

The New York Forest Owner

A PUBLICATION OF THE NEW YORK FOREST OWNERS ASSOCIATION

For people caring about New York's trees and forests

May/June 2022



Lumber Market Update - 2022

Volume 60 Number 3



**THE NEW YORK
FOREST OWNERS
ASSOCIATION**

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The New York Forest Owner

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COVER: Front cover: Decades of woodlot management come to fruition. Photo courtesy of Tom Gerow. See article on page 4.

From The President

Happy spring to all. In reviewing NYFOA's activities over this past winter, our association continued to be on the move in many positive ways. Of special note, NYFOA had seven members meet with a number of state legislators and present the interests of the private woodlot owner at Forestry Awareness Days. We thank



the Empire State Forest Products Association (ESFPA) for inviting NYFOA reps to take part in this event. Hugh Canham coordinated the role of NYFOA's participants and ESFPA officers

again did an exceptional job preparing background materials, coordinating meetings with legislators using Zoom, and much more. Our participants used the opportunity to support expanding NYS financial incentives to woodlot owners who implement best forest management practices (e.g. the Regenerate New York Forestry Cost Share Grant Program), to encourage responsible use of wood as heating fuel and oppose a sweeping ban on the use of woodstoves, and emphasize the overall role of the forest in helping mitigate environmental threats.

I am excited that NYFOA's Program Committee with the help of Executive Director Craig Vollmer is developing a workshop on Legacy and Tax Planning. The idea is that this will be a 'traveling workshop' that can be presented across the state as a chapter-hosted event. We are drawing on the professional talents of NYFOA member Nick Jensen, a CPA and Certified Financial Planner (yes, a very talented guy) to provide a framework for the workshops and to help recruit a team of professionals who can present on their respective specialties — e.g. estate planning attorneys, tax specialists,

conservation easement professionals, and others. We are pursuing this based on broad member interest in legacy planning. The workshops would assist NYFOA members in exploring various options should they wish to keep their woodlots in the family, or donate the property, or sell it. There is no one-size-fits-all solution in legacy planning, and our belief is that the workshops will provide an accessible framework on how to proceed. FYI, Nick Jensen is a member of the steering committee of the Western Finger Lakes chapter, owns a family woodlot, and has offered to write articles about legacy and tax planning in the *NY Forest Owner* magazine and *The Woodlot* e-newsletter. We are in the start-up phase of the workshop initiative and will keep everyone posted as things progress.

The Lower Hudson chapter (LHC) has always been the smallest chapter in NYFOA with less than 100 members. Through the collegial efforts of the adjacent Capital District chapter, NYFOA members in the Lower Hudson region receive newsletters and invitations to events organized by Capital District. Recently, Craig Vollmer reached out to several LHC members and it looks like we have the makings of a home grown steering committee. Clearly this is a positive development which we will support actively as things line up.

I think we all know that inflation is a real factor in our lives today, recently reaching its highest level in 40 years. Our operating expenses have similarly gone up and we were obliged to pursue a modest annual dues increase for NYFOA members in the amount of \$10 per year. At the same time, we are always on the lookout to reduce costs and still provide real value to members. For example, NYFOA and NY Tree Farm have agreed to share the costs of producing one combined e-newsletter. This publication will retain the name NYFOA has been using from the start, *The Woodlot*. Joining forces with Tree Farm on the newsletter

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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.

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Hardwood Lumber Market Outlook for 2022

BY TOM GEROW

In the last article I wrote for this magazine (Volume 59, No. 3; May/June 2021), we explored various impacts on our hardwood lumber markets. These are the markets most New York landowners rely on to derive value generated from forest management activities. Major impacts include export lumber demand, domestic market fluctuations, overall production, and supply chain issues (weather, COVID, workforce). All of these influence the price a landowner realizes when selling timber or logs at any given point in time.

Today, with that table set, I will provide an update on some of those markets and factors with some thoughts looking toward the second half of 2022 and beyond.

General Domestic Lumber Market Comments

Lumber Production: After a strong start, 2021 turned into a tough year for hardwood lumber production throughout the U.S. Whereas the market was good, the combination of COVID, weather, and a dicey labor market wrought havoc on many operations, keeping production limited. The largest component in

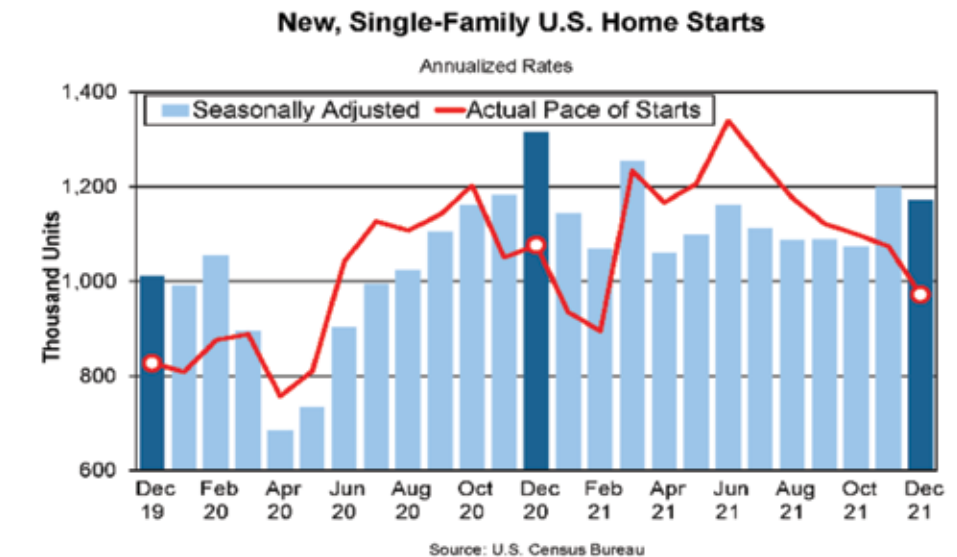


Figure 1

keeping log and lumber prices strong is a lack of supply against a steady demand.

That changed toward the end of 2021 and beginning of 2022, with drier logging conditions in the South and Ohio Valley, increasing cold in the North, and the ending of some of the long-term unemployment and

COVID benefits. Some feel the ending of the bolstered unemployment benefits brought people back into the labor pool and eased production woes a bit. The weather improvements certainly had a big impact.

Specific data for lumber production in 2021 is not available yet, but by all accounts, it was stronger than 2020.

Did you know there is a land trust seeking to conserve New York's working forests?

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If you're considering selling land, be sure to consult with the experts.

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Log Supply: The log supply in NY followed national trends, although it was a little more delayed due to the weather conditions. We did not get good cold weather until late January in 2021. From there we had a nice spring, but a very, very wet summer and fall. Things stayed that way until late December when cold, drier weather started setting in, and just in time, as winter is the time of year when harvesters “make hay.” The windows to get into sensitive parcels get narrower every year, and timber harvesters need to be able to produce to make their payments.

Logs seem to be widely available and mill doors are wide open this time of year as logs are perishable, and you have a lot more flexibility in production when the weather is cold, and the logs are preserved. Spring and summer present a whole new set of challenges when it comes to purchasing logs and rotating inventory. Sawmills do need to run year-round, so there are a variety of logistical manipulations that go on from season to season.

Low Grade Lumber and By-Products: An unsung hero in this recent strong lumber market has been the low-grade lumber (flooring grade, pallet cants, railroad ties, and truck flooring) and

by-products (chips, sawdust, and bark) markets. The lumber and cants that go into the pallet industry are slightly off the all-time highs but are moving very well. With 25-35% of a mill’s production in NY being in this category, it is very impactful to the price of logs and timber. A strong overall economy keeps pallets in demand and that is a good thing for NY landowners.

Chips, sawdust, and bark markets are also remaining vibrant. A part of this is due to the lower production of the preceding months, but the market for heating pellets, industrial heating (schools and industry), agriculture (sawdust), paper, and landscaping mulch are all remaining strong. Mills need to move the by-products as they take up a lot of space! This is another positive for NY landowners.

Labor: Nationally, labor has improved. More people have gotten back to work as the added unemployment benefits we spoke about last year, have ceased. Wages are on the upswing and now there is a significant amount of competition for lower skilled workers. This is still impacting production at NY mills. The Omicron variant of COVID-19 has also had a huge impact this winter as many employers have had to slow

production lines due to employees being out with COVID or with family members being sick. More recently, the HERO Act in NY has expired and CDC guidelines have changed, allowing NY businesses get back to business as usual (sort of). Hopefully future variants won’t cause the same havoc the last couple have.

Domestic Lumber Market Influences

Housing: The number one market for hardwood lumber is for housing, and specifically for what goes into new houses: flooring, cabinets, and furniture. New housing is the largest driver of demand for these products. That being said, remodeling is also a significant part of the mix, especially as people continue to take advantage of new opportunities in working remotely and add home office spaces.

As you can see from Figure 1 on the previous page, new home starts took off during late 2020 and held steady through 2021. This trend is expected to continue through the first half of 2022 and beyond. The trend is driven by people’s desire to get out of cities (pandemic related), increased work from home, and the maturing of the Millennial generation who want to settle down and have children.

Cabinet: Cabinet sales primarily impact hard and soft maple, hickory, and birch demand. Sales are brisk and are expected to stay that way.

Flooring: Flooring demand centers around red oak, white oak, and hickory. Typically using the lower grades of lumber (#2 common) when available, manufacturers will venture into higher grades when needed, typically #1 common.

Furniture: As you can see from Figure 2, domestic factory shipments have been strong through October of 2021. Again, this trend is expected to remain. Furniture manufacturers use a variety of grades and species, so strength in this area is good for all forest owners.

Moldings and trim: Along with the other items, the demand should be strong here; this demand primarily influences tulip poplar and basswood.

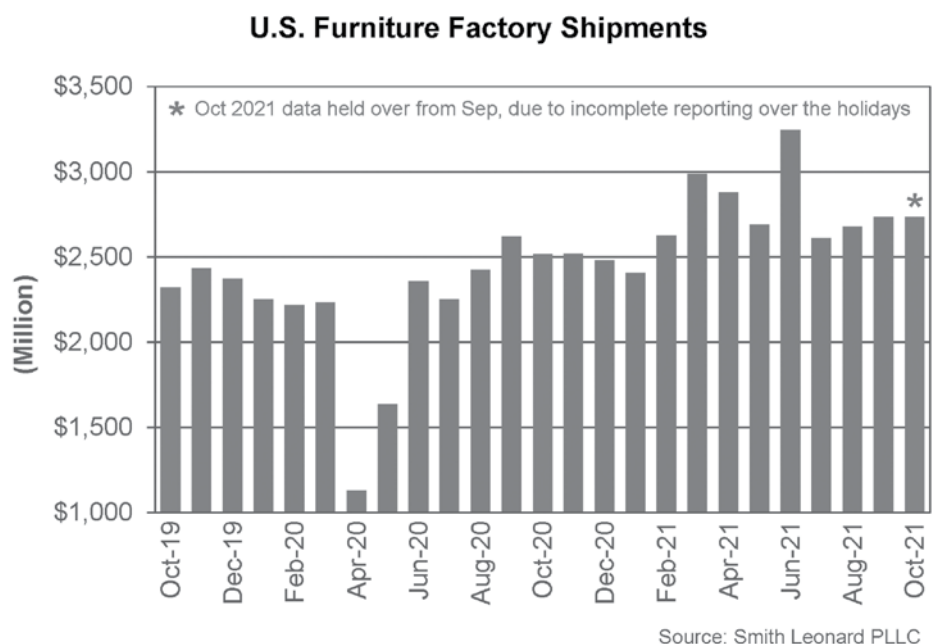


Figure 2

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Ask A Professional

PETER SMALLIDGE



Peter Smallidge
Additional reading on various topics is available at www.forestconnect.info

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

easily be manipulated. An area that supports one objective might be able to support other objectives with a little work.

Once you consider all the areas and objectives you have for your property, it can be daunting to decide the highest priority objective. Then you have to decide the most efficient and timely way to achieve that objective. Fortunately, you can contact the NYS DEC for a free forest stewardship plan that covers these basic considerations. You can also contact a private consulting forester for a more detailed management plan (Figure 1). Both will provide a suggested work schedule that focuses

Tools for working in your woodlot

Question:

I recently retired and we moved to our woodlot. I'm eager to get into the woods and make improvements. What types of tools will be useful? (Michael, CNY)

Answer:

The opportunity to work in the woods can be gratifying and productive. The time in the woods allows experiences that are not possible with other endeavors. Every day can bring positive changes to you and your woods, but you also benefit by knowing there will always be another task and another day in the woods. Several tools will ensure you are productive, efficient, and safe.

The first and most important tool is a stewardship plan or management plan. At the core of a plan are the objectives that you and your family have for the property. These objectives are the outcomes that you desire on a regular or infrequent interval. Most objectives are complementary, but some require their own unique space. Typically objectives last for many years, but sometimes objectives are added or removed from your list.

Once objectives are written down, the simplest plan would require walking your woods and prioritizing what areas are not supporting your objectives and can most



Figure 1. A forester has the experience to blend the owner's objectives with a prioritized list of tasks that will bring satisfaction to the owner.



Figure 2. Ticks carry a variety of diseases. There are a number of personal behaviors that reduce exposure to ticks and thus disease. There are also insecticides that can be applied to clothing to repel or kill ticks.



Figure 3. The peavy had its start in the logging industry. The basic design is unchanged, although a variety of materials are used. This tool excels as a lever to maneuver logs into position or for releasing a pinched chainsaw bar.

your efforts on a few tasks each year, and additional tasks for several years in the future. Let the forester know how much of the work you want to do, and ask for suggestions of tools to make the tasks as safe and efficient as possible.

Your plan and the tasks of the work schedule will determine the most needed tools. I suggest purchasing tools of good to exceptional quality, without going too far, and being sure to keep the tools in proper working condition. The following list of tools, in no particular order, are those that many woodland owners find useful. The necessity of each tool depends on your objectives and your intended tasks.

- Some circumstances or terrain require certain types of boots for safety and comfort. If your feet are sore, soggy, or lacking traction you are distracted and less safe. A pair of waterproof boots with lug soles

and a pair of barn or muck boots can cover most needs. Steel-toed boots are important if you work with heavy objects.

- If your stewardship or management plan is the simple version described above, work with your local office of Cornell Cooperative Extension or your Soil and Water Conservation District to find a source for maps of the boundaries, soils, and topography. Draw in any existing trails and roads, and add new trails as you create them. Two webinars about the use of inexpensive and accessible GIS and GPS tools are archived on www.youtube.com/ForestConnect.

- It is an unfortunate reality that working in the woods exposes us to ticks, and ticks can carry a variety of pathogens including the bacterium that causes Lyme disease. A number of strategies reduce your exposure, such as gaiters or pants tucked into socks or boots. There are also insecticides, as a type of tool, that can be applied to clothing to repel or even kill ticks.

Three common active ingredients, (and others may exist), include DEET, Permethrin, and Picaridin (Figure 2). Read the label instructions to understand how to use these products safely and optimally. There are commercially available pants and shirts that have these compounds pre-applied.

- If you're physically able to work with a chainsaw, these can be quite helpful. Using a chainsaw requires particular attention to safety, and a course such as Game of Logging (GOL) will provide benefits each time you use the saw. You can learn about GOL training sessions by emailing chainsawsafety@bassett.org. Once you understand chainsaw technique and have personal protective equipment (PPE), the two most important aspects are keeping the chain sharp and making sure the saw runs properly. A local saw shop can help with both, but GOL training also gives instruction. For gasoline chainsaws, I suggest only using

continued on next page



Figure 4. Folding saws find numerous tasks. Smaller saws can easily slip into a hip or side pocket. Larger saws, such as the 15" saw pictured, can fit in most day-packs and handle larger stems.



Figure 5. There is almost no end to the uses for flagging, from marking crop trees, new trails, or trees to cut for firewood. A variety of types are available, shown here are vinyl and paper-based, for enduring or biodegradable uses.

ethanol-free gasoline when mixing with the two-cycle oil. Battery powered chainsaws are now available, and can be helpful for low intensity work. All chainsaw use requires cut resistant chaps or pants; eye, hearing, and head protection is conveniently provided by a logger's helmet.

- If you're cutting logs with a chainsaw, you will sometimes pinch the bar. The safest way to release the bar is to use a peavey as a lever (Figure 3). This tactic is most practical if the log has been severed from the crown. It is a good idea to cut a felled tree into sections, minimally crown and stem, so if the bar gets pinched the peavey only needs to leverage a small and disconnected section.

- It's helpful to have easy access to a folding hand saw with a cutting length of 10 to 15 inches (Figure 4). Many trees on trails or other situations requiring cutting can be handled by these lightweight saws.

- A hatchet or an ax is useful for adding blazes to the boundary trees identified by your surveyor (create new blazes and leave existing blazes as historic evidence). Related to this, you might annually refresh the paint on your boundary trees. An ax is also handy if your handsaw isn't large enough for a tree that has fallen across your ATV trail. Your ax and hatchet should be sharp, and safe technique is essential.

- One of the most useful features of your woods will be trails and roads to allow easy and defined access. Start with a soils and topographic map, and then time on the ground with flagging tape to mark, unmark, re-mark and eventually decide on the best location for trails and roads (Figure 5).

- Many woodland owners cut their own firewood. This provides great exercise and improvements to your woods by thinning out lower quality stems and allowing more sunlight to the better quality stems. Once the firewood has been cut into blocks and/or split, log tongs are useful for gripping pieces to pile or stack. Depending on the amount of firewood you use, a log splitter might also be useful.

- Many woodland owners need to remove items from the woods, such as firewood. They also need to take items into the woods, such as gravel for trails or deer stands. This is easiest if you have a tractor, ATV, UTV, or an old truck. Depending on what you are moving, it may help to have a wagon or cart you can attach. Ideally, the wagon or cart has a low center of gravity to reduce the likelihood of tipping.

- If you plan to move logs with your tractor or ATV, you might also want a forwarding arch (Figure 6), skidding cone, self-releasing snatch block or PTO-mounted winch. These keep logs out of the mud, make moving logs safe, and reduce damage to the residual trees.

- Working in the woods may allow you to refocus your brain from other concerns and result in ideas about projects you can do on your property, sketches of new designs, or lists of additional tools that you need. There are pocket notebooks (Figure 7) that have special paper that allow you to write in the rain. These are rugged, and even if it isn't raining they are useful when your ideas are mixed with sweat and dirt.

- If you have interest or needs for additional storage buildings or woodworking projects you might benefit from finding a local sawyer who has a portable bandsaw mill. One




Figure 6. Logging arches are used in small-scale low impact situations to move single logs. Production is low, but for the occasional easy-to-access log, this works well. The log is kept clean for the sawmill or cutting into firewood.



Figure 7. Waterproof paper is worth the minimal expense the first time you realize the priceless thought you captured wasn't lost because of the rain storm or inadvertent washing machine exposure (the latter isn't recommended or assured). Write the date you start the notebook on the cover to keep track of information through time.

manufacturer of mills has a network you can search <https://woodmizer.com/us/Find-a-Local-Sawyer>. You might decide that you have a sufficient need to buy your own mill, which provides great satisfaction.

Again, these tools are all options depending on your objectives, the needs of your woodlot, and the tasks before you. There are numerous other tools that might be useful, perhaps a diameter tape, brush saw, tree marking paint, scale stick, etc. An exceptional source of ideas and utility of tools is to participate in your NYFOA chapter woods walks to see the tools other woodland owners use. Practice with the tools before you need to use them. Always be sure to use safe techniques, which are the most productive techniques in the long run.

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Wild Things in Your Woodlands

DEVON DAVIS

EASTERN WHIP-POOR-WILL (*ANTROSTROMUS VOCIFERUS*)



The eastern whip-poor-will is a medium-sized bird slightly larger than a robin and smaller than a crow. It has a top-heavy build, with a large, flattened head, protruding chest, and short tails and wings. Whisker-like feathers surround its tiny, black beak, which likely aid in capturing flying insects. As a nocturnal species, its eyes are slightly enlarged and contain a special structure to see in low-light conditions. Its plumage contains an intricate, mottled brown-gray pattern that allows it to camouflage in leaf litter on the forest floor or on tree bark. Males can be distinguished from females by the presence of bright white patches on the edges of their tail feathers. Breeding occurs from May to July. It does not build a nest; rather, females lay two camouflaged eggs in dry leaf litter on the forest floor. The incubation period is between 19-21 days, and both parents care for the hatchlings.

Photo credit: Andy Reago and Chrissy McClarren

Eastern whip-poor-wills are rarely seen; rather, they make their presence known through their repetitive and distinct call, which phonetically resembles “whip-poor-will.” Like most nightjars, they are nocturnal and are exclusively active at night.

Historically, the range of the eastern whip-poor-will was large, extending from the midwestern United States to the west, southern Canada to the north, the eastern seaboard to the east, and parts of Central America to the south. Nonbreeding populations exist in the southernmost portion of their range, and they migrate northward to breed in the spring months. They can be found throughout New York State during the breeding season. However, their range has been consistently shrinking over the last few decades, primarily due to human impacts such as habitat loss.

In late April and early May, eastern whip-poor-wills flock to southeastern Canada, the northeastern United States (including New York), and parts of the

Midwest to breed amongst open, dry deciduous, and mixed evergreen-deciduous forest habitats. They prefer forests that contain little to no underbrush, as they spend most of their time on low-lying branches or on the forest floor. They also tend to frequent forests that are adjacent to open, unforested swaths of land, which is where they generally forage for food. They are typically not found in areas of high altitude.

Their diet is primarily composed of insects, including moths, beetles, bees, wasps, mosquitoes, grasshoppers, ants, and fireflies. Though their beaks are small, their wide gape allows them to swallow their prey whole. Around 30 minutes after the sun sets, they move to the forest edge and other open areas and shift their gaze upwards to detect flying insects against the dark night sky. As the night continues to grow darker, eastern whip-poor-wills have a more difficult time spotting their prey and wait to forage again until just before sunrise. However, during full moons,

their vision is enhanced due to the moon’s illumination, and they have been observed foraging throughout the entire night.

The moon also seems to play an important role in their breeding cycle. Parents time nesting so that their eggs will hatch approximately 10 days before a full moon. This allows them to catch more food for their offspring, enhancing their development and chances of survival. Just like the adults, young hatchlings quickly develop a camouflaged pattern to blend into the forest and avoid predation. Though both parents initially care for their young, the female often leaves soon after they hatch to lay a second clutch. Their courtship behavior is not well understood, but males have been observed singing, bobbing their heads, and moving in a sporadic fashion to attract females.

Like many native bird species, eastern whip-poor-will populations are facing declines. Though they are still common in their breeding and nonbreeding ranges,

continued on next page

Wild Things (continued)

their numbers declined by 75% between 1966 and 2015. In New York State, they are listed as a species of "Special Concern". Since many bird species surveys are conducted in the daylight, their population declines are poorly understood and documented. However, as forests grow older, they provide less open space, and become less hospitable for eastern whip-poor-wills. They may also be facing habitat loss as forests are cut down, or as invasive plant species proliferate in the understory. Their preference for edge habitats renders them vulnerable to vehicle collisions and attacks from animals like cats and raccoons. Widespread insecticide use poses threats to their diet and their health as they are exposed to these substances through their prey. Additionally, climate change is shifting the alignment of their reproduction in relation to the timing and availability of insect populations.

To protect eastern whip-poor-wills from these threats, it is important to conserve their breeding and foraging habitats. Removing invasive plant species from open forest habitat can help ensure that these birds can have suitable open space to breed and nest. Maintaining open habitats such as meadows and prairies, especially those next to forests, is an important way to ensure that they have adequate access to foraging habitat. Using alternatives to insecticides when managing pests is a crucial aid in preserving their food sources, as well as in preventing them from being exposed to potentially hazardous substances. Continuing to plant native tree species (such as pines and oaks) is a great way to provide future habitat for eastern whip-poor-wills. By being mindful of these birds and conserving their habitats, their unique song will continue to ring out throughout the springtime, and they can continue to contribute to the intricate woodland ecosystem. 🌲

Devon Davis is a Program Assistant for the New York State Master Naturalist Program, directed by Kristi Sullivan at Cornell University's Department of Natural Resources. More information on managing habitat for wildlife, and the NY Master Naturalist Volunteer Program, can be found at <https://blogs.cornell.edu/nymasternaturalist/>

From the President (continued)

should result in a \$3,000 per year savings to NYFOA with no reduction in the quality of the publication. We are hopeful that by distributing the e-newsletter to NYFOA and Tree Farm members, advertisers will be attracted to use the publication to place paid advertisements now that it reaches the members of two statewide associations.

On the weekend of April 22-24, NYFOA will hold a statewide meeting hosted by the Western Finger Lakes chapter. The weekend activities will take place at Finger Lakes Community College in Canandaigua, Ontario County, NY. It is going to be a great event with excellent speakers and outdoor activity options. I encourage all members to attend. See details about the weekend at www.nyfoa.org.

A note of thanks to state board member Dave Sturges for his long service to NYFOA. Dave has reached his term limit and stepped down from the board in March. Through his work on various initiatives, Dave has helped to shape our association's plans and activities while providing a good measure of stability and reason. Dave and his wife Elaine have long been active members of NYFOA's Southern Tier chapter, something I am certain they will continue. Thank you and Godspeed, Dave and Elaine.

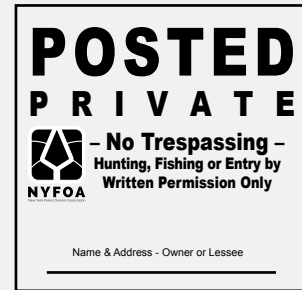
On a related note, I encourage interested members to consider a seat on the state board. The challenges are interesting as we continue to identify and support programs and activities that members value. Staying with our founding principles, NYFOA is a decentralized, peer-to-peer association. This means that most of the substantive work resides at the chapter level. The state board is there to support all chapters and manage association resources responsibly. There are many interesting possibilities for board service. Contact me directly (skazacos@nyfoa.org) if you are interested in finding out more.

I'll end things on a personal note. My wife Jeannine, a French-Canadian from New Brunswick, tapped 20 sugar maple trees on our property this year. I am sure this is in her DNA. We boiled sap which yielded about three gallons of syrup (yes, that 40:1 sap-to-syrup ratio can be daunting for the backyard enthusiast.) I provided the muscle and moved firewood to feed the insatiable appetite of our backyard evaporator. While we both enjoyed the experience, I often dream about what life would be like in a reverse osmosis world.

–Stacey Kazacos
NYFOA President

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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

A MEASURE OF SPRING, ONE INCH AT A TIME

BY MARK WHITMORE

Everyone likely has a memory of spring that is special and brings a smile. Daffodils, tulips, and muddy, wet puppies readily come to mind. Yet, not unexpectedly, one of my favorites are inchworms. No, these are not real worms; they are caterpillars, or the immature form of moths, in the family Geometridae. Geometrids are common worldwide with about 35,000 species described to date. The name comes from Latin and Greek meaning “earth measure.” If you are familiar with inchworms, you probably get it. However, to those who are new to the inchworm world, the name comes from the peculiar way the caterpillars move. Most caterpillars have legs pretty much along most of their body. Think of woolly bears crawling on the ground, a fuzzy tube winding its way along. Inchworms, on the other hand, are skinny, hairless, and have legs at the front and at the back with none in-between. They move by rearing up on their hind legs, then thrusting their body forward, grasping a surface (usually a twig) with their front legs, and then bringing the back legs up to meet the front ones. Measuring the earth, one step at a time. Other common names for them are “loopers” and “spanworms.”

When I was young, we would find a few inchworms and release them in the middle of a circle and the first one



Great oak beauty. Gyorgy Csoka, Hungary Forest Research Institute, Bugwood.org.

to the edge of the circle won. The trick was to find the largest one we could and then warm it in our hands, and remember which one was ours. The truth is I still like to race inchworms. My advantage is that I now know how to find the biggest, but I give those to the youngest child in the group.

Inchworms are not easy to find, not surprising considering they are some of the earliest juicy food items on the spring bird menu. Their hatching from eggs is closely timed with the first flush of leaves. They are never hairy and coloration is similar to

their food plant, greens and browns, often patterned to resemble bud scars on twigs. Their big trick to avoid detection is to remain still; sticking straight out from a twig with their hindlegs firmly attached. If you are just a casual observer you would think they were a just another twig. Very clever of them to find that camouflage technique and to adapt their method of movement to fit it. The adult moths are also cryptic. They are little gray-brown moths with coloration and patterns often matching that of lichens and mosses on the bark of trees.



Spiny looper. Joseph Berger, Bugwood.org.

The importance of inchworms in the diet of birds in spring cannot be understated. Research has found that caterpillars transfer more energy from plants to other animals than all other herbivores combined. A protein-rich diet of inchworms is essential to the breeding success of many of our most common birds: wrens, warblers, sparrows, chickadees, titmice, wrens, and of course bluebirds. Studies have shown that birds can eat up to 300 caterpillars in a day. Imagine what that means to inchworm populations when you have a busy forest full of birds feeding their young.

When I think of managing my own woodlot, birds are an important piece of the puzzle. I have often thought that managing for plant (including trees) diversity would be an important consideration for increasing the diversity of birds. Although some

caterpillars, like the spongy (formerly “Gypsy”) moth, are generalists, most, including inchworms, are specialists on a narrow range of plants. Because caterpillars chew leaves to ingest them (as opposed to sucking the juices from specific cells with straw-like mouthparts), they are exposed to the complex chemistry manufactured in leaves. This chemistry is metabolically expensive for the plants to produce, but is an essential part of the ongoing battle by plants to deter feeding by herbivores. The herbivores, or caterpillars, then need to adapt to the unique and shifting chemistry of the plants, forcing them to become specialists.

By this reasoning, it would be logical to think that increasing plant diversity would increase the diversity and perhaps overall abundance of inchworms to feed the birds. Then I

ran into a recent publication by D.L. Narango et al. (2020) that has changed my thinking. They looked at the host plant records for just over 12,000 species of caterpillars in 83 counties dispersed across the United States. They considered the records for over 2000 plant genera and found that the vast majority of caterpillars are found on only a few genera of host plants, and all are trees or woody shrubs. The top ten genera nation-wide in order of importance are *Quercus* (oaks), *Salix* (willows), *Prunus* (cherries, plums, peaches), *Pinus* (pines), *Populus* (cottonwood and aspen), *Betula* (birch), *Vaccinium* (blueberries), *Acer* (maples), *Carya* (hickories), and *Malus* (apples). They refer to these genera as “keystone genera” because they “are unique components of local food webs essential to the participation

continued on next page

of most other taxa in those food webs.” Now I have my shopping list for converting my old field.

Of course, all is not exactly wonderful in the world of inchworms and birds, and we may be witness to a change in this dynamic with climate change. Bud break in trees and subsequent hatching of inchworm eggs are closely tied to temperature. Young caterpillars with tiny mouthparts depend on tender young leaves to begin feeding and development. On the other hand, migratory birds adhere to strict schedules often dictated by celestial events or perhaps changes in climate far removed from the areas they migrate to for breeding. These birds have adapted to time their arrival in spring to nest when the first leaves are appearing and the inchworms are beginning to grow. Egg hatch just happens to coincide with peak caterpillar abundance.

A problem occurs when there is a disconnect with this timing and food is unavailable or diminished for developing young. Mayor et al. (2017) looked at 48 species of migratory birds and found that as spring green up of the trees became earlier, the arrival of birds lagged behind. Although some of the birds have been able to shift their arrival, it still lags behind the shift in green up. The more troubling news is that nine of the 48 bird species have been unable to keep up with the change in green up.

This is a subtle yet important demonstration of how climate change impacts the food web and potentially changes those familiar aspects of the world around us. For my part, I’m going to plant more “keystone genera” and help the youngsters in my life find inchworms. 🌱

References:

Mayor, S.J., Guralnick, R.P., Tingley, M.W. et al. 2017. Increasing phenological asynchrony between spring green-up and arrival of migratory birds. *Science Reports* 7, 1902. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41598-017-02045-z>

Narango, D.L., Tallamy, D.W., & Shropshire, K.J. 2020. Few keystone plant genera support the majority of Lepidoptera species. *Nature Communications*. 11:5751 <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41467-020-19565-4>

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

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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
Kevin Bieler	NFC	Annie Hsu	LHC
Gina Maiolo and Michael Charleton	WFL	Andrew Leonello	CNY
Shaylyn Decker	CDC	Gary Malek	CNY
Thomas P. Dziulko	NFC	Jake McClelland	WFL
Donald Einhouse	AFC	William Niemi	CDC
Richard and Scott Hirschmugl	SOT	Mike Rater	AFC
Andrew Hoskinson	CDC	Nancy Riding	SAC
		William Stavisky	NFC
		David A. Steele	SAC

History of the New York Forest Owners Association, Part II

BY HUGH CANHAM

Part I of this article can be found in the September/October 2021 issue of the Forest Owner.

Outreach and Education

Showing forest landowners the many opportunities that their woods present, and informing the public of the importance and significance of New York's private forest legacy are stated objectives of NYFOA. These have been achieved through a variety of means: woods walks, booths at county fairs, educational seminars, and special targeted presentations with other organizations.

NYFOA initiated the idea of "woods walks" to demonstrate the benefits of good forest management practices and to encourage sharing of information among and between private woodland owners and forestry professionals. Member landowners host a day or half day visit to their woods to demonstrate various

land management practices: timber sales, silvicultural thinning, road and trail construction, pond, and other riparian treatments, among others. Unique events such as recovery from a forest fire, horse logging, and the presence of exotic species have also taken place. Calling them woods walks as opposed to forest visits is an important distinction. This conveys the idea that there is a familiarity and oneness with the land held by its owner. Various studies have shown that many family forest owners (formerly called non-industrial forest owners) do not think they own a forest but rather they have their woods. The first woods walk was held on Saturday May 27, 1967 at Henry Kernan's property in South Worcester, Otsego County. Ten people attended the 3-hour session. Henry Kernan was a professional forester concentrating on international affairs. In the 1950's he

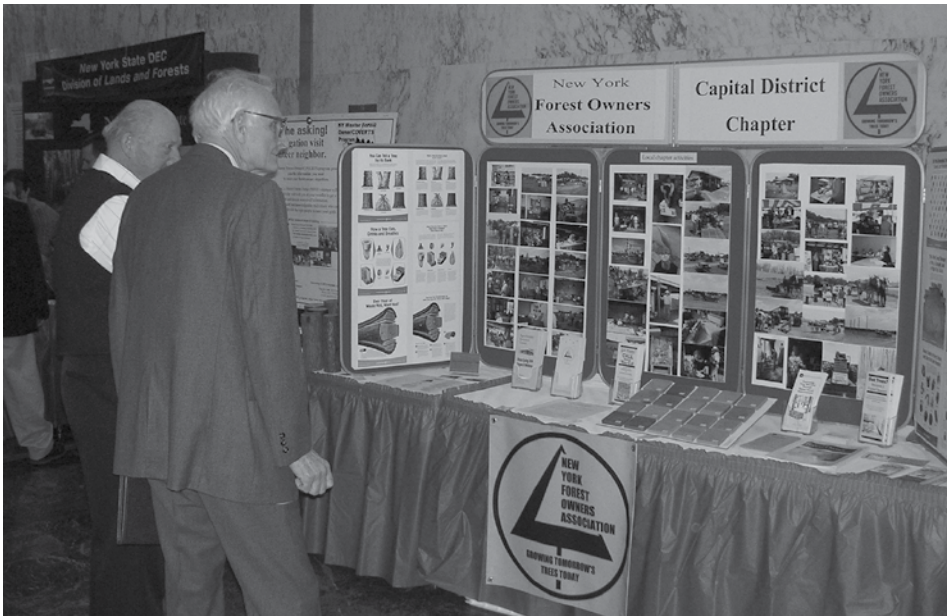
and his family settled in upstate New York and managed the property with multiple-use sustained yield forestry principles. He has been a frequent contributor to the *New York Forest Owner* magazine.

Other woods walks developed across the state were set up and run by the state NYFOA board. In 1973 it was proposed to divide the state into chapters with a woods walk chairperson in each chapter to set up and coordinate woods walks in his area, including notifying local news etc. of the locations and dates of walks as well as other information about NYFOA. Further development of chapters would wait more than ten years, but statewide woods walks were set up in various regions, drawing on members for assistance. After the formal development of chapters, woods walks were mainly run by individual chapters. Notice of walks are published in the *New York Forest Owner* magazine, and Cooperative Extension service and other public agencies and private organizations publicize the events. These events are a major activity of chapters and can attract new members. NYFOA holds a group insurance policy that protects chapters in the event of accidents etc.

Since the beginning of the organization, the annual statewide meetings have included presentations on various issues of interest to NYFOA's members. Development of chapters facilitated more local educational and outreach opportunities. County fairs have had booths staffed by volunteer NYFOA members in many areas. At the State level, the Woodsmen's Field Days at Booneville, Empire Farm Days in August, and the Syracuse Farm Show have all featured NYFOA booths and displays of educational material.



NYFOA members attend a woods walk.



The NYFOA display.

The evolution of NYFOA at the annual Syracuse Farm Show is an interesting example of the growth of a volunteer organization. Originally the central New York chapter, working with the local NYS Department of Environmental Conservation conducted a few seminars at the Farm Show at the end of February. Coincident with that, the chapter had a booth displaying material etc. Mounting these activities put a strain on local members and a call was put out for NYFOA members across the state to volunteer to staff the booth and help with logistics on the seminars. Foresters, educators, landowners, and others conducted the seminars but local volunteer help, especially by John Druke, made the event a success. By 2012, local personnel could no longer maintain the event. Ron Pedersen and Hugh Canham (the author) stepped in and organized the booth and the 3-day series of seminars. Both the booth and the seminars were moved from outbuildings to a central location in the Farm and Home Center. This provided good exposure for NYFOA.

The seminars cover a variety of forest and land-related topics. Presenters are drawn from regional natural resource educators, public agencies, professionals such as lawyers, and forest landowners. Successful attendance depends on having a topic that interests people. Some come to get information they can use in their

own situation; others are drawn to what seems to be an interesting subject and are looking for a break from looking at machinery etc. Some school groups such as FFA and 4H sometimes drop by. As with all winter events in upstate New York, weather can affect attendance.

Having attractive posters, brochures, and other display material is essential to effective marketing. NYFOA has developed some materials, often with much volunteer input. Modest sums were spent on some displays. One hurdle has been the storage of such materials (other than a member's basement or garage) and transport of these to different chapters as needed. Cornell Cooperative Extension, the New York Department of Environmental Conservation, and other agencies have helped in this endeavor.

Forest Family Fairs developed as an idea in the 1990's. The first event was held on June 4, 1994 at Gurnee Woods, the Tree Farm of Vern and Marg Hudson, in central New York and was repeated in 1995 and 1996. There were activities for entire families, with guessing games, food vendors, demonstrations such as portable sawmills, and other educational presentations. The development, planning, publicity, and management of the day was all done by local NYFOA members with technical presentations from cooperating agencies and organizations. In 1997 the Eastern Adirondack and Capital District

chapters brought the Forest Family Fair to the Washington County Fairgrounds in eastern New York. This was successful and the chapters hosted the fair again in 1998. A call went out to the membership to have some other chapters develop a similar fair for their region, but no one appeared able to mount such an ambitious undertaking.

In 1976 Alan Knight, then editor of the magazine, proposed a NYFOA tour to Europe and the next summer a group visited the forests of Austria, Germany, and Switzerland. A second trip to Scandinavia took place in 1980. These trips were very well received by those who attended and in 1982 Alan Knight again organized a trip across Canada via rail, visiting several private forest owners and the Canadian Rockies. A second trip to meet with woodlot owners in eastern Canada took place in 1987. Other trips took place over the years to the United Kingdom with stops in England, Scotland, and Wales; a 2½ week trip to New Zealand in 1986, and others.

A data base of professional help, loggers, and markets was set up as a member service in 1969. People could call or write to the NYFOA secretary, who at that time was Louis Dumond, for information. This service is not currently advertised as such, but the administrative secretaries or office manager routinely receive telephone and email requests for information on every conceivable tree-related, woods, forest, or other subject. The administrative assistants are not professional scientists, but they serve as a first contact with people who want information and can refer them to the appropriate specialists or agencies.

From 1990 to 1992 a quarterly *Woodland Steward* newsletter recounting activities of the national Woodland Steward program was sent to 7,000 woodland owners in New York. In addition to information to owners it was hoped that the communication would result in more members for NYFOA.

The Master Forest Owner program, conducted by Cornell University Cooperative Extension program, prepares laypersons, who own woodland (and are

continued on next page

often NYFOA members), to meet with woodland owners and give them practical advice on managing their land and how to get further professional assistance. NYFOA has supported this program and it serves as a first contact for owners who might be reluctant to hire a professional without knowing what might be done. This is of increasing importance as public assistance programs face cost-cutting and personnel reductions.

One interesting development has been the adoption of logos for NYFOA. The original logo first appears on the 1967 issues of the *New York Forest Owner* magazine. In 1989 a new logo appears, designed to reflect the multiple interests of forest owners. However, this logo did not catch on and the original one was used until 2017, at which time the present logo was adopted.



The evolution of the three NYFOA logos. Top left is original; top right established in 1989, and current logo to the left

Staff

Since its inception, questions of staff and leadership for NYFOA have come up. In 1966 the Board sought applications for an executive secretary position. The board discussed the pros and cons of paid staff versus volunteers. Dave Hanaburgh had a very pertinent statement (*New York Forest Owner*, vol. 22 no.6) “There are great advantages in a paid or subsidized executive secretary — the primary one being to remove the responsibility of day-to-day administration from the shoulders of the membership. The removal of this responsibility permits the membership to become lazy. Soon the executive secretary is not only performing the administrative work but tends to direct policy and development with the consent of the membership. The alternative to an

executive secretary is dedicated volunteer service. The problem is again related to membership laziness. When NYFOA finds a dedicated volunteer, it tends to work that volunteer to death or frustration.”

In 1986 Ruth Thoden is appointed executive secretary. When she retired in 1991, Debbie Gill replaced her as administrative secretary. After her retirement, Liana Gooding took over as office administrator, serving up to the present. As the job titles changed so did the responsibilities. Prior to hiring a paid staff member, correspondence, membership records, and other secretarial needs were handled by the President, membership secretary, and other volunteers.

The paid secretarial staff greatly facilitated the day to day management of the organization. However, with the retirement of Ruth Thoden other activities also slowed. John Marchant volunteered to serve without pay as an executive director for at least one year. John had recently joined NYFOA but was a leader in establishing the Western Finger Lakes chapter and had hosted a woods walk on the property owned by him and his wife who also volunteered to assist John.

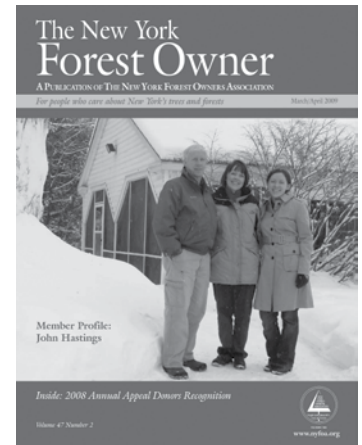
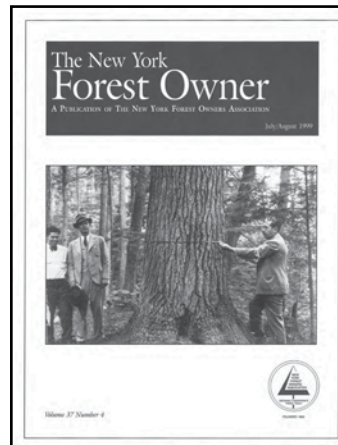
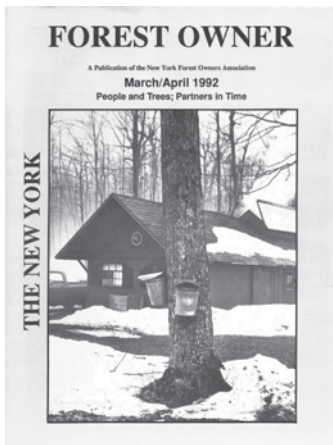
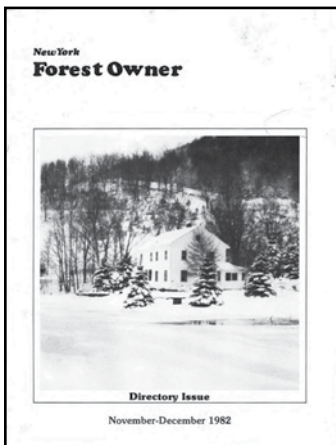
From 1991 to 1995, John Marchant served as NYFOA’s first Executive Director. He worked hard to increase membership, monitor legislative matters, and keep in touch with other forestry related groups. He was enthusiastic in his work and did much to establish NYFOA’s presence with other groups. John and others suggested hiring a paid half-time Executive Director although he cautioned that such a person must have clear direction from the NYFOA Board and which direction she or he should go in carrying out stated directives. In 2002, Dan Palm was hired and served until 2005. He worked on developing a set of guidelines for chapters and how to increase membership. Following his tenure Mary Jean Packer was hired and served from 2005 until 2009. She helped develop some grants and initiated some programs for attracting new members. However, carrying out these grants entailed additional work by the staff. In addition, more responsibility was put on the board to provide guidance

and direction to the executive director. Membership did not increase during this period and adding the executive director significantly increased the annual expenditures. From 2010 to 2018 NYFOA functioned without a paid executive director.

In 2018, Mike Zagata, a former Commissioner of the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation was hired as Director of Organization Development, serving until 2020. He concentrated on helping chapters increase programs and participated in several NYFOA events. After much deliberation, the NYFOA board went ahead with recruitment of a new Executive Director with Craig Vollmer being appointed as of January 2021. Craig has a professional forester background with industry experience and organizational skills.

The *New York Forest Owner* magazine

Since the beginning of NYFOA the organization’s official communication organ has been the *New York Forest Owner* magazine. Professor Floyd Carlson, charter member of NYFOA, and faculty member at the College of Forestry, served as editor until 1976. The magazine consisted of a few typed pages. Material covered included reports of board meetings, short letters to the editor, meeting announcements, and short briefs of noteworthy forestry happenings. After 1976, when Alan Knight became editor, the magazine was printed, and the number of pages increased. Evelyn Stock took over as editor in 1978, serving until 1985 when Alan Knight again becomes editor. Dick Fox replaced him and in 1999, Mary Beth Malmsheimer became the present editor. At that juncture, the magazine expanded with more pages, color pictures and advertising. The latter was needed to offset the costs of a paid editor but also showed woodland owners where they might obtain professional forest services or those of other professionals, and forestry equipment distributors. For the last 20 years the output of the magazine has remained constant with six issues per year. Regular inclusions are the From the President/Executive Director column,




Various covers of the New York Forest Owner magazine.


Ask a Professional, Wild Things in your Woodlands, a member profile, and meeting announcements. One feature that has remained over the entire 57 years of the magazine has been a column on woodland health, sometimes named insects and diseases. For decades Dr. Douglas Allen, faculty member of SUNY ESF authored this extremely useful column. The column was then authored by Mark Whitmore, entomologist from

Cornell University. In 2020 Jeff Joseph was added to the staff as managing editor for the magazine. More time and effort can now be devoted to content and soliciting articles.

Effective and timely communication to, and among members is vital in this era of electronic media. NYFOA recently started a monthly email newsletter, *The Woodlot*, which is sent to members and others in the forestry community of New

York. Continued publication depends on timely news articles being supplied from a variety of sources. This does not replace the bimonthly *New York Forest Owner* but gives people another source of information. 

Hugh O. Canham is Emeritus Professor of Forest and Resource Economics at SUNY ESF. Part III of this history will appear in an upcoming issue of the New York Forest Owner.




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Hardwood Lumber Market (continued)

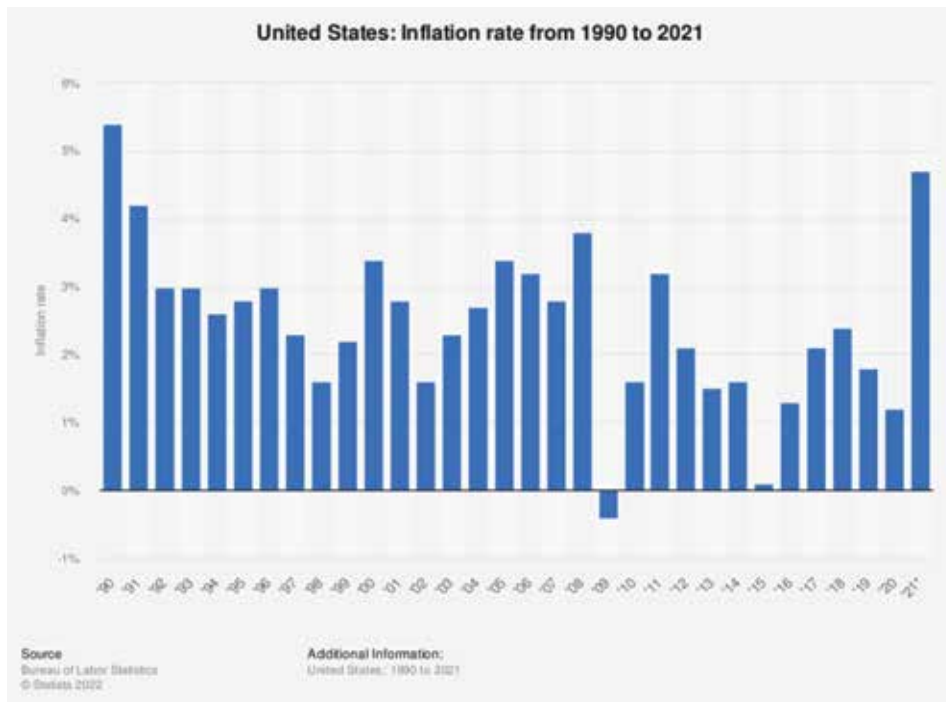


Figure 3

General U.S. Economy

Hardwood lumber products are generally high cost durable goods, and there are a number of factors that will contribute to the value of log and lumber prices in 2022. Primary among these are inflation, mortgage rates, and consumer confidence.

Inflation: Inflation influences interest rates and comfort level/affordability for

buying homes. As you can see in Figures 3 and 4, inflation took a big jump in 2021 (and has continued into 2022) and that can influence other aspects of the economy (see mortgage rates). Seeing as inflation has basically been non-existent for thirty years, it is not yet clear that this will remain as high as last year's, and ideally will temper some with rising

interest rates, and as the supply chain issues settle down in the months to come.

Mortgage rates (see Figure 5): These rates have been low for a long time and are expected to continue to rise in the coming year. They are not expected to cause too much heartburn for potential buyers (see Figure 7), but could knock some first-time home buyers out of the market if rates move too far. The availability of contractors and actual building rates will have a bigger impact; as labor rates rise, the cost per square foot of construction will also rise.

Consumer confidence (see Figure 6): The sustainability of people's jobs/income and the availability of product weigh into consumers decisions when buying durable goods such as furniture or remodeling their homes. With the labor market very tight and wages on the upswing, consumer confidence is high. Inflation could give pause to that confidence if supply chain issues are not straightened out in 2022.

As these factors creep into the pocketbook and the psyche of the American public, substitutes are often used to keep the cost of new construction down. Cabinets with a high component of MDF and particleboard are less expensive and carpeting instead of solid hardwood flooring are a couple of examples of cuts that are common. These trends are not good for NY forest owners.

General Export Market Comments

The comments below were made prior to the recent Russian military action in Ukraine. There could be a variety of disruptions that upset the balance of material flow world-wide (i.e. Russian lumber and plywood exports, Ukrainian plywood and lumber supply to name a couple) and will have a rippling effect on supply chains

China: The general economy in China has weakened over the past year. After a slow start to 2021, China came on strong in the latter months, but that

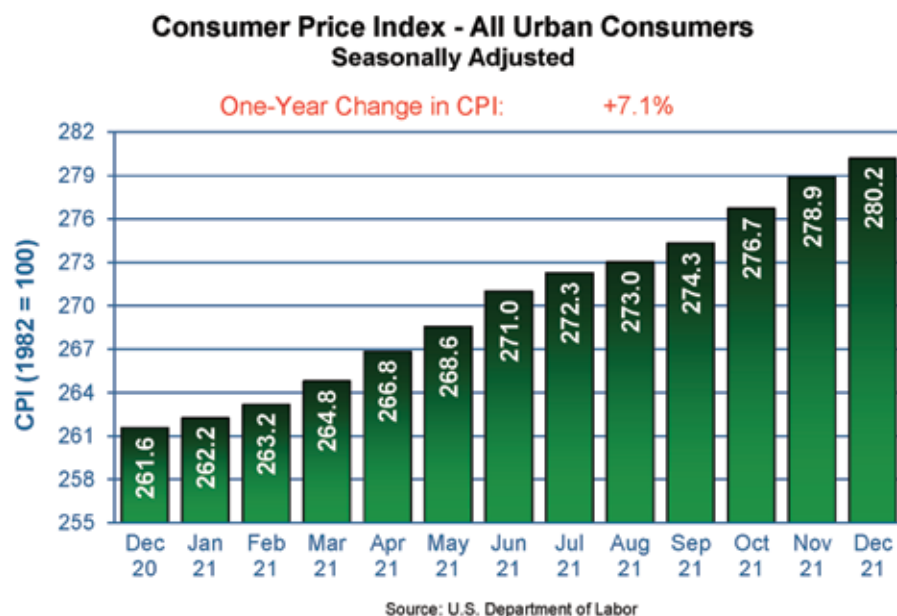
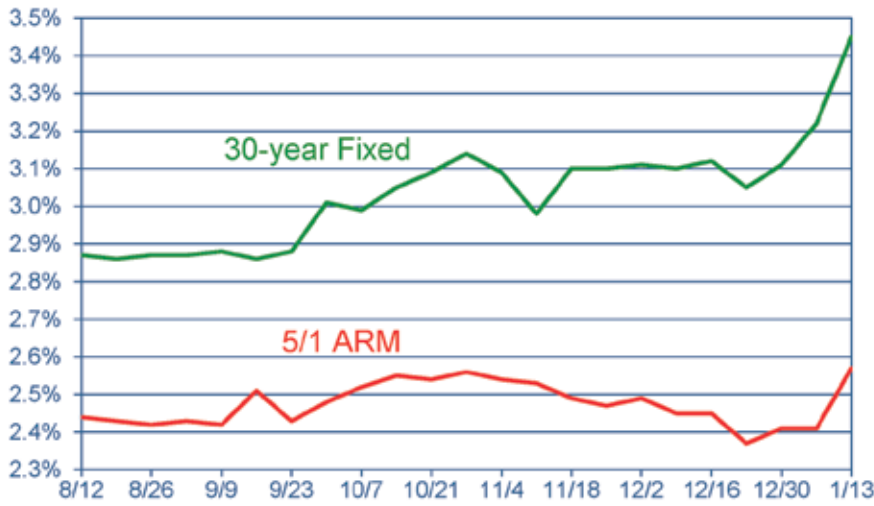


Figure 4

continued on next page

Hardwood Lumber Market (continued)

Average U.S. Mortgage Rates*



*Average commitment rate, excluding fees and points

Source: Freddie Mac

Figure 5

has since cooled and lumber shipments to China are down 10% from 2020 by volume. China is expected to pick up some this winter as the inventories of hardwood lumber are low even for a weaker economy. The question is whether we can get containers to ship the lumber! There are lots of challenges in the shipping industry at this point in time. If companies cannot get containers to take lumber to China, that lumber gets “dumped” onto the domestic market, oversupplying it, and driving prices lower.

Other Export Markets: Other southeast Asian economies are struggling as well, with Vietnam being the largest buyer of US hardwoods in the region outside China. Their purchases of US hardwoods are down by almost 30%. They do appear to be rebounding as they were hit especially hard by COVID in 2022. Other markets like Thailand, South Korea, and Indonesia are doing better, but all these together (including Vietnam) are less than half of China’s consumption alone.

Canada/Mexico-Canada and Mexico are important markets as the second and third largest destination for US hardwoods respectively. Hard maple, soft maple, and red oak shipments to

Canada have been strong due, in part, to a stronger Canadian dollar (relative to the US). There are a lot of flooring companies in Canada which drives some of the purchases. Mexico is big into red oak, hickory, and walnut. Mexico had a banner year in 2021, with exports to that country going up by over 35%.

United Kingdom and Europe: The UK has been a strong buyer of white oak, poplar, and walnut. Whereas the EU has

a history of purchasing white oak, poplar, and (more recently) red oak. In general, this market has had a lot of disruptions due to COVID but rebounded quickly in 2021.

Species Rundown

Due to all the variations affecting local pricing, I will not report any specific pricing, but rather continue to stick with trends for the various species.

Red Oak: Being the number one species in the US, red oak is considered a little more of a “commodity” than other species. The oak growing in NY is northern red oak, which has a quality and color advantage over other regions of the US, but it is still red oak, and buyers often chase price over quality which prevents NY red oak from straying too far from pricing in other regions. All in all, red oak prices have moderated and come down slightly from the highs in 2021. I would expect red oak to stay stable even if we are not at all-time highs (with the caveat regarding shipping mentioned above).

Hard Maple: Hard maple had peaked in 2021 and slowed a bit due to its high price, with end users switching to soft maple (which is a common trend when hard maple gets too expensive). Even so, hard maple is underproduced and is

Consumer Confidence

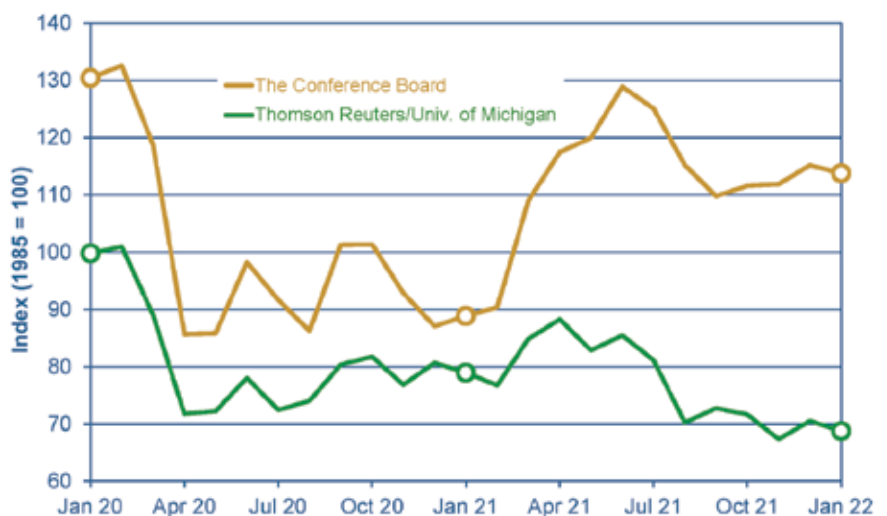


Figure 6

New, Single-Family Home Sales

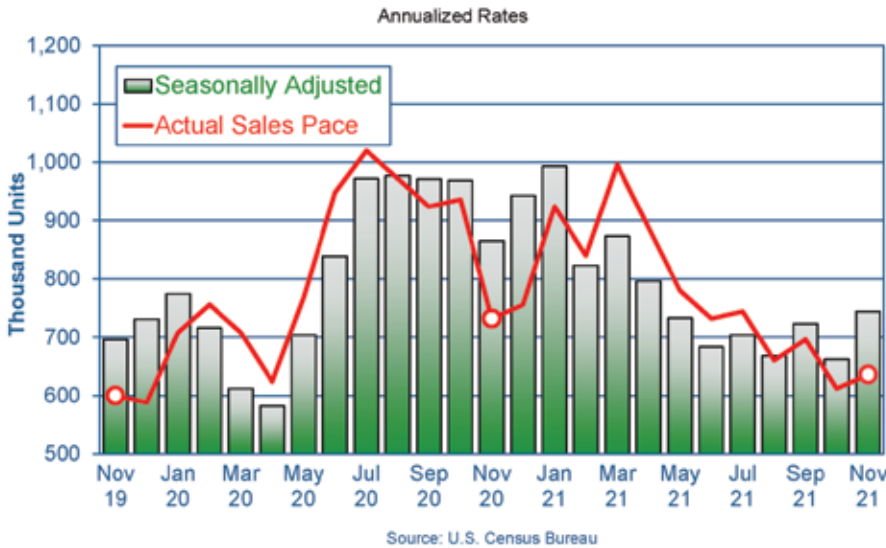


Figure 7

expected to remain strong through the spring, when production is customarily higher due to the cold weather and reduced risk for staining/spoiling logs and lumber. The strength of the cabinet industry will drive a lot of this pricing.

Cherry: Cherry has been a disappointment for a long time but has had its moments over the past five years. Those moments have been short lived, and I would expect cherry to continue the slow plodding performance of the past ten years. It has become largely an export item to China, and as you read above, China is not expected to be as strong as it has been.

White Oak: Even with moderating pricing, white oak is expected to be in strong demand this coming year, continuing its surge. White oak being in demand for wine and bourbon barrels has limited availability for more conventional uses. Overall, expect this species to do well moving forward.

Soft Maple: Riding the coattails of the strong hard maple market, soft maple demand has been on the upswing. Soft maple has a higher percentage of industrial grade lumber when it is produced, so the stronger grade prices aren't as direct a benefit to sellers of this species; however, as discussed above,

industrial prices and demand are strong and expected to remain so, which is more good news for NY forest owners regarding the state's most populous species.

Ash: We all know the future of this species, but from where we stand today, ash is in strong demand. This may be one of the overall surprises (and disappointments) of my career; ash was 10% of NY forest volume before EAB arrived and was a comparable volume of overall production. However, as production of this species has grown, so has its appeal in the market. A great deal of this has gone to China over the years, but the market has expanded over the past ten years. Sadly, that run is coming to an end as ash is harder and harder to find.

Hickory: Hickory is in good demand domestically and in Mexico. I expect this to continue.

Tulip Poplar: Poplar had a resurgence unmatched in the history of the market. Landowners in the Finger Lakes and south of Lake Ontario should continue to see strong pricing for this species.

In closing, I have always been fascinated that the local products I have been in the business of managing, buying, producing, and selling over the past 35 years are subject to so many influences outside of our little world in regard to their demand and value. In addition to the items discussed above, there are MANY other impacts that come from regulations, quality of access, and past land management that also influence the value of your timber and logs. Maybe we can touch on these in future articles.

Until then, enjoy the strong market while it lasts, shoot lots of deer (good for your forest), and listen to your foresters, as they will guide you to prosperity through your forests for years to come. 📸

Tom Gerow is General Manager of the The Wagner Companies and Greene Lumber Company, a series of NY based sawmills and hardwood lumber yards that service the furniture, cabinet, flooring, and other secondary wood manufacturing industries worldwide.

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