

New York Forest Owners Association Capital District Chapter Newsletter

Volume 20, Issue 4

October 2010

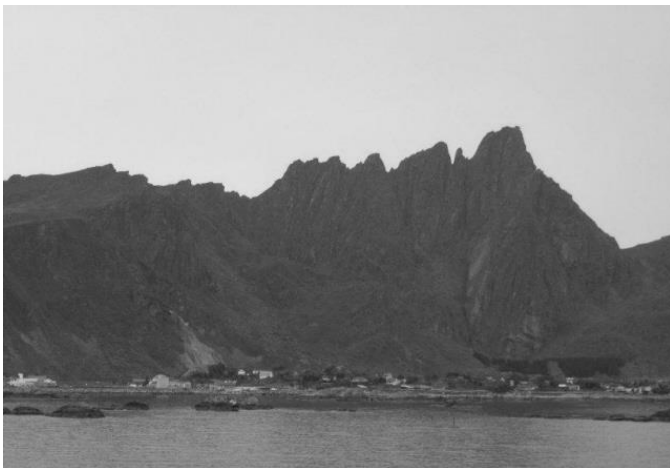
Message from the Chair

Since our last newsletter, Peggy and I vacationed along the west coast of Norway. It certainly is scenic. We stopped at Bergen, Trondheim, the Lofotin Islands, North Cape, Tromso, and Alesund. Our transportation provider was the Queen Mary 2, and you may guess that I'm a little rural for her. She was the biggest manmade structure in any city we visited.

The fjords were beautiful, mostly sided by rock with lesser areas of farm and forest land. The lower slopes of forest are managed for timber products; yet much of the landscape we saw, mostly from the ocean liner was too rugged and inaccessible to work.



One of my granddaughters accompanied me on a bus trip from Alesund to Trollveggen and Trollstegin. I even took pictures of her with two trolls. But since they were carvings Jasmine did not seem uncomfortable. On this side trip, I was also impressed by the small percentage of land that was productive from a forest and farm perspective. The fishing and offshore oil drilling appears to be the base of their economy.



On the way home flying from Heathrow to Newark, we flew across northern Vermont and down the Hudson Valley. Having a window seat on the east side, I had the pleasure of seeing many of my client's woodlots and our abundant forest landscape.



The point of this reflection on our vacation is to remind everyone that we truly have one of the best "potential" forest resources in the world. We also have some of the poorest public policies in the form of confiscatory real property taxes, disjointed local timber harvesting ordinances that do not lead to good forest management, and victims of timber theft who have to hire an appraiser to prove they are a victim.

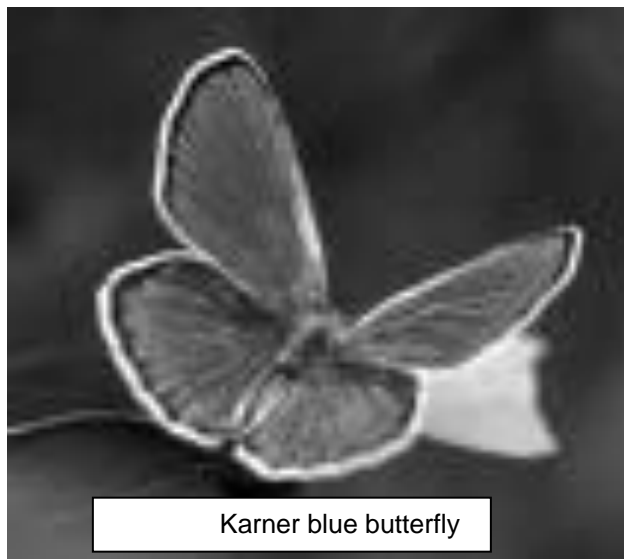
NYFOA has a story to tell. This story if conveyed to the right audiences may lead to better managed forests where high grading and diameter limit cutting are not the norm and parcelization leading to ecosystem fragmentation is not the rampant. The average woodlot in New York in 1970 was 40 acres and Greene County is now at 14 acres, I'm also concerned about the future of our forest industry, that industry that helps us justify our investments in retaining our woodlands.

Mike Greason

New Regulations Proposed

This August DEC proposed new regulations to strengthen protections for endangered and threatened species. If you are a woodland owner you may be affected.

The draft regulations establish criteria for the listing and de-listing of species and requirements for restoration and recovery plans. They are posted on the DEC website. The proposal establishes time lines, procedures and standards for reviewing applications for any activity that might impact endangered and threatened species or their habitats. The regulations also require landowners to develop a mitigation plan that results in a net conservation benefit to the listed species. Agricultural activities, with the exception of forest management, are exempted from the proposed regulations.



Karner blue butterfly

According to an article in the Times Union by Brian Nearing; "There are 53 endangered species of mammals, birds, reptiles, fish, insect and mollusks in the state. Some are well-known, like the Karner blue butterfly and the peregrine falcon; others remain obscure, like the bog buckmoth and gilt darter fish. Another 35 species are considered threatened".

DEC's comment period on the proposed regulations ended on September 20, 2010. Mike Birmingham, who is a member of this chapter send a letter which includes the following statement; "*The resources needed to implement this regulation are large and unlikely to be forthcoming due to the state's pitiful fiscal situation. Even if funded, the regulation is likely to do more harm than good. It will stifle small woodland management. It will dampen enthusiasm of volunteers to work with woodland owners by undercutting their credibility when landowners learn that information they*

provide can be used to require them to apply for Incidental Permits and to prepare mitigation plans. Since small landowners lack the money and skills to comply with the regulation, it will reduce the woodland acres managed. Lack of management will not bode well for many wildlife species or for continued landownership as forests. The alternative is for the state to foster good working relationships with landowners of critical habitats. It is a focused effort that produces positive results at affordable prices and without weakening further the economy of rural NY".

More information is available from:

Dan Rosenblatt
NYSDEC
625 Broadway
Albany, NY 12233-4750



Peregrine Falcon

You can learn if your property is in an area where threatened or endangered species may be located using DEC's environmental resource mapper. This information is accessible on the Internet through the DEC website: www.dec.ny.gov under "publications, forms, maps". An interactive map shows general areas where rare plants and animals have been found in New York State. However, the map does not show specific locations of endangered or threatened species. A field inspection by a qualified biologist would probably be necessary to make that determination.

Selective Timber Harvesting

By Joseph Dwyer, Consulting Forester
(www.dwyerforestry.com)

A selective timber harvest is part of a silvicultural system used to create or maintain an uneven-aged forest. Such a forest contains at least three well-defined age classes. For example, an oak-hickory forest with a history of timber harvesting in might have an overstory of 60- to 80-year-old trees, a pole stand of 20- to 30-year-old trees, and an understory layer of seedlings. It might look like this:



This woodland was selectively marked by a now retired consulting forester in 1984 and harvested shortly thereafter. Notice the old white oak stump in the foreground from the previous timber harvest. In 2004 I completed another selective marking on the property. The harvesting was finished shortly before these photos were taken in March of 2006. Notice the scattered tree tops on the ground and also the medium-sized sawtimber trees in the background. Also pay attention to the high stocking (density) level with numerous 20- to 40-year-old pole-sized sized trees present. A high stocking level is one of the characteristics of uneven-aged forest management.



One thing that does not show up well in this winter photo is the tree seedling regeneration. Because of the use of a selective harvesting system, this woodland is converting to more shade tolerant tree species in many areas. The predominant tree seedlings are sugar maple, beech, and ash.

Finally, the trees that were harvested in this timber sale were all marked and measured by myself. I use one paint spot on the base of the tree to regulate the harvest, in addition to several paint spots on the stem. You may not see a paint spot on every stump pictured here because it is located on the reverse side of the stump.

Here are some more photos from the same selective timber harvest:



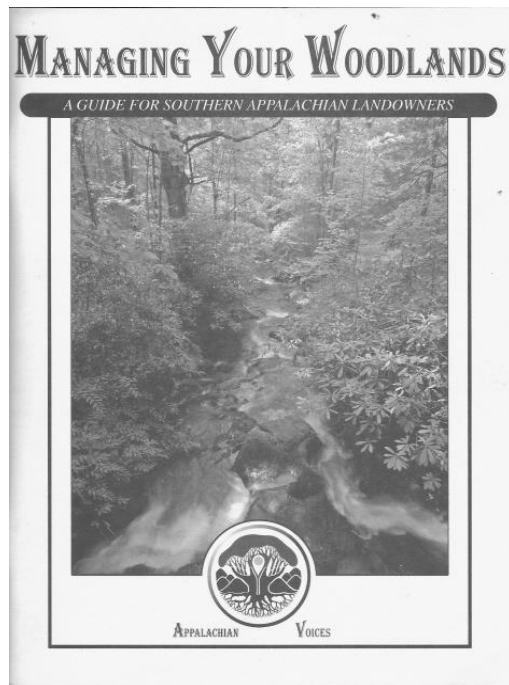
One of the main differences between a good selective timber harvest and a poor one is what is left in the woods after the sale. A typical timber buyer will select just the high value, large diameter tree species for cutting and leave the low value (culls, undesirable species) and small diameter trees in the woods. This type of 'selection' harvesting results in a degraded woodland that has a much lower growth and earnings potential over time.

A true selection harvest **TAKES** trees in all diameter classes, especially those trees that are unhealthy, overmature, have poor form, or are growing on the wrong site. A true selection harvest **LEAVES** trees in all diameter classes, especially those trees that are healthy, vigorous, have good form, and are growing on the right site. Notice the high quality 22- to 26-inch diameter (chest height) black walnut, northern red oak, sugar maple, and American beech left in this woods after I marked a proper selective timber harvest:

Editors Note: Although Joseph Dwyer works in Indiana, Kentucky and Illinois, he describes the difference between the selection system of silviculture versus selectively cutting the most valuable timber – which, unfortunately, is how most timber is cut in NYS.

Woodland Management Handbooks

Members of the Capital District Chapter may be interested in obtaining one or more of the following free publications which are available for downloading on the Internet or may be ordered in hard copy. These publications come from different sources, but each is well written and includes good information about forest management. The combination of all three provides a great reference for woodland owners who are interested in sustainable forestry, selling timber and wildlife management.



Managing Your Woodlands 2006 - 128 pages - published by Appalachian Voices

A comprehensive handbook for landowners who are interested in long-term forest management, in protecting its health and beauty, in producing high quality timber and other goods for local industry, in protecting habitat for wildlife and protecting water quality, or just leaving a healthy and valuable forest to their heirs. This guide comes with a compact disk on the subject of sustainable woodlot management. Managing Your Woodlands is available at the following website: www.appalachianvoices.org It can also be ordered at no charge by calling (877) 277-86423

A Landowners Guide to Selling Standing Timber, 2001 – 65 pages - published by the Ontario Woodlot Association

A Landowner's Guide to Selling Standing Timber provides a comprehensive, step-by-step explanation of the process. Following these guidelines will help ensure a fair business deal for both the seller and buyer of standing timber. The guide also recommends ways to ensure that woodlots are managed in a sustainable manner, so that biodiversity and natural features like wildlife habitat, wetlands, and streams are protected.

A landowners Guide can be downloaded from the following website: <http://www.ont-woodlot-assoc.org/pdf/guide.pdf> A hard copy can also be ordered for \$5.00 by calling (613) 258-0110

Wildlife and Forestry in New York Northern Hardwoods, - 40 pages - published by Audubon New York

This manual shows how wildlife is related to different forest conditions in the northern hardwood forests of upstate New York. The manual supplies information about how different methods of timber management change wildlife habitats, and how wildlife communities change across different forest conditions. The manual also provides tips for some ways to improve habitat conditions for a variety of forest wildlife no matter what the forest condition. A hard copy can be ordered by calling (518) 869-9731. Wildlife and Forestry can be also downloaded from the following website: http://ny.audubon.org/forestry_manual.pdf



The Chapter Welcomes The Following New Members:

Bonnie Blader
Stephen Cohen
Jenny & Jon Stromer-Galley

West Kill, NY
Cherry Hill, NJ
Berne, NY

Capital District Chapter Picnic



Thacher Park on the Helderberg escarpment



Games include cards and horseshoes



Hans "Master Chef" Kappel at work



Jim and Phyllis House organize the raffle



Coco takes charge of cleaning up any food that spills.



And there is lots of catching up to do.

2010 CALENDAR OF LOCAL EVENTS

STEERING COMMITTEE

CDC STEERING COMMITTEE MEETINGS

PLACE: COLONIE TOWN LIBRARY

DATE: OCTOBER 12

6:30 – 8:30 PM

ALL MEMBERS WELCOME TO ATTEND.

LOW IMPACT HARVESTING WORKSHOP

Place: Crowell Woodlot

Route 9 - ½ mile north of SR 295

East Chatham, NY

Date: October 23, 2010

9:00 AM – noon & 1:00PM – 4:00 PM

MONTGOMERY COUNTY WOODSWALK

Place: Thomas Burbine Sr. Memorial Forest

Corbin Hill Road

Charleston, NY

Date: November 6, 2010

LECTURE & WOODSWALK WITH TOM WESSELS

PLACE: EMMA TREADWELL NATURE CENTER

DATE: NOVEMBER 13

9:00 AM – 1:00 PM

TOM WESSELS IS THE AUTHOR OF READING THE FORESTED
LANDSCAPE

LANDOWNER WORKSHOP

Place: Columbia Greene Community College

Hudson, NY

Date: December 11, 2010

1:00 to 4:30 PM

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

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

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

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

Dick & Sheri Gibbs, Members
rgibbs@nycap.rr.com ph 283-0155

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

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

Dave Schmidt, Member
ph 237-8327

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Name This Critter ...

If you recall, our last newsletter featured a member of the dog family – the axe handle hound. Just to keep things even, this issue features another well known critter of the north woods, but this time a member of the cat family. This beastie is often described as having similar traits to that of a mountain lion. Tales of this mystery critter were common among woodsmen during the turn of the 20th century.

Here are the clues:

Mystery Critter Do You Recognize It?

Clue #1

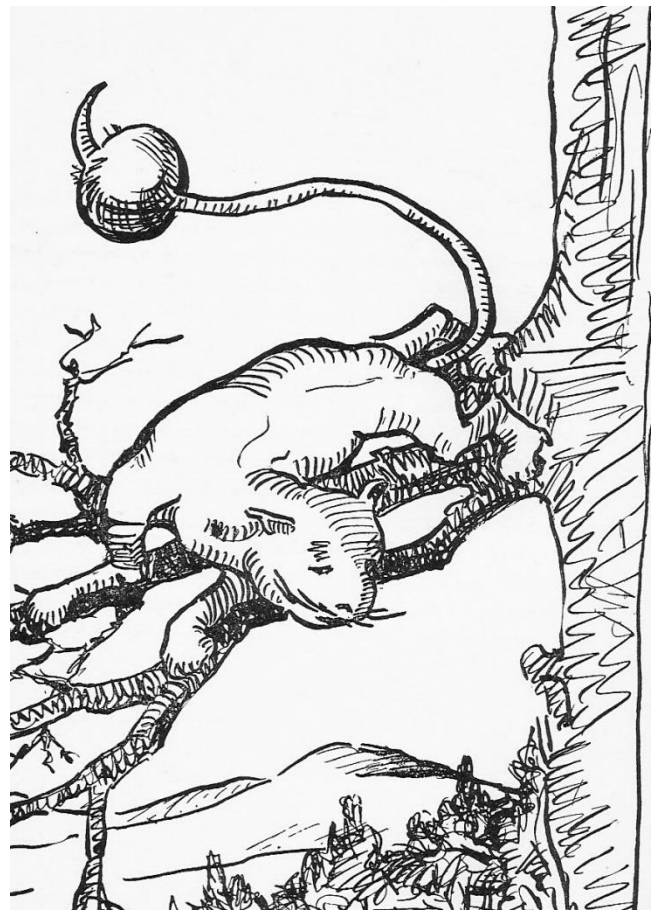
In the early days this feline undoubtedly enjoyed a much wider circulation than at present. Recent surveys indicate that it is now pretty well confined to the Green Mountains of Vermont and occasionally spotted on the Rensselaer Plateau in this area. A fair-sized animal of about the dimensions of a wildcat, but with a far more aggressive disposition.

Clue #2

Its chief physical characteristic is a hard, heavy, bony ball on the end of its tail. The feet are clawed as with all true cats, making it an excellent climber; and this species has the stealthy habit of lying out on a limb, and when the unsuspecting lumberjack passes beneath, the Cat drops on its victim and pounds him to death with the ball. In the rutting season the male uses this instrument to call the female by drumming on a hollow log.

Clue #3

This species has occasioned much discussion and peppery argument. It has often been confused with both the Sliver Cat and the Dingmaul. But a careful study of the equipment and habits of the three species shows plainly that they are by no means the same. However, it is quite possible that they are all distantly related; perhaps the Ball-tailed boy is a less highly developed variant of the same phylum



What is the name of this critter?

Answer:

The Ball-Tailed Cat
Felis caudaglobosa

*From Henry H. Tryon Fearsome Critters 1939.

Join Us!!

Help Support Forest Conservation

The New York Forest Owners Association is a not-for-profit organization which supports sustainable forestry practices and improved stewardship on privately owned woodlands. Our members are family forest owners and all others who care about the future of New York's trees and forests. If you are not a member, please consider joining today. Your membership makes a difference. Regular annual dues are just \$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