

# The Overstory

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Issue 2  
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2015

New York Forest Owners Association Southeastern Adirondack Chapter

## HIGHLIGHTS

### WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!

Rubinstein Family  
Shushan, NY

Donald Shea  
Corinth, NY

### INSIDE

- Off into the Woods
- Winter & Spring Woodwalks
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### ADIRONDACK STUMPAGE PRICE REPORT

New York State Dept.  
of Environmental  
Conservation

[www.dec.ny.gov/lands/5259.html](http://www.dec.ny.gov/lands/5259.html)

## Native Invasive: Hay-scented Fern

Response by Peter Smallidge 🌿 Photographs by Peter Smallidge

**Hay-scented fern** (*Dennstaedtia punctilobula*) is a native species that is common especially in forests dominated by maple or cherry, although it can occur in other forests. It is usually less abundant in forests that are quite shady, such as hemlock-dominated forest or those with heavy beech cover. In certain situations, it can have negative effects on forests, but there are always both chemical and non-chemical approaches that can be taken to lessen the influence of this fern.

Perhaps its most negative effect is the ability to prevent the development of hardwood seedlings. Hay-scented fern is considered a “native invasive” because of its ability to dominate a forest under some conditions. Fern domination will significantly affect the long-term health and sustainability of the forest because the future forest will have fewer and likely different trees.

Dense fern cover has negative effects on the ability of seedlings to establish and develop. There are three likely ways that ferns, in general, inhibit

hardwoods. First, the ferns create a dense shade that will limit some hardwood species. Second, the fronds create a heavy organic layer that together with the dense root system of the ferns limits some tree seedlings. Finally, the expansive fronds create a habitat where rodents can effectively forage for seeds with reduced likelihood of predation.

Fern domination of the understory is linked jointly to canopy thinning and prolonged browsing of other species by deer. Even low intensity thinning will create enough light to stimulate fern expansion. However, as your forest matures and upper-canopy trees die, sunlight will likely increase even if you don't cut or thin your woods. Forests without any cutting may also experience an increase in fern abundance. Deer browsing reduces other low-growing shrubs, like raspberry or hobblebush that would shade the fern. Deer, like other livestock, likely avoid browsing of ferns because of an enzyme in the foliage that inhibits the animal's ability to absorb nutrition.



Continued on page 3



# Winter Wonderland Woodswalk

By Lou and Inger Curth 🌿 Photographs by Kristie Edwards

**It was a beautiful sunny but cold Saturday morning** when 20 members went for a snowshoe hike at “Matoaka”. This property is owned by Lou and Inger Curth and is located at Riparius, about halfway between North Creek and Chestertown.

The group started out with coffee in the small red cottage occupied by Lou and Inger. After refreshments, the group got underway snowshoeing across a frozen pond and on into the woods along the route of an old logging road that now doubles as a ski trail in the wintertime.

Inger kept the group moving along at a brisk pace with occasional stops enabling Lou to discuss the history of the place and answer questions. Lou and Inger are both retired and have now become more actively involved with this property after an absence of many years. At the present time the property is being used for recreation and rental purposes under the direction of Sven Curth, the owners’ son. A review of Matoaka’s long dormant forest management plan is in the works.

Matoaka was purchased by the family in 1963. The property consists of two subsistence farms which were carved out of the woods by settlers who arrived in the mid-1800s. Land cleared by them for farming has now largely returned to forest growth. During the 1920s both farms were consolidated under new owners from New York City. They renovated the two farmhouses and used them as vacation homes during summer months during the 1930s and 1940s. Later on the consolidated property was

purchased by others who did some logging and added electrification of both houses. To the west of Matoaka an adjacent lot containing about 500 acres was added to the New York State Forest Preserve “forever wild” holdings. At present, more than 200 acres are now re-forested.

The day’s outing ended at the 136 year old farmhouse where snowshoers took an extended break for lunch and conversation about topics including forest tax law, best management practice and generational property transfers. With the sun to warm us, it was a delightful day.



Above: The men gather, ready to go. Below: Lou Curth tells the history of their woodlot.





*Hay-scented Fern, continued from page 1*



**Hay-scented fern is considered a “native invasive” because of its ability to dominate a forest under some conditions.**

Hay-scented fern increased in abundance with canopy openings more quickly than the fern decreased in response to canopy shading. Increased light levels increase photosynthesis, growth and branching of root rhizomes, and production of spores. Rhizomes spread the clones vegetatively while spores allow for the development of new clones.

Now to the second question – what strategies will control the abundance of hay-scented fern? Both chemical and non-chemical strategies have advantages and disadvantages and varying levels of success. The most effective way to control ferns is chemical applications. Typically the chemical glyphosate is quite effective when used in accordance with label instructions. If you decide to try chemical controls, check with your local office of Cornell Cooperative Extension for additional information on the safe use of pesticides. There are also some non-chemical approaches. In all cases, do not disturb the organic layer of the forest floor as this will increase sprouting and abundance of ferns. Remember also that fern abundance

increased because of the combined effects of deer and increased sunlight. Thus, you will need a plan to control the impacts of deer on other vegetation. Simply controlling deer is insufficient to reduce the fern and re-establish hardwoods. A recent study evaluated mowing as a control for hay-scented fern. This study, in Massachusetts, found that mowing in June after full expansion of the fern fronds and again in August for two consecutive years significantly reduced the density and height of the ferns and allowed increased light. Mowing can be with any tool (e.g., mower, weed whip, brush hog, etc.) that you can safely get into the woods and not damage the residual overstory trees. In the study, the mowing treatment helped establish raspberry and desired hardwoods. The raspberries shade the ferns but don't typically inhibit hardwood establishment. The mowing treatment presumably depletes the starch reserves of the ferns when they are lowest after frond expansion in the spring and through repetition stresses the plants into a decline. Mowing will likely not eliminate ferns from

your woods, but may control them to the point that other more desired species can establish.

There are two other techniques that haven't been thoroughly evaluated and which might have some controlling effect on hay-scented fern. First, liming might have a connection to improving seedling establishment. In one study, when soil calcium was low relative to soil aluminum, the ferns did best. This doesn't mean that liming, which would increase calcium relative to aluminum, will help, but it might be worth trying on a small scale to see the effects. Second and even more speculatively, heavy mulching as done in gardens to control weeds might also be an effective control of ferns in the woods. You could try this in a limited capacity to see if it works.

Considerable work on the effects and control of hay-scented fern has been done by Drs. de la Cretaz and Kelty at the University of Massachusetts. Their research has been published in the *Northern Journal of Applied Forestry, Restoration Ecology, and Biological Invasions*.



# Woods Walk at Up Hill House

By Larry Burks 🌿 Photographs by Jill Burks and Bob Manning

**Sixteen hardy woods walkers** ascended the driveway of Up Hill House to enjoy strong coffee, fresh baked muffins and good conversation before embarking on a strenuous stroll across 50 acres and 600 vertical feet of forest.

We were accompanied by DEC Forester Rich McDermott who pointed out the beech tree stands and opportunities for firewood as well as the many fine maple, oak and hickory species. He also brought our attention to the prolific maple and oak seedlings growth, likely saved from deer browsing by the late deep snows.

Rich described his first visit to the property in 2012. We had purchased the property in 2008 as an escape from the city, but in a few short years had built a home and were starting construction on a barn and other farm related structures for our small Nubian goat herd, and assorted chickens and turkeys. We had attended our first woods walk in Salem not long after purchasing the property and soon became members of NYFOA.

We had invited Rich to the property mainly to ensure we had no major problems that required immediate action. Thankfully he found no major invasive species threats or other problems. Finding that we were in no hurry to start intensive management practices, he left us with a brief summary of his findings and recommendations. He later remarked on the walk that we were more interested in hugging trees than cutting them.

We've traced the property ownership back to roughly 1967 when the family that owned it, split it up amongst several of their children's families. By this time we believe the land had already become reforested. Earlier in the century the land was used primarily for sheep farming. Numerous stone fences buried in the woods can be found. The land was too steep to be farmed. A gravel pit had been mined to build the road. The pit then became a local dumping area for residents, including 3 cars dating back to the 40's and 50's.

For over 30 years from 1967 to 1996 the land was mainly used for firewood and several timber cuts. During that time the property acquired notoriety for two locations on the top of the hill. A small pond



**Clockwise from top: Many hiking breaks were filled by lively discussion; Violet and friends welcomed visitors; The group had time to catch their breath at the 'look out.'**

(now a marsh) on the west side and 'look out' point on the east.

The property was then purchase in 1996 by General Timber Corporation which held the property for 2 years and logged it fairly aggressively. It was then sold to an Albany area man that used the property mainly for hunting and had built a small log cabin.

Today we enjoy the beauty and solitude of being surrounded by a deep lush forest. We don't plan to harvest any trees in the near future, although we will likely seek a plan to manage some of the beech stands. The goats also enjoy the woods. They are mainly confined to a 3 acre parcel but we rotate them around the house in the summer. They enjoy all species of trees and

bushes, but they particularly enjoy striped maple and grapevine. They also enjoy beech, but there is little nutritional value, one of the reasons deer avoid it.

After our hike we returned to the house to enjoy lunch and brownies. Rich provided a survey of the several options before the NY State legislature regarding forest management plans and tax structures while we ate.

We would like to thank our woods walkers for making the journey to southern Washington County and our neighbor Diane McEntee for allowing us to traverse one of the several logging roads on her 200+ acres to take a more leisurely path to the top of the hill.



**Do you have questions on invasive species?  
Check out these DEC websites for more information.**

**Emerald Ash Borer**

<http://www.dec.ny.gov/animals/7253.html>

**Hemlock Woolly Adelgid**

<http://www.dec.ny.gov/animals/7250.html>

**Sirex Woodwasp**

<http://www.dec.ny.gov/animals/7248.html>

**Asian Longhorned Beetle**

<http://www.dec.ny.gov/animals/7255.html>

**Tent Caterpillar**

<http://www.dec.ny.gov/animals/7111.html>

**Invasive Plants**

Invasive Weeds to Look for in the Woods or Nearby... (Brochure)  
[http://www.nyis.info/user\\_uploads/files/Forest%20Invasives.pdf](http://www.nyis.info/user_uploads/files/Forest%20Invasives.pdf)

## Coming Events...

**July 21-26  
SARATOGA  
COUNTY FAIR**

*If you would like to volunteer  
to work this event email Bill  
Burke at [liamsb46@gmail.com](mailto:liamsb46@gmail.com)*

**August 24 – 30  
WASHINGTON  
COUNTY FAIR**

*If you would like to volunteer  
to work this event call  
Jane Jenks at (518) 532-1825*

**September 12th  
ANNUAL PICNIC/WOODSWALK**

Jack and Gail Phelan's  
4290 State Rt. 29, Salem, NY  
9:30 am

*Hamburgs, hotdogs and drinks will be provided,  
please bring a dish to share (potluck)*

*Directions and further information will be emailed,  
mailed and available on the NYFOA website in August.*

## MEMBER'S CORNER

### Master Forester Owners Take a Walk

By Bill Burke

**Since becoming a Master Forest Owner** about seven years ago I never realized how rewarding and educational the experience would be, particularly with my involvement in woods walks.

Woods walks are arranged at the owner's request. The MFO meets with the landowner and reviews the owner's current situation relative to forest management. As always, it is interesting to learn how much or little an owner knows about the resource he or she owns. Some are somewhat bewildered, especially if they are new owners and just adjusting to the fact that now they have something of significant worth that has to be cared for to some degree. Others are very knowledgeable about forest management and its dynamics and are eager to reach out and learn more from other owners, hearing about their experiences in ownership and management. Most are in the middle, so to speak, and understand the value of being informed on the subject and networking with fellow land owners.

The benefits I derive from woods walks are many. First, the face to face interaction becomes very meaningful as you can through this common interest quickly identify with your host on a highly meaningful level. Communication is immediate and unhindered. The second benefit is being out in the woods and testing your woodland knowledge as the owner presents various concerns and questions while on the walk. Often this sends me back to doing some research for myself as not every question can be answered on the spot. Thirdly, the land owners often have other related interests such as hunting and fishing, hiking cross country skiing and more. At times they will offer you access to their property for such activities and this is a nice bonus for your efforts. Incidentally, I have made some very good friends as well.

Owners are usually very receptive to advice but I refrain from directly telling an owner what he or she should do management-wise. As I depart from the walk I always provide a number of NYFOA/Cornell pamphlets and articles that I feel will address issues the owner has a particular interest in. Also, I do strongly suggest that if it appears that a timber sale is in the future that they contact a reputable forester as an initial step in the process. I also indicate the importance of knowing where boundary lines are and that it is vital to keep them well marked over the years. Additionally, my hosts need to know that no one gets rich selling timber. Foresters, loggers and the tax man all get a share before we do.

So, with that, I encourage my fellow MFOs to get out there and use your skills as you engage in a wonderful and rewarding service to our fellow forest owners. Who knows, maybe they will want to join NYFOA.

This member's corner is open to anyone willing to share something with the other members. Submissions can be mailed or emailed to Kristie Edwards at [edwardsk922@gmail.com](mailto:edwardsk922@gmail.com) or 411 Beech Street, Mayfield, NY 12117.





## Off Into The Woods

John R. Greenwood  <http://rainingiguanas.blogspot.com/2014/01/off-into-woods.html>

**A Sunday walk in the neighborhood** brought me to the top of Hilltop Drive. Hilltop Drive is a blacktop road to nowhere, or so I thought. It curves up toward the sky line where you find a turnaround surrounded by galvanized guardrails. In the far corner of the turnaround there is a path carved deep into the woods. It called me to come and visit. The snow was not deep but I also wasn't prepared for a hike. I paused briefly-- seconds later Hilltop's blacktop was nowhere to be seen. With each step the scenery changed.

The variation kept pulling me to the next rise, the next outcropping of rocks. Water trickled from surface springs. Stone-walls lay smothered under a hundred years of maple shed. The volume of the singing birds kept increasing. Their excitement evident as they skirted from branch to branch, like happy tour guides anxious to show off their hometown highlights. I stopped from time to time, not for rest, but to absorb my surroundings. I was just beginning to worry about how far I had traveled when the trees separated and opened up onto a trail

christened with two sets of fresh snowmobile tracks. The trail was wide and clear. It pointed up the mountain and pointed down the mountain. My wife would be starting to worry. Instead of heading back the way I came, I decided to follow the snowmobile tracks downhill toward the main road. The woods were welcoming and invigorating. I was glad I chose to leave the blacktop and venture into nature's arms. Now as my spontaneous safari was coming to an end I began to hear the sound of cars again. The steep hillside was behind me now and I was sure I could see the dark shadows of a large building. I had an idea where I might exit the woods. I was curious to see how close my estimate was. I was not surprised to see the familiar sign of a garden center about one mile south of where I first entered the woods.

I was about three quarters of a mile from my house, the entire walk probably consumed about three to four miles. It was much more satisfying than doing them on a treadmill. As I climbed the steps to my backdoor a sense of renewal warmed me.



It wasn't the accomplishment of a high peak but it did revitalize me for the day ahead. That's the way it should be. I left the house searching for something and I found it. It was another circle that brought me back home better than when I left. Do I smell bacon?



# Reflections from the Chair

**We have gone from a very cold and snowy winter** to a very warm spring. If you heat with wood then hopefully your chainsaws are tuned up and have plenty of sharp chains. Rebuilding our wood piles can be a very labor intensive task. It is important not to overlook safety when working in the woods and handling chainsaws. Remember to use the appropriate Personal Protective Equipment. Hardhats, safety glasses, hearing protection, chaps and foot protection are a minimum. Become familiar with your equipment, keep it in good working order. It only takes one slip to do permanent damage to life and limb. Training courses are definitely worth their effort even for the experienced person. Sometimes even the most experienced person can benefit from refreshing their memories on the appropriate and safe techniques.

If you get a chance this summer stop by our Demonstration Deer Exclosure Fence Project at the Saratoga Cornell Cooperative Extension 4H Training Facility on Midline Road in Ballston Spa. The fence has made it through the winter okay. Hopefully it will begin to show how the impact of deer browsing on the regeneration of a deciduous forest can be dramatically reduced.

County Fair season is upon us once again. We are looking for volunteers to cover our SAC-NYFOA booths at the Saratoga and Washington County Fairs. This is a good way to introduce our chapter to the public and attract new members. Once again our coordinators are Bill Burke for the Saratoga County Fair, July 21

thru 26 and Jane Jenks for the Washington County Fair August 24 thru 30. It is lots of fun and you get a free entry to the fair the day you volunteer. Please contact Bill and Jane for more information. (see coming events for info)

There may be changes coming in the future to New York States DEC's Forest Tax Law 480-a program. DEC is looking to simplify this program. The details are still being hashed out. Many different proposals have been discussed that can have a large effect on land owners and local communities. NYFOA has voiced our concern and legislators seem to be listening. As more information comes available we will try to pass it on to you, the members that have interest in this program.

As always if members have any questions, concerns or suggestions please feel free to contact me. Our chapter is always looking to recruit new members. A good way to do this is to let your friends, neighbors and family members know the benefits of being a NYFOA member. We are still in need of a Vice-chairman for our chapter. I encourage members to get involved to help set our course. New ideas and points of view are welcome. If you are interested please contact me or one of the officers.

Thanks and enjoy the Summer!

*Lou Inzinna*



## *Wanted* Woods Walk Hosts

SAC members willing to host a woodswalk in 2016,

Please contact Donna Welch at (518) 225-0629

or email her [trautwei@gmail.com](mailto:trautwei@gmail.com)

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Owners Association**



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