

# New York Forest Owners Association Capital District Chapter Newsletter

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## It's All About The Money

By Carl Wiedemann

The March issue of Sawmill and woodlot magazine includes an article that got me thinking about the financial aspects of woodlot ownership and management. The title says it all - It's Not All About the Money - but it's all about the money!

It was written by Robbo Holleran, a consulting forester from Chester Vermont. Robbo is one of the authors of the recently revised "Silvicultural Guide to Northern Hardwoods" - GTR 132 April 2014. The full article can be accessed from his website.

<http://robboholleranforester.org/>

Holleran argues that landowner surveys underestimate the importance of money in decision making. Most surveys show that growing timber is not an important goal for most landowners. However, this doesn't mean that timber income is not important. I think this may explain why most woodlots have been logged in the past (income) and why most landowners who sell timber don't use a consulting forester (cost).

He includes some great observations including the following: *"Land is a significant investment, with considerable costs for maintenance and management. It is this economic consideration that leads us to grow trees to full economic maturity, and to ensure proper reforestation after harvest. Good forest stewardship also allows the real estate to accumulate value. It is income from the periodic sale of trees that allows ordinary Americans the extraordinary privilege of land ownership. ("Extra-ordinary" in the sense of world history) So, culturing the forest toward commercially marketable wood products is a main feature of silviculture"*.

This is certainly an apt description of why Laura and I still own and manage our woodlot which was purchased in 1980. The investment aspect has always been an important objective and if management was not profitable, these "ordinary Americans" would not continue to own the property.

Selling timber generates income for the landowner, but Holleran makes the point that forest management is not free. Logging operations have to be profitable for the logger in order to stay in business. Therefore any forest management extras required in the contract have to be part of the logging cost calculation. This includes removal of undesirable trees to improve the vigor and composition of the residual stand, and construction of logging roads that can later be used as recreational trails. The extra operating costs to the logger, and timber left in the residual stand for the next harvest cycle, will be passed on to the landowner in the form of a lower bid.

These forest management costs can be thought of as an investment in the future. Sustainable woodlot management requires this type of investment. But since landowners ultimately pay the bill, they should have a good understanding of the costs and benefits.

*"But how many landowners enter into a project without that information? Some engage in selling timber, perhaps to the highest bidder, or just to the first "reasonable" offer. Then they are surprised when they have a messy job with inaccessible trails, tops and debris that are unsightly, damage to remaining trees, or perhaps a lot of cull trees standing. If the logger was hired to cut and haul merchantable timber, and that is all, then they got what they asked for.... In my opinion, well-informed landowners will make the best decisions"*.

Note: Jason was not able to prepare a Chair's message for this issue of the newsletter because of a death in the family.

## Welcome New Members!

Matt Ganster, Delanson, New York  
Kim Wilson, Troy, New York

# 2015 Chapter Picnic

Photos from the July 26<sup>th</sup> chapter picnic at Thacher Park



Anna Wolfe and Valarie Walton enjoying a chat along with lunch.



## 2015 Chapter Service Award – Ron Bernhard

Jason Post, Chairman of the Capital District presented the 2015 Chapter Service Award to Ron Bernhard at the picnic. This award thanks a volunteer individual for helping the Chapter operate in reaching members and other private forest owner outreach in the area.



Ron accepts the 2015 Chapter Service Award from Jason.

## Tour of Hudson River Hardwoods

**When:** Saturday, October 10, 2015 at 10:00 am. (Oct 17<sup>th</sup> rain date)

**Where:** Hudson River Hardwoods, 1339 CR 23B, Leeds NY 12451

Hudson River Hardwoods purchases timber and logs which are grown in this region. Logs are delivered by truck to the concentration yard at 1339 CR 23B where they are sorted, measured and graded by quality. These logs are then shipped and sold to buyers as far away as China and Indonesia. This tour will be an opportunity to learn about the lumber that is produced from logs, which relates to how logs are graded and priced. Jason Post, owner of Hudson River Hardwoods will show us how tree length logs are initially processed to get the most value and utilization from each. For further information contact Jason at (518) 577-4101.

## Marking Trees: The Key to Good Silviculture

**When:** Thursday, October 22 3:00 – 4:30 p.m.

**Where:** Agroforestry Center, Acra, N.Y.

**Cost:** \$5.00 per person

While forestry is defined as the science of planting and caring for forests and the management of growing timber, silviculture relates to the branch of forestry dealing with the development and care of forests. Silviculture has often been described as an art and science and includes marking trees to harvest in order to achieve a certain outcome.

The Siuslaw Model Forest (SMF) has trees harvested periodically to improve the health, resiliency and value of the forest. So how does a forester decide what to mark and why? Come and join us for an afternoon woods walk as we visit stands that have been marked for an upcoming harvest. We will discuss with Mary Spring, the SMF forester, why she marked certain trees and for what purpose. You will also have the chance to “mark” additional stands and practice the skills needed to help you begin to understand the process of harvesting timber on your own property.

Registration deadline: October 20

To register on line: [https://reg.cce.cornell.edu/markingtrees\\_210](https://reg.cce.cornell.edu/markingtrees_210) or call 518 622 9820 x0

## Making the Most of Your Woods: Tools and Resources for Landowners

**When:** Saturday, October 17th, 2015 8:30 – 4pm

**Where:** Poestenkill Fire Hall, 182 Main Street, Poestenkill, NY 12140

**Cost:** \$20 for lunch & materials

This day-long workshop for woodland owners will include expert presentations on a variety of topics in the morning, followed by a woods walk in the afternoon. Speakers from NYS Dept. of Environmental Conservation, Cornell Cooperative Extension, and Rensselaer Land Trust will explain how you can manage and create natural habitat for wildlife, grow the next forest for future generations, do your part to keep local streams and lakes healthy, develop a plan for your forest land, and get the most from a sustainable timber harvest. In the afternoon participants will tour the new Rensselaer Plateau Community Forest and a recent timber harvest site at the Capital District Wildlife Management Area. The woods walks will illustrate stewardship concepts from the morning sessions and how attendees can make a difference in their woods.

Register on-line by October 10th at workshop registration. For more information contact Kristi Sullivan [kls20@cornell.edu](mailto:kls20@cornell.edu)

### Agenda

- 8:30 Registration, Refreshments
- 9:00 Welcome, Introductions - Jim Bonesteel, Rensselaer Plateau Alliance
- 9:15 The Rensselaer Plateau and Your Land Ingrid Haeckel, NYSDEC Hudson River Estuary Program
- 9:30 Your Woodland as a Source of Wildlife Habitat and Biodiversity - Kristi Sullivan, Cornell University Dept. of Natural Resources
- 10:15 Sustainable Forest Management - Peter Smallidge, State Extension Forester, Cornell University
- 11:00 Break
- 11:15 Creating a Plan for Your Forest TBD, NYSDEC forester
- 11:45 Protecting Your Land with Conservation Easements - Nick Conrad, Rensselaer Land Trust
- 12:00 Maps, Tools and Other Resources to Help you Make Decisions on Your Land - Ingrid Haeckel
- 12:15 Lunch
- 1:00 Field Trip

## The Growing Deer Debate Conference

**When:** October 31, 2015 9am—4pm  
**Where:** Margaretville Central School  
415 Main St, Margaretville, NY  
**Cost:** \$25—Pre-Registration \$30—at Door

This day-long conference seeks to raise awareness of deer impact on the environment in the Catskill Mountain Region & throughout the eastern US. A variety of experts, professionals, & authors convene to discuss out-of-the-box & cutting edge solutions to tackle this growing issue.

To Register Call: 845-586-3054. For more information visit: [www.catskillforest.org](http://www.catskillforest.org)

### Agenda

- 9:00 a.m. Registration
- 9:30 Session 1: Nature Wars  
Jim Sterba, Author
- 10:30 Session 2: Deer, Forests & the People That Love Them Tom Rawinski, USDA Forest Service
- 11:30 Session 3: Free Market Environmentalism  
Edward Peter Stringham, Ph.D.
- 12:15 Lunch
- 1:00 p.m. Session 4: Regulated Commercial Harvest to Manage White-Tailed Deer - David Drake, Extension Wildlife Specialist
- 2:00 Session 5: Public Ownership—North American Model of Conservation—Public Stewardship; the Brewing of a Perfect Storm - Ruben Cantu, Habitat Advantage, Certified Wildlife Biologist
- 3:00 Session 5: Panel Discussion All Speakers
- 3:45 Closing Remarks - Ryan Trapani, CFA

## Challenges to the Catskill Forests: Understanding Issues, Moving Towards Solutions

**When:** Friday, November 13 - 9:30 am – 3:30 pm  
**Where:** Windham Mountain Resort, Windham, NY  
**Cost:** \$10.00 per person includes lunch

Our regional trees and forests are being impacted by invasive insect pests, overwhelmed by competing ground vegetation, and eaten by deer! Why should we care? Trees and forests clean our water and air, sequester carbon, support wildlife, provide local energy and valuable wood resources, plus provide places to recreate and relax. Come hear about these topics, have discussions on how we can find solutions and learn about valuable resources to help deal with these issues.

Registration deadline: November 6  
Register online at:  
[https://reg.cce.cornell.edu/forestchallenges\\_210](https://reg.cce.cornell.edu/forestchallenges_210)  
or call 518-622-9820x0

### Agenda

- Getting Serious about Two Destructive Invasive Forest Pests: Mark Whitmore Cornell University Forest Entomologist
- Impacts of Deer on Forested Landscapes: Dr. Paul Curtis, Cornell University Department of Natural Resources
- Challenges to Successful Forest Regeneration: Dr. Peter Smallidge, Cornell University's Extension Forester
- A New Road to Success: Transforming our Approach of the Ecology and Management of Invasive Plants: Dr. Bernd Blossey, Director of the Ecology and Management of Invasive Plants, Cornell University

## Game of Logging Workshop

Game of Logging classes were held July 16-17 at the Hoyt property in Grafton. The weather was perfect, the trees were perfect, and the participants were truly engrossed and amazed at what can be done.

The Game of Logging (GOL) is widely acknowledged as the premier chainsaw safety and productivity training program in the country, offering hands on chainsaw safety training in a competitive environment. Top instructors across the country combine demonstration with participation to teach chainsaw safety, productivity, conservation and cutting techniques.

The New York Center for Agricultural Medicine and Health (NYCAMH) has partnered with Bill Lindloff's ProCuts to offer Game of Logging trainings across the state. The cost of the class is covered in part through a generous grant from the New York State Department of Health. Game of Logging is widely recognized as a leader in logging safety. The program combines traditional 'classroom' lecture with a hands-on component, so students can put their newly learned skills to the test



The Game of Logging held at Lisa and Pierce Hoyt's woodlot in Grafton. In the photo above Bill Lindloff, the instructor, is giving a feedback evaluation on a tree felled by one of the participants. This GOL class was sponsored by both CDC-NYFOA and the RPA (Rensselaer Plateau Alliance).

## Grafton Tree Farm Tour

This is a summary of the August 29<sup>th</sup> woodswalk through Carl and Laura Wiedemann's 80 acre Tree Farm in Grafton.

We started with a visit to the cellar hole of a house that was the Cooper family home until about 1920. This is a reminder of how land use has changed over the years – from subsistence farm to tree farm. Living here must have been difficult for the Coopers because the site is not very suitable for agriculture.

The property was purchased 35 years ago to grow timber - profitably. It's hard to do this unless there is good timber potential, which there was in this case. The cost of woodland and annual property taxes makes it very challenging to manage a woodlot profitably from timber alone. However, timber is a natural inflation hedge. Trees grow come rain or shine and so does their value. Real prices for timberland have risen steadily for over 100 years. And timber helps diversify an investment portfolio.

This old farm was almost entirely cleared of trees in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. However, when farming ended, the forest regenerated naturally. Today there is a mix of red oak, hard and soft maple, hemlock, white pine, and several other species.

The Wiedemann's have used timber harvesting as a way to improve the health, productivity and value of the woodlot. There have been three timber sales on the property since 1980, yet the current timber volume is more than three times what it was back then. This is an example of the potential than can be achieved with silviculture.

We looked at measured trees on one acre of the woodlot. There were 40 trees 12" or more in diameter. The total value of these trees was estimated to be \$1,400.

### The Timber Management Strategy

1. Only Sell Marked Trees. Our trees are marked to control what is cut.
2. Cut Trees Periodically. Cutting creates growing room for established trees as well as new seedlings.
3. Leave Crop Trees. We try to leave a good residual stand after each timber harvest in anticipation of future harvests. If all of the valuable trees are cut, future productivity will be degraded.



Carl Wiedemann leads the NYFOA and RPA Woodswalk at his Tree Farm property in Grafton. Carl has demonstrated sustainable forestry and silviculture and kept accurate records of harvests, growth and profits over a long period, while leaving the forest in better condition than when he purchased it.

#### The Woodlot Management Results

- 1980 – 420 trees > 16" diameter
- 1982 – timber sale
- 1987 – timber sale
- 2010 – timber sale
- 2011 – 1,170 trees > 16" diameter



Woodswalk Attendees

## Steering Committee Meeting Schedule

Tuesday, Oct 13, 2015 @ 6:30 – Colonie Library  
 Tuesday, January 12, 2016 @ 6:30 – Colonie Library  
 Tuesday, April 12, 2016 @ 6:30 – Colonie Library

## Steering Committee

Jim Beil, Member jbeil.tr7@gmail.com	ph 355-4471
Mike Birmingham, Member mjbirmin@nycap.rr.com	ph 755-7469
Ron Bernhard, Member rgb138@msn.com	ph 765-4600
Fred Bockis fbockis@ymail.com	ph 253-9856
Renee Bouplon, Member bouplonrj@gmail.com	ph 929-7832
Jim Bulich, Member bettyjim@mhcable.com	ph 943-5047
Dick Gibbs, Member rgibbs@nycap.rr.com	ph 283-0155
Jeff Kehoe, Vice Chair halfacreforestry@gmail.com	ph 596 9040
Tracy Lemanec tlamanec@msn.com	ph 864-5068
Ron Pedersen, Director* rwp22@nycap.rr.com	ph 785-6061
Jason Post, Chair jasonrpost@gmail.com	ph 577-4101
Dave Schmidt, Member	ph 237-8327
Bob Sheedy, Member rms47@aol.com	ph 482-1288
Mary Spring, Secretary Maryspring@rocketmail.com	ph 634-7174
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

\*Director – member of the NYFOA state board of directors

# How to spot a healthy forest

Sizing up the health of a forest may be hard to do with the naked eye. There's a lot going on in there. Plants, animals, people and businesses all play critical roles behind the scenes.

Forests are critical from every angle. Animals and people rely on them for food, clean air and fresh water. Businesses count on them to supply materials for products we need every day. Local and global economies depend upon them to create jobs and foster growth.

Sustainable forestry maintains a delicate balance among all these demands, so forests can serve as a viable resource now and in the future. Numerous factors indicate whether or not a forest is being managed sustainably. Get familiar with these key seven.

## 1. Balanced Management Practices

When forests are managed sustainably, there are ecologically sound plans in place for protecting watersheds, harvesting timber, reducing hazards and reforestation. Trees may be thinned to prevent overcrowding, reduce disease or enhance access for recreational use. Some management practices are tailored to help conserve habitat for species that would otherwise be lost. Reforestation can be allowed to take place naturally through the growth and spreading of seeds from remaining trees or it can be prompted by new plantings. In a sustainably managed forest, all this activity is carried out by design with a long-term view.

## 2. Economic productivity

Thirty percent of the world's forests are used primarily in a production capacity to bring us wood, fiber, fuel and food. This production employs millions of people, supporting local and national economies. A healthy forest is highly productive, yielding an ample supply today without compromising the ability to produce in the future. Achieving this health is directly related to how the forest is managed—how materials are harvested and replenished.

## 3. Environmental protection

In addition to a production function, forests have what is known as a protective function. They absorb greenhouse gasses, filter air pollution, protect soil from water and wind erosion, and mitigate floods.

## 4. Biodiversity

Forests are complex ecosystems with lives of their own, and every leaf counts. Even the smallest piece of the system, from a bird to a beetle to pond bacteria, is needed to support every other piece. All

forest animals, in particular, need a clean, safe water supply, as well as specific foods for nourishment. Some animals require certain "microclimates", which are the unique conditions resulting from particular groups of plants or land forms. Biodiversity represents the diversity of life in a thriving forest, which helps make it stronger and better able to withstand outside threats that can destroy it, like infestations and disease.

## 5. Wildlife

The loss of species' habitat and the extinction of species is one of the major threats to biodiversity. It's like removing one link from a chain. A healthy, sustainable forest operates with wildlife conservation in mind, primarily by conserving habitat so species can move freely, feed and reproduce. For example, bears need to roam across long distances. Breaking up this habitat with commercial development, without planning for corridors that can provide safe passage, can isolate them to the point of population decline.

## 6. Recreation

A healthy forest is not only one that supports the living creatures with in it, but also provides a place for us to visit and enjoy through hiking, boating, camping and other recreational activities. About 86% of US forestland is available for recreation, and U.S. National Forests welcome nearly 150 million visitors per year.

## 7. Certification

Forest certification programs, such as the Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI) work to ensure the health and future of our forests, with credible, transparent and auditable standards that enable a sustainable resource for today and generations to come.



# **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 \$45.00 for an individual or family.

**Contact: NYFOA, P.O. Box 541, Lima, New York 14485 1-800-836-3566 [www.nyfoa.org](http://www.nyfoa.org)**

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