so abundant that they are taken for granted and when they are decimated by HWA, a pest that often takes up to ten or more years to kill a tree, the loss in the forest ecosystem is not immediately apparent.

There are several telltale signs of HWA: there's the white, cottony balls of waxy wool apparent on infested twigs; thinning tree crowns; and the absence of fresh, bright green elongating shoots in spring.



Laricobius nigrinus beetles feed on HWA. Photo by Mark Whitmore, Cornell University.

In the summer, one can even spot HWA sistens using a hand lens, which appear as small black spots attached to the twigs near the base of individual hemlock needles. In New York, HWA is mainly confined to southeastern, western, and central parts of the state, though a small infestation of HWA was recently found in the Adirondacks around Lake George in July 2017.

The best way to fight HWA is through early detection. With rapid response to new infestations, we are more likely to be able to slow the spread of this invasive insect and buy precious time necessary to implement a long-term biocontrol management strategy. One way that forest owners can help is by surveying their own woodlots for hemlock trees infested by HWA. While government officials and conservation agencies are able to survey public lands, much of the forest in New York is privately owned, so it is vital that landowners are on the front lines in seeking out new infestations and responding with proper management techniques. With the added help from private woodlot owners, we will be able to slow the spread of HWA into areas like the Adirondacks, where hemlocks make up a hefty piece of the ecological pie.

The New York State Hemlock Initiative, based at Cornell University, seeks to slow the spread of HWA, research effective long-term biocontrol management strategies, and recruit volunteers to aid in hemlock conservation efforts on a statewide scale. Woodlot owners are encouraged to join our efforts because of their commitment to healthy forest ecosystems, as well as their intimate knowledge of the forests on their own properties. Volunteers with the NYS Hemlock Initiative not only help us find new HWA infestations, they can help with our biocontrol program in several ways. The biocontrol—short for biological control—of HWA utilizes natural predators of the pest to manage HWA populations. The predators we are currently focusing on are the beetle *Laricobius nigrinus*, and two Silverfly species of the genus *Leucopis*. Our biocontrol research facility at Cornell University is opening this fall, and will begin rearing insects for experimental



Hemlock woolly adelgid on a hemlock twig, seen here with lots of its characteristic “wool”. Photo by Mark Whitmore, Cornell University.

purposes as well as wild release with the hope that biocontrol will be a successful long-term management solution for HWA.


Our biocontrol program is aided by citizen science volunteers located throughout New York, who provide us with information that is invaluable to the success of our goals. There are several ways that volunteers can get involved with the NYS Hemlock Initiative biocontrol program. We are looking for volunteers to help us understand the timing of the life cycle of HWA, or phenology, over varying climatic conditions in New York. This information allows us to accurately time releases of biocontrol insects and monitor for successful biocontrol establishment at release sites. In addition, we are looking for landowners who have hemlock hedges on their properties to consider hosting a colony of HWA predators outside of the lab environment. These hedges, or field insectaries, provide locally adapted predators for distribution at locations far from our lab at Cornell. We are also

seeking potential biocontrol release sites, preferably those with heavily HWA-infested hemlocks that are still relatively healthy. As our biocontrol program expands, we will need more volunteers interested in monitoring release sites, and/or providing HWA-infested branches as food for our biocontrol predators.

While we are optimistic about the biocontrol opportunities for HWA management long-term, currently the key to managing HWA is to buy time with short-term solutions. The systemic insecticides Imidacloprid and Dinotefuran are effective treatment options and, when combined, provide rapid treatment that will last for up to seven years or more. That time is critical for saving valuable hemlock resources, since it will take many years for populations of predators to increase to the level where they can control HWA.

At the New York State Hemlock Initiative, we are dedicated to conserving New York’s hemlock trees and researching long-term HWA management solutions.

The loss of hemlocks would not only be devastating for the scenic aspects of our forests, it would also be devastating for the wildlife that depend upon hemlocks for survival, for the watersheds that provide clean water resources, and for forest ecology statewide. Help us to keep the legacy alive by joining in our efforts to slow the spread of HWA.

To contact the NYS Hemlock Initiative, either for volunteer or biocontrol information, please email us at info@nyshemlockinitiative.info or reach us by mail at 111 Fernow Hall, Cornell University, Ithaca NY 14850. There is lots of information available for potential volunteers on our website: www.nyshemlockinitiative.info/get-involved/ 

Charlotte Malmborg Dept. of Natural Resources, Cornell University, Ithaca NY

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

Ask a Professional (continued)

objectives. Interfering plants are either native or introduced. These plants might reduce biodiversity, tree regeneration, recreational access, habitat for wildlife, or aesthetic quality. Importantly, many interfering plant problems originated because of an overabundance of deer. If the deer problem exists, and hasn't truly been resolved (a difficult task), effort to manage interfering plants may fall short. Information about problem plants can be found in the ForestConnect webinars, on the ForestConnect website, and in several previous issues of the *NY Forest Owner* magazine on the NYFOA web page.

The third, but equally important, factor that degrades our woodlands is exploitive harvesting. Unfortunately, this may be the most common of harvesting practices that occurs in NY. It goes by many names such as selective cutting, diameter-limit cutting, and high-grading. The arguments in support of this practice might include: "the little trees are younger and we'll give them more light" (Figure 5), "there are diseases and insects and we should cut the big ones," or "diameter growth has slowed on the bigger trees." Incidentally, the last statement is true, but invalid because the larger trees may have less diameter growth, but still have greater overall growth. Many woodland owners inherit or purchase an exploited woodlot. The process for remediation is involved, and will require dedication and commitment by the owner. These degraded woodlands desperately need improvement. Learn more at the ForestConnect webpage and YouTube channel.

The time you spend on woodland improvement won't end, but that's part of the joy we experience as woodland owners. Always work safely in the woods, don't take chances, breathe the fresh air, and try to learn something new each time you're among your trees. 🌲

The column is coordinated by Peter Smallidge, NYS Extension Forester and Director, Arnot Teaching and Research Forest, Department of Natural Resources, Cornell University Cooperative Extension, Ithaca, NY 14853. Contact Peter at pjs23@cornell.edu, or (607) 592 - 3640. Visit his website www.ForestConnect.info, and webinar archives at www.youtube.com/ForestConnect Support for ForestConnect is provided by the Cornell University College of Agriculture and Life Sciences and USDA NIFA.



Figure 4. The impacts of deer on NY woodlands can have profound and long-lasting effects. You usually don't see the full number of deer on your property. The first step is to assess deer impacts with a vegetation assessment protocol such as <http://AVIDdeer.com>

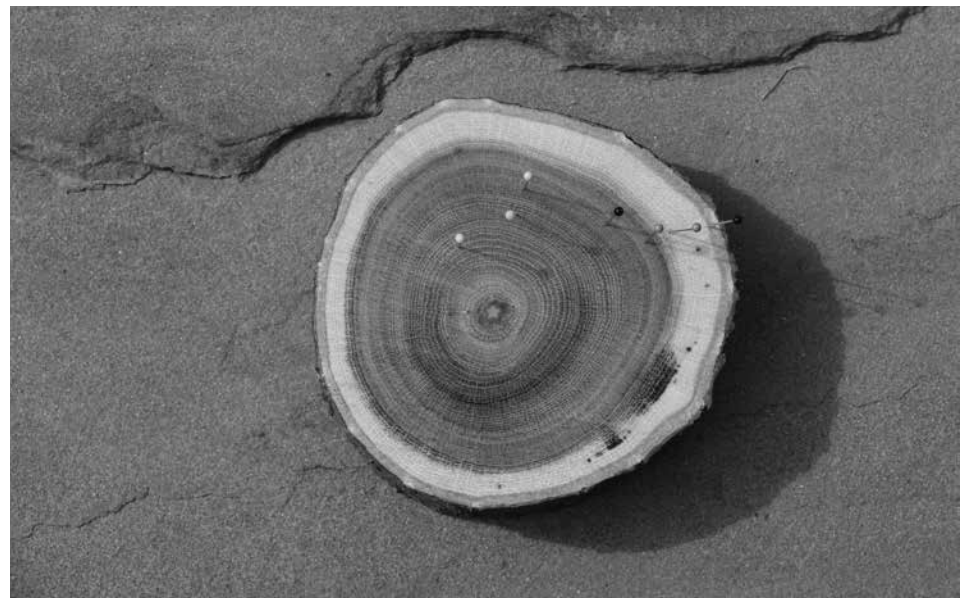


Figure 5. Seldom do the big trees represent old trees and the smaller trees represent young trees. This picture is of a tree cookie of a 4.5 inch diameter northern red oak that is approximately 80 years old. It was beneath a 32 inch diameter northern red oak of the same age. The smaller tree is, for whatever reason, not suited to growing on that site. Giving it more sunlight won't really help. Photo credit: Lew Ward, NYFOA Southern Fingerlakes Chapter.

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Member Profile:

Jonathan Farber

BRIANA BINKERD-DALE

Jonathan Farber grew up in Rockland County, NY, about 45 minutes outside of Manhattan. At that time there were still farms in the nearby area, and patches of remnant woods that felt immense to him when he played in them as a child. Though he lived in the city most of his life and loved it, Jonathan was always drawn to the natural environment. He attained a bachelors degree in environmental design from SUNY Buffalo and a masters in public administration with a concentration in environmental policy from Columbia before going to Washington, DC to work for a U.S. senator on environmental policy, where Jonathan realized that he needed to spend more time working outdoors. He started designing gardens for people and went back to school for a masters in landscape architecture from Cornell. Since 2001, Jonathan has run a small landscape architecture firm with offices in Leeds and Brooklyn, NY. His landscape architecture projects include city gardens, country residences, parks, and working

farms and forests for private, corporate and institutional clients. He also owns and operates a 176-acre farm in Leeds, NY named Wellaway.

Jonathan bought Wellaway Farm in January 2015 after looking for the right property throughout the Hudson Valley for several years — approximately 200 acres with both forests and fields in good condition. “It was easy to find clean fields but much more difficult to find woods that had not been severely diminished by past logging practices,” he remembers. “I looked at over 30 properties before I could find something that hadn’t been highgraded; Wellaway was managed by a consulting forester for 40 years and it shows.” Jonathan lives in what was originally a 500 square foot corn crib there, that he converted into a live-work space. “I had to do everything — sheathe it, build the interior out, renovate an old well, put in two water filters, septic, plumbing, heating... but I was able to get a full certificate of occupancy after a year.”



Jonathan does the majority of the work in the woods by himself.

The 176 acre farm is divided evenly between forest and pastures. Two trout streams enter the property from the north, combine in the middle and exit to the south on their way to Catskill Creek and then the Hudson River. The streams are protected with treed windbreaks. The property includes the banks and bottom of what was once a glacial lake, and the soils are silty-gravelly loam. Forest composition is approximately one third white pine and hemlock, with the rest primarily oak-hickory stands. The canopy is closed and there is little regeneration of desirable tree species. Weed species such as multiflora rose and barberry are present but not dominant.

Working with a consulting forester to implement his forest management plan, as well as an invasive species control consultant, Jonathan does much of the manual labor himself, only bringing in contractors when necessary — to spread lime and drive fence posts for example. Last winter he coppiced about an acre of black locust trees by himself and harvested 400 fence posts and 5 cords of firewood. Over the past several years, before ever harvesting a tree, he took the complete Game of Logging course (twice!) as well as chainsaw and forestry courses with the Maine Organic Farmers



View of the farm from the woods.

continued on page 22



One of the two protected class C trout spawning streams on the property.

and Gardeners Association (MOFGA). “This training prepared me very well for work in the woods,” Jonathan said. “My primary tools are two 60cc chainsaws, a manual logging arch and various slashers, axes, sledges and wedges.” He is out a full two days a week in the winter with the chainsaw. Working alone has its risks, but he is able to work fairly close to a road on much of his property, carries a first aid kit on his belt and has taken first aid classes, and always parks his truck pointing in the direction of the hospital. “You’re working with a machine that wants to kill you and a tree that wants to fall on you,” he laughed.

Jonathan walks his woods regularly, and friends and neighbors hunt deer and

turkey there. Due to aggressive deer management by the large farms around him, as well as predator presence, deer pressure is less of an issue than it could be. He has coyotes, and regularly sees bear, beaver, hawks, eagles, fox and porcupine. During a visit from the state forester to certify an invasive weed species treatment, a baby fisher left its mother up in a tree while it came down and tried to play with them like a kitten.

He is currently working on installing new perimeter fences around the pastures with the 400 black locust posts he harvested last winter, after pulling miles of old barbed wire fence. Jonathan hopes to run cattle and sheep in them, with a handful of goats and

pigs, starting next year. His management plan calls for a timber harvest and timber stand improvement across all seven forest stands. “The project went out to bid and — after being postponed the past two winters — is scheduled to be completed this winter,” Jonathan said. He also received a grant from the Natural Resources Conservation Service to control invasive weed species and has been doing this work in conjunction with his invasive species control contractor, Trillium Invasive Species Management.

“I typically don’t work with herbicides, since I do a lot of ecological restorations or work in urban areas where they aren’t allowed, and philosophically I try to avoid them whenever possible,” Jonathan said. However, personal observations of the negative consequences of not using herbicides convinced him of their usefulness in the woods, and he is now comfortable taking advantage of his right as a landowner to apply them on his own land when needed. Trillium has been very helpful advising him on personal protective equipment and application techniques, and when there is a large project to do they send a crew out to assist. “We did about 30 acres in two days this past February and got 90% kill with the basal bark applications on barberry and multiflora rose,” Jonathan said. They plan to go back out for the remaining 10% prior to the timber harvest this winter, as Jonathan would like to prevent the release of interfering vegetation as much as possible when the canopy is opened up. He has noticed that not many foresters or loggers talk to landowners about managing interfering vegetation before or after timber harvests, and feels that an unexploited niche industry could develop there.

Jonathan’s interest in forest management started about seven years ago, while working on a project for a client in the Hudson Valley with 200 acres of woods. The client was wondering “what to do with their woods,” and Jonathan wasn’t sure. “The Landscape Architecture program is on the same quad as the Natural Resources program, but there is no overlap — we learned nothing about forests or forest



View across several fields, with treed windbreaks regularly spaced between them.


management,” Jonathan remembers. He called the DEC forester for the Hudson region, who met with him and gave him a list of consulting foresters, and after interviewing three of them he settled on Anthony Del Vescovo, whom he has since worked with on at least half a dozen projects.

Now a Master Forest Owner volunteer, Jonathan continues to be fascinated by forest management and greatly enjoys helping neighbors and clients identify how best to manage their woods. “I work with large landowners all over the state, and they do like everything manicured, but most of them understand the benefits of timber stand improvement very quickly once you explain it to them,” he said. “It may look a lot less manicured for a short period of time, after a harvest, but in the long run you have a much healthier, more diverse and enjoyable forest. And it gives them something new and exciting to talk to their children and neighbors about.”

Jonathan does worry about the lack

of connection to the natural world, and knowledge around how to sustainably interact with it, that he is noticing in a lot of his clients as well as local municipalities across the state. “The farm to table movement has made a big difference in awareness around farms and food — you have a lot of people who are wanting to farm and garden now,” he noted. “But that isn’t translating into an understanding of how to manage the woodlot that comes with the farm, or the connection between logging and forestry, resulting in policies being made on a local level that actually hinder responsible forest management.” He used as an example a 70-acre timber stand improvement harvest he recently assisted a client with, where they were required to put money into escrow, pay for the town planning board to hire an environmental consultant (who was anti-logging), and jump through several other hoops that did not exist prior to the logging code that the town had recently passed, resulting in a total of

four additional permits. “For landowners without a lot of resources, they are essentially saying that you can’t manage your forest,” he said.

His biggest challenge when it comes to managing his property and the woods is financial. “Managing the woodlot and setting up the farm infrastructure is very expensive,” Jonathan said. His advice to other forest owners is to read up on forestry and silviculture and talk with a consulting forester. He loves the NYFOA magazine and the subscription to Northern Woodlands magazine. “Both are fun to read and very informative,” he said. “It is also good to know the NYFOA representatives are paying attention to woodland politics and lobbying for smart policies on behalf of landowners.” 

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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