

New York Forest Owners Association Capital District Chapter Newsletter

Volume 21, Issue 3

July 2011

Message from the Chair



his accomplishments.

The three months since our last newsletter have been very busy. On April 15th, many of our members joined in with family, friends, clients and foresters to celebrate the life of Mike Greason. Most of us, individually, appreciated Mike for our own interactions with him, but were awestruck at the memorial celebration when we learned about all

Arboretum in Esperance. Both walks were led by Carl Wiedemann and Tom Wolfe, who expertly answered many questions asked by the participants. Jim Beil gave us interesting information about bluebirds and the nesting boxes at the Arboretum.

If you can, join us in some of the upcoming events which are noted in this newsletter. And if you have any ideas that will help us in our mission, contact one of our Steering Committee members.

Jim Bulich

Upcoming Events

We had our NYFOA display at the Woodworkers Showcase in Saratoga on March 26th and 27th. This was set up by Hans and Joan Kappel, who also coordinated the manning of the booth by Bob Sheedy, Jim Beil, Phil Walton and myself.

On April 17th, Jim Beil, Jimmy Bulich and I helped the Catskill Regional Invasive Species Partnership (CRISP) to do an ash inventory of the Village of Catskill. The purpose was to prepare the local government for the almost certain invasion of the Emerald Ash Borer, which was found only six miles south of Catskill last year.

Forest Awareness Day (FAD) was held at the Legislative Office Building in Albany on May 2nd. This event was coordinated by the Council of Forest Resource Organizations (CFRO), of which NYFOA is affiliated, along with 14 other organizations in the name of the forests of New York State. Small groups visited 54 legislative offices. Carl Wiedemann and Marilyn Wyman led some of these groups.

We had two very interesting and well attended woodwalks. The first was at the Tom Wolfe property in East Berne, and the other at the George Landis

July 16th – 9:00 a.m. Small Logging Equipment demonstration by Peter Smallidge – hosted by Art & Jeanine Brearton, 1676 Berne Altamont Road, Altamont, N.Y.

July 17th - 9:00 a.m. Small logging equipment demonstration – hosted by Dick & Shari Gibbs 287 Hidley Road, Wynantskill, N.Y.

August 7th - Capital District Chapter's annual family chicken barbecue/picnic is Sunday, August 7th, at the Glen Doone area of John Boyd Thacher State Park in western Albany County. Suggested arrival time is between 11 am and 12 noon, allowing time to walk on the trails or in the woods, to play horseshoes, volleyball, and socialize with other members. The chicken will be ready around 1:30 - 2:00, depending on the weather and the breeze.

Beverages and tableware will be provided. Please bring a dish to pass -- one of your family's favorites. We ask for a \$6 per person contribution to defray expenses - this is an unbeatable deal, because the regular \$6 Thacher Park parking fee is waived for those attending our picnic!

May 14th Woodswalk – Wolfe Tree Farm



There was a good turnout of about two dozen people for the tour of Tom and Anna's woodlot in the Town of Knox, Albany County. The Wolfe's have owned this property for nearly thirty years. The woodlot is about 80 acres in size and has been a source of firewood to heat their home, for hunting, and just to enjoy.



Tom explains his approach for selecting trees to be cut. He tries to thin out around the crowns of the crop trees to keep them growing vigorously.

Tom and Anna's woodlot includes the remains of a lime kiln. Lime production is an ancient technology that was used in America through the 1800s. This particular kiln is a stone chamber dug into a hillside. Firewood was stacked in the bottom of the kiln, and limestone boulders were piled on top. The stone would be burned for several days until it was fully calcined into lime, calcium oxide. The most common product of burning lime was quicklime, which was used to make plaster and mortar for building construction.



Trilliums, and other spring wildflowers, were found scattered throughout the woodlot. Trilliums are low growing woodland flowers. There are several varieties but what they all share are 3 leaves, 3 petals and 3 sepals.



June 4th - Landis Arboretum Woodswalk

The Landis Arboretum is located just north of Esperance in Schoharie County. It was the inspiration of Fred Lape who spent part of his boyhood on what was at the time the Lape family farm. The original farm is now part of the arboretum. Much later in life he began planting trees from all over the world and dedicated the property to a friend and colleague, George Landis.

One of the highlights of this woodswalk was the sight of a young barred owl sitting on the ground at the base of a tree just a few feet from the trail. With one of the parents sitting anxiously on a branch above, the owlet calmly watched everyone walk by. Apparently our group marched through the classroom in the middle of flying lessons.



Since much of the arboretum is wooded and includes a trail network, it offers the opportunity to see various stages of forest succession, along with a variety of tree species and habitats.

We also learned about bluebirds and the care and maintenance of nest boxes from Jim Beil. Jim is one of the volunteers who maintain nest boxes along the bluebird trail along route 20.



Bluebird Houses

Bluebirds can readily use our help for housing. Bluebirds cannot excavate their own houses, but rely on old woodpecker holes or rotting trees for their homes. A manmade house is a welcome sight to most bluebirds, however, they tend to be a little more picky than most birds about how their house is designed and where it is located.

A good bluebird box should have a floor size of 5" x 5", the box height should be between 8 to 12", the entrance hole should be about 6 to 10" above the floor and the diameter of the entrance hole should be 1 1/2". Be sure your boxes are made of durable wood like cedar, have ventilation holes in the top and drainage holes in the bottom. Another good feature is an easy open front to check on the progress of the nesting birds without disturbing them.

Bluebirds nest primarily in suburban and rural areas. During breeding, bluebirds hunt insects by scanning the ground from a perch, spotting an insect, then swooping down to the ground to get it. Scattered young trees or shrubs, fence posts and lower branches of a lone mature tree make good hunting perches. Sparse or low vegetation is also important since it enables the bluebirds to see and capture insects. Cut meadows, mowed lawns and grazed fields are good.

Nest boxes should be at least 100 feet from brushy or wooded areas where wrens are likely to be and preferably at least 1/4 mile from farmyards or barns where sparrows live.

Proper spacing of your nest boxes is important. Bluebirds are territorial when breeding and will claim territories of 2-3 acres. Research shows they will generally not nest closer than 100 yards from the next box. To keep sparrows out, pair boxes 5-15 feet apart. The sparrows will only nest in one, leaving the other open for the bluebirds.

Bluebirds start looking for breeding nest boxes by mid March. Bluebirds will use them well into August, producing 2-3 broods per year.

Grow Healthy, High Value Trees

by Mike Birmingham, Forester

We lost a dear friend in the passing of Mike Greason. His message on woods walks and articles had been to grow the best trees and cut their competition. He said this prescription could return annual gains of 10-15% - far higher than earnings from other sources we can know.

Most woodlots have lower quality, merchantable trees. Their removal through commercial timber harvests could release healthy, high quality trees to grow quickly to mature sizes. Trees need growing space and time to reach mature sizes of 18 or more inches in diameter.

The focus of timber cutting should be to remove the lesser quality competitors of superior trees. Superior trees are high value species 12 to 16 inches in diameter, good form, and free of major defects. Inferior trees may be forked, low value species, have extensive wounds, leaning trees, and ones with small crowns. For stumpage valuations by species and regions see DEC stumpage report http://www.dec.ny.gov/docs/lands_forests_pdf/spr2011winter.pdf.

Figure 1 below shows a leaning black cherry that could be harvested to release vigorous, healthy, and valuable surrounding trees.



Figure 2 below shows a large oak tree of mature size and inferior form that competes with other more desirable trees.



A woodland owner hiring a consultant forester can communicate their desire to grow superior trees and remove their competition through commercial timber sales.

2011 Woodswalks & Events

STEERING COMMITTEE

Saturday July 16th Albany County

9:00 a.m. meet at Brearton property at 1676 Berne Altamont Road, Altamont, NY at the junction of SR 157 and 156; driveway leading north from that intersection. State Extension Forester, Dr. Peter Smallidge will lead a Small Scale Woodlot Management and Low Impact Harvesting Workshop. The event will focus on tree selection for various landowner objectives; demonstration of safe tree felling techniques, and demonstration of controlling beech stump sprouting and root suckering.
More information call 872-9600

Sunday July 17th Rensselaer County

9:00 a.m. meet at Gibbs property, 287 Hidley Road, Wynantskill, NY. Peter Smallidge will lead a Small Scale Woodlot Management and Low Impact Harvesting Workshop. The event will focus on tree selection for various landowner objectives; demonstration of safe tree felling techniques, and skidding with a small tractor equipped with a winch; and demonstration of controlling beech stump sprouting and root suckering.
More information call 283-0155

Sunday August 7th Albany County

11:00 a.m. meet at Glen Doone Picnic Area, Thacher Park for our annual picnic. See a detailed description of the event on page 6.
More information call 861-8753

Saturday August 20th Schenectady County

10:00 a.m. meet at Christman Sanctuary 3201 Schoharie Turnpike, Delanson, NY
Join us for an easy hike through this nature preserve. Along the way we will discuss land use history and woodland management opportunities. There are several scenic waterfalls along the Bozenkill Creek which runs through the property which will make this a memorable experience.
More information call 280-8892

Saturday September 24th Greene County

8:30 a.m. meet at Agroforestry Center Route 23, Acra, NY
Choose from several concurrent workshops (morning) and field visits (afternoon) covering a variety of topics of interest to woodland owners including emerald ash borer, Agroforestry, silviculture, and a visit to a log export yard.
More information call 622-9820

Jim Beil, Secretary ph 355-4471
jbeil.tr7@gmail.com

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

Ron Bernhard, Member ph 765-4600
rgb138@msn.com

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

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

Dick Gibbs, Vice Chair ph 283-0155
rgibbs@nycap.rr.com

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

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

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

Jason Post, Member ph 577-4101
jpost@mhccable.com

Dave Schmidt, Member ph 237-8327

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

Phil Walton, Director ph 895-5346
pwalton518@gmail.com

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

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

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

Any interested member of the chapter is welcome to join the steering committee. Meetings are held every three months at the Colonie Town Library starting at 6:30 p.m. The next meeting is scheduled July 12th.

Deer Management Plan Available for Comment

White-tailed deer are an important game species in NYS. They can also have a major influence on the forest ecosystem where the deer population is high.

DEC recently released a draft deer management plan for public review and comment. The plan describes six primary goals that encompass the current priorities for deer management and the values and issues expressed by the public. It is available for your review on-line at:

www.dec.ny.gov/animals/7211.html

White-tailed deer have been described as keystone species in forest ecosystems implying that their feeding activity can directly and indirectly affect many other species. It has been said that deer are grazers by choice, browsers by necessity. During the spring and summer they feed primarily on herbaceous plants and the leaves of woody plants. In the fall, acorns and fallen fruits are favored. Browsing of woody stems is prevalent in winter, when other food sources are usually in short supply.

At high population densities deer can greatly alter the appearance and ecology of forest vegetation. Forest Service Ecologist Susan Stout made this poignant observation:

We think we know our forests. But in Pennsylvania and many other parts of the Northeast, deer overabundance has changed our forests so much and for so long that we truly don't know how our forests would look without too many deer. I walk inside a fence that's been up for three or four years in the springtime, and I am amazed at the wildflowers and seedlings I find.

Forest Service Researcher Stephen Horsley made this assessment:

The current density is producing devastating and long-term effects on forests. Foraging deer "vacuum up" the seedlings of highly preferred species, reducing plant diversity and in the extreme, creating near monocultures. It could take decades or even hundreds of years to restore forests. . . . Deer have the capacity of changing forest ecology, by changing the direction of forest vegetation development. It doesn't matter what forest values you want to preserve or enhance—whether deer hunting, animal rights, timber, recreation, or ecological integrity—deer are having dramatic, negative effects on all the values everyone holds dear.

Comments on the draft deer management plan will be accepted through Thursday, July 28, 2011.



Management Plan for White-tailed Deer in New York State 2011-2015



Division of Fish, Wildlife and Marine Resources
Bureau of Wildlife
June 2011

Welcome New Members!

Robert & Susan Kliza, Gilboa, New York

Christine Young, Sand Lake, New York

Test Your Wildlife Knowledge ...

The most melancholy of creatures that, because of its deformed countenance, refuses contact with all life and will dissolve completely into tears if ever gazed upon.

Here are three clues to the identity of another rare denizen of the forest:

Mystery Critter

Clue #1

Probably the homeliest animal in the world, and knows it. The distribution was once fairly wide, the original habitat being those regions where glaciers had recently scoured the landscape leaving only a meager growth of mosses, lichens and liverworts.

Clue #2

History shows beyond dispute that, as these glaciated areas gradually changed to swampy, lake-dotted country the _____ was forced to take to the water. Of distinctly low mentality it traveled constantly around the unaccustomed marches in search of fodder. With time, it developed webbing between its toes, but only on the submerged left feet. Hence, on entering the water it could swim only in circles, and never got back to shore. Fossil bones dredged from these lake-bottoms reveal that thousands perished of starvation in this manner.

Clue #3

Today the _____ is met with solely in the hemlock forests of the Adirondacks. It is a most retiring bashful, crepuscular animal, garbed in a loose, warty, singularly ill-fitting skin. He is always unhappy—even morbid. He is given to constant weeping over his really upsetting appearance, and can sometimes be tracked by his tear-stained trail. Moonlight nights are best for locating one of these creatures, for then the animal prefers to lie quiet in its hemlock-home, fearing, should it venture forth, that it may catch a glimpse of itself in some moonlit pool. Sometimes you can hear one weeping softly to himself. The sound is a low note of pleading somewhat resembling the call of the Cross-feathered Sneer.



Do You Recognize It?

What is the name of this confounded critter?

Answer:

THE SQUONK

Lacrimacornus dissolvens Sudw.

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