The New York Forest Owner

A Publication of The New York Forest Owners Association

For people caring about New York's trees and forests

January/February 2023

Audubon New York's Bird Friendly Maple Program

Volume 61 Number 1

NYFOA
New York Forest Owners Association
www.nyfoa.org

In This Issue . . .

The New York
Forest Owner

A Publication of The New York Forest Owners Association
Volume 61, Number 1

Jeff Joseph, Managing Editor
Mary Beth Malmsheimer, Editor

The New York Forest Owner is a bi-monthly publication of The New York Forest Owners Association, PO Box 541, Lima, NY 14485. Materials submitted for publication should be sent to: ***Mary Beth Malmsheimer****, Editor, The New York Forest Owner, 134 Lincklaen Street, Cazenovia, New York 13035; Materials may also be e-mailed to mmalmshe@syr.edu; direct all questions and/or comments to jefffjosephwoodworker@gmail.com. Articles, artwork and photos are invited and if requested, are returned after use.* ***The deadline for submission for the March/April issue is February 1, 2023.***

Please address all membership fees and change of address requests to PO Box 541, Lima, NY 14485 or lgooding@nyfoa.org. 1-800-836-3566. Cost of family membership/subscription is $55.

NYFOA
New York Forest Owners Association

www.nyfoa.org

Cover: The scarlet tanager is one of many avian species native to New York that stands to benefit from the management activities prescribed by Audubon's Bird Friendly Maple program. Image provided by Linda Steele. See page 21 for full article.

From The President

We had a productive meeting of the NYFOA state board on November 5, 2022 in Syracuse. SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry (ESF) generously allowed us to have this meeting in a conference room on campus which worked out well (see photo of attendees on page 17).

I would like to share some of the highlights:

Communications: The board reviewed our various communication channels and considered ways to make improvements to be more responsive to members. *The New York Forest Owner m*anaging editor Jeff

Joseph and fellow editor Mary Beth Malmsheimer developed a presentation about the magazine, which Mary Beth delivered. All agreed that the magazine continues to provide excellent educational content and the editors always welcome input from members. We discussed the need for each chapter to nominate members to be subjects of "Member Profile" columns, a traditional highlight in our magazine. In addition to seeking more organic educational content from our membership, we need to expand the number of advertisers to help defray increased publication costs.

Turning to *The Woodlot* e-newsletter, the board agreed to review and consider other online formats to communicate with members. From our distribution statistics and "click analysis," (i.e. how many readers actually open a given link to an article), it was clear the readership of *The Woodlot* has been relatively low. This, coupled with various business and financial reasons, led NYFOA and Morning Ag Clips, the company which produced and distributed *The Woodlot,* to part ways. Having an e-newsletter represents an important communication, particularly as our member demographics are changing. We will keep you advised of what form *The Woodlot* will take to become more responsive to member interests.

NYFOA Budget: The board approved the 2023 NYFOA budget as presented by Treasurer Peter Tonetti. Chapter representatives to the board can share details of the budget with any member who inquires.

Legislative Affairs: Hugh Canham, chair of the legislative affairs committee, reported on NYFOA's comments on several legislative initiatives including proposed DEC regulatory changes to the NY Forestry Tax Law, 480-A, the NY Climate Action Plan, and Draft Scoping Plan. Forestry Awareness Day (FAD), organized by the Empire State Forest Products Association (ESFPA) is scheduled for March 7, 2023. Once again, ESFPA graciously invited NYFOA to participate in FAD — which provides a venue for NYFOA representatives to meet directly with NYS legislators and their staffers. We view FAD as an excellent opportunity to outline NYFOA's support for the various NYS programs that assist the private woodlot owner. If you are interested in being part of the NYFOA team at Forestry Awareness, please contact Hugh directly. Separately, Hugh has updated several NYFOA position statements and will send drafts to board members for comment.

Programs: Kristina Ferrare, chair of the programs committee, reported that plans are underway for NYFOA to have a booth and a speakers program at the NY Farm Show which will take place in Syracuse, February 23-25, 2023. We need volunteers to serve at the NYFOA booth — please contact Kristina if you are interested in taking part in this important effort.

continued on page 11

The mission of the New York Forest Owners Association (NYFOA) is to promote sustainable forestry practices and improved stewardship on privately owned woodlands in New York State. NYFOA is a not-for-profit group of people who care about NYS's trees and forests and are interested in the thoughtful management of private forests for the benefit of current and future generations.

Join!

NYFOA is a not-for-profit group promoting stewardship of private forests for the benefit of current and future generations. Through local chapters and statewide activities, NYFOA helps woodland owners to become responsible stewards and helps the interested public to appreciate the importance of New York's forests.

Join NYFOA today and begin to receive its many benefits including: six issues of ***The New York Forest Owner***, woodswalks, chapter meetings, and statewide meetings.

( ) I/We own _____acres of woodland.
( ) I/We do not own woodland but support the Association's objectives.

Name: _____
Address: _____
City: _____
State/ Zip: _____
Telephone: _____
Email: _____
County of Residence: _____
County of Woodlot: _____
Referred by: _____

Regular Annual Dues:
( ) Student $20
(Please provide copy of student ID)
( ) Individual/Family $55
( ) Life $750

Multi-Year Dues:
( ) 2-yr $100
( ) 3-yr $150

Additional Contribution:
( ) Supporter $1-$59
( ) Contributor $60-$99
( ) Sponsor $100-$249
( ) Benefactor $250-$499
( ) Steward $500 or more

( ) Subscription to Northern Woodlands $15 (4 issues)

NYFOA is recognized by the IRS as a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization and as such your contribution may be tax deductible to the extent allowed by law.

Form of Payment: ☐ Check ☐ Credit Card
Credit Card No. _____
Expiration Date _____V-Code_____
Signature: _____

Make check payable to **NYFOA.** Send the completed form to:

NYFOA
P.O. Box 541, Lima, New York 14485
1-800-836-3566
www.nyfoa.org

Under 40—The Next Generation of Woodland Stewardship: Q + A with Ryan Green

By Jeff Joseph

It is a tumultuous time in our world. Change has accelerated at an unprecedented rate, yet our woodlands remain steadfast in their measured pace of growth, with a single rotation of timber taking the better part of a century (or more) from seed to maturity. As long-term woodlot owners age out of active management of their properties and/or pass on, forestland is being increasingly parcelized and fragmented. In the process, the culture fostered by that long-term stewardship also fragments, and silviculture-based, holistic management increasingly takes a back seat to short-term economic gain—with subsequent losses in forest productivity, fertility, and diversity that spread, mostly silently, across the landscape. Add rapid climate change and incessant pressure from invasive plants, insects, and disease into the mix, and it is enough to turn near anyone who cares about these issues into a cynic.

Despite these very real challenges, there is a new generation of committed woodlot owners on the horizon. This "Under 40" column will introduce some of these younger land stewards to our readers, as they merit our acknowledgement and support, and also as they are a reminder that our efforts, both as woodlot owners and as NYFOA members, make a real difference in shaping the landscape and culture of the future here in New York.

The following is a lightly edited version of my questions and Ryan's responses:

Ryan Green and son Rowan hanging out in their woodlot.

Please provide a brief background on yourself, including your age, and how your life and family relate to your property (where you're from, family, current occupation, etc.):

My name is Ryan Green and I'm 31 years old. My wife Rachel and I have two children, a 5 year old boy and a 7 month old girl. I work as an airport firefighter and my wife works as a kindergarten teacher. My wife and I both grew up in our hometown of Dryden, New York where we currently live next door to my father and our woodlot. I've spent a good amount of time blazing trails through the property to improve access for future projects. As a family we enjoy walking the property and looking for our favorite trees and wildlife. My brother-in-law burns wood for heat, so we spend time felling the numerous ash trees and other undesirable trees to process for firewood.

How much land do you own? How much of the land is wooded?

We own just over 42 acres of property that borders our home. Most of the land is wooded, with patches of swamp and grassland.

What is the location of your woodlot?

The property is located in the Town of Dryden, which is in the northeastern corner of Tompkins County.

When did you take ownership of your land? Was it from within the family or outside the family? If outside the family, what attracted you to purchase that particular parcel?

We took ownership of the property in December of 2020. We purchased the property from a gentleman who acquired it at a tax foreclosure auction. What drew us to this parcel was the fact that it shares a border with our home. The ease of access is unparalleled and gives the kids (and us) much more room to roam and explore.

What motivated you to become a woodlot owner? What motivates you to engage in the active management of your woodlot?

Initially, we were interested in purchasing the property to preserve it from future development and to keep it wild. I grew up next door to my current home, and the wild spaces that I used to explore and grew up in as a kid have now turned into cul-de-sacs and housing development. I wanted a space for my kids to grow up in and explore and make memories in. Our main motivation for being active in our woodlot management is to ensure that, while we're the stewards of this space, we can protect the natural resources and further the sustainability and stability of the habitat.

Who participates in the management decisions and the actual work? Where do you obtain information to guide your decisions?

Management decisions are a collaborative effort between myself, my wife, and her brother. Information comes from state and local resources, such as NYSDEC, Cornell Cooperative Extension resources, as well as NYFOA publications.

Describe the overall makeup of the land, the topography, water features (ponds, swamps), surrounding landscape, etc.:

According to the survey, approximately 20 acres is listed as wetland, with the remaining 22 acres being wooded. I would say it's probably 10 acres of wetland with the remaining 32 or so acres being wooded, with the last ¾ acre being grassland. The property is cut roughly in half east to west with an old railroad bed that was part of the "Auburn Branch" of the New York and Oswego Midland Railroad.

North of the railroad bed is where a majority of the wetland is located. There's a seasonal stream that runs parallel to the railroad bed, where it cuts through the bed as it heads south and east where it eventually joins up with Fall Creek. The property has two small ponds, both man-made, one with fish, the other with frogs and turtles and the like. Most of the surrounding area is also forested and of a similar age, as most of this area was farmland up until about 80 years ago.

Describe the land's vegetation: Types of trees that dominate? Presence of and type of understory vegetation?

The northwest corner of the property is predominantly deciduous trees with a choked understory filled with multi-flora rose, buckthorn, and honeysuckle. The northeast corner is mostly pine forest with many black cherry trees as well as the occasional copse of aspen and odd ash and maple, the understory is more sparse beneath the canopy of the evergreens. Between these two northern corners is a large swampy area with sedges, stunted aspens, and other water loving vegetation. Bordering this swamp is a place we lovingly refer to as "Old Oak". "Old Oak" being a rather ancient Oak tree, under which field stones from decades of farming were cast at the base of its trunk. South of the railroad bed there is a mix of ash and black cherry trees, with several copses of aspen and the occasional maple and oak tree. The dominant trees overall would be the black cherry trees, followed closely by eastern white pine, ash, and aspen in that order. Understory vegetation includes beech trees, multi-flora rose, buckthorn, and honeysuckle.

Provide a summary timeline of your experience with the land since you bought it. What have been your major projects? What did you learn during those projects?

After purchasing the property in December of 2020, a majority of our time there was spent close to the road, in a clearing my son calls "the big burdock". Prior to purchasing a tractor and brush hog, we didn't have an easy way to gain access to the rest of the property, so my trips deeper into the property tended to be during the winter and early spring before vegetation had time to grow up and make hiking the property tough. In December of 2021 I purchased an old Ford tractor from a neighbor, and then in the spring of 2022 I purchased a brush hog from a family friend. This was a game changer, as it meant I could re-establish the old tractor paths and dirt bike trails that had been carved into the property 10-20 years prior. Since brush-hogging, we've established several trails that are easy for the whole family to hike, and we've definitely gained more use and enjoyment

continued on page 20

Ask A Professional

PETER SMALLIDGE

Peter Smallidge

Landowner questions are addressed by foresters and other natural resources professionals. Landowners should be careful when interpreting answers and applying this general advice to their property because landowner objectives and property conditions will influence specific management options. When in doubt, check with your regional DEC office or other service providers. Landowners are also encouraged to be active participants in Cornell Cooperative Extension and NYFOA programs to gain additional, often site-specific, answers to questions. To submit a question, email to Peter Smallidge at pjs23@cornell.edu with an explicit mention of "Ask a Professional." Additional reading on various topics is available at www.forestconnect.info

Forest Stewardship and Tree Cutting

Question:

I was encouraged to cut some of the trees in my woodlot. The people were very nice, but I'm not sure their motivations are the same as mine. If I want to be a good steward of the land, do I need to cut trees? (Nate W. SFL)

Answer:

Just what is a steward?

Conversations about forestry in recent decades have described woodland owners as stewards. Many owners report that they want to be a good steward. However, carrying the mantle of steward creates uncertainty for some owners. For example, they don't know if being a steward allows them to cut trees, or if they should abstain from cutting trees. Whether or not to harvest trees has always been a valid question, but it is more nuanced when considered in the context of being a good steward.

A steward (*noun*) is someone who works for someone else or has some authority granted to them to tend the assets for the benefit of another person or entity (Oxford English Dictionary). Stewardship (*n*) or steward (*v*) is the action of being a steward (*n*). A "good" steward is presumably one who effectively delivers the desired benefits. If a woodlot owner is to be a steward, then that owner is tending the woodlot for someone else. Most woodlot owners are aware that their woodlot is part of a larger landscape of forest and community, and their woodlot is connected to society through the benefits and services their woodlot provides. However, I suspect that most woodlot owners see themselves or their family as the entity that both benefits from and manages the tangible and intangible assets of the woodlot (Figure 1). It is the owner and family that pay the taxes and carry the duty of ownership challenges.

The woodlot owner is thus both the steward and the beneficiary of their woods, and society also benefits through the outcomes of the owner's actions; the owner's management actions are conducted to accomplish their objectives. The owner's objectives determine what management actions are appropriate, and the accomplishment of the objective results in benefit to the owner. If the owner's objectives lead to the cutting of trees, then the owner as the steward is justified. The benefits that an owner receives when an objective has been accomplished are perhaps different than the benefits that society might receive. Not all people in a community will similarly prioritize the benefits from forest management.

Woodlot owners should make management decisions that support their objectives. Attaining those objectives will provide some benefit. Owners should consider if their objectives and methods have a negative, and particularly an enduring

Figure 1. Woodlot owners are both the manager and steward. They carry the responsibility and cost for tending and maintaining the property. They are also the primary beneficiary. Society benefits in multiple ways from private woodlands, which occupy almost 50% of New York.

Figure 2. In the absence of human intervention, the forest does what forests will do. Trees live and die, and the outcome is neither good nor bad. Importantly, forests always change.

negative impact on society. If the objective is beneficial for the owner, and beneficial or neutral for society, the owner should be comfortable in their objectives. Ultimately, because the trees are the property of the owner, the owner can cut the trees for any reason (presuming no local regulations to the contrary).

Figure 3. Between half and two-thirds of woodland owners in NY have previously cut or plan to cut firewood for their own use. Cutting firewood can be done in a way to accomplish multiple objectives.

What happened before there were people to cut trees?

Before there were owners to identify objectives and guide the outcomes of the woods, how did the woods survive? Forests don't need human intervention. Forest trees, and the other plants and animals, are biological organisms that respond to the same pressures that humans confront: temperature, pathogens, predators, stress, small and large disturbances (Figure 2), acquiring food (or making it), etc. In the forests before humans intervened, some trees died, some struggled, and some thrived. Because there were no objectives assigned to any particular acre, the outcome of what happened to the trees was neither good nor bad.

Forests do not need humans to survive. However, the outputs and outcomes from a forest without human intervention are uncertain. Without human intervention, for example, some forests might produce some outcomes that are broadly desired, such as tall canopies and a diverse array of plant and animal species. Other forests, with current common stressors, might become more ecologically simplified and with a higher incidence of disease. Without the presence of an owner to set objectives, these hypothetical scenarios are neither good nor bad.

When to cut?

As a steward, there are many circumstances when harvesting is desirable and justified. As expected, these circumstances are when an owner (who we know is also the steward) has an objective that is best satisfied when trees are cut. There are probably few objectives that are specifically aimed at cutting trees. Rather, tree cutting is a means to achieve some new condition, product, or attribute of the woods. The objective relates to some desired future attribute of the woods, and harvesting trees helps attain that attribute.

Here is an incomplete list of examples of ownership objectives that might likely require harvesting trees:

- Produce firewood to heat the home or boil maple sap (Figure 3);

continued on next page

Figure 4. A 1/10th acre patch cut was fenced to exclude deer. The patch of regeneration resulted in a high diversity of plant species, an objective of many woodland owners. (Photo credit T. Testo-Smith)

- Generate revenue to pay taxes, bolster retirement, or pay other bills;
- Shift the mixture and balance of species, to reduce some and increase others;
- Increase the growth of trees for greater production of tangible outputs (e.g., wood, carbon sequestration, acorns, maple sap);
- Create forest gaps for pollinators and herbaceous plants that require higher levels of sunlight;
- Reduce the abundance of trees with infestations of disease or insects;
- Produce logs to saw into boards for personal woodworking projects;
- Increase the vigor (i.e., growth efficiency) of trees to increase their resilience to environmental stressors;
- Diversify the structure (i.e., what the forest looks like) and variety of habitats for wildlife;
- Recover value following a large-scale climatic disturbance (e.g., ice storm, hurricane);
- Increase sunlight availability on the forest floor to stimulate the regeneration of desired hardwood species (Figure 4);
- Increase sunlight to allow forages to develop for silvopasture;
- Create trails for recreational vehicles.

These objectives are all worthy of consideration by some woodland owners. For some of these objectives there might be an action other than cutting, but cutting is an option and is often the most efficient and effective way to determine which trees live and which don't. The scale of harvesting ranges from a couple of trees to acres of trees. The method to cut the trees ranges from an owner (trained via Game of Logging) who has a chainsaw to a logging crew with an assortment of equipment. It is worth noting that accomplishing some of these objectives will result in collateral benefits that support one or more other objectives (e.g., diversifying structure may result in firewood, and generating revenue can reduce the incidence of disease).

When not to cut?

Some owners have objectives different from those examples provided above. Their objectives might not require that any trees be cut, or perhaps they have objectives that would preclude the cutting of trees. Some examples of ownership objectives that would not require or would preclude cutting trees include:

- A "forever wild" woodlot (Figure 5);
- Recreational trails for the observation of nature taking its own course (owners might still want a plan to address hazard trees near the trail);
- Contentment knowing there are no stumps.

Figure 5. Old-growth forests have distinctive attributes that make them unique and special. The most stringent objective for old-growth or undisturbed forest would just let natural events happen, such as leaving the top of this large and mature white oak. Owners inclined towards these types of objectives should consider what might prompt an action. (Photo credit J. Ward)

Figure 6. A commercial harvest has numerous details that include marking the cut (or leave) trees, refining details of the contract, soliciting buyers and bids, executing the contract, oversight of the harvest, closing out the contract, etc. Because few owners have worked through these details, a forester is an important part of the process.

No owner should ever feel that they have to cut trees. However, in the absence of human intervention the forest responds to natural processes of life, death, and disturbance, as previously described. These events may put the forest on a trajectory for outputs and outcomes that are misaligned with the interests of the owner.

If the actions that support an owner's objectives do not include cutting, the owner should be particularly diligent to look for changes in the forest. In response to some change there may be actions, other than cutting, that have a small window of opportunity; for example, treating hemlock to prevent mortality following infestation by the hemlock woolly adelgid.

How to approach a harvest, who can assist?

If an owner decides they have objectives that warrant the cutting of trees, there are two ways to approach that action. Both assume the owner has a management plan that details their objectives.

1. If they are uncertain about the scale of harvesting and whether they can do the work, the owner should contact a forester to assess the extent of the harvest. If an owner is in this situation, they likely have limited experience working in the woods and would need to obtain training through Game of Logging if the forester suggests the cutting is an owner-scale activity. The owner might also be able to contract small-scale management operations. If the forester recommends a commercial harvest (Figure 6), the forester can mark the trees to be cut to ensure these support the owner's objectives. The forester can also then administer the sale by soliciting bids and overseeing the logging contract and contractor.
2. The owner has prior safety training in felling trees and has the equipment and time necessary to complete the work themselves. Depending on the objective and action, the owner may want to mark some trees and then discuss the selection with a forester to verify the selection process. For owners needing a refresher, there are resources on *www.ForestConnect.info* and *www.youtube.com/ForestConnect* about tree selection, small-scale logging, forest thinning, and more.

The decision to cut trees shouldn't be taken lightly. As the scale of cutting increases, the more important is the need to consider how the cutting will support the owner's objectives. Owners can learn about the thought process that precedes tree cutting by visiting with other members of the NY Forest Owners Association during woods walks and similar events.

Peter Smallidge, NYS Extension Forester and Director, Arnot Teaching and Research Forest, Department of Natural Resources, Cornell University Cooperative Extension, Ithaca, NY 14853. Contact Peter at pjs23@cornell.edu, or (607) 592 – 3640. Visit his website www.ForestConnect.info, and webinar archives at www.youtube.com/ForestConnect. *Support for ForestConnect is provided by the Cornell University College of Agriculture and Life Sciences and USDA NIFA through McIntire-Stennis, Smith-Lever and the Renewable Resources Extension Act.*

Wild Things in Your Woodlands

Kristi Sullivan

Brown Creeper (*Certhia americana*)

The brown creeper is a small, long-tailed songbird with a down-curved, pointed bill. Its brown mottled upperparts blend in easily with tree bark, while its underparts are white. Both sexes look virtually identical. Its call is loud and piercing, which helps make its otherwise inconspicuous appearance known. Though it is not completely certain, males and females most likely form monogamous pairs. When approaching a potential mate, males fly in a spiral; they also compete for territory by engaging in singing competitions. Their breeding season extends from April to July, where they typically nest on dead or dying trees where loose bark is abundant. Their nests are usually nestled between the loose, dead bark and the tree trunk. Females lay around 5-6 speckled white eggs, which she incubates for between 13-17 days. Both parents feed the fledglings.

Brown creepers are found throughout North America. They are essentially found everywhere in the United States except for portions of southern Florida, Hawaii, and north-central Alaska. They are also common throughout southern Canada. In New York State, brown creepers can be found in virtually all counties during all seasons. During the winter, some populations migrate to warmer parts of the country.

Dense evergreen and mixed evergreen and deciduous forests are the preferred habitats of the brown creeper. They require the presence of large, mature, and/or dying trees for nesting, as they provide optimal nesting spaces. These trees also help brown creepers blend in and evade predators. When they are not breeding, they can be found in most forest types and even in disturbed areas such as parks or suburbs.

Their name comes from their tendency to "creep" up tree trunks to forage for insects, spiders, and other invertebrates. They start from the bottom of the tree and move upwards, flying down to the bottom of another tree once they reach the top of another. They prefer dense forests presumably because the short distance between trees allows them to travel from tree to tree more efficiently. Some of their favorite prey include insect eggs and pupae, beetles, aphids, ants, caterpillars, true bugs, and spiders. In the winter, they sometimes eat seeds and feed on suet and peanut butter. In the cold months, many brown creeper populations roost communally and join flocks with other bird species to forage collectively.

Brown creepers play an important role in controlling insect populations. They are iconic birds with very distinct behavior and serve as an indicator species in mature forests due to their dependency on old, densely spaced trees. Though their current populations are abundant and stable, nationwide their numbers are expected to decline as the climate continues to warm. This is mostly due to the stress that heat imposes on younger birds, as well as an increase in wildfires and a subsequent decrease in forest density and abundance. Climate change may also increase the spread of insect pests, which can also threaten certain tree species in mature forests, such as eastern hemlocks and ash trees. Current challenges for this bird include feral and free-roaming cats that prey on the birds when they visit feeders, and a lack of dead and dying trees in some woodlands. Woodland owners can take steps to benefit this bird by keeping cats indoors, and by retaining some dead and dying trees on which brown creepers can nest and forage.

Photo taken by Andy Reago and Chrissy McClarren.

Kristi Sullivan directs the New York State Master Naturalist Volunteer Program at Cornell. More information on managing habitat for wildlife can be found at https://blogs.cornell.edu/nymasternaturalist/resources/

From the President (continued)

Nick Jensen led NYFOA's inaugural webinar on legacy planning. The webinar generated a great deal of interest with 43 people attending and many others accessing the presentation online later. The next step of our plan is to hold a series of in-person workshops regionally on this very relevant topic. Details to follow.

Possible Alliance between NYFOA and NY Tree Farm: Art Wagner presented a draft proposal to enhance the collaboration between NYFOA and NY Tree Farm. In this proposal, NYFOA would provide management, administrative, and program support to NY Tree Farm and would be compensated accordingly. The board approved that Art would present the proposal to the NY Tree Farm steering committee for initial review, and if all agree, to the American Forest Foundation, the parent organization of NY Tree Farm.

Executive Director Craig Vollmer reported that the six bird habitat programs which NYFOA implemented through a National Audubon grant program are nearly complete. These programs have been well received and it is likely that NYFOA will take part in similar opportunities with Audubon in the future.

Craig also discussed the possibility of the membership committee taking over the planning of a statewide members program. Craig suggested having four regional meetings which would encourage greater participation by members instead of one big members meeting. We will seek input from our chapters about this proposal.

Fundraising for NYFOA: Per board approval, Craig continues to work with a professional fundraiser to develop relationships with potential donors. One important recommendation was for chapters to help solicit member stories about timber harvesting which will help in speaking with potential corporate donors in the wood products industry. Craig is also looking into potential grant opportunities. Craig recommended that all board members donate what they can because having full board participation in donating, regardless of the amounts, will help in attracting outside donors. Important point: In this fundraising effort, NYFOA will reach out to potential donors, emphasizing our core values and the benefits our association brings to its range of members. We will always remain true to our founding principles and believe these principles are worthy of support from various donor groups.

Endowment Possibility: Ed Neuhauser suggested the board consider establishing an endowment as a legacy planning option for NYFOA members. Ed will research this possibility further. Board members agreed that we would discuss the endowment idea at the Spring 2023 board meeting with Ed leading the charge.

Shifting gears, I would like to recommend a book about a woodlot management activity which is near and dear to my heart, trail building and maintenance. The Appalachian Mountain Club (AMC) published a very practical guide to trailblazing entitled *AMC's Complete Guide to Trail Building & Maintenance*. The book offers multiple sections on building trails on private land including: trail planning and layout, costs, safety measures, erosion control, building materials, bridges, trail maintenance, and equipment tips. It is well worth the read as you consider building new trails or maintaining the ones you have.

I will end by letting you in on a 'little understood option' to help control deer browsing — the Amish. We were fortunate to have had a family-owned Amish painting company re-stain our house and outbuildings. The patriarch of this crew asked if we allowed hunting on our property. We do, selectively, and encouraged them to return during hunting season. Our Amish friends proved to be responsible and effective hunters. They have had great success hunting at our place. Why is this so special? The Amish generally are not concerned with getting the "trophy buck" and were quite pleased to take does for the food value. I love these guys. As woodlot owners seeking to control deer browse of desirable tree species on our property, the Amish have been of great help to us.

I wish everyone a great holiday season. I encourage all of you to continue looking to NYFOA as a source for best practices in woodlot management along with highlighting the issues we face as woodlot stewards heading into the future. Please support your chapter events, and enjoy your time in the woods.

–Stacey Kazacos
NYFOA President

NYFOA POSTED SIGN ORDER FORM

Ordering signs at the reduced rate is one of the many benefits of NYFOA membership

Use this form to order the sign shown above. The signs are 11.25″ x 11.25″ orange with black printing.

SIGN MATERIAL	COST PER SIGN	NUMBER ORDERED*	COST
Plastic (.024 gauge)	$.70	_____	$_____
Aluminum (.012 gauge)	$1.35	_____	$_____
Add Name and Address to Sign Set up cost per address			$5.00
Plus $.05 per sign		_____	_____
Shipping and Handling Cost $15.00 per order			$15.00
SUBTOTAL			$_____
NYS Sales Tax – add 8%			$_____
TOTAL COST OF ORDER			$_____

Please specify Name and Address to be printed on signs:

Name:_____

Address: _____

Limited to two lines of type (abbreviate where possible). Type is about 5/16 inches high.

SHIP TO: NO PO BOXES

Name:_____

Address:_____

City:_____

State / Zip: _____

Telephone: _____

Form of Payment: ☐ Check ☐ Credit Card

Credit Card No.

_____

Expiration Date _____

Signature: _____

Make check payable to NYFOA. Send the completed form to: NYFOA, P.O. Box 541, Lima, New York 14485. Questions? Call 800-836-3566

* Minimum order is 25 signs with additional signs in increments of 25.

The Wood in Your Woods: Sassafras

By Jeff Joseph

When it comes to the wood grown in New York's trees, the vast majority of attention goes to a scant few of the species found in our woodlots. While there are over 100 native and naturalized tree species found across our state, during a timber inventory or sale, or, at the other end of the supply chain, at your local lumber yard, there are only a handful that are commonly considered to have commercial value as lumber.

With some regional variation, independent lumber suppliers in New York may offer up to a dozen or so species potentially harvested in-state (my preferred supplier lists 14 on their website, along with an array of exotics). At your local big-box home center, however, you are generally going to be limited to choosing between hard maple, red oak, tulip poplar, and some non-native species of pine. Of these, it is highly likely that *none* have been sourced from within our state's borders; the pine may actually have been grown in a plantation as far away as New Zealand before being shipped to the U.S.! While this amounts to a colossal waste of fuel, for one, it is also a colossal lost opportunity here at home.

Even if relatively few of our tree species are valued in the commercial sphere, our woodlots hold an incredible wealth of untapped **use**-value in all the species that are ignored or maligned by the marketplace. Prior to global supply chains and cheap fossil energy, this was once common knowledge, but has in recent times turned into something of a lost art.

Due to their high economic value, and well-proven use and aesthetic values, everyone wants more prized species like sugar maple, black cherry, walnut, red oak, and select-grade white pine in their timber stands, and most everyone has a good mental image of what the wood found in each of those types of trees looks like. But what about the other 95% of the species out there? What do their woods look like? Feel like? Smell like? What distinguishes them from other more commonly utilized types of wood? What are some of their unique properties? What uses can they be put to? It is with these questions in mind that this occasional column will offer brief snapshots of some of these 'forgotten' (or at least undervalued) species, starting with *Sassafras albidum*.

Sassafras is a shade-intolerant pioneer, found commonly in regenerating old-fields, on dry ridges, and in hedgerows, where it can form thickets of root-sprouted clones. It can be found on most all soil types, but prefers well-drained sandy loam. Sassafras can be shrublike in its size and growth habit, but on good sites can grow to 80' tall or more with a trunk diameter of 12-36"+.

The thick, deeply furrowed bark of sassafras is very distinctive, and can help in identifying the species. Photos courtesy of author.

In New York it is most commonly found on Long Island, in the counties along the Hudson from Manhattan northward, and along the southern edge of Lake Ontario. It has spotty distribution elsewhere in the state, usually consisting of isolated individual trees in mixed stands—as an example, my closed canopy woodlot in the Southern Tier is home to maybe a few dozen sassafras stems, ranging from a few sawtimber-sized dominants down to a handful of saplings languishing in the shade cast by neighboring trees.

To regenerate sassafras, in addition to full sun and good drainage, you will need to ensure that you have both males and females present, as it is a dioecious species, with male and female flowers occurring on separate trees. For more information about regenerating sparsely populated intolerants like sassafras, search the *Forest Owner* archives at *www.nyfoa.org* for "Retaining Woodlot Diversity," an article I wrote for this magazine in 2015.

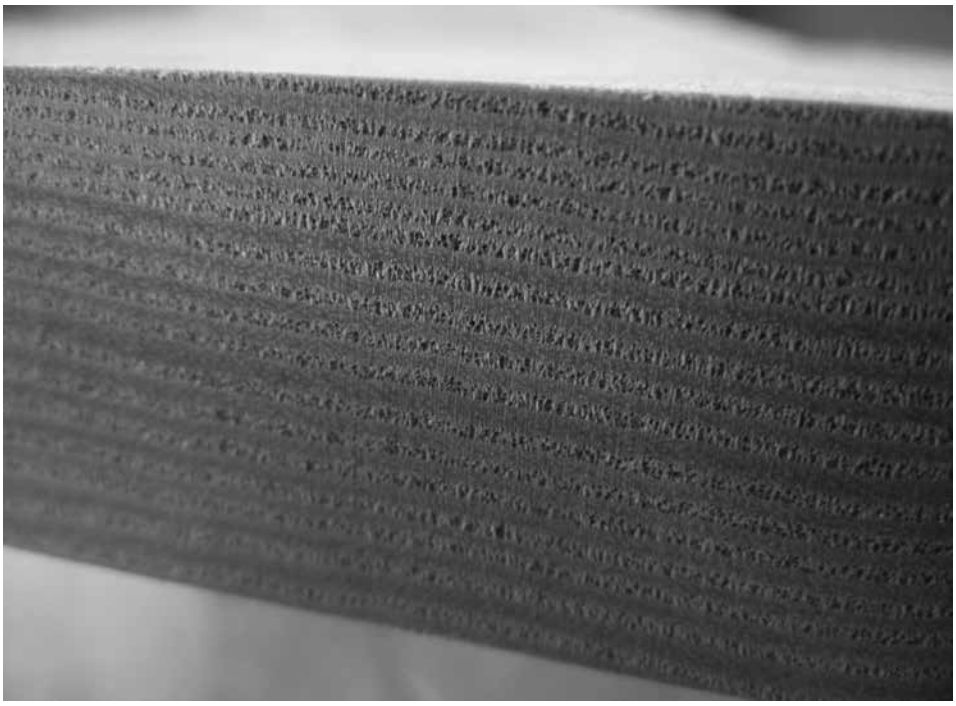
Sassafras is allelopathic, producing chemicals that inhibit the growth of neighboring trees and plants. Its unique leaves come in three distinct forms, each with an entire (untoothed) margin: oval, mitten-shaped, and 3-lobed. The reddish-brown bark is also very distinctive, with thick, raised plates separated by deep, elongated vertical furrows. The bark, twigs, prominent dark blue fruits, and leaves of sassafras all provide food for a variety of wildlife.

As for the wood itself, the most striking characteristic of sassafras is undoubtedly its spicy, fragrant scent when freshly cut—being in the laurel family it is closely related to cinnamon, bay laurel, and camphor trees. Its color is an attractive pale brown, and being ring-porous the wood has a coarse, open grain, with a distinct contrast on both its face and end grain between its darker brown,

Freshly planed sassafras board with characteristic grain patterning and naturally lustrous surface, even without any finish applied.

very large earlywood pores and its paler tan, smaller latewood pores. With its similar grain patterning, it looks like a darker shaded ash (*Fraxinus)*, which is more of a pale blonde by comparison.

Sassafras is surprisingly lightweight for a hardwood, at 31 lbs./cu.ft. (by comparison white pine is about 25 lbs.), and has a low BTU value, making it useful as kindling perhaps, as it splits easily, but not as fuelwood. It is also relatively weak and brittle, so is not well-suited for structural applications. The brittleness also makes it unsuitable for projects that require bending, such as in chairmaking, where other ring-porous species such as ash and oak excel.



Endgrain closeup of the same board as above, showing the clear delineations between the large, wide earlywood pores and the smaller, more tightly spaced latewood pores of a ring-porous species such as sassafras.

It is a very rot resistant wood, and so was traditionally used in fencemaking, for buckets and pails, as well as in boat and canoe building. The lumber shrinks and distorts minimally during the drying process, and is very stable once dried, making it very suitable for both furniture and cabinetry. The wood works very easily with either hand or power tools, with minimal grain tearout or dulling of edge tools. It also takes finishes very well, though its surfaces seem to have a natural luster, especially when hand planed, which is very attractive without any finish applied.

My first experience working with sassafras came some years ago when visiting a prominent supplier of black cherry in Pennsylvania. After we completed the business at hand, we got to talking, and I asked the aged proprietor about some interesting looking boards leaning against the wall that I could not identify. He told me what they were, and that he wasn't looking to sell them, as he viewed them as more of a novelty than a marketable product, but happily gave me a few boards of sassafras to 'see what I could make of them.' They sat for some time in my shop, and eventually were used for a variety of small projects, including a number of picture frames, and some kerfing for the interiors of acoustic guitars. Based on this experience, I would gladly substitute sassafras for a number of other more commonly available woods, especially where its combination of rot resistance, great stability with moisture changes, and light weight would be of benefit. Outdoor furniture would be one example. Or fences or gates. Or for exterior trim. It would make a great canoe paddle as well. Or birdhouse. Or seedling flat. You get the idea.

Some woods seem to fight against you when working with them, as if they resent the intrusion, and want you to know it. Others seem much more docile. Sassafras works beautifully, seemingly offering itself up with no resistance. Full length shavings curl up off the surface when planed, leaving a glossy, burnished surface. And its delicious scent fills my workshop like incense each time. If you are fortunate enough to have a population of sassafras in your woodlot, consider putting it to use, perhaps saving yourself an expensive trip to the lumber yard.

Jeff Joseph is the managing editor of this magazine.

Woodland Health

A column focusing on topics that might limit the health, vigor and productivity of our private or public woodlands

Coordinated by Mark Whitmore

Spotted Lanternfly: a New Insect Gaining Ground in New York

By Brian Eshenaur

They're here now and spreading in New York state so we're hearing a lot about the spotted lanternflies! The name is misleading: Spotted lanternflies have little in common with any type of fly. In fact, when they are in their adult stage they look more like moths. Spotted lanternflies are actually planthoppers in the order Hemiptera, or true bugs, and are related to cicadas, brown marmorated stink bugs, aphids, and leafhoppers. All insects in this order have piercing-sucking mouthparts which allow them to tap into the phloem of a plant to feed directly on the sugary sap.

Spotted Lanternfly nymph photo by Benjamin Burgunder.

Life Stages through the Year

The true bugs like spotted lanternflies go through metamorphosis passing through life stages which are: egg, nymph, and adult. In the spring, normally sometime in May, as the leaves emerge on the trees, the spotted lanternfly eggs will hatch. The new spotted lanternfly nymphs are small and are somewhat tick-like both in size and shape and are jet black with small white spots.

The nymphs grow with time, shedding their skin as they become larger. By mid-summer they take on a distinctive red coloration with white spots and can be up to ¾" in length. Then a slit develops in the back side of those red nymphs through which the adult spotted lanternfly emerges. These adults are about 1" long and folded over their backs are tan wings with black polka dots.

They have red/orange underwings that can give the insect a pinkish tint as those outer wings are semi-translucent. With these wings the adults can fly. To start their flights, they'll climb a tree or anything tall and launch themselves into the air. They've been described as clumsy fliers bumping into people, buildings or anything in their way but with the right conditions and repeated flights they may fly for an estimated total of 5-7 miles in their lifetime.

At the end of September, they will begin to lay eggs with the egg laying continuing through November. Females lay one to three egg masses, each containing 30 – 60 eggs laid in rows. She covers them with a white, putty-like substance that becomes pinkish-gray as it dries. After a few weeks the covering turns a darker tan and starts to crack, resembling a splotch of mud.

Depending on the where they are laid, egg masses can be extremely camouflaged so they're very hard to find on certain tree barks like sycamore or river birches. Research has shown that the spotted lanternfly eggs are laid throughout trees' canopies with the vast majority of the eggs are found above 10 feet in height. Although scraping and removing the eggs is an effective means

Spotted lanternfly adults covering egg masses. Photo by NYS IPM.

of control, it becomes impractical since most are out of reach due to the heights where the eggs are laid.

Spotted lanternflies also will lay eggs on any outdoor surface, from firewood to camp chairs, to rusty metal, to vehicles and pallets. This is one way they can move to a new area. If an item that has egg masses gets transported to a location that hasn't had them before and the egg mass remains outdoors, the eggs will hatch in the spring initiating a population in a new location. Many occurrences in new locations including those in Broome, Erie, and Onondaga counties in NY have shown up near large rail yards. There's a strong suspicion that some rail cars with egg masses from locations such as PA and NJ ended up in these new locations and the eggs hatched there in the spring.

Potential Range of Spotted Lanternfly in NYS

Unfortunately, lab studies have shown that the egg masses can survive even sub-zero temperatures and remain viable. However, we anticipate the growing season in some parts of NYS will not be long enough for the spotted lanternfly to complete its life cycle. Since they don't hatch until the leaves appear in May and don't start laying eggs until the end of September it's likely the shorter growing season in areas of Northern NY and in locations with higher elevations will have frosts that will kill the adults before egg laying can begin. There may however be microclimates along bodies of water that would facilitate the longer growing season they need. Those protected growing areas in among NYS's Finger Lakes, near Lake Ontario, and the Hudson Valley will likely support spotted

continued on next page

lanternflies' need for a long growing season and these areas with temperatures moderated by the water bodies are also the very spots where vineyards thrive and are our prime grape growing regions.

Host Plants

Grape vines are a favorite host plant, and several acres of grapes in a few vineyards in Pennsylvania have been killed by spotted lanternflies. The lanternflies move into vineyards late in the season, after harvest. Their feeding has been shown to reduce internal starches and sugars which are important to winter hardiness so the vines are more vulnerable to winter injury. With the lessons learned in PA, scouting and management strategies are being put in place to protect our vineyards.

Spotted lanternflies do not feed on any of the conifers, and little impact from spotted lanternfly feeding has been seen on deciduous forest trees. However, there is some concern that if high numbers of lanternflies feed on sugar maples in the fall the reserves available when sugaring begins could be diminished. They're starting to watch for this effect where the insect is established in PA. Fortunately, spotted lanternflies are rarely found deep within a woodlot. Even when there's a high population in a region the spotted lanternflies are at their highest numbers along the edge of forests.

Spotted lanternflies are most successful in reproduction if they have access to a varied diet, and although they can feed on over 100 plant species, they have their favorite native host plants which including black walnut, willows, silver maple, red maple, and sugar maple (these are in order of preference from the most to the least).

But their absolute favorite host plant is one from their native habitat in Asia, the tree of heaven (*Ailanthus altissima*). This weedy tree is well distributed throughout the northeast and it's the tree species to check for spotted lanternfly if you are scouting for the insect in a new area. Spotted Lanternflies are so well adapted to feeding on the tree of heaven that if they have access to these trees during their lifetime, they will lay seven times the number of eggs compared to if they were raised in an environment without tree of heaven.

Currently New York State's highest populations of spotted lanternfly are in NYC and the lower Hudson Valley. Although there are smaller, isolated populations in upstate NY we're still monitoring for this insect upstate and actions are being taken by NYS Agriculture and Markets to slow the spread.

Think you've found a Spotted Lanternfly?

1. Take pictures of the insect, egg masses, or infestation;

2. If possible, collect the insect and seal it in a plastic bag or jar, and then place it in a freezer, to kill the insect;

3. Note the location (street address and zip code, intersecting roads, landmarks, or GPS coordinates);

4. Email pictures and a location to *spotted-lanternfly@agriculture.ny.gov*.

For more information, and to see the current range of the spotted lanternfly check out the resources at *www.cals.cornell.edu/new-york-state-integrated-pest-management/outreach-education/whats-bugging-you/spotted-lanternfly*.

Brian Eshenaur is a Sr. Extension Associate in Cornell's Integrated Pest Management Program.

Mark Whitmore is a forest entomologist in the Cornell University Department of Natural Resources and the chair of the NY Forest Health Advisory Council.

NYFOA Board of Directors

From left to right: Craig Vollmer - Executive Director, Peter Tonetti – Treasurer, John Bartow – ESFPA, Jason Post - CDC Chair/Rep, Stacey Kazacos – President, Nick Jensen - Member At Large, Liana Gooding - Office Administrator, Art Wagner - Member at Large, Bob Somers - Member at large, Ed Neuhauser – Secretary, Harmon Hoff - Member at large, Mike Arman - Member at large, Kristina Ferrare - Member at large, Greg Lessord - WFL Rep, Bruce Cushing – SAC, Chair/Rep, Hugh Canham - Member at large, Mike Gorham - Member at large. Not pictured: Tony Rainville - Member at Large, Tracey Testo - Member at Large, Dick Brennan - AFC Chair/Rep, Dan Zimmerman - CNY Chair/Rep, Erik Schellenberg - LHC Chair/Rep, Bill Lynch - NAC Rep, Suzanne Treyger - SFL Rep, Darryl Wood - SOT Rep, Vic & Deb Bandinelli - NFC Rep.

Would you like to see an article about a particular topic we haven't covered?

Please send your suggestions to: Mary Beth Malmsheimer, editor at mmalmshe@syr.edu or Jeff Joseph, managing editor at jeffjosephwoodworker@gmail.com

Welcome New Members

We welcome the following new members (who joined since the publishing of the last issue) to NYFOA and thank them for their interest in, and support of, the organization:

Name	Chapter	Name	Chapter
Gwen Alegre	NFC	Rick Frisbie	SOT
Amanda & Kevin Aucompaugh	CDC	Donn Hewes	SOT
Blackberry Maple	SAC	Tracey Jordan	LHC
Brandon Bulkley	WFL	Michael Karl	CDC
Steve Chen	LHC	David Owen	WFL
Philippa Dunne	CDC	Bjorn Schellenberg	LHC
Genie Fabian	LHC	Timothy Sohn	LHC
		Sandra Swenson	LHC

Follow us on Facebook

Follow NYFOA on Facebook or visit our website at *www.nyfoa.org*

from the property. My biggest takeaway from all of this is that using machines vastly improves your efficiency in achieving your management goals.

How has the land changed since you bought it?

Since purchasing the property in 2020, we've established a network of trails that allow us access to most of the property, and we're hoping to improve access further in the future. Unfortunately, we've had to witness firsthand the progression of the emerald ash borer (EAB) in our woodlot, killing off dozens, if not hundreds of ash trees.

What is your biggest challenge when it comes to managing the property and the woods?

One of our biggest challenges remains dealing with the invasive species in our lot. There are some spots so thick with honeysuckle, buckthorn, and multi-flora rose that it's next to impossible to traverse those areas. Our second biggest challenge is gaining access to the northside of the railroad bed. The bed prevents a tractor from getting up there to cut in trails. I may work out a barter with a landscaper neighbor who has a walk behind brush hog that would work well.

What are some things you have done to learn how to understand and manage your land more effectively?

Reading NYFOA publications, and watching others at work in their woodlot has been instrumental in learning about best practices and techniques to manage our lot. Learning the history of our property has also helped shape our understanding of how it came to be and how we might change it for the better.

What advice would you give to other young woodlot owners, or to those considering buying woodland?

To other young woodlot owners, I would definitely recommend taking a woods walk with a Cornell Master Forest Owner volunteer. Shortly after purchasing our property, I met with Ed Neuhauser, a MFO volunteer, and he had great insight into what he saw in our woods, as well as some parallels he had on his own property. To those considering buying woodland, I would say commit and do it. For me and my family, there is no greater joy than spending time together in our woodlot. Whether it be time spent hiking and talking, exploring the ponds, or collecting shagbark hickory nuts, there's always fun to be had.

What do you enjoy the most about being a forest owner?

My favorite part about being a forest owner is the connection to nature, the feeling of being in that space and seeing things change and grow and flourish.

In what ways, if any, do you interact with your neighbors or community as it relates to your woodlot?

When we purchased our lot, we sent letters to the neighbors of the property, letting them know we had purchased it and how to get in contact with us should there be any issues or questions. The response we got from most neighbors was fantastic. Several neighbors use our trails for walking their dogs, my next-door neighbor's kids use the trails and ponds to play and explore, and I've had a few neighbors help with improving the stand with trails and storm damage clean up.

Which NYFOA chapter are you affiliated with? How has membership in NYFOA benefited you as a woodland owner?

I'm currently affiliated with the Southern Fingerlakes (SFL) chapter of NYFOA. With COVID restrictions easing, I'm looking forward to meeting folks in person and making those connections. Thus far, my NYFOA membership has provided me with a wealth of knowledge and literature, as well as access to professionals and peers in forest stewardship and woodlot management.

Many thanks to Ryan for sharing his story. If you are another "Under 40" woodlot owner and would be willing to participate in a future installment of this column, send me an email at jeffjosephwoodworker@gmail.com.

Please share this magazine with a neighbor and urge them to join NYFOA. By gaining more members, NYFOA's voice will become stronger!

Sweetening the Sugarbush for Birds

By Sharon Bruce

Sean Carter and his partner Maria Paone operate a small scale sugarbush and mushroom farm on their forested land in Tompkins County near Ithaca, NY, in the Finger Lakes region. Their 103-acre Sapwood Farm was one of the pilot participants in Audubon New York's Bird-Friendly Maple program, and they work with a forester who is an ecologist and bird expert. In Sean's words: "I've experienced 80%, 90%, 100% mortality when jumping in with planting. This time around we addressed some of the bigger issues first—from invasives to deer—and created habitat for wildlife, which in turn helped manage issues like rodents... and finally we're seeing success!"

As part of its Healthy Forests initiative, Audubon New York is partnering with maple producers to manage sugarbushes with the goal of creating a more diverse stand structure. (Sugarbush refers to a forest stand which is utilized for maple syrup; the tree canopy is often dominated by sugar maple). The shift will benefit nesting songbirds, including scarlet tanagers, wood thrushes, black-throated blue warblers, and veeries—and will make the resulting product more appealing to bird-loving consumers. Some of these species, like the wood thrush, have already lost half their population in the last 50 years due to habitat loss. Urgent action is needed address these declines, and dedicated landowners like maple syrup producers have an incredible opportunity to help.

"Here in New York we have a very active community of maple syrup producers exchanging ideas and lessons learned, leading family-owned and operated small businesses. It's not necessarily a full-time job for all of these folks, although they are fully invested in the work. They're seriously motivated go-getters who love what they do," explains Zack Boerman, forest program associate for Audubon Connecticut and New York and Bird-Friendly Maple program lead. "Many of these folks aren't producing year-round. If you have 100 acres of sugarbush that's in production during the winter, you want to support a healthy habitat for the rest of the year."

Wood thrush. Photo by Kathy Johnston.

As of the end of 2022, nine New York producers have signed on to participate, impacting 800 acres of important forest habitat for birds. The program has 70 participants in Vermont, where it originated, and is expanding into Connecticut in 2023.

Birds and the Sugarbush Both Benefit

"I understand that there are native birds that also appreciate our

continued on next page

This sugarbush has been managed to improve forest habitat and health. Gaps in the tree canopy allow more sunlight to reach the forest floor and increase understory growth and native tree species diversity. By managing for more complex structure, forest birds will have ample places to nest, forage, and raise their young. Photo by Steve Hagenbuch.

management; and of course, one of our favorites here is the wild turkey. That is a species that did not exist here when I was a kid," says Mary Jeanne Packer, national sales manager for Mapleland Farms. "The only reason wild turkeys have returned to our sugarbush is because we've diversified our management. It is certainly heartwarming to see the reintroduction of a species because of our efforts."

Mapleland Farms is another of the first Audubon Bird-Friendly Maple producers in New York State. Owned by two brothers — David and Terry Campbell — who have worked on the same land their entire lives, it was originally a dairy farm. The Campbell brothers began maple production on the land 50 years ago. In 2005, they sold their dairy herd and began working on making maple products full-time, tapping over 19,000+ trees. This change led to a willingness to invest in sustainable woodland management, since a healthy forest is crucial for the longevity of the sugarbush and the business that depends on it. A big transformation occurred when the brothers stopped using their pasture lands for grazing and chose not to have the area reseeded. "Now, those sections are starting to get a little brushy around the edges. We even deferred mowing in the hayfields last year as part of a program with USDA, and a family of ruffed grouse successfully nested in one of the brush lots. We hadn't seen them in our neighborhood for many years, so it was nice to see them come back," says Packer.

While maple syrup can look and taste the same, it can come from forests that are managed in dramatically different ways. Park-like maple monocultures may look tidy and increase sap production over the short-term, but support relatively low numbers of birds and bird species. These same forests are also less likely to be able to respond to the stresses of insect outbreaks, disease, or a changing climate. Features which provide great habitat for forest birds and improve the health of the sugarbush include a diversity of tree *species* and *age classes* (more than just mature sugar maple, although sugar maple is typically the dominant tree species), complex *structural diversity* (layers of vegetation, from small seedlings on the forest floor to saplings and shrubs, to the canopy overhead), standing dead trees and live trees with

cavities, and large logs and branches on the forest floor.

In order to participate in the pilot program and receive Bird-Friendly Maple marketing and promotional materials, producers welcome Audubon staff to collect forest inventory data, such as tree diameters and species diversity, which is used to draft a forest habitat assessment. The assessment captures current habitat conditions and provides habitat management recommendations for participating sugarbushes. Based on the results of the assessments, producers agree to follow a set of guidelines to help ensure important bird habitat characteristics are integrated into sugarbush management. For example, they agree to limit disturbance to nesting birds by conducting any harvests outside of the nesting season (breeding season runs approximately May – July). They also agree to conduct recommended management activities like controlling invasive plants, and creating canopy gaps to promote understory growth.

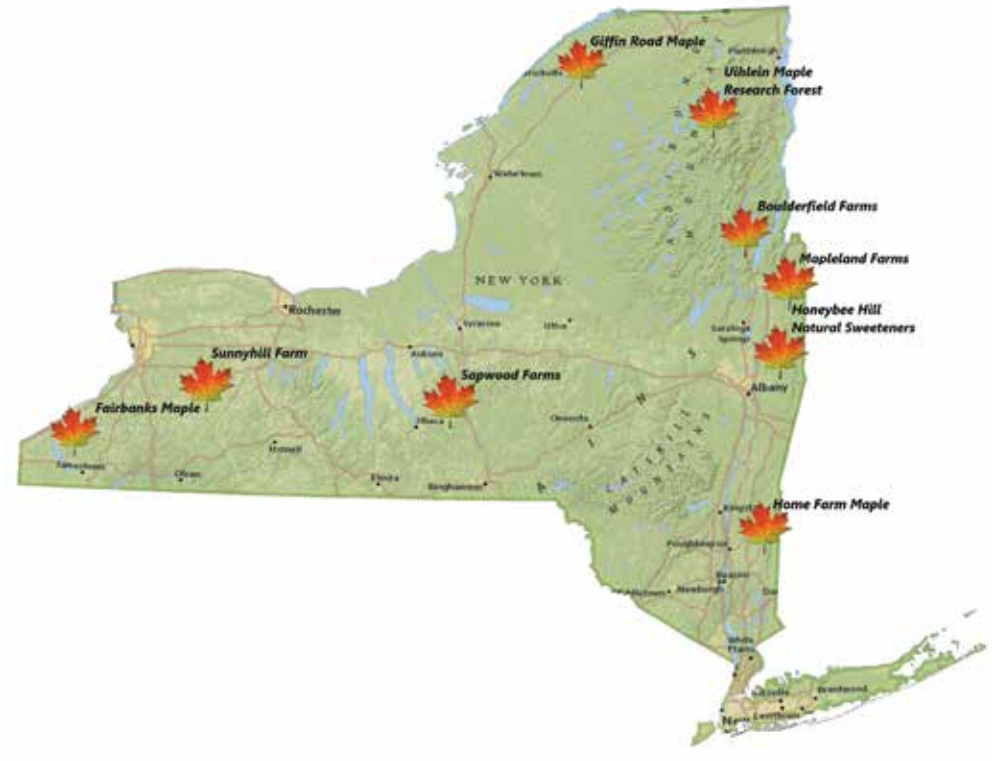
"It is an honor to be recognized for having a forest that is managed for effective bird habitat. Maple sap is collected from intact-forest ecosystems that not only provide bird habitat, but also habitat for other wildlife, land for recreation, filter water, and sequester carbon. As a research and educational forest for maple producers across New York and the entire maple producing region, we strive to be a model for sustainable forest management. Being recognized by the Bird-Friendly Maple project is another way for us to best represent and lead the maple industry," said Adam Wild, director of Cornell University's Uihlein Maple Research Forest.

Building a Bird-Friendly Brand

For Mapleland Farms, participating in Audubon New York's Bird-Friendly Maple certification program is also a good business proposition. Mary Jeanne explains, "We believe that the Bird-Friendly Maple brand can be effective in differentiating what we make in the crowded marketplace of maple syrup. You can buy syrup from any mass-produced brand, but the way that the sugarbushes are managed can be very different. So, we are always looking for upscale partnerships – figuring that the people who understand the values of Audubon are also people who understand premium products and the care with which the landscape is managed, and may choose to use our syrup over another brand."

Aaron Wightman, Maple Specialist for the Cornell Maple Program adds, "This program empowers consumers to play a direct role in bird conservation. Every unit of maple syrup purchased displaces sweeteners produced from other sources that do not sustain bird habitat, such as intensively cultivated corn and cane sugar fields. Maple syrup is unique because it is produced from intact forest ecosystems."

To recognize and support participating maple producers for their good work, look for maple syrup containers with the Scarlet Tanager label indicating that the syrup is "Maple Managed for Birds."



Map of NYS Bird-Friendly Maple participants.

Participating Bird-Friendly Maple Producers in New York State:

Boulderfield Farms, Brant Lake; Fairbanks Maple, Forestville; Giffin Road Maple, Canton; Honeybee Hill Natural Sweeteners, Valley Falls; Mapleland Farms, Salem; Sapwood Farms, Dryden; Sunnyhill Farm, Arcade; Uihlein Maple Research Forest, Lake Placid.

Sharon Bruce is the Senior Communications Manager for Audubon New York. If you are a maple producer interested in learning more about the Bird-Friendly Maple program, please contact Zachary Boerman at zachary.boerman@audubon.org.

The New York
Forest Owner
A Publication of The New York Forest Owners Association

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Syracuse, N.Y.
Permit No. 999

NYFOA
New York Forest Owners Association