

New York Forest Owners Association Capital District Chapter Newsletter

Volume 20, Issue 1

January 2010

Chair's Message:

First, I wish you all a happy and healthy new year. As we begin 2010, we are planning an event schedule that hopefully will grow on efforts of working with several partners that have started over the past couple of years. Some of these partners include Cornell Cooperative Extension (CCE) of Greene, Albany, Rensselaer and Columbia counties. With the Agroforestry Resource Center (ARC) striving to have a regional impact, we are in a unique position to reach out more effectively than we could ever hope to do on our own.

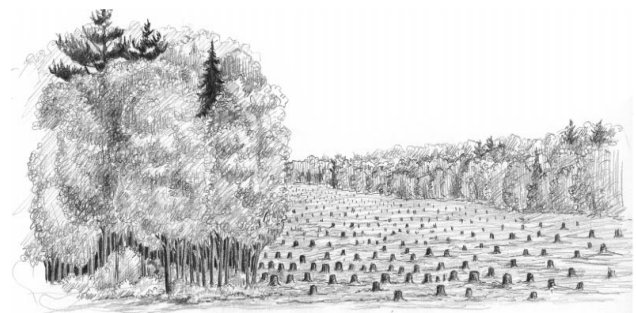
I would be remiss if I neglected to publicly thank our very own, Marilyn Wyman, Extension Educator at the ARC, for including us in so many opportunities. Some of these efforts may expand our reach into Montgomery and Schoharie counties where we have not been very active. In several cases we will be included in events reaching beyond our chapter borders; thereby helping NYFOA as a statewide organization to take advantage of programs we already have on the shelf. Marilyn has a grant for a woodland owner workshop serving Schoharie, Delaware, Ulster, Sullivan, and Greene counties and the plan is to repeat the Columbia County program that was held last fall.

Her interaction with the Hudson Mohawk Resource Conservation and Development Council (RC&D) expands our opportunities to reach out in new areas and partners. She is expanding contact with Laurel Gailor of Warren County CCE who is involved with the Greater Adirondack RC&D. This will strengthen our ties with the Southeastern Adirondack Chapter of NYFOA, allowing us to better serve those on the northern fringe of our area.

She is also planning a Master Forest Owner refresher course on June 12th and may be successful in having Tom Wessels (author of Reading the Forested Landscape) participate. I encourage all of you MFO's to take advantage of this opportunity. I had the pleasure of attending Tom's recent event at the ARC and found I'm still not too old to learn and to be reminded of things I was taught a half century ago. Walking in the woods with Tom is fun to say the least.

Marilyn informed us of her Women Forest Sustainability Group. Ladies, consider contacting Marilyn at (518) 622-9820 ext 36 or email mfw10@cornell.edu to become involved.

Carl Wiedemann, our newsletter editor, has been working on the "high grading" issue or exploitive cutting of our resource. He has developed a NYFOA power point presentation, "Pinchot's Last Crusade" and another on forestry history in New York. These efforts have led to planning, with Marilyn taking on the organizational lead, an all day workshop at the ARC to discuss the problem of high grading and how to restore exploited woodlots. We hope to attract landowners, foresters, loggers, forest industry, and community leaders. Several well respected experts will be speakers; so this event should be valuable to all.



We hope to utilize the generous support from the last two Robert H. Wentorf Family Foundation grants to continue new events in Albany and Rensselaer counties. NYFOA's affiliation with the Rensselaer Plateau Alliance should strengthen our chapter efforts in our northeasterly quadrant of our chapter. We are discussing topics that might serve to grow on those first events; if you have ideas of topics you'd like explored, please contact us and share them.

The enthusiasm of our volunteers is contagious and I am excited that we are undertaking a varied and large activity list. Hopefully, each event will have an associated woods walk so people can come to both or choose whether they prefer workshop versus outdoors exposure to these issues. I think we are representing NYFOA well. This visibility can help woodlot owners become good stewards of the resource and gain NYFOA recognition as a resource to provide input into better public policies related to our natural resources.

Mike Greason, Chair
Capital District Chapter

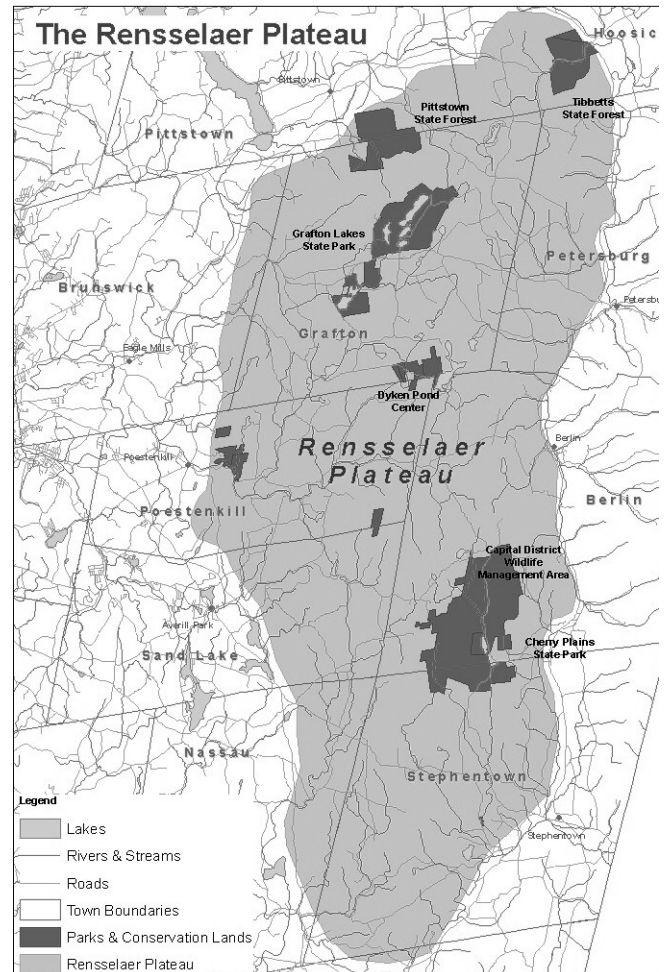
A Vision, A Mission, A Plan The Rensselaer Plateau Alliance

Do you own forestland on the Rensselaer Plateau? The Rensselaer Plateau at approximately 105,000 acres represents the fifth largest unfragmented forest in New York State. The Plateau is a distinct upland region and is geologically a true Plateau. Its high elevations, resistant sandstone and acidic soils result in a natural area that is more similar to the Adirondacks than the neighboring low lands.

Millions of years ago the Plateau moved, (was pushed as if a raft), from what is now Vermont to its current location in the eastern third of Rensselaer County. The Plateau extends from the Pittstown and Tibbits State Forests in Pittstown and Hoosic, south to nearly the Columbia County border in Stephentown. In the west the escarpment begins roughly in Cropseyville, the village of Poestenkill and near Crooked Lake and extends roughly to the RT 22 valley in the east. It encompasses 25% of the total land area of Rensselaer County.

Public Lands on the Plateau include the aforementioned State Forests and Grafton Lakes State Park, the County owned Dyken Pond Environmental Education Center, the Capital District Wildlife Management Area and Cherry Plain State Park. Other protected lands include the Nature Conservancy's Barberville Falls Preserve, the Rensselaer Land Trusts Geiser Preserve and Common Farms in Poestenkill. The remaining lands of the Plateau's forests are owned by private land owners. There are a handful of large landowners but the majority of the land is substantially owned by small private land owners that own several hundred acres or less.

The Plateau supports a wide variety of wildlife including birds such as the Black Throated Blue Warbler and Hermit Thrush that require deep interior forest areas. This has resulted in the Plateau being designated an Important Bird Area by Audubon New York. The Plateau also supports populations of large mammals such as moose, black bear, bob cat, fisher, river otter and red and gray fox. It has headwaters for 7 watersheds and provides wonderful trout streams, some of which still support populations of native brook trout. These watersheds include the Kinderhook, Valatie Kill, Wynants Kill, Poesten Kill, Little Hoosic, Hoosic and waters that feed the Tomhannock Reservoir.



There is a long tradition of hunting here and a wide range of recreational uses such as hiking, cross country skiing, snowmobiling, horseback riding, mountain biking, birding and paddling. The forests also support a local forest products economy, producing lumber, fire wood and maple syrup. These working forests produce significantly more tax revenue for towns than they require in services.

There weren't always forests here though. In the mid nineteenth century the area was 80% deforested with the forests being cleared for agricultural use and for the production of charcoal to support local industrial furnaces. This was a 'soft' deforestation. When the west opened up with the Erie Canal, people moved to better pastures. The charcoal industry continued into the 20th century but when the charcoal makers ultimately lost their market the forests grew back.

Consider for a moment that all that we have on the Plateau; rural character and way of life, clean drinking water, recreation, wildlife and working forests that support the tax base and a local forest economy, could be lost. The threat that the forests of the Plateau face now is of haphazard, piecemeal and unplanned development which will result in a 'hard' deforestation from which the forests will not recover.

The Capital District Chapter of NYFOA is but one of an impressive and diverse list of organizations that have signed on to the vision and mission of the Rensselaer Plateau Alliance (RPA). The RPA and its Alliance Members are working to promote and facilitate the protection of the Rensselaer Plateau and its unfragmented forests. The RPA is conducting a campaign to raise the funds to develop a Rensselaer Plateau Regional Conservation Plan (the "Plan"). The Plan will care for the resources of the Plateau by providing a framework that can be adopted by municipalities and key landholders as a planning tool.

To learn more about the Rensselaer Plateau or the work of the Rensselaer Plateau Alliance, visit www.rensselearplateau.org or join them for one of the woods walks, lectures and workshops that they will be cosponsoring with NYFOA in 2010. To stay informed you can sign up to receive e-mail newsletters and reminders.

Jim Bonesteel

Note: Jim Bonesteel is the President of the Rensselaer Plateau Alliance, Inc.



Landowners Workshop

At Columbia Greene Community College

Approximately 60 people attended the forest owner workshop held at Columbia Greene Community College on Saturday, October 24th. This program was co-sponsored by a number of organizations including the Capital District Chapter. Although the program was held in Columbia County, half of the attendees came from other areas.

Attendees had the opportunity to complete a written evaluation of the program at the end of the day. These are some of the things attendees said they plan to do in the next two years:

- Thin my forest
- Create a forest management plan
- Have a timber harvest done right
- Increase the number of trees & plan ahead
- Have DEC forester visit to our property
- Cut and harvest dying pine trees
- Would like to focus and set up a plan
- Monitor hemlocks for wooly adelgid
- Begin to actively manage my forest
- Get a clear idea of my boundaries
- Attend a class on ginseng
- Get a soils map of my property
- Become a NYFOA member
- Thin out low grade trees
- Implement a management plan for my forest
- Do timber stand improvement in softwoods

Future program suggestions:

- Forest harvesting and management
- Gas drilling leases and forest impacts
- Information on tax breaks (480a)
- Illustrate specific problems and their resolution
- Information about how to assess a tree (even though you still need an expert)
- Information concerning forest products

Keeping in Touch

Members of the Capital District Chapter are invited to join an electronic mailing list which is maintained by Joan Kappel. Occasionally, Joan sends out notices of upcoming events or special alerts. However, if your e-mail address has changed, or if you have never received CDC messages and would like to, please contact her by e-mail at: nyfoa-cdc@juno.com

Cavity Trees for Wildlife

By Brian Naylor, Forest Habitat Biologist, Ontario MNR

Cavity trees are dead or dying trees that contain one or more holes or cavities that could be used by wildlife for a variety of purposes — nesting and raising young, denning, roosting, resting, feeding, caching food, escaping predators and hibernating.

Cavity users can be divided into two broad groups – primary cavity users and secondary cavity users. Primary cavity users are able to make (excavate) their own holes for nesting or roosting. Woodpeckers, chickadees and the red-breasted nuthatch fall into this category.

The majority of wildlife species that use cavities cannot excavate their own holes and rely on those created by primary cavity users or on holes that form naturally. This group is called secondary cavity users. The saw-whet and barred owls, ducks such as the wood duck, and songbirds like the white-breasted nuthatch are all secondary cavity users. Many mammals are in this category too. These include deer mice, red and grey squirrels, flying squirrels, weasels, fishers, raccoons, porcupines and black bears.

Once you've seen one hole, you've seen them all, right? Wrong. Holes in trees are extremely variable in terms of their size, shape, orientation, location in the tree and value to wildlife. Cavities can be divided into three main types based on their use by wildlife: nest, den, or roost cavities; escape cavities or feeding cavities.

Nest or den cavities are hollows that are surrounded by relatively sound wood and can be used by birds or mammals for nesting or denning. Once a primary cavity user has abandoned a nest hole, secondary cavity users may make use of it. Species like the saw-whet owl, wood duck, or grey squirrel will use an old pileated woodpecker hole for nesting or denning. Consequently, all trees with primary cavity user nesting holes are important habitat for other wildlife.

Many landowners harvest fuelwood or sawlogs from their woodlots. When cutting trees landowners should think about the habitat needs of cavity users. Leave as many snags standing as safety permits and try to retain some living cavity trees – about 2 or 3 per acre. Consider the guidelines outlined below.

- 1). In order of priority, leave living trees with nest, den, or roost cavities, escape cavities, then feeding cavities.
- 2) Leave potential cavity trees (trees that have rotten cores) when there is a shortage of trees with

existing cavities.

3) Trees with multiple cavities of various sizes are more valuable than those with a single cavity.

4) Cavities in the upper bole are more valuable than those in the butt of the tree.

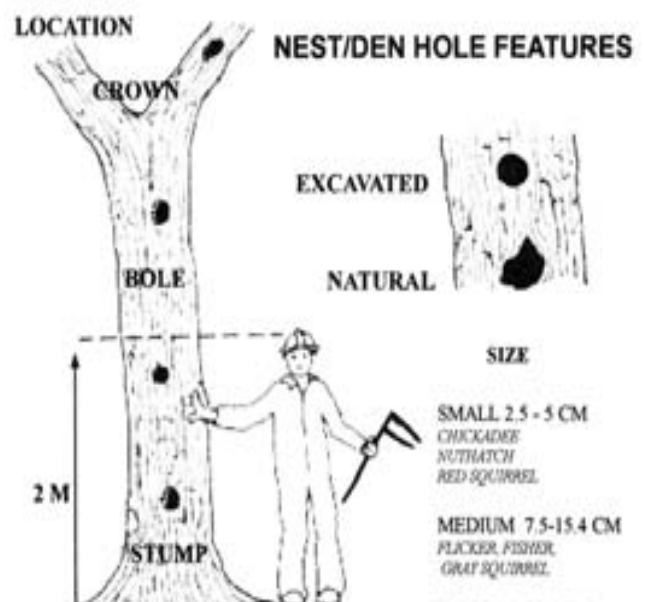
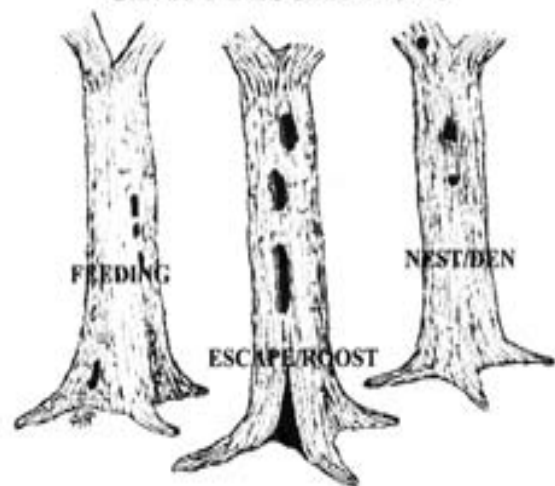
5) Bigger is better -- a small cavity user can usually find a home in a large tree but the reverse is not true. Cavity trees should be at least 11" dbh; at least one of the 2-3 cavity trees per acre should be large (>16" dbh).

6) Cavities found in long lived trees (maple, oak) will last longer than cavities found in short lived trees (poplar).

7) Leave trees that have relatively low risk of blowing down.

8) Since most cavity users are territorial, try to retain a relatively uniform number of cavity trees per acre across the stand.

CAVITY DESCRIPTIONS



Holiday Gathering Covered Dish

Mark your calendar! New York Forest Owners Association members, family, and friends are invited to attend the Capital District Chapter annual Holiday Covered Dish Supper. The program will be held on **Saturday, January 23, 2010**. Ron Pedersen has reserved the Bethany Presbyterian Church in Menands. The festivities begin at 4:00 p.m.

The chapter will provide tableware, plates, cups, napkins, condiments, and beverages. Attendees are asked to bring a dish to pass. Bring your favorite! This event is always a wonderful opportunity to enjoy some great food and fellowship.

One of the highlights of the evening will be the chance to participate in a "silent auction" of gifts and treasures organized by Jim and Phyllis House. Each couple is encouraged to bring no more than five (5) new or nearly new items that you are offering to the auction. Any item that is not bid upon/sold, must be reclaimed before you leave. Tickets will be sold at three (3) for \$1.00 or 20 for \$5. Profits from the auction go to support chapter activities.

Directions: From the north – take 787 south to exit 7W (rte 378) and bear right on the ramp to route 32. Turn left onto rte 32 (Broadway). At the first traffic light (by Stewarts) turn right onto Menands Road. The church is on the left on the first corner after you cross the railroad tracks. From the south – Take 787 north from Albany to exit 6. At the end of the exit ramp turn right onto rte 32 (Broadway). At the first traffic light (by Roxy Cleaners) turn left onto Brookside Ave. Take Brookside to the end and turn right on Lyon Ave. The church is on the right after two blocks.

Newsletter Contributions Welcome

The CDC Newsletter is printed quarterly in January, April, July, and October. Submission deadlines are the first day of the month in which the newsletter is printed. Carl Wiedemann, newsletter editor, welcomes your articles, pertinent comments, criticisms, etc. He can be reached by telephone at (518) 280-8892 or e-mail at wiedeman@nycap.rr.com

Visiting A Session Of Congress

How many CDC members have had the experience of visiting a congress in session? It only happens once a year, and it is a very short session. No, it's not a congress of people; it's a congress of frogs.



Although everything is frozen in January and most of February, sometime in March the snow begins melting, and vernal pools start to appear in many woodlots. That's a good time to look for a wood frog (*Rana sylvatica*) congress.

The adult wood frog is a medium sized (1.5-2.5"), light tan to dark brown, terrestrial frog found in moist woodlands. It is easily recognized by the dark mask extending from each eye back through the tympanum. The adults are seldom associated with water other than during the breeding season of early spring when wood frogs migrate en masse to vernal pools. Males then commence a raucous, quacking, breeding chorus. Mating and egg laying follow and are completed within a few weeks, upon which adults leave the vernal pool to return to nearby uplands.

Listen for wood frog choruses at vernal pools in March and early April. Frogs will call at night and on warm days. Adults are secretive during daylight and seek cover when disturbed. At night, chorusing adults can usually be observed by flashlight.

2010 CALENDAR OF NYFOA EVENTS

CDC STEERING COMMITTEE MEETINGS

PLACE: COLONIE TOWN LIBRARY

DATES: JANUARY 12, APRIL 13, JULY 13, OCTOBER 12

6:30 – 8:30 PM

TOPIC: VARIOUS - ALL INTERESTED CDC MEMBERS ARE
WELCOME TO PARTICIPATE

CDC CHAPTER HOLIDAY GATHERING

PLACE: BETHANY PRESBYTERIAN, MENANDS

DATE: SATURDAY, JANUARY 23 - 4:00 PM

Covered dish supper & program

NYFOA Annual Membership Meeting

PLACE: SYRACUSE FAIRGROUNDS

DATE: SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 27 – 1:00 PM

TOPIC: SEMINARS & BUSINESS MEETING HELD IN
CONJUNCTION WITH THE NYS FARM SHOW

WOODLAND OWNERS WORKSHOP

PLACE: AGROFORESTRY RESOURCE CENTER, ACRA, NY

DATE: SATURDAY, MARCH 13

TOPIC: HOW TO SELECT A FORESTER

NE Woodworkers Assn Show

PLACE: SARATOGA CONVENTION CENTER

DATE: MARCH 27 – 28TH 10:00 AM – 5:00 PM

TOPIC: SEMINARS & EXHIBITS INCLUDING A NYFOA BOOTH
STAFFED BY CDC AND SAC MEMBERS

FORESTRY AWARENESS DAY

PLACE: LEGISLATIVE OFFICE BUILDING, ALBANY

DATE: MONDAY, APRIL 26

TOPIC: SEMINAR & VISITS TO LEGISLATIVE REPRESENTATIVES -
ALL NYFOA MEMBERS ARE WELCOME TO PARTICIPATE

The CDC Welcomes New Members:

Jean Campbell
Martin & Vivian Conboy
Ron & Inga Spivak
Walter R. Tarr

Grafton, NY
Petersburgh, NY
Hoosick Falls, NY
Franklin Lake, NJ

2009 Steering Committee

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Name This Critter ...

Part of NYFOA's mission is to inform landowners about all aspects of the forest ecosystem – which may include unusual critters which are part of the lore of the woods. Maybe you know this one. How many clues will you need before reaching the “a-ha” moment?

CLUE #1

This critter is a well-known menace in the great north woods, as well as in several rural areas of the Capital District Chapter. Although there are still some skeptics, its existence is thoroughly established by numerous reports from highly creditable parties. The descriptions appear to be about the same in all regions. This critter has a habit of tucking its tail in its mouth and rolling at incredible speed in pursuit of prey, or a fancied enemy. Fortunately, this habit is not duplicated by any other member of the animal kingdom.

CLUE #2

This is a species of snake whose tail ends in a stinger carrying venom of such power that a dose of but 0.003 parts per million is sufficient to make even the leather-skinned Hodag turn green and swell up and die inside of an hour. No wonder that folks wise in woods lore are wary of this circular engine of destruction. He or she may travel on just one cylinder but that's all it needs.

The speed reached in rolling is nothing short of remarkable. A full-grown cotton-tail rabbit is pie for this snake. A mature specimen, when hooped, has a diameter of 1.5923 feet. He has been clocked, after being enticed on to a cleverly designed rolling metered platform at an rpm of about 1,056, equivalent to a straightaway speed of some 60 mph. The only way to outrun the snake is to climb over a fence. The snake must un-hoop to get through.

CLUE #3

There are many authentic cases of death from this reptile's venom; possibly the most convincing bit of data is that, in a fit of pique, one of these snakes stung Paul Bunyan's peavy handle. Of course this handle was a sizeable stick to start with, but the venom swelled it to such dimensions that Paul cut it up into 946 cords of wood. And then the dang stuff wouldn't burn. Just lay in the stove and hissed.

Mystery Critter

Do you recognize it?



Answer: The Hoop Snake
Serpenscirculosus caudavenenifer

Join Us!!

Your membership is important

The New York Forest Owners Association is a not-for-profit organization promoting wise stewardship of trees and woodlands for the benefit of current and future generations. We represent family forest owners and all others who care about the future of New York's trees and forests. If you are not currently a member, please consider joining today. Your support can make a difference. Regular annual dues are \$30.00 for an individual or \$35.00 for a family.

Contact: NYFOA, P.O. Box 541, Lima, New York 14485 1-800-836-3566 www.nyfoa.org