

# The New York Forest Owner

A PUBLICATION OF THE NEW YORK FOREST OWNERS ASSOCIATION

*For people caring about New York's trees and forests*

September/October 2022



*Slash Wall Update*

*Volume 60 Number 5*



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FOREST OWNERS  
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## The New York Forest Owner

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VOLUME 60, NUMBER 5

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**COVER:** Front cover: Dense oak regeneration in a slash wall protected shelterwood harvest at the Arnot Forest in Van Etten, NY. Photo courtesy of Brett Chedzoy. See article on page 4.

# From The President

I would like to start today with some interesting statistics (really) which I'll refer to as the "missing 698,539." According to information developed by the NY Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC), "Today, 61% of New York's land area is covered with almost 19 million acres of forest land, and 74% of those forests are owned by more



than 700,000 private landowners." A quick calculation indicates that the average size of a privately owned woodlot in our state

is about 20 acres. So where is this going? NYFOA currently has a total of 1,461 members. In the most basic terms, we have a huge untapped group of woodlot owners who could genuinely benefit from NYFOA membership. This group represents the missing 698,539.

A little personal background to help understand my assessment of our situation in NYFOA. The journey my wife Jeannine and I took as woodlot owners began in 2007 when we bought a house on 95 acres in Mt. Vision, Otsego County. After closing on the property, we both felt the proverbial knot in the stomach and a touch of buyer's remorse. We were first time woodlot owners who had no experience living in a rural area. What have we done?

Can we manage this place? What equipment will we need and can we learn how to use these things safely? At the time, we were both working in Washington, DC and would visit the property on long weekends and vacation breaks. Our two sons were studying in upstate NY colleges then. They and their friends often used our place as a 'retreat' - I am sure this was to discuss the nuances of their academic subjects and maybe, just maybe, consume a beer or two without the worries of driving anywhere. By sheer luck we learned of the Master Forest Owner (MFO) program from a friendly Cornell Cooperative Extension officer and eventually arranged an MFO visit by Jerry Michael. At that time, Jerry was on the NYFOA Executive Committee and had completed over 200 MFO visits, a remarkable record which should stand for the ages.

After walking the property, Jerry introduced us to NYFOA, gave us the latest copy of *The New York Forest Owner* magazine along with other information, and offered to serve as an ongoing resource. Soon after the MFO visit, we joined NYFOA. This short series of events was literally life changing. We overcame our initial trepidation and developed a keen interest in managing our woodlot, taking the long view, and absorbing the learning curve lumps along the way. Most important, we liked working in the woods and plotting our next moves and decided to make

*continued on page 17*

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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# Slash Wall Update – Arnot Forest

BY JEFF JOSEPH

*Two years ago, I conducted an interview in this magazine with Peter Smallidge and Brett Chedzoy to gauge the feasibility of using slash walls as a tool to deter deer in timber stands being regenerated (Volume 58, No. 6, Nov/Dec 2020—the complete text of that interview can be accessed in the magazine archives at nyfoa.org). I recently caught up with each of them again to follow up on that conversation, and to assess the current status of the slash wall experiments at Cornell's Arnot Teaching and Research Forest in Van Etten, NY. What follows is a lightly edited version of their responses, with my questions in italics.*

—Jeff

*I believe it has been about five years since the first slash wall was created at the Arnot Forest, and nearly two years since our original interview—what is the status of the regeneration within the walls? How does it compare with what you see in post-harvest stands outside the walls—I imagine it must be a really radical contrast?*

**Brett:** Five slash walls were initially built at Cornell's Arnot Forest in 2017 ranging from 9 to 74 acres. There are dramatic differences in the growth and quality of the regeneration inside the walls as compared to the control areas directly outside of the walls. The simple difference is the presence and absence of deer and deer browsing on the young tree seedlings and other vegetation. Numerous slash walls built since then have shown the same differences of encouraging success vs. complete failure.

**Peter:** The contrast in vegetation inside versus outside the slash walls is dramatic. Inside the slash walls there are desirable hardwood species that have reached over 6 feet for stump sprouts and more than 4 feet for seed



Figure 1. American spikenard (*Aralia racemosa*) is one example of an uncommon native plant that has flourished within the deer-protected confines of the Arnot slash walls.

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origin stems. Outside the response varies some with deer pressure, but the height of desired hardwood species is much lower. In my 26 years of forestry in NY there is almost no parallel level of success with forest regeneration. Slash walls, correctly built, will exclude deer. The forester needs to prescribe an appropriate silvicultural system.

*Has the timber harvesting and subsequent building of the walls always been planned/timed around good mast years, or with the long-term protection provided by the walls is this not a necessary practice?*

**Brett:** The ideal situation would be to have abundant desirable seedlings already present prior to initiating a regeneration harvest and building a slash wall, even if the seedlings are being repeatedly browsed. If that is not possible, then the next best scenario would be to time the harvest to coincide with a good seed rain. Penn State published a study indicating that drought as measured by the Palmer Drought Index is a trigger for good seed production the following year. We saw that during the 2017 harvests following the 2016 drought. We were unable to evaluate seed production in 2021 following the 2020 drought due to heavy caterpillar defoliation.

When seedlings and seed are lacking, investing in things like a more robust slash wall or an enrichment planting of seedlings to augment what naturally regenerates will improve the chances of a favorable outcome.

**Peter:** We are not able to plan “seed cut” harvests and slash walls to coincide with seed crops. The seed cut retains only those trees desired to provide seed for the next forest. One slash wall from 2019 coincided, by chance, and resulted in an abundance of red oak seedlings, some approaching 4 ft tall after 3 growing seasons. Ideally we could establish advance regeneration during a preparatory cut, a few years before a seed cut. The challenge is that the slash walls would need to remain effective for 8 to 12 years in that scenario, something we haven’t yet accomplished. We’re currently experimenting with a cluster of 2- to 4-acre slash walls with seed cuts, surrounded by unprotected forest also having received a seed cut. Seedlings that establish in unprotected areas will be browsed, but our

intent is to enclose the entire area with a slash wall and assess if the browsed seedlings will coppice into vigorous stems.

*For a period of time I created a small deer exclosure in my own woodlot, and saw the beginnings of successful regeneration of a number of species rarely seen or significantly underrepresented on my property, including not only trees, but also shrubs and wildflowers. I presume you are seeing something similar there? If yes, is this increased floral diversity being assessed and documented at all? Might this help generate interest and/or funding for similar projects elsewhere?*

**Brett:** That’s a great question and one that we’ve often considered as we routinely encounter a number of plants inside the deer-free slash walls that are rare or unknown. Our focus to date has been on tree seedling composition and growth, but others from Cornell have started to make some initial evaluations of pollinator habitat and other indicators of biodiversity inside the slash walls. I believe that slash walls have significant applications and utility for goals that extend beyond forest regeneration, including but not limited to habitat enhancement, rare species restoration, and the cost-effective restoration of horticultural and agroforestry crops.

**Peter:** We are not formally assessing full floristic biodiversity. We’ve had visits by some renowned botanists who were favorably impressed. Inside the slash walls there are a broader array of unusual, deer-sensitive herbaceous plants such as spikenard (see Figure 1). Current interest in carbon sequestration and the potential for slash walls to support biodiversity may allow for additional funding of projects that would document the species present. As an aside, that project would be challenging given the abundance of vegetation inside slash walls. It is currently difficult to access most areas.

*How are the walls themselves holding up over time—has there been much need for maintenance of the walls? Are they maintaining adequate height as the materials begin to break down? Have there been any incursions of deer that you know of?*

**Brett:** To date we have not had to maintain walls that were built to the standard dimensions of 10’ high x 20’ wide. Annual measurements of the older walls show an initial slumping rate of 8 to 14” per year, or about 10% of the wall height. These walls are currently about half of their initial height and appear to still be effectively deterring deer based on our monitoring efforts.

**Peter:** One of the desired attributes of slash walls is once they are correctly built, there is no need for maintenance. After the first year, the slash is sufficiently brittle, that adding large trees would crush the slash wall; smaller trees could be added at a greater expense. Fences, by contrast, need to be inspected about every 2 weeks. The walls slump at a rate of about 10 to 12 inches per year. In general, after 6 growing seasons the walls are in adequate shape. However, in two of the original 2017 walls, there are a few thin spots. One thin spot is sufficient to allow deer to breach. These were areas with limited availability of low-value and low-grade material to supply the slash wall. We haven’t yet seen any that have been breached by deer. In these two harvests, the initial dominant trees were pin cherry and also red elderberry. There are sugar and red maple seedlings below the pin cherry and red elderberry, but the maple heights of 12 to 20 inches make them vulnerable to deer if the wall is breached. We’re exploring options to either reduce the abundance of the pin cherry and red elderberry, or to enhance the existing wall. Our effort to reduce abundance of the current dominant species involves spraying Accord XRT II (glyphosate) over the top of the pin cherry and elderberry. That canopy, plus the blackberries as a secondary canopy should protect the

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You will receive an email every two months that includes a PDF file of the publication. While being convenient for you – read *The Forest Owner* anytime, any place – this will also help to save the Association money as the cost of printing and postage continues to rise with each edition.

# 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](mailto:pjs23@cornell.edu) with an explicit mention of "Ask a Professional." Additional reading on various topics is available at [www.forestconnect.info](http://www.forestconnect.info)*

## Important Features of a Woodland Property

**Question:** When a forester walks in the woods with a woodlot owner, what types of features of the woods and land are they looking at? Why are these important? (Tom C., CNY)

**Answer:** The specific features of a property that are of interest and important will vary with the circumstances. However, there are several features that would be common or typical to assess when a forester visits. These can be grouped into categories as illustrated below. Additional specific features might be added depending on the interests of the owner.



*Figure 1. Skid trails may exist on the property from a previous harvest. Future harvests can add trails to the property. Some trails will require some extra work to make them useful for the interests of the owner. Focus on preventing erosion and removing anything that might be a safety issue (e.g., leaning trees).*

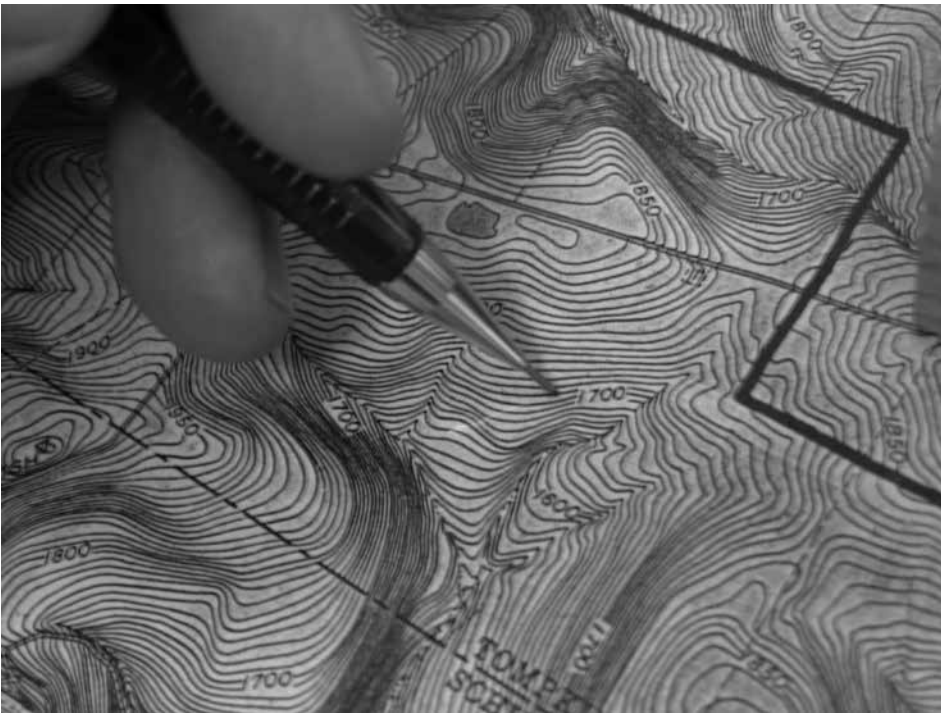


Figure 2. A topographic map is helpful when thinking about ways that you can use your property. There are phone apps that will provide topographic features, paper maps are available, and other online resources.

Woodland owners can use this list to help them think about what they like about their woods, what they might want to change, and how they can use their property to accomplish a variety of outcomes. Some family members may focus more on some features than other family members, and thus each can feel a personalized connection to the property.

### The Property

*Objectives for property:* The owner’s objectives, why they own the land, and what they desire from it. Objectives provide the guiding framework to decide which actions are important.

*Property boundary:* Property boundaries, when clearly marked on the ground, help ensure that activities on adjoining properties don’t extend onto their property (or vice versa).

*Roads and trails:* Access throughout the property is an important feature to be able to fully enjoy and manage the land. Roads and trails are often a first priority to establish or enhance (Figure 1).

*Historic cultural features:* All land was previously owned, and past activity might be of interest. Past activity might also indicate opportunities (e.g., former farm roads) or challenges (e.g., eroded roads and trails).

*Scale of Management:* The size of a property influences options for management. On larger parcels there may be sufficient wood volume to sell a harvest and include management practices with no out-of-pocket expense. On smaller parcels the owner may need to do the work or hire the work to be completed.

*Topography:* Topography is the change in elevations across the property. Flat properties have fewer limits, whereas property with steep slopes, cliffs, rocky outcrops, streams, and other features require more creative solutions (Figure 2).

*Neighboring Property:* In a landscape of scattered woodlands a benefit might be to maintain connectivity of the woodlands. In a landscape of contiguous forest, a benefit might be to add variety with a patch of young forest. An owner will manage their property, but might consider the adjoining properties.

### Forest Vegetation

*Dominant upper canopy species* (uppermost crowns of trees, by stand): The canopy is the uppermost layer of vegetation. In young woodlands it might be 15 to 30 feet high, and more than 80 feet high in mature woodlands

*continued on next page*



Figure 3. The understory vegetation is sometimes overlooked. This layer can tell important stories about what happened in the past, or what might happen in the future. The red elderberry in the picture is growing in the understory of a shelterwood harvest inside a slash wall. It survives because it is protected from deer.



Figure 4. This sugar maple seedling is approximately 12 years old and has adequate sunlight for growth. The repeated browsing by deer has stunted its growth. It is approximately 30 inches tall, and the multiple stems will yield at best an aesthetically interesting tree.

on productive soils. The species that dominate the canopy indicate options for wildlife food, fall color, timber, and other features.

*Mid canopy species* (6 – 30 feet tall, 1 – 5” diameter, by stand): As woodlands mature, a layer of woody vegetation may form below the main (uppermost) canopy. The presence and absence of this layer provides unique wildlife habitat. The mid-canopy might also represent species that can become interfering vegetation if the upper canopy is disturbed.

*Ground layer species*: The plants that grow close to the ground, often seedlings or herbaceous plants, are important indicators of the future health of the forest. They also may indicate the fertility of the soils, the disturbance history, or other stressors (Figure 3).

*Structure* (predominant stem diameter class, by stand): The structure of a woodlot is what it looks like, particularly if the trees are mostly the same age, or if multiple ages of trees occur. Although tree size usually does not predict age, categories of trees (e.g., small, medium, large) plus the species will indicate opportunities. Assessing structure can be technically challenging.

## What the Forest Provides

*Forest health issues*: Healthy trees are a common ownership objective. However, every woodlot has some amount of normal and inconsequential presence of insect and disease activity. In other cases there are invasive pests that can be abundant. Identification of many pests often requires assistance from a specialist.

*Wildlife habitat*: Every woodland provides habitat for some wildlife. Wildlife require food, cover, water, and space. An owner with specific wildlife interests can learn what actions attract more of the desired wildlife species.

*Forest products*: “Traditional” forestry is focused on harvesting timber and firewood, but many other endeavors may be possible from a woodland. Other examples include maple syrup production, forest farming crops such as ginseng, and silvopasture.



Figure 5 This young forest has low structural diversity, which is expected given its history of disturbance. This situation is neither good nor bad, but the owner may want to take certain actions depending on their objectives. Over time structure will become more complex as some trees will grow faster and overtop other trees. Other trees will die and create snags.

**Forest activities:** Woodlands vary in the types of recreation, aesthetics, and related human pursuits that are available for non-consumptive uses. Where the owner seeks more of something, an assessment can identify what needs to be changed.

### Threats and Concerns

**Evidence of deer impact:** Deer selectively browse some species and avoid others. Significant deer impact can reduce forest resilience, indicate an unhealthy deer population, and impair many ownership objectives (Figure 4).

**Deer Management Options:** There are multiple strategies to limit the impacts of deer. Selecting the correct strategy requires consideration of the size of the area to be protected, how the owner uses the property, cost, and the time

the owner can invest in maintaining the protective structures.

**Forest Resilience – species composition:** Resilience is the ability for a forest to rebound from a stress or disturbance. Resilience doesn't mean that some trees won't die, but rather describes how quickly a forest can again provide desired services. A monoculture, one species, is usually less resilient than multiple species (you recognize the presence of different species even if you can't name them).

**Forest Resilience – forest structure:** Forest structures that have multiple layers of desired species allow for a more rapid recovery if a stress or disturbance is severe (Figure 5).

**Forest Resilience – regeneration:** The lower layers of forest vegetation, seedlings and saplings, are the "next forest" if the canopy is disturbed. The

absence of a regeneration layer means that the outcome following a canopy disturbance is less predictable.

**Special Considerations:** Some features are part of the property. These may create opportunities or constraints. Most important is to identify these features and to understand how they will influence the owner's objectives. ♻️

*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](http://www.ForestConnect.info), and webinar archives at [www.youtube.com/ForestConnect](http://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

DEVON DAVIS

## YELLOW BUMBLE BEE (*BOMBUS FERVIDUS*)



*The yellow bumble bee is a charismatic pollinator native to New York State and other parts of North America. Though they are not especially common, they are extremely efficient and fast pollinators. Unlike many bumble bee species, they have extremely long tongues, allowing them special access to rich pollen sources. Both the queen and worker have black faces and a hairy yellow thorax. A characteristic thin black band stretches between the bases of their two pairs of wings. Their abdomen is mostly yellow, though the bottom segments are black. Physical appearance of male workers, female workers, and queens are similar, but queens are notably larger and male workers sometimes have small yellow hairs on the face. Males may also be a more vibrant yellow than females. Though they usually nest above ground, they occasionally nest underground. Yellow bumble bees are active from early spring until the end of the fall and reproduce throughout this time. After mating, the queen dies, a new queen is established, and that queen hibernates through the winter.*

The yellow bumble bee, also known as the golden northern bumble bee, gets its name from its almost entirely yellow appearance. They are exceptionally efficient pollinators and can pollinate as many as 44 blossoms per minute. Unfortunately, they are one of nine bumble bee species native to New York State that are currently on the New York Natural Heritage Program Rare Species List.

Yellow bumble bees are found throughout North America. Their range extends from eastern Canada to southern British Columbia, from the northeastern United States down to Georgia, and across to the west coast. Their populations in New York State were once widespread but are now extremely sparse. The most established populations exist in New

York City and on Long Island, and a few smaller satellite populations can be found upstate. However, their current populations and distribution patterns within New York State are poorly understood.

The habitat that yellow bumble bees prefer varies throughout the year. In the spring, they seek nesting habitat, which includes long blades of grass, stacks of hay, or under wood or other material when nesting above ground, and abandoned rodent holes when nesting underground. In the spring and summertime, worker bees seek foraging habitat, which typically includes open areas containing patches of various species of flowers. This tends to be on the edge of agricultural fields and roadsides, or within parks and gardens. Nesting habitat needs to be within 50

yards of foraging habitat so that the colony can be adequately supplied with food. After reproduction, certain individuals, including the new queen, will overwinter. They do so in rotting logs, loose soil, or mulch.

Plants preferred by yellow bumble bees include species of thistle, bee balms, blueberry bushes, black willows, goldenrod, legumes (such as vetch and clover), dandelions, and many others. Their long tongues provide them unique access to plants with deep-throated flowers, such as toadflax. They are generalist pollinators and are attracted to a wide variety of native flowering plants. Compared to other bumble bee species, they are notoriously defensive. They will pursue potential attackers from hundreds of yards away from their colony and repel them by coating them with honey.

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Since their foraging habitat needs to be near their nesting habitat, it is difficult for yellow bumble bees to persist. Not only are their preferred foraging habits usually within or near development or disturbance, but their survival depends on two specific habitats remaining intact rather than one. Pesticide (specifically neonicotinoid) use, which is more prevalent in their preferred habitats (agricultural fields, parks), also serves as a major threat to their populations; they have been shown to inhibit the queen's ability to lay eggs, and thus reduces her ability to maintain the colony and propagate new ones. Their tendency to nest above ground also renders them more vulnerable to pesticide exposure, inclement weather, and disruption via other animals, including humans. Exotic pathogens have also been determined to have contributed greatly to the rapid decline in yellow bumble bee populations within New York State. Currently, they are considered by New York to be "Critically Imperiled".

Though yellow bumble bees are uncommon in forests, there are many ways for forest landowners to help conserve yellow bumble bees and their habitat, as well as other

wild pollinators. Limiting the use of neonicotinoids and using alternative pest control methods reduces their exposure to these substances. Maintaining areas of herbaceous plant growth within and around forests or on other parts of the property is an effective way to conserve their foraging habitat. However, it is important to consider the blooming times of various plant species to ensure that there are available nectar resources throughout the spring and summertime. Mowing different areas at different times can also ensure nectar availability. Leaving around or laying out woody material, such as logs, near forest edges is an easy way to provide habitat for pollinators, especially in the springtime when they seek out areas to nest, and in the winter when they are overwintering. By keeping pollinators such as yellow bumble bees in mind when managing land, landowners can help combat the various threats imperiling these valuable animals. ♻️

*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/>. Photo credit: John Baker.*

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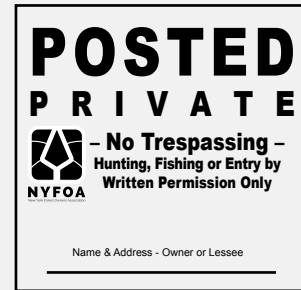
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# Woodland Health

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

COORDINATED BY MARK WHITMORE

## BORING MOTHS!

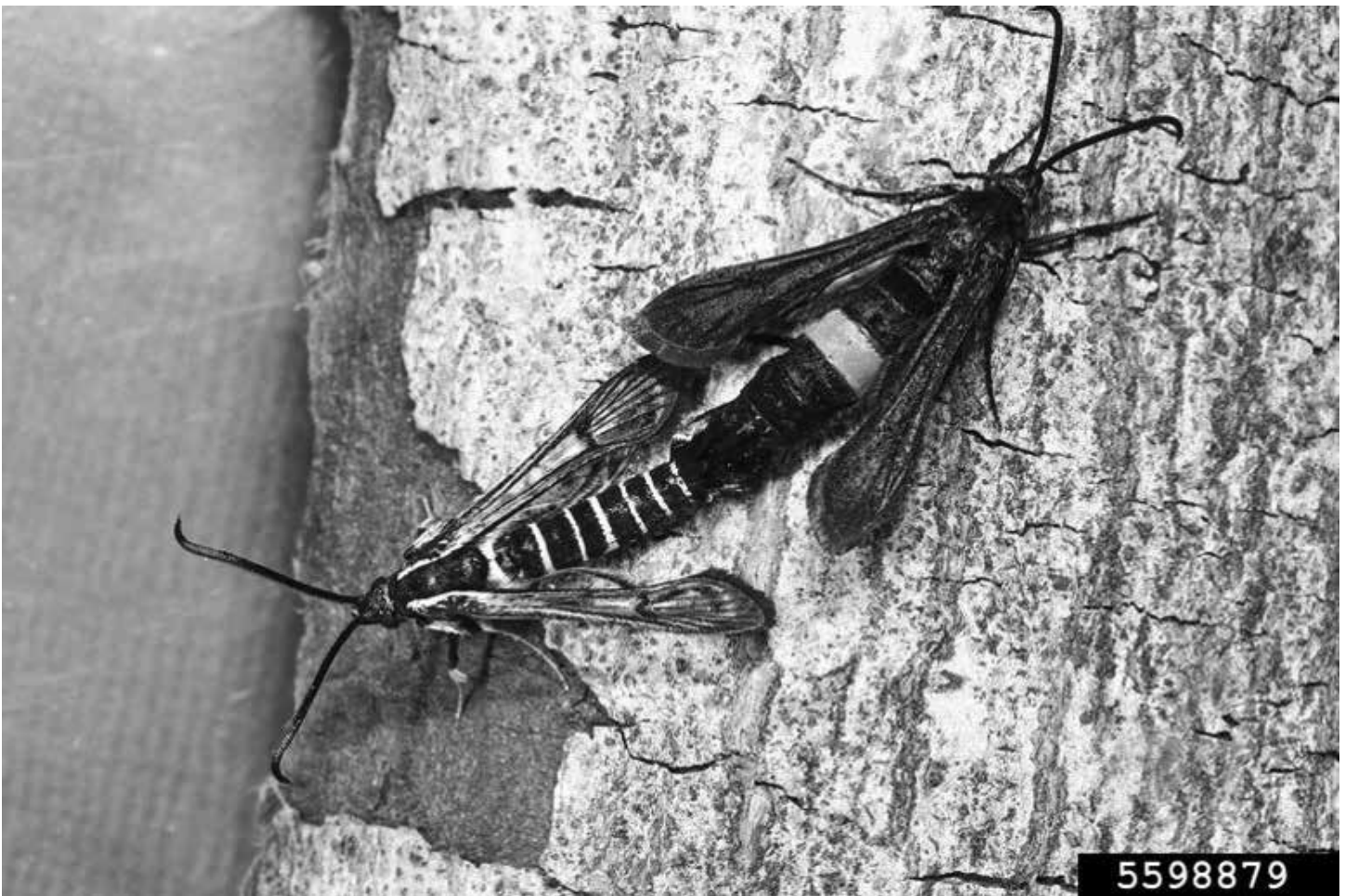
BY MARK WHITMORE

I'll bet that most of us who walk in the woods look at a moth fluttering about and yawn at their drab color, lazy and fluttering flight, and their propensity to spend summer evenings incessantly bonking their heads into porchlights. I'm an exception to this as I contemplate their amazing diversity and complex biology. You can't honestly repeat the famous phrase "you've seen one, you've seen them all" with moths. Just the fact that they can find mates by following complex chemical cues, or pheromones, wafting through a forest is enough to keep them off the boring list for me.

As you may have guessed by now, I'm not writing about boring moths, but moths that bore into plants. You are probably used to moths tucking into a fine meal on a plant's leaf. Does spongy moth (the new name for gypsy moth) poop raining down into your cold beverage on a warm June day come to mind? As I write on this warm August day, a stroll around my meadow brought the sight of one of my most favorite moths and reminded me to protect the young stone fruit trees in my orchard as well as the squash in the garden. What I've been seeing, hovering like a hummingbird, sipping nectar from bee balm flowers, is one of the most beautiful, and least boring, boring moths that I know, the clear-winged moth (*Lepidoptera: Sessiidae*).



*Dogwood borer damage, John Weidhass, Virginia Tech, Bugwood.org.*



Mating peachtree borers, Joseph Berger, Bugwood.org.

Clear-winged moths get their name because large patches in their wings are clear. As you probably know, moths and butterflies have scales on their wings, like shingles on a roof (if you don't, you should check them out with a magnifying glass sometime). Clear-winged moths lack these scales over parts of their wings so the wings are clear and resemble those of other insects. In many cases the wings are narrowed and resemble those of bees or wasps. This, in combination with yellow and black coloration, is quite convenient if you want a predator to think you might be packing the punch of a wasp but actually aren't. This kind of mimicry is what we call Batesian mimicry, named after a famous 19<sup>th</sup> century entomologist, Henry W. Bates, who spent many years exploring the insect diversity of Amazonian forests. Bates preserved many more bugs than I

could ever think of, but then he didn't have the internet to play around with in the evenings. Batesian mimicry is where a benign organism mimics a more dangerous one to inhibit predation. If you look like a big, bad wasp then predators are going to avoid you. Another example is with tasty butterflies that mimic the foul-tasting Monarchs. There is another kind of mimicry called Müllerian, named after another 19<sup>th</sup> century entomologist, Fritz Müller, who also did extensive insect collecting in the tropics. Müller described mimicry where looking alike was mutually advantageous to a group of harmful or distasteful species. "Taste one, you've tasted them all." I digress ...

There are over 1,500 species of Sessiid, or clear-winged moths, in the world, and most are tropical. With over a hundred species in North

America, Sessiids are well-known plant and tree pests, infesting conifers as well as hardwoods. They are also beautifully colored, and one of my favorites (and hated at the same time), the squash vine borer, *Melittia curcurbitae*, looks like an iridescent hummingbird hovering around the bee balm flowers in my meadow. This is an article about forest health so I won't delve into the frustration I have controlling these pests in my garden. Clear-winged moth adults usually emerge in June, but unlike many, these moth adults usually fly during the day. Adult females deposit their eggs on the bark and larvae bore into the nutrient rich phloem, or inner bark. Early infestations are hard to detect until early fall when pitch or sap begins to ooze from the feeding wounds of the larvae.

There are a number of *Synathedon* species infesting pines and Douglas-

*continued on next page*

fir, primarily in the west. These “pitch moths” cause oozing wounds mixed with red specks that resemble bark beetle attacks near the base of the tree; a few will feed on twigs. Pitch moths rarely cause mortality; rather, they weaken tree tissues where they feed, introducing fungi and causing breakage. As is the case with many tree pests, trees that have been mechanically wounded tend to be more attractive, with spring and early summer wounds being the most important to avoid if you don’t want moths.


You name it and there is an eastern hardwood infested by a clear-winged moth, but the difference from conifers is that moth larvae generally dive from the phloem into the xylem, or wood, and take two years or more to complete development. Their tunnels will be broad and deep in the wood and often stained with black fungi. They generally cause little noticeable damage to the trees until you chop them up for firewood, but prolonged infestation can weaken the stem and cause failure. As with most trees, those that are growing under stressed conditions are the ones that suffer chronic infestation.

Many of the clear-winged moths that infest hardwoods look like wasps. The banded-winged ash borer, *Podosesia aureocincta*, is one I’ve run into a lot recently as I chop firewood and find the dark, pinky-sized tunnels running through my ash firewood. The curious thing is that I have not seen a population increase of *P. aureocincta* as a number of ash trees on my land begin to perish from the emerald ash borer. I’m thinking the emerald ash borer kills the trees too fast. Another common clearwing-moth that resembles a wasp is the dogwood borer, *Synanthedon scitula*, which has perhaps the widest distribution of clear-winged moths on the east coast. This moth commonly infests twigs and can cause significant canopy decline and even death, primarily in ornamental plantings of dogwoods, *Cornus* spp.

Right off the bat when I started planting fruit trees I learned that the peachtree borer, *Synanthedon exitiosa*,

is one of the most damaging pests of stone fruit orchards. Interestingly, this moth is native to North America, likely infesting our native cherries and plums, and because it is native it has a suite of native natural enemies. However, humans have made things much more interesting by planting orchards, allowing borer populations to increase to damaging levels. Peachtree borers are formidable pests, laying up to 800 eggs near the root collar of trees under a flap of bark from June to September in upstate NY. Piling a bunch of mulch around the stem will encourage egg laying. If you’re going to treat with insecticides, this is the time to do it. There are pheromone traps that can help decide when adults are flying in your neighborhood so treatment can be timed more accurately. Eggs hatch within a week or so and bore into the phloem. At

this time you can detect their presence by a gummy mass of sap produced by the tree. If you only have a few trees you can dig the larvae out with a pocket knife, being careful not to destroy too much of the healthy tissues. Peachtree borers overwinter as larvae, resuming development in spring, then pupating and emerging in June. Young trees can be completely girdled and killed in just one season. Older trees can be compromised such that the canopy and fruit production is lost and recovery is questionable.

The clear-winged moths are beautiful AND boring! 

*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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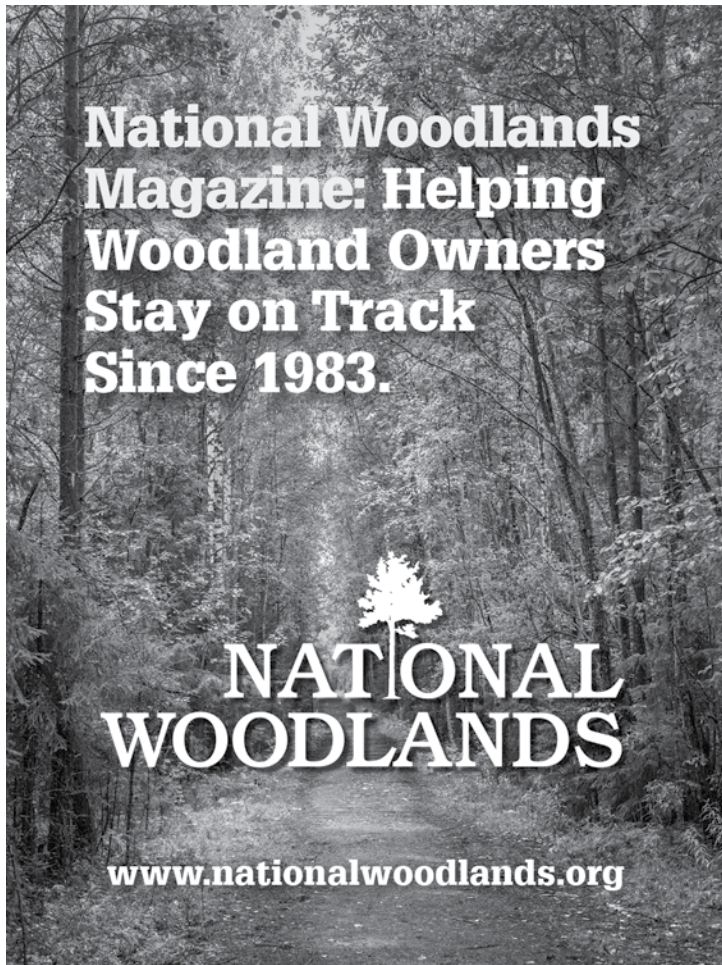
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Jeff Joseph, managing editor at

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## 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
Christofer Andrus	WFL	Kevin O'Brien /	
Robert Barber	WFL	Charrington Creek, Inc.	SOT
Luc Collin	CDC	Maria & John Orosz	AFC
Tom Curtin	WFL	Chip Patton	AFC
Eden Dedrick	NFC	Brett Pendorf	SOT
Maxwell Fronczak	NFC	Dennis Poplin	CDC
Bonita Gardinier	NAC	Glen Spinelli	WFL
Dusanka Marusic	LHC	Kimron Thomas	LHC



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# Vision 2050 - Fulfilling the Promise of the Adirondack Park

ERIC LAWSON

Members of NYFOA have a vested interest in the future of the Adirondacks. A vision of that future is described in the recently released *Vision 2050* publication of the Adirondack Council.

Common interests of NYFOA and the Council include forest health, clean air and water, the control of invasive species, the economic wellbeing of residents of the Adirondack Park where forestry is a close second behind tourism in economic importance, and taxes and governmental activity, including the Adirondack Park Agency and the Department of Environmental Conservation.

The Adirondack Park is the largest publicly protected area in the lower 48 states, larger than Yellowstone, Yosemite, Glacier, Grand Canyon, and the Great Smokies Parks combined. It is more than 6 million acres of heavily forested, wild, and scenic woodlands, half owned privately, some by NYFOA members who are in its Northern and Southern Adirondack Chapters.

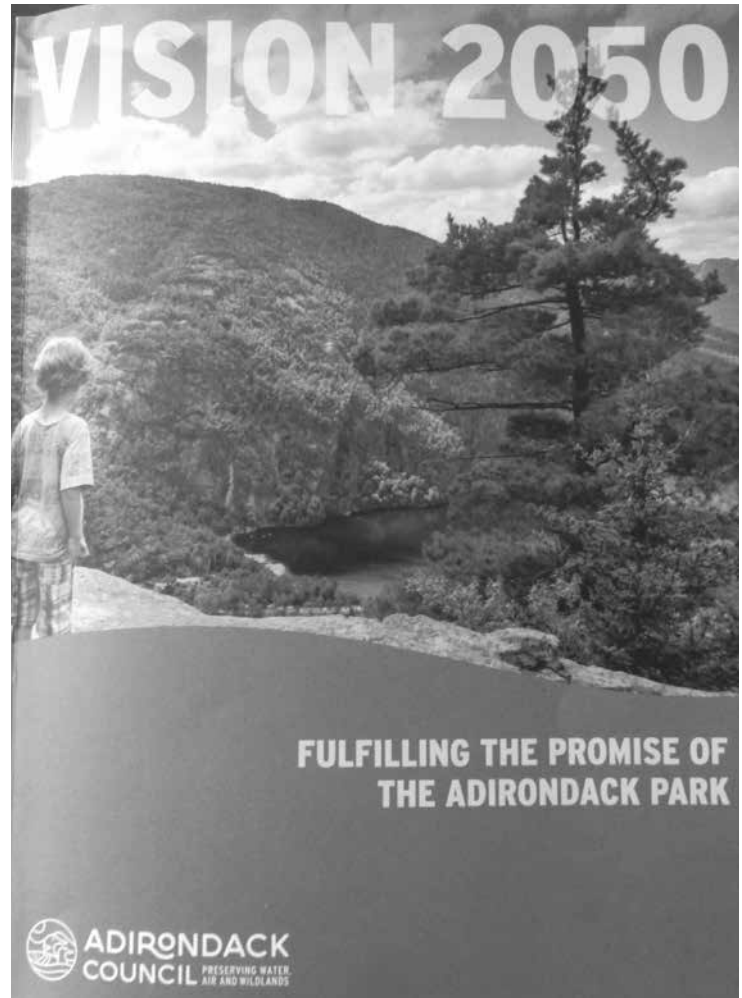
NYFOA's mission is "to promote sustainable forestry practices and improved stewardship on privately owned woodlands." The mission of the Adirondack Council is "to ensure the ecological integrity and wild character of New York State's 6-million-acre Park for current and future generations." The interests of the two organizations have much in common.

As a long-time member of NYFOA's Southern Adirondack Chapter, a holder of 160 forested acres in the Adirondack Park, and


a member of the Board of Directors of the Adirondack Council, it is easy for me to see how the *Vision 2050* publication raises thoughtful questions whose answers have both immediate and long-term implications for NYFOA members.

Forest land stewardship, for example, affects clean air and water now and for generations to come. How are these irreplaceable assets threatened and how might they be protected? The 130,000 people who live in the park year-round, and the millions who visit there each year provide its economic lifeblood and the labor required for the forest and tourism industries. They are the consumers who contribute to vibrant, diverse, and healthy communities.

The *Vision 2050* publication recognizes "holistically [that] all aspects for the [Park's] preservation and success are interconnected [requiring] big picture thinking." NYFOA members are part of this



picture, and their enthusiastic support of Vision 2050 will help advance the strategic planning needed to secure a positive future for the park.

The full publication is available at <https://www.adirondackcouncil.org/page/vision-2050-332.html> 

*Eric Lawson is a member of the NYFOA Southern Adirondack chapter and a board member of the Adirondack Council.*

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## From the President (continued)

Mt. Vision our retirement residence. Having had the initial guidance through the MFO program and later receiving pertinent information from NYFOA, we were on our way. Eventually, Jeannine and I took the MFO training and got involved with our home chapter (Southern Tier) steering committee. We decided to enroll in the 480-A tax relief program. I joined the state board and later the Executive Committee — and occasionally wrote articles in the *Forest Owner*.

I am relating all of this because I believe in my bones that there are many woodlot owners in NYS like Jeannine and me who would benefit substantively from NYFOA membership — **but do not know NYFOA exists**. My push today is not to appeal for funds or sweeping changes. Rather, I wish to emphasize how fortunate we felt when we discovered NYFOA. I think many others could realize, as we did, genuine value on several levels by joining NYFOA and a community of likeminded woodlot owners. The million dollar question is, how do we reach the missing 698,539 private woodlot owners in NYS who are not members of NYFOA and could benefit in many ways?

I think our current messaging to members is really good and would be interesting to the missing 698,539 too. We have the *Forest Owner* magazine, *The Woodlot* e-newsletter, the NYFOA website, a Facebook page, and the respective chapter newsletters. Members have expressed their enthusiasm with this array of publications.

What's the plan to reach more of the missing 698,539? In Fall 2021, NYFOA's state board approved a membership development plan prepared largely by Executive Director Craig Vollmer and board member Darryl Wood

with input from our chapters. A couple aspects of this plan include expanding NYFOA's participation and exposure at venues we have not used previously. Examples are sportsperson exhibitions and workshops where greater numbers of woodlot owners are likely to attend. Another avenue is to expand NYFOA's contact among related associations in our state such as NY Tree Farm, The NYS Maple Producers, The NY Nut Growers Association, and others where members of these groups are likely to own woodlots. We also are starting to reach out to realtors who can inform potential buyers of wooded property about the benefits of NYFOA membership and the services offered by the MFO program. A key aspect of our membership plan is retention of current NYFOA members. Darryl and his committee are planning a series of focus group interviews with chapter chairs and existing members to determine which NYFOA activities provide the most value and benefit to our members. We will use the results of this research to tailor our program offerings accordingly to

ensure chapter driven events and activities address what our existing members want.

Over the years, we have learned that word of mouth referrals to NYFOA are the most effective way to reach interested people. So I ask every member to bring a friend, neighbor, or acquaintance to your next chapter event so they can experience first hand what NYFOA is about, meet our members, and consider joining. Also, I encourage chapters to go beyond announcements of events in their chapter newsletters. We can reach greater numbers of the missing 698,539 by advertising local events more widely with the use of appropriate local media to reach these landowners.

As always, I appreciate the work being done by our great group of volunteers. Let's expand our efforts by getting the word out to the missing 698,539 and help them achieve their woodlot goals. In the meantime, enjoy the the rest of the summer and continue to explore the woods.

—Stacey Kazacos  
NYFOA President

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## Slash Wall Update (continued)



Figure 2: Bird's eye view of experimental slash and brush walls at the Arnot Forest (Photo credit Katie Simms).

maple seedlings. Our effort to enhance the slash wall will involve a contract using a bulldozer and root rake to scrape the 50 to 60 feet immediately inside the slash wall towards the slash wall to bolster its capacity. This is at the expense of any seedlings in the scraped area, but if success will allow the other seedlings to survive it will be worthwhile. We have two other strategies to address the issue of slumping of slash walls: First, we have revised our slash wall specification to be 10 ft tall to a 2-inch diameter stem. Previously it was simply 10 ft tall. Observationally this adds a few feet of total height. Second, we use a telescoping staff and paint roller to mark the 10 ft height on residual perimeter trees. This provides a target for the logger to know when the required height has been attained. This tactic seems to reduce the variation in slash wall height that was seen in the earlier walls.

*Are there ongoing slash wall projects happening at the Arnot, or was this a short-term trial? Is it proving to be economically feasible to build these walls on an ongoing basis as an inherent component of the silviculture taking place there?*

**Brett:** Our initial goals were to see if slash walls could be built, how much they cost, and if they would exclude deer. After those questions were answered, our work has continued by building new slash walls with overlaying silvicultural treatments such as shade manipulation in the overstory (shelterwood vs. seed tree) and understory (complete understory vegetation removal vs. partial) to see how these and other variables influence regeneration and the likely composition of the future stands — something that will ultimately take decades to fully evaluate.

**Peter:** We completed a series of experimental walls in February of 2022. This was funded through NYS Agriculture and Markets and DEC as part of a joint effort of SUNY ESF and Cornell CALS known as the Climate and Applied Forest Research Institute (CAFRI). The patterns we previously observed were the different responses of desired (e.g., maple, oak, black cherry) and less desired species (e.g., pin cherry, red elderberry, aspen) that were related to sunlight, and other factors such as past harvests. The less desired species respond well to high levels of sunlight, but the increased sunlight is

a result of more cutting which provides more material for the slash wall and a more significant financial pulse. We wanted to test some combinations of high and low shade to see how to assure regeneration of desired species, reduce dominance by less desired species, and provide enough material to build effective slash walls. We built 14 slash walls that surrounded two or four acres. The slash walls were either 7 ft or 10 ft tall (The 7 ft tall slash wall is a test of the hypothesis that smaller areas can be protected from deer with smaller walls.) Inside the slash walls we thinned the canopy to retain either 27 or 55 square feet of basal area (roughly the residual for a seed tree versus a shelterwood harvest). We also fully removed or minimally disturbed the beech sapling layer. In five to ten years, once the next forest is established, we will mechanically remove all the remaining beech saplings and the majority of the overstory trees. Within this same stand, the control plots will have some desired species regenerate, but we expect heavy browsing. Within 3 to 5 years we will enclose the entire area in a new slash wall and measure the survival of previously browsed seedlings with deer exclusion.

*Has there been anything else particularly notable or unexpected about this project that you would like to share?*

**Brett:** Inspired by the Arnot examples and research, new slash wall projects around the Eastern US done by a variety of other contractors and logging equipment configurations have shown similarly encouraging results in the early regeneration response. Some of these projects are documented on the [www.slashwall.info](http://www.slashwall.info) resource site.

**Peter:** We are particularly grateful to the discussions we have had with loggers, foresters, and woodland owners at our annual field day (usually the last Thursday of September). We are also pleased that the DEC Regenerate NY program will cost-share the construction of slash walls, and NRCS forestry programs have options for slash walls. Finally, it has been exciting to see the adoption of slash walls in parts of NY, RI, CT, MA, NH, and VT. Finally, we have finished our slash wall BMP guide to share what we've learned about the construction of slash walls. Look for that

as a print copy at our field days, or online at [www.slashwall.info](http://www.slashwall.info).

*Based on your experience to date, what would be the smallest acreage timber harvest that a private woodland owner might want to consider incorporating slash walls into to promote/protect regeneration? You of course need a lot of slash to build an impenetrable wall encircling a stand, and then there are the financial considerations....*

**Brett:** Measurements of slash walls at the Arnot Forest have averaged about 30 tons per 100 linear feet of slash wall that is 10' high (to 2" branches) by 20 feet wide. The oldest walls built in 2017 are still successfully excluding deer and in many areas the regeneration inside of the walls is already well above the browsing height of deer. This past winter of 2021-22 we built a series of 2-acre and 4-acre walls (see Figure 2) that were both the standard 10' x 20' dimensions and also ones that were 7' high by 15' wide. These smaller walls are half of the cross-section of the standard walls and

use roughly half as much slash (15 tons per 100' of wall). It will take a few years to see if the smaller walls will work for smaller acreages. In 2019 we built a series of 1-acre circular slash walls using just the low-value material that was available inside harvested areas. Those slash walls were similar in size to the new "half walls" and to date appear to be keeping deer out. We don't have the rigorous monitoring inside those experimental 1-acre walls as for the larger ones, but the regeneration inside looks very promising after a few growing seasons.

Smaller slash walls that require less slash and which cost less to build may exclude deer for a long enough period under the right conditions, but further testing is needed. Variables that influence the effectiveness of small walls include the presence of abundant seedlings prior to harvest, deer "motivation," and the material used to build the wall, which in turn affects the rate of slumping and decomposition.

*Thank you both for your willingness to update us on the slash wall projects at the Arnot Forest, congratulations on the success so far, and most of all thanks to you both for providing us with a much needed "success story" regarding forest regeneration in our region.*

While it is truly astonishing, and unprecedented, that such Herculean efforts are required to achieve successful regeneration in our woodlands, such is the reality (and the undeniable overpopulation of the deer herd in NY) at present. Get out and hunt this fall if you can — it won't solve the problem, but may at least put a small dent in it. 🦌

*If you are interested in seeing some slash walls up close and in-person, you are welcomed to attend the annual Forest Regeneration Field Day at the Arnot Forest on Thursday, September 29<sup>th</sup>. Details are available at [www.cornellforestconnect.ning.com](http://www.cornellforestconnect.ning.com).*

*Peter Smallidge is New York State Extension Forester.*

*Brett Chedzoy is a Senior Resource Educator in Ag and Natural Resources.*

*Jeff Joseph is the managing editor of this magazine.*

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# History of the New York Forest Owners Association, Part III

BY HUGH CANHAM

*Part II of this article can be found in the May/June 2022 issue of the Forest Owner.*

## Becoming a Non-Profit Organization

Financial issues were not of great concern during the early years, but as NYFOA increased efforts to reach out and attract more members and the need for staff increased, the need for financial resources increased. By the mid 1990's fiscal issues led to further discussions by the board as to type of non-profit organization NYFOA should become. Up to this point NYFOA was a 501 (c)5 not for profit. It could engage in political lobbying, but donations and gifts were not tax deductible. A few people had expressed interest in donating property to NYFOA and others inquired about tax-deductible donations. The easiest

way to tap into these funding sources was to set up a separate but related fully tax-deductible nonprofit organization; a 501 (c) 3. In 1997 New York Woodland Stewards was set up as an independent tax-exempt organization to raise money for educational purposes for NYFOA. It had its own board and replaced the Board of Trust committee in NYFOA. The arrangement allowed NYFOA to obtain some grants and expand on advertising and information materials. Individuals and other non-profits now contributed money. However, having two organizations with separate but related boards was confusing, and led to some competition for projects, disagreements, and tensions between its two boards. Efforts were then pursued to get NYFOA reclassified as a fully tax exempt 501(c) (3) organization. There were several legal hurdles to overcome, and problems with the word "Association" in NYFOA's title.

However, by 2006 the New York State Department of State allowed the name to remain and two groups merged, resulting in full non-profit 501(c)(3) status for NYFOA. This in turn allowed NYFOA to expand on giving and introduced several levels of participation with a listing of donors in an issue of *The New York Forest Owner* magazine.

## Interactions with other Organizations

Interactions with other organizations, both in New York State and nationwide, is important to the strength of NYFOA. Public agencies, especially the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, State University of New York College of Environmental Science and Forestry, Cornell University College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, and Cornell Cooperative Extension have supported NYFOA and made valuable contributions in technical advice, landowner workshops, and public policy areas. Many private organizations have worked with NYFOA over the last 50 years.

The American Tree Farm system, and its counterpart in New York State has had varying relationships with NYFOA. At first it was considered a valuable ally. Later, it was competing with NYFOA. However, many NYFOA members are also Tree Farm members and the Tree Farm system has name recognition and signage. Various attempts have been made to join the two organizations more closely. Tree Farm news has been a regular column in *The New York Forest Owner* magazine and members of both organizations are made aware of chapter activities. A major outreach to Tree Farm members was made in 1994. The January-February issue of the magazine featured several articles



*NYFOA members attend Forestry Awareness Day in Albany.*

*continued on next page*

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aimed specifically at the New York Tree Farm members and the issue was sent to the approximately 2,000 New York Tree Farm members who were not also NYFOA members.

Two years after the formation of NYFOA, the Empire State Forest Products Association joined NYFOA as a supporting member. This was significant recognition by one of the oldest and strongest forest-related organizations in New York (ESFPA was founded in 1906) that the mission and work of NYFOA was important. The NYFOA Legislative Committee has depended on ESFPA's knowledge of pending New York state legislation to inform members. The two organizations do not always agree on what are important issues and the appropriate stances to take. Timber theft, while important to both groups, is seen differently as to penalties etc. Workers compensation is important to both but for different reasons. Other differing viewpoints have arisen over the years but the communication and partnership between NYFOA and ESFPA has benefitted both groups.

ESFPA has sponsored a Forestry Awareness Day each spring at the state capital in Albany since the early 1980's. Many different organizations have been invited to attend and NYFOA is an active participant. In 2005 these several forestry-oriented organizations formed the Council of Forest Resource Organizations with the aim of developing a set of mutually agreed-upon issues to advocate for with state legislators. Member groups included the following:

**NYFOA**

Adirondack Landowners Association

Catskill Forest Association

Catskill Landowners Association

**ESFPA**

New York Society of American Foresters

New York Farm Bureau

New York Maple Producers

New York Tree Farm

Timber Producers Association

**THRIFT**

Institute of Consulting Foresters

Urban Forest Group

While this was a noble effort it was difficult to achieve uniform agreement on concerns such as property rights, property tax relief, the role of urban forestry, invasive species, logger licensing, etc. In 2017 ESFPA decided to abandon the

idea of one unified Council and revert back to its independent conduct of a Forestry Awareness Day. They invited other organizations to attend with the understanding that the issues discussed were those of ESFPA. NYFOA continues to attend and participate each year. The approach is to present legislators and/or their staffs with information but not to act as a lobby.

The New York State Forest Practice Board was established as part of the New York State Forest Practices Act in 1946. Its purpose was to promote and encourage the practice of sound forestry by private woodland owners. Regional Forest Practice Boards across the state had members from each county. In 1987 the Legislative Committee of NYFOA urged members to communicate with their local Forest Practice Board members and sought closer ties with the state board.

In 1984 the Forest Practice Board proposed an Empire Forest Association. This new organization would offer liability insurance to landowners and charge annual dues. They wanted to blend NYFOA into this new organization which would be run by the NYS Forest Practice Board. NYFOA decided not to affiliate with the proposed board but a member of the NYFOA board would serve on the Empire Forest Board.

The Audubon Society has helped NYFOA by integrating bird habitat management into forest management plans. Staff of New York Audubon has made presentations at chapter and statewide NYFOA events over the years. Recently Audubon and NYFOA have partnered to conduct targeted assistance to landowners particularly interested in bird habitat in three specific areas of the State.

### **Advocacy**

The stated objectives of NYFOA in the original founding documents strongly suggested that the organization would study and evaluate various public policy and legislative issues. NYFOA provides a voice for private woodland owners in New York State. Over the years, NYFOA has informed its membership on various public policy and legislative issues of interest to woodland owners. Although there may not always be consensus among NYFOA's members on any given issue or piece of legislation, NYFOA informs its members

on the pros and cons of each and legislation and how they will affect private woodland owners. Position statements on pertinent issues have been developed and are posted on the NYFOA web page ([www.nyfoa.org](http://www.nyfoa.org)).

Forest property taxation has long been troublesome for private forest owners. In New York State it has been identified as a major obstacle to long-term sustainable forestry on private woodlands. In the 1960's NYFOA started discussions on what could be done. Over the years various meetings were held with state agencies and legislators. Francis "Mike" Demeree, a NYFOA member with lands in Chenango county, was a major force in developing and pursuing forest property tax reform in New York. His efforts, with support from many other members of NYFOA and other organizations resulted in passage of a new forest tax law, section 480a of the real property tax law. This was not a perfect solution and its merits continue to be debated with various amendments proposed. However, without Mike Demeree's early efforts there might not be at least some tax burden relief for New York's forest owners.

Availability of public foresters to help private landowners has changed over the last 60 years. The New York State Forest Practice Act law, enacted in 1946, provides foresters through the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) to give technical advice to landowners, prepare management plans, and help in timber harvests. Faced with budget cuts the state has cut back on the number of foresters and the time each has to assist landowners. NYFOA repeatedly has advocated for more foresters but to no avail. However, the DEC does recognize and support the mission of NYFOA.

Logger regulating and licensing has appeared as an issue for NYFOA to debate. While many other organizations have similar views on many forestry subjects, logger licensing often divides people and groups. Similarly, licensing of professional foresters tends to divide groups. NYFOA has considered these two related issues but no clear consensus can be developed within the organization.

Timber theft, in contrast, is an issue that seems to bring complete agreement within NYFOA. Other groups, while disagreeing on laws and enforcement, generally agree that timber theft is another major deterrent

to long-term forest management and timber production. In 1995 Ron Pedersen, long time NYFOA member and former president, gathered information on the extent of known timber theft across New York State. The New York State Joint Legislative Committee on Rural Resources pursued the topic. Sessions at the New York Society of American Foresters meetings were devoted to timber theft. A series of articles on timber theft appeared in the New York Forest Owner magazine. With the support of state legislators, a comprehensive timber trespass law in New York was enacted in 2003.

In 2013, NYFOA launched the Restore New York Woodlands (RNYW) initiative to bring forest health issues and solutions to the attention of all forest stakeholders and the public. As stated in the proposal, “Without timely and comprehensive action, many of the environmental and economic benefits of our forests will be denied to future generations.” NYFOA members Jerry Michael and Kelly Smallidge took the lead on this project. A symposium was held at SUNY-ESF in April 2015, cosponsored by New York Audubon, Catskill Forest Association, Cornell University, New York Farm Bureau, and the Nature Conservancy. Under the aegis of RNYW news articles were distributed and contact with state legislators increased. One focus was on the effect of deer on forest regeneration, and the loss of early successional woods as abandoned farmlands have become more forested.

## Where We Are Today

NYFOA was founded in 1963 with 212 members. Membership rose to 1,400 in 1990 and peaked at 2,100 in 2003. For the last 20 years membership has averaged about 1,900. Changing economic conditions in New York’s rural economy, the aging demographic of private woodland owners, and the subdivision of private woodlands into smaller parcels all impact membership. In addition, many civic and religious organizations across the country are struggling to gain new members. Meanwhile, people are barraged with pleas to support a plethora of causes through mail flyers, television advertising, and phone calls. Social scientists tell us that the citizenry is changing in its views of joining clubs etc.

Currently, the country is suffering tremendously under the COVID-19 pandemic. This restricts many activities including woods walks, in-person seminars, in-person board meetings, and limits the social interaction which has been important in the organization. Hopefully, this will pass, and we can learn from the experience. Several recent initiatives by NYFOA may bode well for the future. These include strengthening ties to the Tree Farm system, obtaining another Executive Director, new communication tools, and furthering the Master Forest Owner program.

The American Forest Foundation, sponsors of the Tree Farm program, appears interested in closer ties with NYFOA in New York. Other states have developed close relations among the two organizations. Conversations have occurred and details must be worked out. A cooperative atmosphere between the two groups would be beneficial to both. Common interests exist between the two organizations and members often partake of the other’s events.

The Executive Director position in NYFOA has come and gone over the years. Such a position has the potential of greatly advancing the status and strength of NYFOA. Past experiences have shown that the Director must receive specific guidance from the NYFOA board and must maintain close communication with the president. Dedicated professional help can relieve the president and Executive Committee of NYFOA from many administrative tasks and allow them to concentrate on developing more long-range programs. The director can also maintain the close relationships that have developed between NYFOA and other organizations and develop new ones.

## The Future

What can or should NYFOA do over the next several decades? We can serve various audiences and several purposes. The first audience are the 700,000 owners of the 11 million acres of family forests and woods of New York. The second audience are the public officials that run our governments, from towns and villages to county and state. The third audience are the 20 million people who live in New York state. For each of these groups NYFOA can, if it chooses, help these groups make

a substantial contribution to making the Empire State better.

Providing education and information to private forest owners is a prime objective. However, for the future we must determine what the correct message needs to be to excite forest owners. Membership in all non-profit organizations is lagging. From religious to social to professional to environmental groups everyone is trying to answer the same question, “What can we do to attract more people and spread what we believe is correct information to the world”. Related to this is the continuation of social interaction among members. Developing a sense of camaraderie is important.

Legislators from town Supervisors and local board members to county Boards of Supervisors or county executives to state Assemblypersons and Senators all need more and better information about the vital role our forests and woods play in the economic and overall health of our society. NYFOA could be the place where elected representatives go for answers. However, we need to get to know our legislators and be involved in their day-to-day activities.

The public can also benefit from the ability of NYFOA to educate and inform. Through the magazine, e-newsletter, workshops, woods walks, seminars, etc. NYFOA brings the professionals in contact with people. However, there is much more that could be done including regular press releases about what is going on in the community, local radio interviews, public television spots, etc. The recent e-newsletter and our updated website are excellent but what about a series of NYFOA type blogs, or other electronic media outlets?

There will always be trees and forested areas in our Empire State but more importantly, what kind of forests will they be? Will they provide the goods and services that landowners want? Will they help in mitigating climate change? Will they help sustain both rural and urban communities? NYFOA can ensure that these things happen by educating landowners, interacting with legislators, and informing the public. May the forest be with you. 🌲

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