

New York Forest Owners Association Capital District Chapter Newsletter

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Message from the Chair



This is my last message as the Chapter Chair. It has been a privilege to serve as Chair for the last two years, and I plan to continue as a Member of the Steering Committee. Our Chapter is still very viable, thanks mostly to the Members of the Steering Committee who are dedicated to the cause of sustainable forestry

practices on private woodlands. We were also helped by the hosts of our woodswalks and motivated by members who attended them, making our efforts worthwhile.

We are fortunate that Richard "Dick" Gibbs will be taking over as the new Chair. Dick, and his wife Shari, are also very involved with the Rensselaer Plateau Alliance, which share many of our goals. We have co-sponsored some of our recent woodswalks and programs with the RPA.

This year, NYFOA will concentrate mostly on "Restoring New York's Woodlands". Plans are now being made for woodswalks, starting in early May that will concentrate on efforts to insure that there are, or will be, a new generation of desired growth in our woodlands. We should all take a good look now, to see what is growing in the understory, and figure out what can be done to save the desired species, those that are important to you. There will be much information forthcoming about this project, both in print and electronically, especially from our website, nyfoa.org.

Relatively, NYFOA is a small organization, so it is very important for each of us to let as many people as possible know about our mission. A great way is to mention nyfoa.org, especially when you are emailing your friends. Hopefully, they will click on our website, learn a lot, and maybe even join NYFOA.

I hope to see some of you at our Winter Gathering on January 19th, and also hope the best for you in the New Year.

Jim Bulich

Holiday Gathering – Jan 19th

Chapter members, family, and friends are invited to attend the annual CDC Holiday Gathering covered dish supper. If you have never participated before – bring a dish to pass. The event usually attracts chapter members from across the region and this year will be held on **Saturday, January 19, 2013** at the Bethany Presbyterian Church in Menands starting at 4:00 p.m. It will also be an opportunity to thank Jim Bulich for his service as our Chapter Chair.

Our guest speaker is Dan Yacobellis. Dan is a man of many talents including animal tracker, primitive skills practitioner, and wilderness awareness educator. He is the founder of Tamakoce Wilderness Programs and runs seasonal classes for children and runs workshops on tracking and primitive living skills throughout the year for all ages.



Dan Yacobellis

Dan has been working to get a comprehensive picture of the animal activity on the Rensselaer Plateau and hopes to start spreading out to the larger Capital District area by doing flora and fauna inventories for private and public landholders. With slides and stories, he will explore some of the different possibilities that landowners have regarding management of their lands.

The Holiday Gathering is an opportunity to enjoy food, fellowship, learn something new and participate in a silent auction organized by Jim and Phyllis House. Attendees are encouraged (but not required) to bring as many as five (5) new or nearly new items that you are donating to the auction. Tickets will be sold at three (3) for \$1.00 or 20 for \$5. Profits from the auction go to support chapter activities. The only condition is that if your donation doesn't sell, it goes back home with you. (Jim's garage is already full!)

Covered Dish Supper! (Bring a dish to pass)



Directions: From the north – take 787 south to exit 7W (route 378) and bear right on the ramp to route 32. Turn left onto route 32 (Broadway). At the first traffic light 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 route 32 (Broadway). At the first traffic light 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.

Chapter News via e-mail

It has been just over six months since we have instituted sending messages by email to those members for whom we have a working address, notifying them of new events, event reminders, schedule changes, etc. Many addresses are bouncing rendering the message undeliverable. If you are not receiving messages but would like to receive updates from us this way, please go to the following address:

<http://npogroups.org/lists/info/nyfoa-cdc-news> and click on **SUBSCRIBE** to be added to the list. Your information will never be used for any other reason than to try to keep you informed of NYFOA related business and events. Will you help us his way?

What Retired Country Folks Do

By Richard Gibbs

On Hidley Farm, we own a small woodlot on a steep side-hill that hosts a nice stand of Sugar Maple trees. This south facing rocky slope ends at our property boundary where a large oak line- tree lived for well over 100 years, but was uprooted in an ice storm, and fell onto our neighbor's side of the boundary a year ago. Another neighbor, Larry, has set up lines to collect maple sap for his sugar house on our trees, and this site was very productive-the woodlot is now laced with PEX tubes all about chest high. Larry desired to expand his trunk lines to tap more trees, but the big dead Oak was now in the way. Charlie is the major woodlot chainsaw operator among many his many other skills, and he used his large saw to cut the oak into about twenty chunks, each of which would weigh well over 100 pounds. While we heat with wood, we have more than enough, and the Oak was now in a difficult spot for us to retrieve from, so it would have been easy to take the path of just leaving the blocks of Oak where they lay and let Larry continue with his sap line project. However Charlie does not like to cut up a tree and then leave it in the woods. With the web of sap lines, and the steep bank, it was a challenge to remove a couple tons of oak blocks. I have a Farni 3-PT hitch skidding winch for my 39 HP Kubota tractor, and I started my Saturday by doing the hook-up of the winch on the back of my tractor.



My Tractor

The woodlot was a veritable calendar picture of golden maple leaves both on the ground in the trees, and some now flitting to the earth. Ah to be part of the natural cycles, but how to find the right place at each moment!

I backed into the upper edge of the woodlot, Charlie and friend Joe, along with Larry, would pull out the 165 ft. of winch cable, then add another 50 ft. of pulling straps to reach down to the bottom edge and snag one of the blocks. I would run the winch and they would guide each block as we pulled up the entire bulk of the tree in the course of about two hours. We still need to pull them more as we don't quite have the blocks up to the open field, but that will be tomorrow's work. Four retired men with great skills, tools, and experience work almost without talking in the beautiful setting. Considerable danger at all times, but all are extremely careful and quick to spot any trouble with the way things proceed.

None of this operation makes any real economic sense in the current economic world of monetized realities. We moved probably a cord of wood without ever touching the tubing lines for the maple sap operation. The wood will be split, stacked, and dried for two years.

We are not the first to work these woods, others with axes, splitting malls, and horses worked hard in these same stands. The Hidley Farm cemetery is only a few hundred yards beyond, and that is where my ashes should come to rest when my time is over. The giant trees, the falling leaves from one year's cycle, the maple sap that sweetens the morning pancakes, the rotting debris and the work of the fungus to decompose all that grows in sunlight, the smoothed rocks from untold glacial grinding lie scattered everywhere. The nested cycles lead out beyond our ability to imagine, and we are part of these all. The woodlot is my laboratory of life.



Joe, Charlie & Larry

DEC Service Foresters

Did you know that DEC service foresters are available to help private woodland owners? They advise on sustainable forest management activities tailored to meet your ownership goals. Foresters have expertise on wildlife habitat improvement, erosion control, tree planting, recreation enhancement, sugar bush management and silviculture. Federal cost-sharing programs and the state forest tax law program are also administered by DEC foresters.

If you are new woodland owner, or if you have never had a visit from a service forester, consider it. This is a non-regulatory program which is available to any woodland owner interested in any aspect of woodland management.

DEC Service Foresters who serve landowners in the Capital District Chapter:

Josh Borst phone 607-652-3607
Delaware & Otsego counties

Jason Drobnack phone 607-652-3624
Columbia, Greene and Montgomery counties

Dan Gaidasz phone 518-357-2351
Rensselaer, Albany, Schenectady and Schoharie counties



DEC Forester Jason Drobnack measures a large sycamore

Forestry Awareness Day

Forestry Awareness Day is **Tuesday March 19, 2013**. A face-to-face meeting with your elected representative, or a member of their Albany staff, is a good way to inform them about your concerns to give them new information and insights. Don't feel you are imposing: after all, legislators meet with constituents daily. If you feel intimidated at first, remember that legislators depend on you for support just as you depend on them.



If you are available, please consider joining a group of individuals who represent various forestry interests including the Forest Owners Association. Visits to Senators and Assemblymen and women have been scheduled through the Council of Forest Resource Organizations. Since legislators and their staff members are usually busy, visits usually last 10 to 15 minutes.

2012 Issue Summary

The following issues were discussed last year.

Fair Properly Tax Assessments

Develop property tax and assessment legislation that is fair and equitable, that encourages long term forest management, and prevents forest owners from being put into a position of having to subdivide, liquidate, or convert their forest resources.

The State Plan Should Include Wood Energy

The State Energy Plan talks about prioritizing the use of in-state energy resources but state procurement and incentive policies are silent on the potential for using forest harvesting residuals, wood waste, and low-value timber to produce energy, even though supplies of this material far exceeds market demand in most regions of the state.

Aggressively Combat Invasive Species

Invasive species, especially insects and pathogens, are compromising the health and economic

viability of our rural and urban forests. These threats, if left unchecked, will mean the loss of billions of dollars in forest products, thousands of private sector jobs and billions of dollars in sanitation and hazard tree removal costs. State policy and funding to support eradication, control and monitoring are vitally needed.

Predator Beetle Releases

By Krishna Ramanujan

Hemlock woolly adelgids (HWA) – aphid like insects that have destroyed stands of hemlocks throughout the East Coast -- were first identified in hemlocks in the central Finger Lakes in summer 2008 and then in trees in Cornell Plantations' natural areas in early spring 2009.



L. nigrinus

To battle the hemlock-killing insects, a team of entomologists has released one of the adelgids' natural predators as a local case study. Specifically, researchers from Cornell, the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) and University of Massachusetts-Amherst released 900 *Laricobius nigrinus* beetles into a stand of adelgid-infested hemlocks on Cornell Plantations land near Lansing and at two other sites on Seneca Lake.

L. nigrinus beetles are native to the Pacific Northwest, where the black, 3-millimeter-long beetle keeps HWA in check by preying on them. As HWA spread through the Northeast, the insects flourished and decimated hemlocks, since no natural predators lived in the region. HWA avoid predators by growing in the winter. But *L. nigrinus* beetles have synchronous life cycles with the hemlock woolly adelgid, and they feed and grow during winter.

"It's important to reassure people, the release of this beetle is not haphazard," said Mark Whitmore, a Cornell forest entomologist in the Department of Natural Resources. "People have been studying *L. nigrinus* for a long time and have established that it will feed only on adelgids and successfully reproduce only on a diet of HWA."



Mark Whitmore releases predator beetles

The Lansing site was ideal for the case study, the researchers said, since the hemlocks there are only lightly infested with HWA, and there are many hemlocks to sustain a long-term study.

Volunteers trained to identify adelgids by Whitmore and Cornell Plantations staff discovered the Lansing site last spring. The site will be left untreated with pesticides for 10 years to study how well the *L. nigrinus* beetles become established, said Todd Bittner, director of natural areas.

If the experiment proves successful the researchers expect the population will take two to three years to build to levels where they can be readily detected.

Cornell natural areas staff will continue to survey Cornell Plantations, train volunteers and research strategies for stopping the spread of adelgids, Bittner said.

Welcome New Members

The following people have joined the Capital District Chapter in the past three months. Welcome!

Sheryl and Frank Galinski	Poestenkill, NY
William and Dolores Heilmann	Castleton, NY
Jack & Gail Phelan	Schenectady, NY

Steering Committee

Jim Beil, Secretary jbeil.tr7@gmail.com	ph 355-4471
Mike Birmingham, Member mjbirming@airport.net	ph 758-2621
Ron Bernhard, Member rgb138@msn.com	ph 765-4600
Renee Bouplon, Member bouplonrj@gmail.com	ph 929-7832
Jim Bulich, Chair bettyjim@mhccable.com	ph 943-5047
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Phil Walton, Director* pwalton518@gmail.com	ph 895-5346
Carl Wiedemann, Editor wiedeman@nycap.rr.com	ph 895-1028
Marilyn Wyman, Director* mfw10@cornell.edu	ph 622-9820

*NYFOA State board of directors

Note: Chapter members are encouraged to join the steering committee. We need your ideas. Meetings are held every three months at the Colonie Library.

2013 Steering Committee Meeting Schedule:

January 8th – 6:30 p.m.
 April 9th – 6:30 p.m.
 July 9th – 6:30 p.m.
 October 8th – 6:30 p.m.

Local Forestry Workshops

These programs are held at the Agroforestry Resource Center 6055 Route 23, Acra, NY 12405 (518) 622-9820x0 to register.

Demystifying Woods and Wildlife Management

Date: Saturday, February 9

Cost: \$5.00 per person

Time: 1:00-4:00 p.m.

To register call: 518-622-9820x0

Registration deadline: Thursday, February 7

Presented by Marilyn Wyman, Extension Educator

Many landowners are interested in learning how to make the most of their property through simple, sustainable projects. Projects we will learn about include attracting more wildlife, pruning wild apple trees, tree planting and increasing the value of your trees as well as an introduction to basic forestry concepts and terminology.

Trees and Tracks

Date: Thursday, February 21

Cost: \$5.00 per person \$10 per family.

Time: 1:00-3:00 p.m.

To register call: 518-622-9820x0

Registration deadline: Monday, February 18

The winter landscape may seem dead to us, but it is actually full of life! If you know what to look for, winter is a great time to see evidence of the wildlife that lives in our area. This winter adventure walk will highlight identification of animals from their tracks, scat and habitats. We'll also get to know deciduous and coniferous trees from their bark, branches and buds. This is a family-friendly event and a great outdoor cure for school-break cabin fever!

Landowners and Your Woodlands

Date: Saturday, March 9

Cost: \$5.00 per person \$10.00 per family

Time: 1:00-3:00 p.m.

To register call: 518-622-9820x0

Location: Agroforestry Resource Center, Acra

Registration deadline: Thursday, March 7

Presented by Mary Spring, Certified Forester

Do you own woods? Do you have woodlands you would like to learn more about, such as the value of your trees? Would you like to know how to enhance your woodland for wildlife and other opportunities your woodlands provide? Mary Spring, professional forester, will provide basic concepts of forest stewardship and management practices, forest planning as well as the value of working with those qualified to assist you. Come dressed for the weather, as we will have an outdoor component illustrating some of the concepts covered.

NYS Farm Show - Syracuse

The New York Forest Owners Association (NYFOA) has announced free workshops designed to help all New York landowners to get the most out of their woodlots. Fifteen free programs to help owners realize greater benefits from their woodlands are scheduled for the 2013 Farm Show in Syracuse, February 21-23, 2013. Learn from experts. Come with your questions.

Programs are held in the Somerset Room on the lower level of the Arts and Home Building at the N.Y. State Fairgrounds in Syracuse. Programs start on the hour and allow time for questions and discussion. Reservations are not needed. List of workshops is available at www.NYFOA.org.

Restore NY Woodlands

If you have been reading the Forest Owner since the July/August issue, you are by now familiar with NYFOA's initiative starting this 50th anniversary year, to raise public awareness of the unhealthy condition of New York's forests. Regeneration of desirable tree species to replace the mature and old age trees is happening in very few woodlots unless very specific management is practiced. To call attention to this problem, its causes and solutions, NYFOA is encouraging all local chapters to hold multiple woods walks centered on the week of May 11 through 19. To date, CDC has commitments to host 4 woods walks, one each in Greene, Rensselaer, and Schenectady counties, the fourth to be held at a yet undetermined location. With only four of our nine counties represented, a large portion of our chapter area is not yet served.

Have you ever thought of hosting a Woodswalk? This coming May might be your chance to show what is going on in your woodlot and be instrumental in encouraging other forest landowners and the general public in understanding the importance and challenges of growing a healthy forest. If interested, please contact **Phil Walton at 895-5346** or at the email address listed elsewhere. Help would be provided in planning and hosting the event, but first we need to hear from you. If you are not ready to be a host but would like to volunteer on this initiative, please let me, or anyone on the steering committee, know. We will gladly accept your help.

The link <http://www.nyfoa.org/education/rnyw.php> to NYFOA's website contains developing resource information about RNYW. Please take a look. Thanks.

Fearsome Critter #16

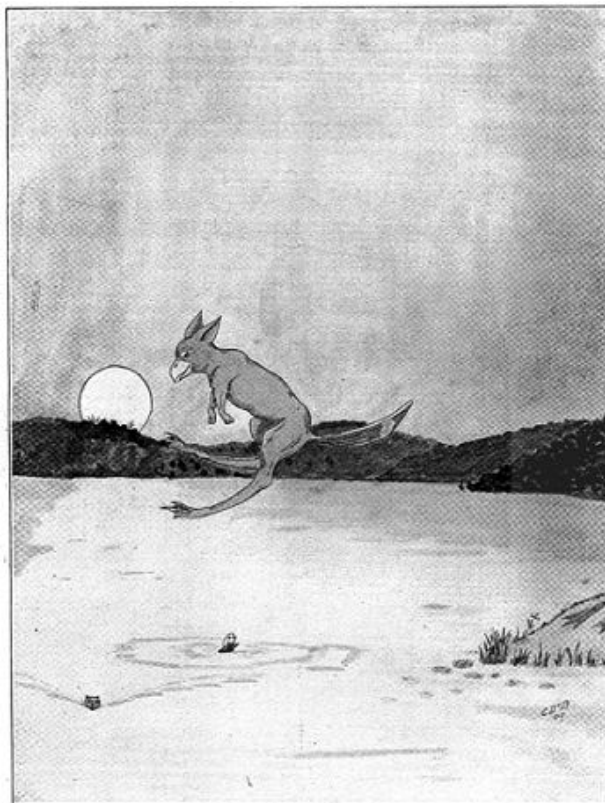
If you have ever paddled around Boundary Pond, in north-west Maine, at night you have probably heard from out the black depths of a cove a spat like a paddle striking the water. It may have been a paddle, but the chances are ten to one that it was a billdad fishing.

This animal occurs only on this one pond, in Hurricane Township. It is about the size of a beaver, but has long, kangaroo-like hind legs, short front legs, webbed feet, and a heavy, hawk-like bill. Its mode of fishing is to crouch on a grassy point overlooking the water, and when a trout rises for a bug, to leap with amazing swiftness just past the fish, bringing its heavy, flat tail down with a resounding smack over him. This stuns the fish, which is immediately picked up and eaten by the billdad. It has been reported that sixty yards is an average jump for an adult male.

Up to three years ago the opinion was current among lumber jacks that the billdad was fine eating, but since the beasts are exceedingly shy and hard to catch no one was able to remember having tasted the meat. That fall one was killed on Boundary Pond and brought into the Great Northern Paper Company's camp on Hurricane Lake, where the cook made a most savory slumgullion of it. The first (and only) man to taste it was Bill Murphy, a tote-road swamper from Ambegegis. After the first mouthful his body stiffened, his eyes glazed, and his hands clutched the table edge. With a wild yell he rushed out of the cook-house, down to the lake, and leaped clear out fifty yards, coming down in a sitting posture—exactly like a billdad catching a fish. Of course, he sank like a stone. Since then not a lumber jack in Maine will touch billdad meat, not even with a pike pole.



Lumberjacks using pike poles



THE BILLDAD.
(*Saltipiscator falcorostratus*.)

Join NYFOA

Help Support Sustainable Forestry

The New York Forest Owners Association is a not-for-profit organization established to encourage sustainable forestry practices and sound management of privately owned woodlands. Members include woodland owners and all others who care about the future of New York's trees and forests. Please consider joining because your support helps make 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