

# New York Forest Owners Association Capital District Chapter Newsletter

Volume 26, Issue 4

October 2016

## Chair's Message



Time to look at the market for this season, which is just beginning. The Logging / Lumber industry takes time off in the late summer, and gets rolling again, after the all the fairs and the first day of school.

It was a tough summer for logs laying in inventory. The Canadians have had high inventories of logs...all species. They take their vacations starting mid-July through mid-August, and pretty much shut down completely, for taking in any logs. When their saw mills don't run, the logs sit outside spoiling. This goes for the log yards here in the states, as well. With nowhere to ship, the logs sit and spoil. Stain in logs is a very big problem for lumber producers. Stained lumber is useless for anything other than pallets or RR ties. Stained logs reduce a saw mill's average yield of # 1 common and better lumber, and in turn, yields less dollars per thousand income. This summer in particular, given the heat and humidity, stain took its toll heavily. Bummer...

On the export scene, China is still buying heavily. Ash log pricing is starting to level off, and even dropped some this summer. Ash lumber is slow moving and building up in the warehouses. This specie has had quite a run, for a long time now. The exporting of Ash logs, is presently ok. I see good movement in kiln dried Red Oak lumber and logs. Red Oak should be a very good item, this winter harvesting season. However, according to Joe, ocean freight rates are rising. This will make a big difference in what China can pay for logs. Ocean rates were as low as under \$400/container. Get that? You could get a full container load of logs, from USA to China, for under \$400. It costs 2 times that, just to get the container to

a N.Y. Port. I have seen, in my time, ocean rates as high as \$1400/container. So again, this rise in rates can greatly affect log and lumber prices. I have no idea why these rates are going up, but I will try to find out and let you know, in the next article. If any of you work in the freight industry, and know the reason, please contact me and clue me in.

Until then, enjoy what is left of this lovely season, and remember to hug a tree before you cut 'em.

*Jason*

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## Join Our Email List

The chapter maintains an electronic mailing list of members. This helps to keep you up to date about new events, event reminders, schedule changes, etc. 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?

## New Members

The chapter welcomes our newest members:

Ben Byas	Catskill, N.Y.
Bill Faulkner	Glenville, N.Y.
Dominick Ferraro	Cairo, N.Y.
Duane Miller	Cobleskill, N.Y.
Don Webber	Livingston, N.Y.

# Upcoming Events of Interest

**What: Starks Woodlot Tour**

**When: Saturday, October 8, 2016 - 10:00am - noon**

**Location: 243 Dean Hill Road, Canaan, NY, 12029**

Charles and Karen Starks have owned and managed their 113 acre property since the 1970's. The woodlot is mixed hardwood and white pine growing on a south facing slope. An aerial photo from the 1950's show that the land which now supports a dense growth of forest trees was originally field and pasture. The former dairy farm is now a tree farm.

Charles cuts and moves firewood and sawlogs with the help of a 40 hp four wheel drive tractor adapted for skidding. The property is currently enrolled under the New York Forest Tax Law 480a.

This woods walk will be a great opportunity for NYFOA members to see how the Starks are implementing sustainable woodland management.



Charles Starks

**Directions:**

From the intersection of Routes 22 and 295 in Canaan, take Route 22 south to Miller Road. Miller Road has two entrances on Route 22, you want the second one. You will pass through a rock cut, then past a cemetery on your left, Miller Road is the next left. Turn left on Miller

Road (a dirt road), take the first right on Dean Hill Road, 1.3 miles from the paved road is our house, first on the left.

Or, from Exit B1 on the NYS Thruway, take Route 22 north, go over the railroad, Miller Road is the second road on your right. Turn right on Miller Road (a dirt road), take the first right on Dean Hill Road, 1.3 miles from the paved road is our house, first on the left.

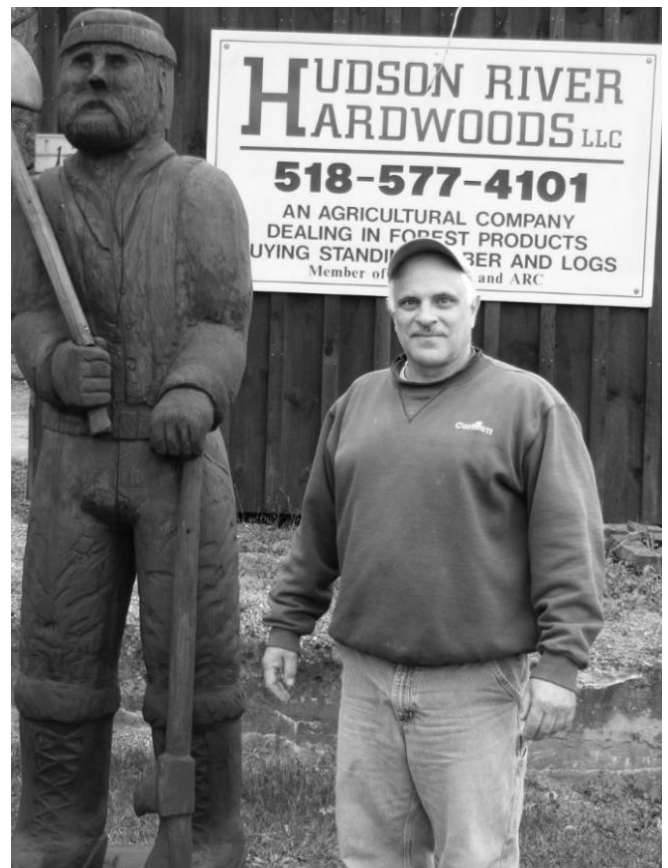
**What: Log Yard Tour – Hudson River Hardwoods**

**When: Saturday October 15, 2016, 9 am until noon**

**Location: 1339 CR 23B Leeds NY 12451**

**Cost: Free!**

Jason Post, owner of Hudson River Hardwoods, has been grading logs for a looong time! He knows his business well. The tour will focus on log scale, no, not a disease but the way logs are measured for the lumber they contain. Grading goes along with scaling, because the location of log defects alters the yield of the quality lumber we all look for. Jason demonstrates with clear examples, and freely shares his knowledge. Take this opportunity to look into a part of the industry most are not privileged to see.



Jason Post – Hudson River Hardwoods

# Firewood Gathering With a Tractor Winch

By Dick Gibbs

We all know that firewood gathering is time consuming regardless of what tools and technology one has. The dollar value of a stack of wood in the shed is less about the wood than it is about the time it takes to move wood from the stump to the drying shed. Making the work as efficient as possible is crucial.

One tool is a tractor fitted with a power take off 3-point cable winch. I have a Kubota L3940 4WD tractor [39 horsepower] tractor and a Farmi JL 351P winch. This combination is ideal for firewood and modest size logs. No tool is perfect for all situations and all good tools can also be dangerous: the winch is no exception.



A good-size high voltage transmission line bisects my woods. Last winter the company cut the right-of-way back a great deal as this had not been done for many years. The trees that were removed were piled by the side of the ROW and our boundary for the taking but the piles of whole tree logs were not easily reached for direct chain saw cutting. The winch has 165 ft of cable on it, and on the cable are several sliding choker links. I back up to a pile leaving a safe distance and string the cable out so I can attach individual choker chains to individual logs and then to the sliding cable links. This allows one to spread the



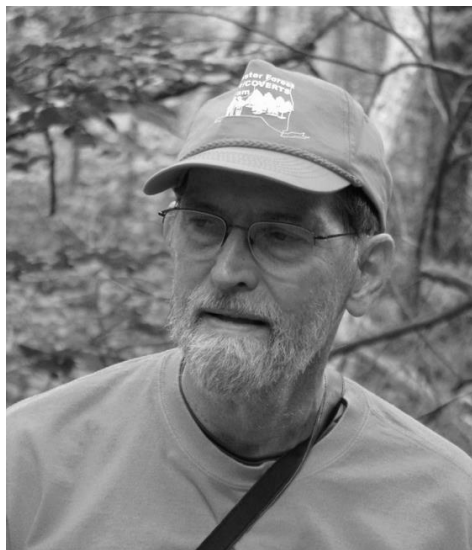
cable over a wide range of logs that are separated by 10-20 feet. I usually get four or more logs or whole trees in each catch. I drop the winch blade into the ground so it can anchor the tractor and cable when I start to draw the cable up.

One thing that Jim House taught me was to just run the tractor engine at idle, as things happen fast when the cable and the assembly of choker chains start to draw the logs into a bunch. The winch as two pulleys to draw from-one is up high and helps get the catch of logs organized and coming toward the tractor, when the clutch of logs is in a straight line to the winch, I release the locking catch wheel on the cable spool, and move the cable to the lower pulley that is down low and close to the winch bucking blade. With a large load of logs on difficult terrain, a low hitch pulling point on the tractor is advised. Then I draw the catch up carefully until is nudged up against the bucking blade that has anchored the tractor and I shut the PTO off and raise the 3-pt hitch hydraulics. This usually lifts

the butt of the log catch a few inches or so off the ground. Now I am ready to drag the catch up to a landing header where the logs are piled and cut into firewood blocks before splitting.



The logs are originally in what looks like a pile, but are in vines, thorns, and not stacked very well for chain sawing, a task our friend Charlie has undertaken. Once I drag the pile up a steep incline to a header we have established, I use the front bucket on the tractor to nudge and organize the logs to help the sawing process proceed.



Dick Gibbs

Sometimes I have to cross small ravines and mud bogs and go up and down fairly steep grades. I drag the catch of logs up to a point, and keeping them all attached, release the winch pulley lock and drive the tractor forward to the other side of the hazard, drop the winch blade, and start the winch and pull the load back to the tractor. This simple process avoids a lot of otherwise dangerous maneuvering. I pulled a 24”

diameter by 39 ft long oak tree in this fashion going over some very rough terrain that would have not otherwise allowed my tractor to pass.

Leaving the winch on the tractor in winter acts as a counterweight to the snow plow. It also lets me pull people out of the ditch if need be.

Today in 90 degree heat I was able to winch up about 20 whole trees, coming up a steep incline, and leave a neat pile for the harder work of chain saw cutting. Winching is also hot and demanding work, but can be done in heat when other tasks can't be done.

I guess winching logs in difficult settings is my substitute to catching “fish” without having a boat.

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## New York State Forestry Initiative

DEC plans to propose a package of forestry related items for consideration during the 2017 State budget/legislative season. A similar proposal was developed last year but failed to make it into the Governor's 2016 budget proposal.

Elements of the proposal include the following:

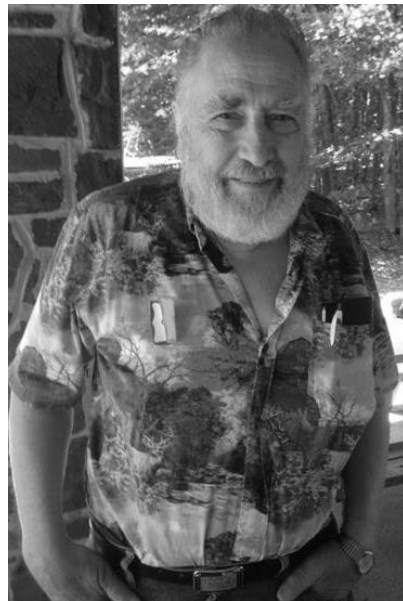
- revision of the 480a Forest Tax Law
- a cost share program for forest practices
- a community forest acquisition program,
- a NYS timber harvest notification requirement for commercial logging operations
- a special preference for New York produced wood products in state agency procurement procedures.

Comments and concerns with the current proposal can be directed to NYFOA Policy Committee Chair, Frank Winkler at [winkler@catskill.net](mailto:winkler@catskill.net)

## Wait!

Instead of recycling this issue of the Capital District Chapter newsletter, why not pass it on to a friend/neighbor to give them a hint of what they're missing by not being a member of NYFOA?

# The Chapter Picnic at Thacher Park



# Community Forest Woods Walk - Not Easy to be a Tree

On Saturday August 27<sup>th</sup> consulting forester Mary Spring led a woods walk through the Community Forest in East Poestenkill, Rensselaer County. The Community Forest is managed by the Rensselaer Plateau Alliance (RPA). The RPA is a not for profit organization which works to conserve the landscape of the Rensselaer Plateau. Mary is a private consulting forester from Freehold in Greene County who works with landowners in the Catskills and Capital District region. Last year she prepared a forest management plan for the 350 acre community forest. She is currently marking trees for a commercial harvest of trees on part of the forest to improve forest value, health, and species diversity.

The woodswalk started in a hardwood stand dominated by red oak, beech, sugar and red maple trees. Later we walked through a stand of hemlock and visited a surviving American chestnut tree which is about 12" in diameter. This was an unusually large specimen because they are infected and die before they reach 6" in diameter. The long term survival of this tree is uncertain, but in the meantime it will be protected.

Mary described the challenges of sustainable forest management on the plateau. Most of the Rensselaer Plateau was cleared for farms during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The remaining woodlands were used and regularly cut as a source of firewood, charcoal and lumber for building purposes. However, in the decades after the Civil War most farming became more unprofitable and people sought other opportunities to make a living. Trees began reseeding into abandoned pastures and fields. Maple, oak, chestnut, pine, hemlock and dozens of other species eventually covered the hills of the plateau and developed into stands of valuable timber.

Mary described some of the challenges of sustainable forest management. Many woodlots have the potential to grow some high value trees, although soils tend to be shallow and rocky on the plateau.

However, most woodlands have not been managed for long term productivity. As trees mature they require additional growing space so periodic thinning is a desirable forestry practice. Since most woodlots now have trees that are large enough to make sawlogs, they have been cut over at least once in the past.

Unfortunately most timber harvests are focused on removing the most valuable trees with no provision for future development of the woodlot. As a consequence, many stands are dominated by low value trees which can only be sold for pulpwood or firewood.

Another challenge relates to introduced insects and diseases from other parts of the world which have devastated some tree species. These include, the Chestnut blight, the Dutch elm disease, gypsy moth, hemlock wooly adelgid, and emerald ash borer.

A third challenge is the overpopulation of white tailed deer in many areas. Deer are eating the seedlings of preferred tree species and essentially preventing natural regeneration. This includes high value species such as red oak and sugar maple.



Woodswalk Participants and The American Chestnut Tree

# Good Food...Good Conversation...Good Company!

Tracy Lamanec graciously invited NYFOA CDC Steering Committee Members, to hold our July 12, 2016 meeting at his lovely Shingle Kill Falls B&B, in Purling, NY. We were welcomed by his Daughter-in-Law, Jill, who generously accommodated us, and served us an array of delicious picnic foods, fruits and desserts. We all brought a dish to share, as well, so there was plenty to go around, and plenty to spare. Tracy was a world of knowledge, sharing with us the history of the old mill, and how it came to be in their family. We were even privileged with a tour of the B&B, he and his family own and operate. The beautifully groomed landscaping, and the breathtaking view of the falls, made the perfect atmosphere/ backdrop for our summer meeting. Despite all this beauty and food, we did manage to eventually take care of our business at hand.

Our Chairman, Jason Post, would like to encourage other members to extend this type of invitation, and hold one of our next future meetings, at their residence. He feels that one meeting a year, at a "home-like" setting, personalizes our gatherings and allows more member involvement in our Committee Meetings.

After all, we are one big family, rooting for the same cause.



## Steering Committee

### Members

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Next meeting of the steering committee: Tuesday, Oct 11, 2016 @ 6:30 p.m. at Colonie Library. All interested members of the chapter are welcome to attend.

# **Your Membership**

## **Helps Support Sustainable Forestry**

Forests cover 63% of our state and provide multiple benefits including wildlife habitat, wood products, recreational opportunities, clean water and air, and beautiful landscapes. 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.

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

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