

The New York Forest Owner

A PUBLICATION OF THE NEW YORK FOREST OWNERS ASSOCIATION

For people caring about New York's trees and forests

September/October 2018



Member Profile: Palm Family Forest

Volume 56 Number 5



**THE NEW YORK
FOREST OWNERS
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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.



NYFOA
New York Forest Owners Association

www.nyfoa.org

COVER: Front cover. Palm Family forest lands are owned and managed by (left to right) Cora and Charles Palm, and Dan and Linda Palm. For member profile see page 21. All photos courtesy of the Palms.

From The President

As the summer season comes to an end, we all can look forward to arguably the best of the four seasons, autumn, to enjoy our time in the woods. The weather is most obliging and the beauty of the forested landscape is awe-inspiring.



Despite the extreme weather conditions this summer, the NYFOA membership, through the local chapters, continued to provide forest-related educational

opportunities to our communities. Our members were out in full force providing woodswalks, conferences, picnics, and manning information booths at local and county fairs. Examples of relevant topics presented include the NYS 480-a program, the U.S. Department of Agriculture NRCS-EQIP initiative, beech control measures, and forest regeneration. Some of the fairs NYFOA chapters participated in include Saratoga County Fair (SAC), Cattaraugus County Fair (AFC), Empire Farm Days - Seneca Falls (WFL), and the Washington County Fair (SAC). These are just a few examples of NYFOA's activities. For a more complete picture of activities and programs offered state-wide visit the NYFOA web-site. Thanks to all volunteers for your time and effort.

At its most recent meeting, the NYFOA board approved a phase two of the Restore New York Woodlands (RNYW) initiative. The initial RNYW program, which launched about five years ago, has significantly increased both public and forest stakeholder awareness of natural forest regeneration. The broad objective of the second phase will be to partner with

other stakeholder organizations to identify opportunities to enhance forest regeneration so that forests can continue to provide the myriad benefits essential for a sound environment.

Jerry Michael, who will once again be chairing the RNYW committee, has an article in this issue (see page 12) that highlights the practical and scientific concerns about deer impact on regeneration. Under Jerry's leadership, NYFOA will be building a coalition of forest, environmental, wildlife, regulatory, and legislative stakeholders to join us in addressing these issues and finding appropriate solutions. We look forward to a successful program and the opportunity to work collaboratively with our partners for a favorable outcome.

NYFOA continues to actively support Cornell's Master Forest Owner (MFO) volunteer program, a statewide, peer-to-peer initiative where trained MFOs serve as a resource to the private woodlot owner interested in improving his/her forest property. Many NYFOA members serve as MFO volunteers and have provided excellent guidance and information to new and veteran woodlot owners.

At the spring 2018 meeting, the NYFOA board endorsed a plan to provide a one-year, discounted membership to woodlot owners who have an MFO visit. Our hope is that the woodlot owners will see the ongoing benefits of NYFOA membership and perhaps consider becoming MFOs themselves.

Finally, NYFOA is looking forward to increasing programs in the Lower Hudson Chapter area and also increasing membership. If you are a member please look out for e-mails and regular mail for updates, woodswalks and conferences. Feel free to invite friends and neighbors so they can learn about NYFOA and what we have to offer.

-Art Wagner
NYFOA President

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

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

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

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Welcome New Members

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

Name	Chapter	Name	Chapter
Charles Benzing	NAC	Rich Mascera	SAC
Robert & Elizabeth Booth	AFC	Chris Nowak	CNY
Lynn Cross	AFC	Jerry O'Neill	SOT
Charles M. Cutting	SOT	Ron Rosati	WFL
Al Engel	AFC	Brian Schaus	AFC
Omer Fahim	LHC	Norman T. Smith	AFC
James Gerovac	NFC	Nancy Smolinski	AFC
Linda Groves	WFL	Lou Troiano	LHC
Steven C. Geunther	SAC	Ben Van Etten	CDC
James Hassan	WFL	Shelly & Robert VanEtten	CDC
Kenneth Horton	NFC	Lauren Whalen	SAC
J-R Zynczak LLC	NFC	Kristopher Williams	SAC
John Koehler	CDC	Kenneth Windstein	SFL
John LaPann	SAC	Mark Wingerter	SOT
Kortney Lawlor	SOT		

Are you interested in a particular topic and would like to see an article about it.

Please send your suggestions to:
Mary Beth Malmshemer,
editor
at mmalmshe@syr.edu or
(315) 558-1846
or
Jeff Joseph, chair,
NYFOA editorial
committee at
jeffjosephwoodworker@gmail.com

Update from the Director of Organization Development

MICHAEL ZAGATA

It's hard to believe that seven months have passed since I became part of the NYFOA team. So far, I've been able to visit all but one of the chapters — some more than once. What I have found during those visits is a group of enthusiastic volunteers dedicated to NYFOA, ecologically sound management of their forestland, and to doing more for wildlife.


I was hired to work with the chapters to help them implement NYFOA's mission and to grow membership. NYFOA must grow if we're going to be effective in representing the interests of our members on issues like taxation, notification prior to a timber harvest, forest regeneration, and a host of other issues. Part of what I can help with involves finding out what is working for the chapters and then sharing it with the other chapters. Another aspect is to provide chapters with the tools they need to succeed. Tools like the "Speakers Bureau" — a list of topics and associated speakers developed with your help and posted on the website; a list of relevant DVDs posted on the website and available from NYFOA so the chapters can have them available to show at pot-luck dinners and thus hopefully attract new members; a Public Service Announcement (PSA) template posted on the website that can be used via radio or TV to increase attendance at our events; making the articles in one chapter's newsletter available to the other chapters for use in their newsletter; standardized tools/spreadsheets to record and transmit information within NYFOA; and lots more.

In order to help our chapters attract new members and grow, NYFOA needs to increase its visibility and

become recognized as the "Go To" organization for forest-related issues. Some of the initiatives that will help us achieve this are: identifying markets for low-value wood so that high-graded forests can be rejuvenated (Young Forest Initiative), benefitting both the economic and wildlife components; expanding the "woods-walks" program by offering more of them and increasing the focus on the wildlife benefits derived from creating young forests; working with Cornell Cooperative Extension staff to grow the relationship between their MFO program and the number of NYFOA members who become trained and conduct MFO visits; establishing a "Call Before You Cut" program to assist forestland owners who are considering a timber harvest; developing a "Call to Action" capability that will enable NYFOA to engage its members regarding administrative (regulations) or legislative (laws) initiatives that will affect their ability to manage their properties; and developing coalitions that can increase the likelihood of success in either supporting or opposing new regulations and laws that affect the membership.

A great example of NYFOA's efforts on behalf of its membership involves the Restore New York Woodlands (RNYW) program. Jerry Michael (SOT Chapter) heads a committee looking for ways to reduce the impact deer are having on the regeneration of New York's forests. He calls it the "Elephant in the Room" syndrome (see article on page 12). Jerry and his committee are working to build a coalition of impacted interest groups that can work together toward a common goal — reducing

deer impact on regeneration while simultaneously improving wildlife habitat for young-forest species. This initiative is likely to put NYFOA in the spotlight and, by sticking to the science, do so in a positive way. The problem of over-browsing won't be addressed unless NYFOA is able to educate the general public, the legislature, and the sporting community about the long-term impact this will have on New York's forests, and the things they hope to achieve from them.

Doing all these things will, as you might expect, require additional funding. We hope to generate those funds from advertising, corporate sponsorships, appeal letters to members, and chapter fund-raising events. We're in this for the long haul and will get there one step at a time. 

Would you like to receive an electronic version of future editions of *The New York Forest Owner*? If so, please send Liana an email (lgooding@nyfoa.org).

You will receive an email every two months that includes a PDF file of the publication. While being convenient for you — read *the Forest Owner* anytime, any place; this will also help to save the Association money as the cost of printing and postage continues to rise with each edition.

Ask A Professional

PETER SMALLIDGE



Peter Smallidge

Landowner questions are addressed by foresters and other natural resources professionals. Landowners should be careful when interpreting answers and applying this general advice to their property because landowner objectives and property conditions will influence specific management options. When in doubt, check with your regional DEC office or other service providers. Landowners are also encouraged to be active participants in Cornell Cooperative Extension and NYFOA programs to gain additional, often site-specific, answers to questions. To submit a question, email to Peter Smallidge at pjs23@cornell.edu with an explicit mention of "Ask a Professional." Additional reading on various topics is available at www.forestconnect.info



Figure 1. In this private woodland in the western Adirondacks there are fewer than 10 deer per square mile. The creation of a 12 ft x 12 ft fence within a patch cut, after a few years, demonstrates how excluding deer allows for the development of a healthy native forest (photo credit P. Curtis).

Protecting seedlings and wildflowers from deer browsing

Question: I've worked hard to control the interfering plants, especially beech, that caused heavy shade in my woods. I still don't have many seedlings or wildflowers. Why not? (Zach, Southern ADK Chapter)

Answer: Interfering plants, both native and non-native, can create a dense shade that impedes the establishment and growth of desired seedlings and wildflowers. There are also other ways that interfering plants compete with desired plants, such as by providing habitat for seed predators or dense root mats that impair seedling germination.

Many factors and conditions must align for successful forest regeneration, which is the reproduction of desired species of tree seedlings and wildflowers. For example, there needs to be a seed source, the seeds need to survive until they germinate, soil moisture conditions need to be sufficient but not excessive, there needs to be adequate quality and quantity of sunlight, among other conditions. Although it is difficult or impossible to know with certainty, without a site visit, why forest

regeneration is impeded at a particular location, a common barrier in many parts of NY is the impacts of deer.

The evidence for deer impacts is based on observations of deer exclosures throughout NY, and observations reported by woodlot owners and professional foresters. These exclosures only change the access for deer, and the result is often

the abundant proliferation of native plants inside the exclosure (Figure 1). In many cases the number of deer



Figure 2. This area is fully stocked with sugar maple seedlings. Heavy deer browsing, despite aggressive hunting, prevents seedlings from gaining any significant height, or good form.



Figure 3. Tree tops will protect seedlings from deer browse. Seedlings established when the slash is placed will receive the greatest benefit.

per square mile is less important than the number of deer relative to the available food supply. Ultimately the question becomes focused on those techniques that are most likely to reduce the impacts of deer.

Before the ultimate question, there are intermediate questions to answer. The answers to these questions influence the appropriate techniques to reduce deer impacts.

The first intermediate question is, if deer are the problem, then how many deer are too many, or how few deer are desired? The context for this question is from the perspective of the successful establishment and growth of desired forest regeneration. Woodland owners trying to regenerate favorable plants will likely desire fewer deer than the number of deer desired by some hunters interested primarily in seeing many deer. Historically, this conversation focused on the number of deer per square mile, or deer density, as an index for too many or not enough. More important than deer density is the number of deer relative to the ability of the landscape to support those deer. If there is abundant

forage, the landscape can support more deer. If deer have heavily browsed the landscape and forage is scarce, there will be fewer deer and the landscape cannot support as many deer. Where deer are a problem and in much of the state, the herd would need to be reduced by 40 to 60% to stabilize the herd. Thus, an area that has a deer impact problem and is able to achieve this level of reduction would still have a problem, it's just that the problem isn't getting worse. The appropriate number of deer varies with local conditions, but is indicated by success in the establishment and growth of a full and

healthy plant community of desired species.

The second intermediate question addresses the vegetation goal. The appropriate starting condition for a young forest would be to have many thousands of seedlings and saplings of desired species per acre; this is known as "full stocking." (Figure 2) Full stocking offers the greatest range of options for the owner, provides for the efficient utilization of sunlight by trees, and assures that deer impacts have been contained. Some techniques to reduce deer impacts result in scattered pockets or patches of seedlings or wildflowers and an area that is not fully stocked. While this is positive, the effort is incomplete. Deer impacts still drive ecological processes, and owner options remain limited for future economic and biodiversity outcomes.

continued on page 18



Figure 4. Tree cages (pictured) or plastic tree tubes will protect seedlings from deer. In most areas at least a 5 ft cage or tube is necessary.

Wild Things in Your Woodlands

KRISTI SULLIVAN

EASTERN SCREECH OWL (*OTUS ASIO*)



The Eastern Screech-Owl is a small, nocturnal, predatory bird, about 8.5 inches in size. The robin-sized owl has short, rounded wings, bright yellow eyes, and a rounded head with visible “ear tufts.” The ear tufts, which the bird raises when alarmed, are otherwise inconspicuous. The facial disc is lightly mottled and has a prominent dark rim along the sides. The tail and the flight feathers of the wings are barred. The eastern screech owl occurs in two color morphs, red and gray. The red color morph is more common near the coast, and the grey color morph is more common in the interior of the state. Male and female screech owls look alike.


In the fall, light and temperature conditions mimic those of spring. Birds and amphibians sometimes begin calling again, a reactivation of breeding behavior termed “autumnal recrudescence.” At this time, the screech owl’s tremulous call can be heard in a variety of habitats including open woodlands, deciduous forests, parks, farms, riparian areas, swamps, old orchards, small woodlots, and suburban areas. This small owl is an often common, nocturnal bird in much of New York State, though it is uncommon in heavily forested regions, at high elevation, and on Long Island. The screech owl is a year-round resident, spending both the breeding and non-breeding seasons in the same area.

The screech owl nests in natural hollows or cavities in trees, old woodpecker holes, nesting boxes,

and occasionally crevices in the sides of buildings. Screech owl pairs may roost together in the same tree cavity during the day throughout the breeding season. While the female is incubating the eggs, the male will bring food to her at night. The nest is usually about 5 to 20 feet off the ground. The female lays four or five eggs in wood chips, old leaves, and assorted fur and feathers from their prey.

While insects are a major food source in the summer, a hearty fare of small mammals and birds make up a majority of the screech owl’s winter diet. To survive winter, this species eats quite a bit in the fall to put on fat stores, and may store food in holes.

The best way to create habitat for the eastern screech owl is to maintain large trees with natural holes (cavities), or trees with large

woodpecker holes. In areas where such trees are not available, nest boxes designed for screech owls can be attached to trees in open forests, parks, next to woodland clearings, along forest edges, or along wooded stream edges. The nest box should have a 3-inch round opening and the box should be placed under a tree limb with the opening facing north. Add 2”-3” of wood shavings in the bottom of the nest box and place the box 10 – 30 feet high. Instructions for building your own nest box are located at <https://nestwatch.org/learn/all-about-birdhouses/birds/eastern-screech-owl/> 

*Kristi Sullivan is Director of the New York Master Naturalist Volunteer Program. You can learn more about the program by visiting <http://blogs.cornell.edu/nymasternaturalist/>
Photo Credit: Greg Hume*

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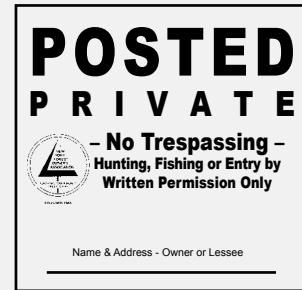


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News from New York Tree Farm Program

BY ERIC JENKS



Tree Farm Inspecting Foresters Help Forest Owners Define and Achieve Management Goals

Some forest owners are unsure of how to get the most out of their property, or even how to maintain it for future generations. Working with a forester to establish a management plan can be the first step in gaining greater enjoyment, or even profiting from your woods, while avoiding some common pitfalls.

“When a new client calls me, I’ve learned to ask a lot of questions,” said Rod Jones, a certified forester and NYS Tree Farm inspector who has been helping forest owners for almost 40 years. “Most forest owners have never thought about what they want to achieve in their woods. Options abound for people who are willing to spend some time and energy.”

Jones cautions that forest owners need to keep an eye out for ticks when working in the woods since they carry a host of diseases. Wearing pants and a long sleeve shirt not only dissuades ticks, but also protects you from brambles and thorns while bushwhacking. And Jones says, “If you plan to fell your own trees, attending a chainsaw course such as *Game of Logging* is a good idea.”

“Many landowners have very little background in forest management. That’s why we’re here — to offer them some one-on-one education,” said John Hastings, a NYS Tree Farm inspector and retired NYS-DEC service forester. “If investment is your goal, then manage your woods for maximum monetary gains. Done correctly, you could have a timber

harvest every twenty years. If you’re looking for something with short-term income, invest in Christmas trees, cultivate a sugarbush, start a firewood business, or consider growing mushrooms or ginseng. You can even manage your woods for wildlife and then lease to hunters.”

Logging a property has its own concerns which a forester can help you navigate. “Most loggers are trustworthy and professional,” said Jones. “But they’re trying to make the most profit they can. Foresters develop contracts that are fair for both buyer and seller. If you have a good agent it can mean a timber sale that is 20- 40% higher in value.”


Hastings agreed. “A common problem if you just go directly to a logger and you don’t know what to mark or how to mark trees is that they may just cut everything that is salable,” he said. “If you harvest all the best trees at once, you might suffer in terms of long-term gain.”

While making a profit off of forest land may not be a goal for everyone, having a clear idea of how you want to benefit from, and enjoy, your woods can help it flourish for years, and generations, to come. Becoming part of the Tree Farm

System and working with a Tree Farm inspector can be a good way of getting started. “Hopefully after talking with a property owner we both understand their goals,” said Jones. “There are a lot of opportunities; and other Tree Farm inspectors and I can help walk forest owners through them all.”


Eric Jenks is a freelance writer and photographer specializing in natural resources and agriculture topics. He and his wife own a woodlot in Greenwich, NY that they are managing for maple syrup production.

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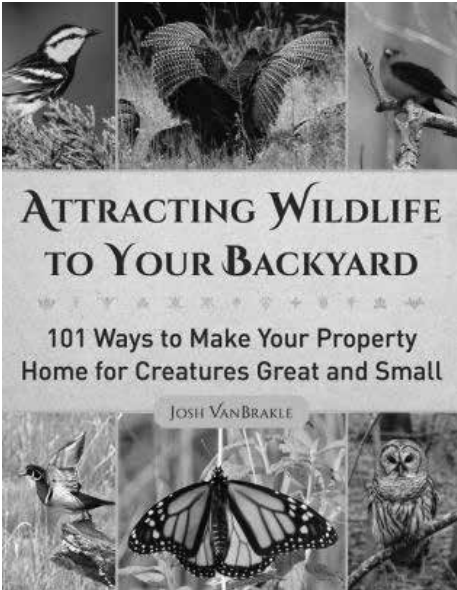


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Book Review

CHARLES L. STACKHOUSE



***Attracting Wildlife to Your Backyard: 101 Ways to Make Your Property Home for Creatures Great and Small* by Josh VanBrakle, New York, Skyhorse Publishing, 297 pages, \$19.99, ISBN 978-1-5107-2848-6**

In the November, 2016, *New York Forest Owner* I reviewed this author's first book, *Backyard Woodland: How to Maintain and Sustain Your Trees, Water and Wildlife*. While devoting one whole chapter and parts of others to wildlife, this book's main emphasis was on woodland management. Now he has authored a book devoted to helping landowners who want to assist the wildlife living on their land or to attract new wildlife to their land.

According to the last National Woodland Owner Survey by the U.S. Forest Service, 80% of woodland landowners in New York owning more than 50 acres list wildlife as a reason they own land, with slightly smaller percentages listing "nature" or hunting as reasons. This interest in wildlife by landowners is a very

good thing for wildlife, as it is estimated that private lands provide 85% of U.S. wildlife habitat.

In this book, author Josh VanBrakle details projects or activities that landowners can undertake to enhance the wildlife habitat that their land provides. While there are 11 projects for backyards, there are also projects aimed at grasslands, shrub lands, young woods, old and interior woods, streams, and wetlands.

The book begins by describing the basic needs of wildlife, (i.e. food, water, cover, and a place to raise young). It tells how to do a property inventory to list what your land already offers wildlife and to figure out what is missing. The projects themselves range from very easy and inexpensive (like bird houses and feeders, bat houses, wild apple tree pruning), to moderately difficult and expensive (like food plots, thinning woods or creating openings in the woods), to potentially much more involved and expensive (like building a pond, attacking heavy infestations of invasive plants or stream restoration). Ways to obtain funding for some of the bigger projects are discussed, as well as ideas on how to protect your land from future threats.

There is a good chapter on deer. Despite ongoing efforts by NYFOA and others to inform the public, far too few people know that deer, while quite welcome by most of us, can be a threat to other wildlife. When too many deer live on the land, they can cause severe damage to their own habitat and the habitat of many other creatures.

The last projects in the book help landowners and their families enjoy the fruits of their labors. Monitoring wildlife projects can be done using nature journals, photography, trail cameras, and by learning bird calls and animal tracks. Fun projects for children are included to get them interested and involved in wildlife.

I recommend this book as a valuable resource to landowners of all stripes, including woodland owners. Some landowners pessimistically feel that whenever humans mess with nature, they do more harm than good and that the best thing they can do for wildlife is nothing, (i.e. "let nature take its course"). This book refutes that pessimism with the good news "that with knowledge, caring, and deliberate action, we can improve the lives of the creatures we share the world with." 🦋

Charles Stackhouse is a member of the NYFOA board of directors and the WFL chapter.

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The Elephant in the Room is The Deer in the Woods

JERRY MICHAEL

Preface

The “Elephant in the room” analogy is often used to describe an obvious and critical issue that is ignored because the solutions are difficult or highly controversial. The analogy certainly applies to the many problems associated with excessive deer populations, including their devastating impact on the forest ecosystem. For this reason, the New York Forest Owners Association has decided to make the deer issue a major focus of our Restore New York Woodlands initiative.

An Early Warning

In 1949, the pioneering environmentalist Aldo Leopold first pointed out the impact of excessive deer populations on the ecosystem in his book, “A Sand County Almanac.”

More recently, 2010 studies by Cornell University and The Nature Conservancy concluded that approximately 70% of New York State forestlands were not able to regenerate desirable hardwood tree species, largely due to selective browsing by white-tailed deer. Extensive research on the issue has been published in recent years, including papers by Walter Carson, University of Pittsburgh, Susan Stout, US Forest Service, and Paul Curtis, Cornell University.

The Problem – Summarized

Deer prefer to eat the seedlings of maples, oaks, and other tree species that humans most value for economic benefits (timber, maple syrup, tourism, etc.), and for ecosystem services such as water and air purification, and carbon

sequestration. Many wildlife species also require these canopy-level tree species for habitat and food. In the absence of their natural predators, underregulated deer populations exploded during the last half of the 20th Century and have essentially removed seedlings and saplings of desirable hardwood forest tree species from much of the northeastern forest, from Virginia to Maine. Furthermore, the natural forest understory has been replaced, where there is any vegetation at all, by invasive and interfering plants that the deer will not eat unless starving. This has created a “legacy effect” which can prevent regeneration of the forest for decades after deer populations are brought under control.

Successful Forest Regeneration Defined

The US Forest Service has developed a forest management tool named SILVAH (Silviculture for Allegheny Hardwoods). According to SILVAH, adequate stocking for regeneration is 550 or more saplings of desirable tree species at least five feet in height per acre. This criteria applies after a final harvest when the saplings will not be damaged by further tree felling or equipment. If the regeneration is not out of the reach of deer (at least five feet tall), up to 9,000 seedlings/saplings would be required per acre. If the regeneration is measured pre-harvest, up to 20,000 seedlings/saplings per acre would be required to be considered adequate stocking for regeneration.

Is Success a Realistic Expectation?

We are not aware of any woodlot south of the NY Thruway where this level of advance regeneration was achieved without excluding deer with fencing or extensive slash, or where there had been clearcutting of sufficient acreage to overwhelm the local deer population with browse, or where the deer population had been practically eliminated through the use of “nuisance” permits. However, these practices are not scalable to the state’s 14 million acres of forestland owned by 687,000 private woodlot owners for several reasons:

- Enclosure fencing is too expensive for most woodlot owners to consider.



David Cappaert, Bugwood.org

- Because deer are highly mobile, population management is ineffective on the average privately-owned woodlot of 20 acres.

- Control via recreational hunting (even when supplemented with “nuisance” permits) is frustrated by deer “sanctuaries” in posted properties and suburban environments where hunting is not possible.

- For a variety of reasons many, and perhaps most, woodlots are passively managed, with little or no focus on forest regeneration. Nevertheless, these woodlots provide ecosystem services to the public and therefore represent an important aspect of the problem.

Other Barriers to Effective Deer Management

- Public affection for deer, influenced by Walt Disney’s movie “Bambi” in 1942.

- Political and economic influence of hunting enthusiasts and commercial interests related to the sport.

The Conclusion Seems Obvious

As can be seen on their website, <http://www.dec.ny.gov/animals/104911.html>, the DEC is fully aware of these issues and is now giving more weight to forest health in their deer management decisions. However, evidence on the ground demonstrates that even an incidental deer population can frustrate efforts to establish regeneration of desirable tree species. Regeneration failure is common in management units where the deer population is considered to be low, and antlerless deer harvest permits have not been granted for years.

In a natural, balanced ecosystem, the fox helps control the rabbit population and wolves and cougars would help control the deer population. But humankind has unbalanced the ecosystem. Both deer and the larger predators were removed from the natural environment during the last half of the 19th Century and first quarter of the 20th. As late as the 1940’s, if you wanted to see a deer, wolf, or cougar in the southern half of New York State or most of Pennsylvania, you had to visit a zoo.

For obvious reasons, you still have to visit a zoo to see a wolf or a cougar, but there are now almost a million deer in New York State, preventing the sustainable management of our forestlands, destroying habitat required by many birds and other wildlife species, broadly distributing ticks carrying Lyme disease bacteria, increasing automobile collision insurance premiums, and increasing the cost of agriculture.

For all of the reasons stated previously, it should be obvious that recreational hunting as currently regulated can never reduce deer populations enough to resolve the burgeoning environmental crisis they are causing.

If deer were identified as an environmental hazard on a par with many invasive insects, diseases and plants, more aggressive management would be justified. Measures that have been suggested include:

- Reducing the acreage required for a “landowner” antlerless deer permit from 50 acres to 20 acres, the average size of privately-owned woodlots.

- Extending deer hunting seasons into January.

- Providing incentives for woodland owners to permit hunting on their property.

- Permitting the commercial sale of venison.

- Streamlining procedures and providing incentives for communities to cull excessive deer populations in suburban areas adjoining forestlands. Proposed Assembly Bill A.8646-B might be a good starting point.

NYFOA’s Plan

NYFOA will engage with other forest stakeholder groups, including those that helped us plan and co-sponsor our “New York Forests at Risk” Symposium in 2015. We will also reach out to the hunting community and other organizations and governmental agencies concerned with public health, the automobile insurance industry, and agriculture that have an interest in the deer issue. Working with a broad and diverse set of stakeholders, we will develop plans to further increase public awareness and bring maximum pressure on the political and regulatory

system for effective solutions. We will also reach out to forest owner organizations from neighboring states in an effort to increase the involvement of federal government agencies in resolving this regional environmental crisis.

The Consequences of Inaction

The northeastern second-growth hardwood forest is, on average, about 100 years old. It is in the final third of its natural life cycle and, if regeneration cannot be accomplished before the seed trees are gone, there will be no third-growth forest as we know it for the benefit of future generations. Mother Nature will keep it green in the summer, but it will consist primarily of plants that deer will not eat. These will include some short-lived and smaller pioneer tree species, invasive shrubs, ferns, and stunted beech trees and brush infected with beech bark disease. This “forest” will not produce as much oxygen, sequester as much carbon, or harbor a diverse wildlife population. It will not be as appealing for recreation or as colorful in the fall for tourists, and it will not produce maple syrup for our pancakes. It will not provide the 60,000 jobs or the \$14 billion in annual economic benefits from the forest products and related industries that New York State enjoys today.

A Final Note on Hunting

Many of us who value forestland also enjoy hunting deer and are torn by the conflict between sustaining the forest ecosystem and being able to pursue our sport and put some venison on the table. But most of the 500,000 licensed hunters in the state do not own or manage forestland, may not be fully aware of the environmental issues connected with deer, and are therefore not as “conflicted” about the issue. We will need to engage the hunting community in this effort and ensure they fully understand that the long-term future of their sport is also at stake. Otherwise the elephant will remain in the room, unrecognized as the impending calamity it represents. 🐘

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

Helping Landowners Choose a Resilient Forest

KRISTINA FERRARE AND GREGG SARGIS

Lately, forest landowners have been hearing quite a bit about a concept called “climate resilience.” When it comes to stewarding woodlots, resilience means making decisions now that will improve the ability of our forests to respond to changing conditions in the future. With climate change projected to bring increased weather extremes like flooding and drought and more frequent storms, it is important for our forests to maintain and, in some cases, regain the ecological functions and services they offer people and nature.

The Nature Conservancy (TNC) has been working on a restoration project on the Tug Hill Plateau, with an eye toward long-term forest resilience. The Tug Hill Plateau is New York’s third largest forest. Although these woods are well-connected and relatively unfragmented, they have been subjected to decades of heavy selective cutting, which has reduced tree species and structural diversity and quality regeneration. Add to that legacy the arrival of beech bark disease and close proximity of invasive pests like hemlock woolly adelgid and emerald

ash borer, and it becomes clear that the forest is vulnerable to climate change and the region’s economic security is threatened.

When considering a management plan for its Tug Hill property, TNC managers are in a position similar to that of other private forest landowners in the region. TNC decided to first focus its restoration efforts on a 400-acre property the organization acquired in 2015. The project, which is ongoing, involves planting up to 45,000 seedlings to encourage future species diversity and using silviculture

Forest Diversity and Composition

Every woodlot is different, and will contain a different mix of tree and plant species due to the conditions unique to that particular place and to the history of the land. In general, a forest that contains a variety of tree species that are well-suited to current local conditions and future climate conditions without many interfering plant species will be better able to tolerate changes in climate and others stressors.

	Higher Risk	↔	Lower Risk	
Species diversity: The forest has low species diversity, either in the canopy or throughout the forest. One or a few tree species are dominant.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Many tree species are present, without a single species being overly dominant.
Species suitability: The dominant tree species are near the southern extent of their species range or are adapted to cold conditions.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	The dominant tree species can tolerate warmer, drier, or more variable conditions, and they are generally found farther south.
General tree health: Trees have poor growth form or have been damaged by insect pests or forest diseases.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Trees are healthy and free of disease. The trees generally have good growth and form.
Insects and Diseases: The forest is currently affected by insects or diseases. There are looming threats, such as nearby outbreaks.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	There are no current or looming forest insect or disease issues and there is a diversity of non-host species.

The tool assesses the level of risk in categories such as forest diversity and composition, and offers corresponding considerations for management to lessen risk and improve resilience.

to build structural characteristics — such as leaving snags and large coarse woody debris on the forest floor — that can help the forest adapt to change.

“What we learn about managing a forest for climate resiliency can then be shared and scaled up not only across the Tug Hill, but also in other northern hardwood forests.” says Gregg Sargis, TNC’s director of ecological management in central and western New York. “We think all landowners should have access to tools to determine if their property is more at risk and where it lies on the resilience continuum,” explains Sargis. “So, we worked with Cornell Cooperative Extension (CCE) on an assessment tool to help landowners figure that out.”

From there, Kristina Ferrare of CCE – Onondaga County worked with Peter Smallidge, the NYS Forestry Extension Specialist and Maria Janowiak of the Northern Institute for Applied Climate Science to develop a “forest scorecard” to help landowners assess their woodlots


with a peer forest landowner or forester.

Landowners will be pleased to learn that the same management practices that keep a forest healthy and productive can make it more resilient, including forest diversity and composition, forest structure, and regeneration. An additional category for site-level risks (e.g. soil type or location within floodplain) helps landowners consider the special conditions of their own landscapes. Because the scorecard requires only observations made on a woods walk, the tool can be used easily on any property and be applied at the parcel level or stand level, depending on the size of the property and the landowner’s interests.

After rating the conditions in your forest in all categories, the checklist also offers options for discussion with a forester that can lower the risk for your forest and increase its ability to recover from increasingly frequent and sometimes extreme disturbances.

You can help

We need forest landowners to help us beta test the forest scorecard and offer feedback. The scorecard is designed to be used on a woods walk with a peer landowner, such as Master Forest Owner, or with your forester. You can request a copy by email or phone from Kristina Ferrare at CCE Onondaga: kaf226@cornell.edu or (315) 424-9485 ext. 231.

We will send you the draft packet, which includes the scorecard, a link to request a visit from a Master Forest Owner if desired, and a link to answer some questions after you have used the tool. This project is funded by the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) through WCS’s Climate Adaptation Fund—a fund established by a grant from the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation. 

Kristina Ferrare is with the Cornell Cooperative Extension office in Onondaga county and Gregg Sargis is director of ecological management in central and western New York for The Nature Conservancy

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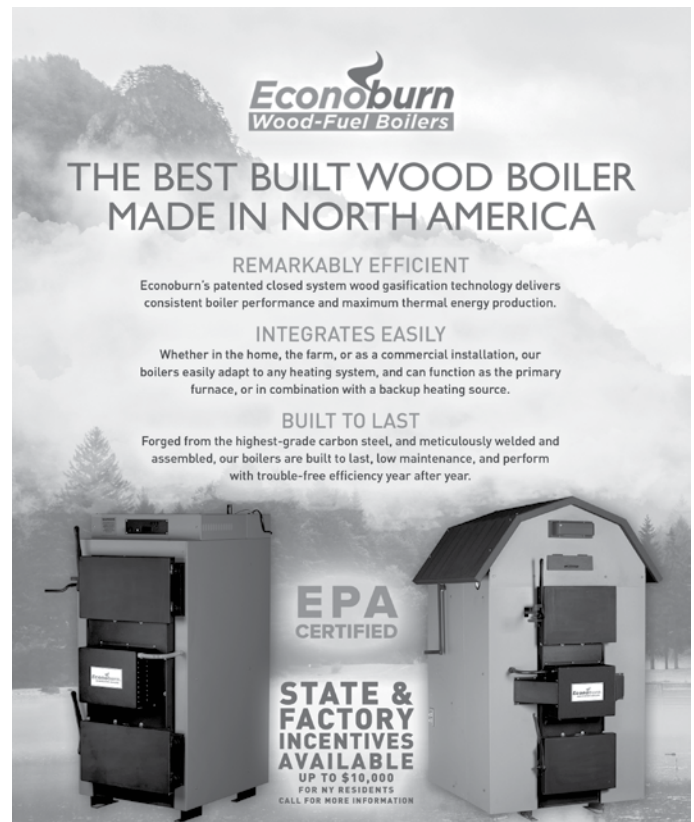
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Woodland Health

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

COORDINATED BY MARK WHITMORE

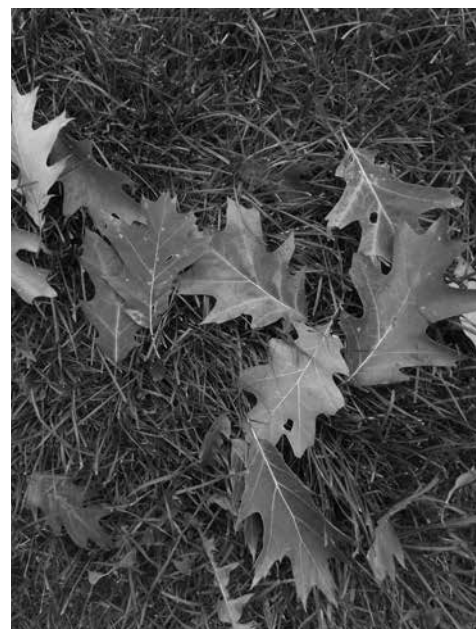
THE STATUS OF OAK WILT IN NEW YORK STATE

BY KAREN SNOVER-CLIFT AND MARY ANN KARP

The Cornell University Plant Disease Diagnostic Clinic staff first identified oak wilt in New York in 2008 on a red oak sample submitted by a Schenectady County Cooperative Extension educator for a Glenville homeowner. The second case was discovered five years later on a red oak from the same neighborhood in Glenville. How the pathogen came to this remote location is unknown, the closest known infection site was approximately 180 miles away in central Pennsylvania. The pathogen can survive in dead trees for long periods and since dead trees are often used for firewood, movement of firewood from an infected site to the Glenville area

is suspected. If you have heard of oak wilt or read articles about the disease, you may be familiar with this fungal pathogen's scientific name, *Ceratocystis fagacearum*. Don't be surprised if you see a different name associated with oak wilt, the scientific name officially changed in November 2017 to *Bretziella fagacearum*.

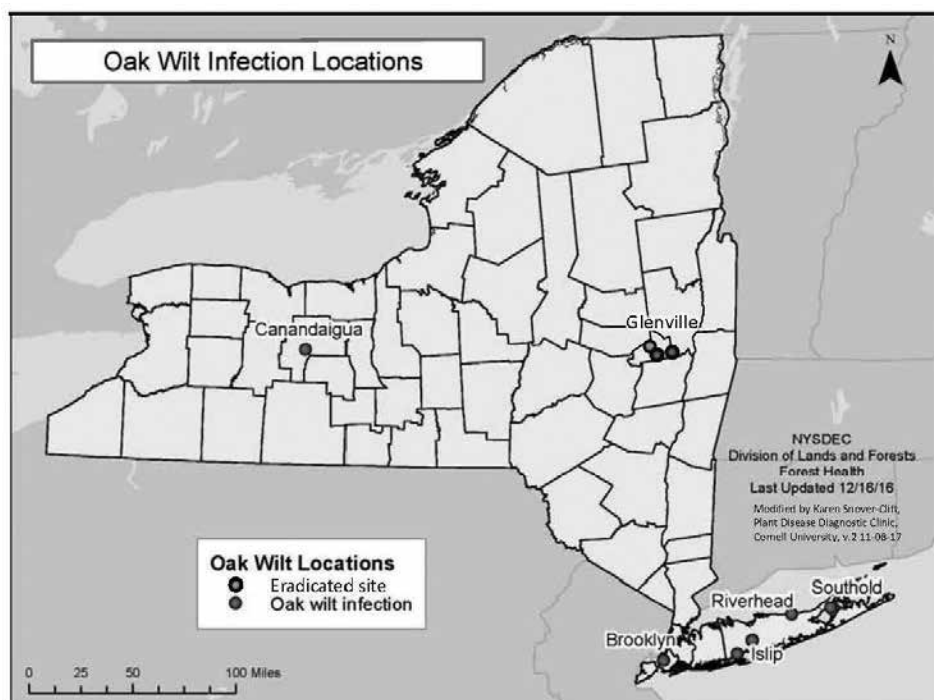
After the second identification was made in 2013, a Specialty Crop Block Grant (SCBG) was pursued that allowed the Plant Disease Diagnostic Clinic to work in collaboration with the New York State Departments of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) and Agriculture and Markets (NYS DAM) to survey oaks around the state,



Sudden leaf drop of all leaf colors is characteristic of an oak wilt infection. Photo credit: Mary Ann Karp, Cornell University

to inform NYS residents and green industry members about the disease and to improve our diagnostic techniques by implementing molecular identification procedures. This funding and project allowed us to identify the oak wilt pathogen in a number of new locations. At the end of 2015, the first survey year, twenty-two samples were processed and number 22 produced a tentative positive using molecular testing. Why tentative? We prefer to get positive results using two different types of testing methods to confirm the pathogen presence; first, isolation from tissue and morphological identification of the fungal characteristics and second, molecular testing that includes double nested polymerase chain reaction (PCR) and sequencing. The Central Islip tree only tested positive using molecular testing, an isolate was not obtained in the first sample submission. After a number of re-collections during the winter and early spring of 2016, an isolate was obtained and the Central Islip tree was confirmed as the third identification of the pathogen and the second location within New York State.

The Central Islip identification was only the beginning in 2016. In the summer months, fifty-five samples were processed and trees at three additional sites on Long Island and one site in Brooklyn were identified using the molecular testing method. Shortly after the down state findings, a sample from Canandaigua



Sites where oak wilt has been identify. Image credit: NYS Department of Environmental Conservation and Karen Snover-Clift, Cornell University



Nearly bare canopy of infected oak tree. Photo credit: Mary Ann Karp, Cornell University

was submitted by a homeowner and an Ontario County Extension Educator. The Canandaigua tree was identified molecularly and morphologically and became the third oak wilt positive area with Glenville and all of Long Island. Mapping these locations create a very large triangle with the shortest distance being at least 185 miles and the longest 362 miles between locations.

The Clinic's SCBG project ended in 2016 but NYSDEC has a commitment to protecting this very important environmental and economic tree. Early detection and swift, accurate identification is a key factor in our ability to eradicate this pathogen. NYSDEC has conducted extensive tree removal and eradication efforts in hopes of removing the pathogen from these areas. In 2017, with support from NYSDEC, 144 samples from across the state were tested and two samples were confirmed positive for oak wilt using molecular and morphological procedures. Unfortunately they were new sites near the original Glenville site, one tree was 3 miles away and the other 7 miles from Glenville.

Identifying infected trees and collecting a quality sample can be difficult. There are a number of signs and symptoms that are characteristic of an oak wilt infection. Typically, in June or July the infected oaks exhibit significant wilting and/or flagging branches. Researchers in other states have found that red oaks are much more

susceptible than white oaks and therefore tend to show symptoms more quickly, in as little as three weeks. In our limited experience, our positive trees have declined over several months and not show any signs of life the following spring. Leaves often show marginal "scorch" or browning around the edges or wilting. Leaves displaying all colors, brown, yellow, and green, fall to the ground suddenly. Unfortunately there are other diseases and environmental factors that can produce similar symptoms.

As a diseased tree nears death, a fungal pad or mycelial mat may form beneath the bark that, over time, will expand and create cracks in the bark. These fungal pads have a somewhat sweet odor, like rotting fruit or stale beer. The beetle vectors are very attracted to the fungal pads and to pruning wounds. Late in the season, it may be possible to observe the cracked bark and fungal pads on the trunk of symptomatic oaks. Researchers have reported beetles arriving at open cracks or pruning wounds in as little as 10 minutes so it is very important to cover wounds very quickly and best not to prune during active beetle flying periods in April through June.

Vascular discoloration may be visible under the bark on the current season's growth, viewing one inch diameter twigs is the best. The vascular discoloration is not a brown streaking we see in other fungal infections but more of a blue-gray smear.

Brown streaking can be present but is often caused by other factors such as insect tunneling. Discoloration in the trunk region or the root flare may be found the year after the tree became infected. This occurs because the fungus is introduced to the tree on insects during their feeding on the tree, which occurs in the higher branches. The fungus spreads through the branches to the top of the tree and then moves down the trunk and into the root, where it can also spread through root grafts between trees.

If you notice any of these signs or symptoms on oak trees within New York State, please contact your local Cornell Cooperative Extension (CCE) Office, the Cornell Plant Disease Diagnostic Clinic, or the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation. NYSDEC has a forest pest hotline for reporting suspect oak wilt trees. See below for contact information and links.

Thank you in advance for your help in protecting New York State's oaks! Your assistance with detection is vital to our efforts — an early detection greatly increases the chances for successful eradication. Initial positive finds were discovered through reporting from homeowners and arborists. Do you want to inform others about this disease and provide contact information? The Clinic has produced an informational poster and postcard. You can view these items at the link provide below and can receive printed material by contacting Mary Ann Karp or Karen Snover-Clift via the NYS Dept. of Environmental Conservation, Forest Pest Information Line: (866) 640-0652, or at the Cornell University-Plant Disease Diagnostic Clinic, 329 Plant Science Bldg., Cornell University, Ithaca, NY 14850. The phone number is (607) 255-7850; email is cornell-plantdiseaseclinic@cornell.edu; or website: www.plantclinic.cornell.edu/oakwiltpage.html

Karen Snover-Clift is the Director of the Cornell University Plant Disease Diagnostic Clinic, Associate Director of the Northeast Plant Diagnostic Network and the National Quality Manager for the NPDN's STAR-D Laboratory Accreditation Program.

Mary Ann Karp is the Molecular Diagnostician in the Cornell University Plant Disease Diagnostic Clinic and her primary responsibility is processing suspect samples for the oak wilt and sudden oak death pathogens.

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)

There are several techniques to limit deer impacts that range from inexpensive to expensive, and between lethal and non-lethal. Costs are related to labor and materials. Most materials can be priced through local or online vendors. Labor costs, if done by the owner, depend on how the owner values their time. Any one or a combination of techniques may be selected by an owner depending on their desired outcome for forest regeneration.

Recreational hunting is a time-honored tradition in our culture, and often advanced as a technique to manage the deer herd. Hunting connects people to nature, can bond families across generations, can be good exercise, and provides revenue to many communities and businesses. However, hunting, as practiced in most locations, is insufficient to limit the impacts of deer and achieve full stocking. Hunters typically are not compelled or able to shoot enough deer. Many areas are not hunted or hunted minimally, thus providing



Figure 6. The slash wall around this 76 acre harvest at Cornell's Arnot Forest is 10 ft tall, more than 10 ft wide, and very dense. The cost for slash walls, averaged over 16,000 feet is \$1.40 per foot for the feller buncher and operator. These experimental walls have effectively limited deer access and impact for the first 2 growing seasons. Photo credit B. Chedzoy.



Figure 5. An example of the effectiveness of a small area protected by 5 ft plastic mesh. See the text for methods to use wire at the top to help support the fence. Photo credit J. Michael.

refugia for deer during the season. Owners should encourage hunting, especially of female deer, and owners who allow free access for hunters are protected from liability under NY's general obligation law.

The use of scattered or clustered tree tops (known as "slash") or hinge cutting are techniques used by some owners. When trees are cut for firewood or timber, some portion of the top is typically left in the woods. By using directional felling or heavy equipment, clusters of two or three tops can be positioned together, or tops can remain scattered. With hinge cutting, trees up to several inches in diameter are partially cut, with a high stump, such that the stem remains connected to the stump. Seedlings within the tops are protected (Figure 3). In either case, the amount of woody material or slash available to impeded deer is small compared to the total

area of cutting. If there are mature seedlings or small saplings these techniques offer scattered protection. If deer pressure is heavy and there are no established seedlings, the rate of decay of the slash may exceed the time required for seed fall, seedling establishment, and seedling growth to a height above the reach of deer. Further, these techniques offer no protection outside the immediate zone of slash and are unlikely to result in full stocking.

Tree tubes and cages will protect seedlings, but their use for extensive areas is not practical (Figure 4). Many owners prefer 5 foot tall metal cages made from 2" x 4" wire fence because they can be made at home and easily re-used. Commercial plastic tubes should have air vents to allow circulation, be in full contact with the soil, and be inspected at least annually. This technique is effective, but difficult to apply across broad areas or to achieve full stocking.


Another technique is the use of mesh fence and living fence posts on small areas (Figure 5). Wooden blocks are attached to low-value trees using a fender washer and long rust-proof nail. High-tensile wire is suspended from the blocks and supports a 5 - 6 ft. mesh fence and ideally a one foot apron. The apron, or alternatively slash loosely piled around the outside perimeter, is important to limit deer from crawling under the fence. These enclosures are proven effective on 0.1 to 0.25 acres if they are regularly maintained to keep the fence up and to prevent deer from crawling under the edge. Deer can jump most fences, but these fences around small areas limit deer impact. This technique is limited in areal extent, and requires diligence by the owner to regularly inspect and repair the fence. Owners could create small patch cuts or areas that are heavily thinned and achieve full stocking incrementally across their property. At some point, the fence will or should be removed, with the option to reuse it. A fact sheet on methods and costs is available here <https://>

blogs.cornell.edu/cceforestconnect/files/2015/12/Fencing-xanc6w.pdf

Larger areas can be enclosed with taller plastic mesh fence of 7 to 8 ft. using a similar technique as the 5 ft. plastic mesh. The primary difference is to ensure that a second high-tensile wire is suspended approximately 10 - 12 inches above ground. This low wire helps stabilize the fence and further limits deer crawling under the mesh. An apron of mesh is especially important. This technique allows for larger areas of regeneration, but the taller fence has added cost and labor to install and repair.

A new technique being tested at Cornell's Arnot Teaching and Research Forest is the use of a slash wall (Figure 6). Details are available by searching for "slash wall" at <http://CornellForestConnect.ning.com> In this technique, trees are felled such that the crowns of trees near the edge fall on or near the perimeter of the harvest area. The wall should be 10 ft. or more wide and tall and very dense. Experimental heights have been 10 ft., though extra width might compensate for a slightly lower height. Regular monitoring will ensure that gaps in the wall can be plugged. Early indications for the effectiveness of this technique to exclude deer are positive. Installation requires a special commitment to either

mechanical felling equipment or extra work on the part of the owner or logger.

The impacts of deer often interact or co-occur with interfering vegetation. The dominance of interfering vegetation in a woodland may be an indicator of a deer problem. If control of interfering vegetation is intended to encourage forest regeneration, the first consideration should be to assess the impacts of deer. Control of interfering vegetation without the presumptive control of deer impacts will be a wasted effort. 

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.

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Member Profile:

Palm Family Forest

PETER SMALLIDGE

It's been an evolution. This phrase describes much of the process that the Palm brothers and their wives have experienced in their 44 years as woodland owners. Dan and Linda, with Charles and Cora, purchased a 200 acre parcel in 1974 for hunting access. The land was close to their childhood home and they knew it would be productive. Their ownership expanded in 1976 with 120 acres from a neighbor, then 125 in 1978, and again by

40 acres in 1980. The parcel is managed as one unit, but Dan and Linda own 253 acres and Charles and Cora own 233 acres that include the camp. Their land is in Delaware County, towns of Stamford and Roxbury.

As the land holding evolved, so did their knowledge and skill. They enjoyed hunting, but they embraced their opportunity to steward a land and forest back to health following mistreatment

by previous owners. They started with a management plan prepared by the NYS DEC. Their first step on the owner's learning curve was that NY land taxes are high, and the 480-a forest tax law would help them afford the land and be better managers. They enrolled in 480-a in 1978, and have continued with assistance of their forester Rod Jones for the last 38 years. The need for help with taxes prompted them to enroll in 480-a, but that led them to gain knowledge and experience for successful and sustainable management.

The management on the property started with the need to reduce the abundance of low-grade (i.e., low value and poor quality) trees that dominated the woods. In 1980 their first harvest included 1000 cull trees and 700 timber-quality trees, reflecting the need to reduce the growing space and light captured by trees that didn't contribute to their ownership objectives. This was

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The Palms enjoy having camp on the north side of the property. Camp offered a place to stay in earlier years during work projects, and throughout camp has been central to their hunting and family recreation.



The Palms gather to review their management plan, inspect maps of recent management projects, and strategize for future efforts.

followed by a 25 acre timber stand improvement, TSI, of low grade stems by the brothers in 1984. By 2005 their labors of love and energy, patience, and the progress of tree growth, was rewarded by a sawtimber harvest of 172,000 board feet. On a different section of the property they

were able to harvest another 150,000 board feet in 2010. Other projects that helped the property and families to evolve in their stewardship included control of invasive plants, tree planting, wildlife food plots, USDA NRCS programs for wildlife habitat, WHIP, and land conservation, CSP.



The property climbs from 1600 to 3360 feet. Upper elevations are better timber lands and dominated by sugar maple and cherry. Lower elevations are historically agricultural lands that now include fields, softwood plantations, and scattered apple trees.

Dan retired as a naval officer at the rank of captain, and later worked as a regional director for DEC. Linda is a retired school teacher. Dan and Linda have two sons, Matt and Jake. Charles is retired as an attorney, and Cora is a retired school teacher. They have two daughters, Andrea and Katie. Cora is a transplant from St. Lawrence County, though Dan, Linda, and Charles all grew up in the vicinity of the property. Dan and Charles demonstrate their wisdom by including their wives in all decisions regarding financial expenditures, and have been delegated to the “lesser” decisions about best management practices (BMPs), harvests, and TSI to execute alone or with guidance from professionals. This policy seems to fulfill their philosophy for “happy wife, happy life.”

The land encompasses the ridge that divides the east and west branch drainages of the Delaware River, and all the land is in the New York City water supply area. Road access is on the north side, and this provides entry for their camp. The elevation of the property rises from 1600 feet to 3360 feet. Seventy percent of the land is at the higher elevation, and is northern hardwood forest dominated by hard/sugar maple (90%), cherry (8%) with limited beech, yellow birch and basswood. This area is managed for timber production. The lower 30% of the land was at one time pastured and when they purchased it about half was early successional forest and half fairly open predominated by rose spirea and thorn bushes. Currently the dominant trees are ash and soft/red maple. A 345 KV power line crosses one corner of the property. A half-acre pond and seven vernal pools have been developed. Twenty three acres were planted with Norway spruce and red pine about 35 years ago.

The Palm’s land is bordered by the 1300 acre Relay State Forest on the south and west. The 250 acre Village of Hobart property borders the east, including a reservoir that provided the village with water until about 1990. The water source for the reservoir was two springs on the Palm’s property at about 2500 feet elevation.

Over the years they have seen many changes in their land. The upper 70% of the land now has a much higher quality of hardwood than when the property was purchased due to improvement harvests and management to reduce low-grade

trees. The lower 30% now has a better and greater variety of habitat than it did when purchased. Habitat improvement is due to the planting of food plots and conservation shrubs, and the maintenance of low shrub habitat through rotational brush hogging. Construction of the pond and seven vernal pools, pruning of the 70 wild apple trees and planting of 23 acres of evergreen have also improved and diversified the habitat.

The timber and forestry projects blend nicely with wildlife interests. Both Charles and Dan are avid hunters. They live at camp most of May to hunt turkeys and from mid-October to December to hunt deer with both bow and rifle. An additional six people hunt with them. They also donate a two day hunt for two during spring turkey season to the Cornell Cooperative Extension 4-H Sports Shooting Program. Management to support recreation include maintaining all log roads — brush hogging and cleaning water bars — planting food plots, planting/caring for conservation shrubs, brush hogging fields on a rotational basis, and pruning the 70 wild apple trees on the property. The pond is also used for fishing,

swimming, and an exercise area for Dan's black lab, Pepper.


Dan's activity and contributions to forestry in NY have changed through time. As a regional director for DEC he was involved with regional and state level policy that impacted public and private land. He later became executive director for NYFOA and worked throughout the state with private owners. As chair of the NYC Watershed Agricultural Council Forestry Program he focused on the NYC watershed. As a Master Forest Owner volunteer he focuses mostly on Delaware County. Most recently he spent time in Washington working with congressional and senatorial staff helping them understand the importance of forestry programs in the farm bill. At this point, Dan enjoys interacting with other forest owners, and especially serving as an MFO volunteer to assist new owners as they begin the management process.

Dan and Charles belong to the New York Forest Owners Association and Catskill Forest Association. These memberships have been important to connect them with a network of people they can learn from,

and who provide assistance and advice. They enjoy the written materials from both organizations, plus have benefited from information provided through the Watershed Agricultural Council and USDA programs. On a more tangible level, their recent up-grade to a 27 HP Kubota tractor with a bucket has increased efficiency.

They recognize that their tenure is short in "forest time," and offer these suggestions to other owners: (1) identify your management goals and use those to develop a plan; (2) actually follow the plan; (3) hire professionals to assist you; (4) always bid your sale and insist on a contract; (5) enjoy your land by doing your best management, but don't stress if you can't do all that you would like. Phrased another way "use a professional forester, participate in programs that support your management objectives, and invest your time in efforts that have the greatest return because you can't do it all." 🗑️

Peter Smallidge, NYS Extension Forester and Director, Arnot Teaching and Research Forest, Department of Natural Resources, Cornell University Cooperative Extension. Support from the Cornell University College of Agriculture and Life Sciences and USDA NIFA.



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