

New York Forest Owners Association Capital District Chapter Newsletter

Volume 20, Issue 2

April 2010

Chair's Message:

The Capital District Chapter and the Southern Adirondack Chapter staffed a NYFOA exhibit at last month's Woodworkers Showcase in Saratoga. Over 4,000 people attended the show. Thanks to Hans and Joan Kappel, Bob Sheedy, and Marilyn Wyman for their help. Elsewhere in this newsletter is a listing of events that have been developing since my last message in the January newsletter. It looks like we will have a more active schedule than in previous years.

There are several woods walks being held in conjunction with the Rensselaer Plateau Alliance. I will have the pleasure of leading one of those on the property of Rebecca Schneider and her brother Wayne Abbott on Blue Factory Road in Grafton on June 6th. We'll be meeting at Walter Kersch's Pineridge Cross Country ski area on Plank Road in Poestenkill and those of us on the 480-a timber harvest walk will proceed to the Grafton site. This is the same property our chapter visited a couple of years ago. We will again look at the woodlot responding to a partial harvest that removed low quality trees to favor excellent potential crop trees.

Our annual picnic on July 18th may be affected by the status of Thatcher Park which is one of the state parks caught up in New York's budget woes. If the park closes, maybe we can shift to an alternate site, such as the Suislaw Model Forest at the Agroforestry Resource Center. If that becomes the option of choice, we could offer interesting walk choices showing off the model forest.

The Landis Arboretum in Esperance, Schoharie County recently contacted me to explore how our chapter might interact with them in establishing some demonstration of sustainable forest management. This could help us expand our outreach in a geographic area we have not been very active in to date. And, it also may enlarge our cadre of possible partners sharing an interest in woodlands of our area.

Unfortunately, in my travels, I am seeing more harvesting that does not appear to be carried out with the future of the forest in mind. The stressed economy may be responsible for many landowners carrying out harvests without forester involvement and loggers trying to survive with limited markets. It is important for woodlot owners to realize that how their timber is cut today will have long management options will be for several decades to come.

I walked one woodlot recently that had an exploitive cut in the 1970's. The site could be prime timberland. Yet, its future still looks bleak today. There are a few scattered good quality trees developing, but it will be several more decades before there will be an opportunity to have a viable harvest. To restore this site would be costly and require a vision looking ahead 70 to 80 years. Patches would have to be cleared and the deer herd and undesirable regeneration would have to be controlled to establish desirable seedlings as reproduction from those few scattered desirable crop trees that occupy the site. This property is now for sale and the owner wanted to capture some of the timber value before selling the land. Unfortunately, he cannot even advertise well managed woods as an asset of the property.

Remember we are always seeking suggestions for events and woods walk sites and topics. Do not hesitate to contact me with your thoughts.

Mike Greason, Chair
Capital District Chapter



Council of Forest Resource Organization's Forestry Awareness Day

The Forest Owners Association is a member of Council of Forest Resource Organization's (CFRO) which sponsors Forestry Awareness Day (FAD). FAD will be held in Albany on April 26, 2010. Participants will come to Albany and attend pre-planned visits legislative offices to discuss forestry related issues in New York State. These visits help ensure a good and informed relationship with our representatives in the state legislature. All members of hosting and sponsoring organizations can attend the day's events free of charge. These visits will provide participants the opportunity to discuss issues of importance to the forestry community in New York State.

In addition to the legislative visits, participants can attend a morning discussion session starting at 9:30 which will consist of an issue briefing to help prepare for the legislative visits later in the day. The morning session will highlight the CFRO Legislative Agenda issues, which are: Financial support for Wood Products Development Council; Limit Restrictions on Wood Boilers; Uniform Enforcement of Stream Crossing and Wetland Permits; Timber Theft Enforcement; Property Tax Issues; Invasive Species; and Forests to Fight Global Warming—Executive Order #24.

If you are interested, please consider attending.

Would You Like to be Notified by E-mail?

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

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

Environmental Education Camps

For the past several years the Capital District Chapter has sponsored campers to Environmental Education Camp. For over 60 years, DEC has provided a residential summer camp program in conservation education for young New Yorkers. There are four camps, Colby, Pack, DeBruce and Rushford serving children who are 12 to 14 years old. In addition, DEC offers a week-long Ecology Workshops for teens who are 15 to 17 years old at Pack Forest during the first five sessions of camp.

At the camps, youth become immersed in conservation education, participating in fun activities and games that teach the wise use of natural resources. There are eight weeks of camp that a student can choose from in the months of July and August. Campers are encouraged to return the next year for a Returnee Week, offered only to campers who have already enjoyed the camp program. Sportsmen Education courses are offered at Camps Colby, DeBruce and Rushford, and shooting sports are offered for a few weeks at Pack Forest.

The Chapter Welcomes The Following New Members:

Babcock Lake Estates
Gerald Beer
Melissa Charest
Ted Randazzo

Niskayuna, N.Y.
Sand Lake, N.Y.
Troy, N.Y.
Halcott Center, N.Y.

State Budget Cuts & DEC

Although the details have not been settled, it seems clear that next year's state budget will include significant cuts in programs as well as tax and fee increases. Ouch. NYFOA members may be interested in how the budget could effect the Department of Environmental Conservation, and in particular the Division of Lands and Forests. The following comments were offered by Rob Davies who is the New York State Forester and Director of that Division. Rob writes:

The Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC), like almost all State agencies, has been hit hard by the economic crisis. As such, DEC and the Division of Lands and Forests will feel the pain. The Governor's Division of the Budget recently has directed some cuts to the proposed Agency 2010-11 budget and specific programs, which are beyond our control. DEC has also been directed to make additional (equally-difficult) cuts that will likely result in less DEC presence in the field this year. Among the new realities that face our agency are:

- **A DEC cut of \$32 million non-personal service expenditures.** For an extremely mobile Division such as Lands and Forests, this will likely mean severe reductions in vehicle miles driven by staff since this is our largest non-personal service expense. Although no final decisions have been made, this will likely result in fewer sustainable forestry activities on State Forest land, less interaction with private forest landowners, and the inability to reach certain areas for maintenance and stewardship.

- **The Governor has already indicated a strict hiring freeze will continue,** meaning that as foresters and other Departmental employees retire; there will be no replacement hires to pick up the workload. Our Department as a whole already has lost 326 staff that have not been replaced since 2008 and we expect to lose an additional 135 staff in 2010.

Times like these obviously try all of us, in our private lives, in private business and in public agencies. It also reminds us that we need to persevere, make hard choices, and work as hard as we possibly can to serve the public good. At the same time, we all should advocate for the programs and services that allow us to ensure our forests continue to meet the needs of present and future generations. Just as our forests go through cycles, but manage to endure, even under the most difficult circumstances, our Department and our Division will endure and emerge ready to take on the challenges of the future.

Another perspective on the budget was recently offered by David Lee, manager of Saratoga Tree Nursery. David was interviewed by Paul Post for the Saratogian, and these were his comments:

What's the most challenging job at the Saratoga Nursery this time of year?

Right now we're trying to harvest and ship out 1 million tree and shrub seedlings. However, we haven't gotten permission to hire seasonal help. With the early spring, the season is about two weeks ahead of schedule this year. Unfortunately, the state budget is behind. Everyone's jumping in with both feet, trying to keep up with demand.

When do seasonal workers normally work?

Normally we have 35 to 40 seasonal workers who help out during these two or three weeks when orders are being filled. Right now, we have 10 full-time staff and three seasonal helpers, so 13 people are doing the work of 50.

We go through this every year with the budget. This year it's more critical, though, because spring is so early. Hopefully we'll get permission to hire seasonal help in the next few days.

Where do orders get shipped?

Seedlings are used on both public and private lands. Private residents, such as farmers and large landowners, can purchase seedlings at cost from the nursery. We sell in bulk so we don't compete with private nurseries. Hardwoods are sold in groups of 25. Shrubs and pines are sold in groups of 100.

When it comes to public use, seedlings are used to reforest DEC lands, as well as for Arbor Day giveaways and school seedling programs.

Why is the timing so critical right now?

Some seedlings are already breaking bud. Once they do, they aren't any good. We're really trying to get everything harvested, graded and put in storage coolers as quick as we can before shipping them out. Spring has sprung, but the government hasn't.

Whatever it takes, though, we'll get the job done.

2010 Holiday Gathering Covered Dish

The Capital District Chapter has a cover dish supper for members, family and friends to start off each new year. With the help of Peg and Ron Pedersen has reserved the Bethany Presbyterian Church in Menands.

The food was great as Tracy Lamanec of Schenectady will no doubt confirm.



One of the highlights of the evening was the chance to participate in a "silent auction" of gifts and treasures organized by Jim and Phyllis House.



Mike Greason introduces our speaker, James Bulich of Catskill



Jim Bulich listens to a question from Mike Birmingham



Logging in the Adirondacks A Century Ago

New York State was the leading producer of timber in the United States for several years in the mid 19th century. Most of this wood was cut in the Adirondacks, but getting logs from the forest to a sawmill was not an easy task. Roads were scarce, often in poor condition, and mechanized equipment to transport timber had not been developed.

The solution was to use streams and rivers to float logs to the mills. This method was so successful that log drives in the Adirondacks continued until the 1950's. Timber was cut during the winter months, and the logs were piled along stream banks where they could be pushed in after ice out. Splash dams were constructed in smaller streams to provide the extra surge of water needed to float the winter's harvest over rocks and other obstacles. However, the spring log drive was still difficult and dangerous work.



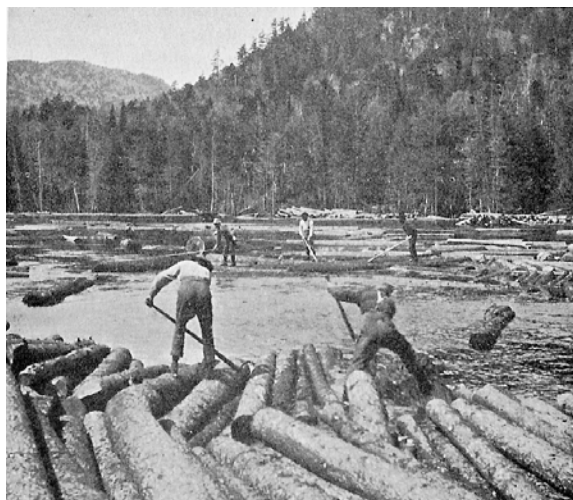
A log "landing" on Ampersand Creek just before the spring log drive to Tupper Lake about 1900.

Breaking up log jams was one of the most dangerous aspects of river driving. The following description was written by William Fox who was New York's Superintendent of State Forests from 1888 until 1909.

"At times, in some crooked rocky stream a jam is formed and thousands of logs are wedged fast in the channel, held back by some one log firmly braced against an impediment. Then a thrilling scene occurs as the boss calls for volunteers to break the jam. There is always a prompt response.

One or more daring fellows, impelled by pride in their work and love of applause, take their lives in their hands, as with axe and handspike they leap over the treacherous logs and place themselves at the head of the jam. Behind them are thousands of logs, filling the angry stream from bank to bank, piled thickly to the bottom, some of them tossing, tumbling and leaping in the air as the dammed up torrent forces them about in wild confusion. Beneath them is the swaying, rocking, unstable mass, in which is seen the log that forms the key to the position.

The crew of drivers gathers on the banks below the jam, where they watch with intense eagerness and anxiety the man who volunteers to cut or loosen this log. They note every stroke of the axe wielded by the hero as, cool and undaunted, he proceeds with his work. The critical moment is close at hand. There is some more prying with the handspike, a few more blows with the axe, and the huge foaming mass begins to move. Above the sound of the foaming waters a loud shout of warning comes from the men below, and then, leaping from log to log as the jam breaks, the brave fellow reaches shore in safety amid the applauding cheers of his comrades; or, as a cry of horror breaks from the watching crew, he loses his footing and disappears beneath the terrible grinding mass. Crushed and torn, a man's body is found in the river later on, and in the camps next winter another chapter is added to the unwritten story of heroism as the men relate in quiet tones the story of the man who lost his life on the company's drive that spring."



Rolling in spruce logs on Ampersand Creek.

2010 CALENDAR OF LOCAL EVENTS

CDC STEERING COMMITTEE MEETINGS

PLACE: COLONIE TOWN LIBRARY

DATES: APRIL 13, JULY 13, OCTOBER 12

6:30 – 8:30 PM

LOCAL WOODSWALKS & WORKSHOPS

PLACE: STEPHENTOWN FIRE HALL

GRAFTON FIRE HALL

DATE: MONDAY & TUESDAY APRIL 12 & 13 – 6:00 TO 9:00 P.M.

TOPIC: FUTURE OF THE RENSSELAER PLATEAU

CONTACT: WWW.RENSSELAERPLATEAU.ORG

PLACE: AGROFORESTRY CENTER, ACRA, N.Y.

DATE: MONDAY, APRIL 19 - 1:00 TO 4:00 P.M.

TOPIC: EMERALD ASH BORER

CONTACT: GREENE@CORNELL.EDU PH 622-9820

PLACE: DYKEN POND ENVIRONMENTAL CENTER, GRAFTON

DATE: SATURDAY, APRIL 24 – 8:30 TO 12:30 P.M.

TOPICS: VERNAL PONDS ,WOODLOT EVALUATION

CHILDREN'S WOODS WALK

CONTACT: WWW.RENSSELAERPLATEAU.ORG

PLACE: PINERIDGE CROSS COUNTRY SKI AREA, POESTENKILL

DATE: SATURDAY, MAY 8 – 12:30 TO 4:30 P.M.

TOPICS: WETLANDS ECOLOGY

WOODLANDS HISTORY, WILDFLOWERS

CHILDREN'S WOODS WALK

CONTACT: WWW.RENSSELAERPLATEAU.ORG

PLACE: AGROFORESTRY CENTER, ACRA, N.Y.

DATE: MONDAY/TUESDAY, MAY 14 & 15

TOPICS: HARVESTING TREES WITH AN ATV

CONTROLLING UNWANTED WOODLAND VEGETATION

STEWARDSHIP FOR LANDOWNERS

CONTACT: GREENE@CORNELL.EDU PH 622-9820

PLACE: PINERIDGE CROSS COUNTRY SKI AREA, POESTENKILL,

DATE: SATURDAY, JUNE 6 – 12:30 TO 4:30 P.M.

TOPICS: WOODLOT IMPROVEMENT

CAPITAL DISTRICT WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREA

STREAM ECOLOGY, CHILDREN'S WOODS WALK

CONTACT: WWW.RENSSELAERPLATEAU.ORG

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

ANNUAL CHAPTER PICNIC

PLACE: THACHER PARK

DATE: SUNDAY, JULY 18

NYFOA MEMBERS, FAMILY & FRIENDS ARE WELCOME

STEERING COMMITTEE

Jim Beil, Secretary ph 355-4471
jimbeil12@aol.com

Mike Birmingham, Director ph 758-2621
mjbirming@airport.net

Renee Bouplon, Director ph 929-7832
bouplonrj@gmail.com

Jim Bulich, Vice Chair ph 943-5047
bettyjim@mhccable.com

Mike Greason, Chair ph 943-9230
forest@mhccable.com

Hans & Joan Kappel, Members ph 861-8753
bluespruce@juno.com

Dave Schmidt, Member ph 237-8327

Phil Walton, Treasurer ph 895-6346
pwalton@localnet.com

Carl Wiedemann, Editor ph 280-8892
wiedeman@nycap.rr.com

Tom Wolfe, Membership ph 872-0811
tbwolfe1064@aol.com

Marilyn Wyman, Director ph 622-9820
mfw10@cornell.edu

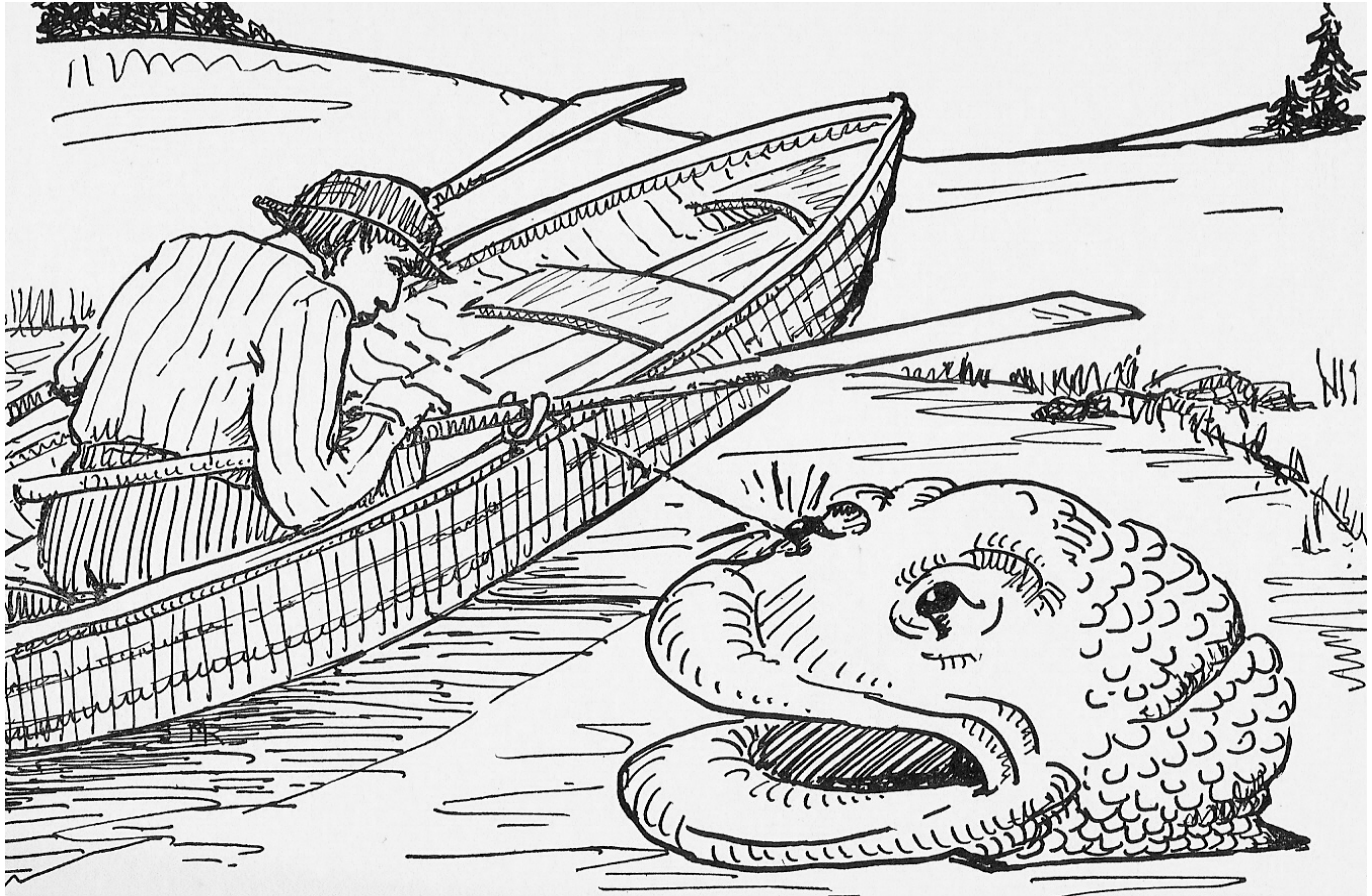
Ron Pedersen, Member ph 785-6061
rwp22@nycap.rr.com

Jim House, Member ph 674-8720
jimwoodnrocks@aol.com

Bob Sheedy, Member ph 482-1288
rms47@aol.com

Name This Critter ...

The mystery critters featured in our newsletter have been limited to unusual fauna found in local woodlots. However, in response to persistent complaints from members who enjoy fishing more than anything else except hiking in the mountains and splitting firewood, we will depart from our usual fare of land animals.



Mystery Critter Do you recognize it?

Clue #1

This question mark is a tasty fish species, found only in perfectly round lakes. Hence, it is quite rare in most areas, although some claim it has been pulled from the waters of Round Lake in Saratoga County.

Clue #2

To catch one, find the exact center of the lake using a hogyoke to determine position, and bore a square hole in the water. Then bait the edge of this hole with a bit of cheese, preferably Brie, Stilton, Liederkranz, or best of all, Limburger.

Clue #3

The fish will quickly scent the bait and come for it. When he emerges, spit tobacco-juice in his eye. (This technique may take some practice at home for those who don't regularly chew tobacco) This makes him so swell with rage that he can no longer withdraw into the hole, and is easily netted.

His Name?

The **Wiffenpoof** (also called the Gilli-Galoo Fish) *Piscisabsurdus tumescens*

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