

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 2021



*NYFOA's New Executive Director:
Craig Vollmer*

Volume 59 Number 3



**THE NEW YORK
FOREST OWNERS
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**The New York
Forest Owner**

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VOLUME 59, NUMBER 3

Jeff Joseph, Managing Editor
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Please address all membership fees and change of address requests to PO Box 541, Lima, NY 14485. 1-800-836-3566. Cost of family membership/subscription is \$45.



www.nyfoa.org

COVER: Front cover: Craig Vollmer surrounded by maples in his Chautauqua County woodlot.

From The President

On March 22, 2021, the NYFOA board of directors elected me to serve as president of our association, succeeding Art Wagner. It is an honor to be part of an organization which has helped so many people in New York understand, improve, and enjoy their woodlots. I am happy to take this opportunity to highlight what I see as key priorities for NYFOA going forward. NYFOA started in 1963 as a



non-profit, peer-to-peer organization which serves as a resource to the private woodlot owner — helping to make the science of forestry and the associated best management practices accessible

to interested private woodlot owners in our state. I wish to adhere closely to the tradition of NYFOA as a decentralized organization. This approach is why NYFOA is unique. In practice, this means that the real work, benefits, interactions, and fun woodlot experiences for NYFOA members occur primarily at the chapter level. The state board is made up of volunteer representatives from all parts of NY and from every chapter. All NYFOA board members are expected to be part of one or more organizational committees at the state level.

So where are we headed? How should we focus our limited financial and volunteer resources? What steps can we take to insure our association will thrive for another 58 years and many more?

A. Review and Enhance NYFOA Programs and Events: The core competencies of NYFOA (peer to peer educational and hands on activities in the woods) will remain front and center. Several

members have suggested broadening the array of programs and activities we offer to members and I support this goal. Examples include: legacy planning, tree propagation, cultivating ginseng and mushrooms, tree pruning, and more. We plan to survey our members and learn more about the types of activities NYFOA could/should support. There are lots of possibilities here so please take part in the survey and talk about possible new program ideas within your chapter. The survey should come out in late summer or early fall 2021.

B. Membership: There is no question we have an aging member base in NYFOA and our total membership has declined about 2.3% over the past year. As of February 2021 the total number of members in NYFOA is 1,428. For our association to prosper in the future we need to make a concerted effort to recruit new members. In the past, most new members came to us through word-of-mouth contact at the local level. Bringing a friend or neighbor to a woods walk remains a great way to introduce people to NYFOA, and hopefully to motivate prospective members to join. That said, our younger generation is generally more tech savvy and likely to communicate digitally. This is a sea change from the 'good ole days' and encourages us to use innovative ways to reach a younger demographic.

C. Communication: NYFOA has in place a good mix of regular communication vehicles. Our goal will be to continue and enhance these when possible, through the dissemination of *The New York Forest Owner* magazine, *The Woodlot*, an e-newsletter we began publishing in 2020, and the NYFOA website, www.nyfoa.org. We will strive to improve each of these communication channels and welcome member input on ways to accomplish this goal.

D. Cooperation with Related Organizations: NYFOA has developed excellent working relationships with several

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

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

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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.

Hardwood Lumber Markets and the Impact on New York's Timber Market

TOM GEROW

I began my career 35 years ago working for a small sawmill in Spencer, NY as a procurement forester. Two years later I started working for Wagner Lumber when we had 10 employees. I have been here ever since, and we now have 250 employees, three sawmills, and three kiln facilities. After 30 years in procurement, I became General Manager, and my perspective of the industry has been broadened significantly as a result; so today, I am going to speak with my GM hat on versus my forester hat (which I will never hang up!).

When I refer to the timber market and what influences the demand and pricing of the various species, I speak primarily of the lumber market. With that in mind, I will be sharing information on the state of the lumber business, being the most significant influence on timber pricing and demand in NY. These days the lumber market is global in scale. As the internet has expanded its influence, the world has become a much smaller place. As a result, most hardwood sawmills in the US are directly exporting lumber and to some extent, logs.

To get to the meat of the matter, one which you (as a very educated group

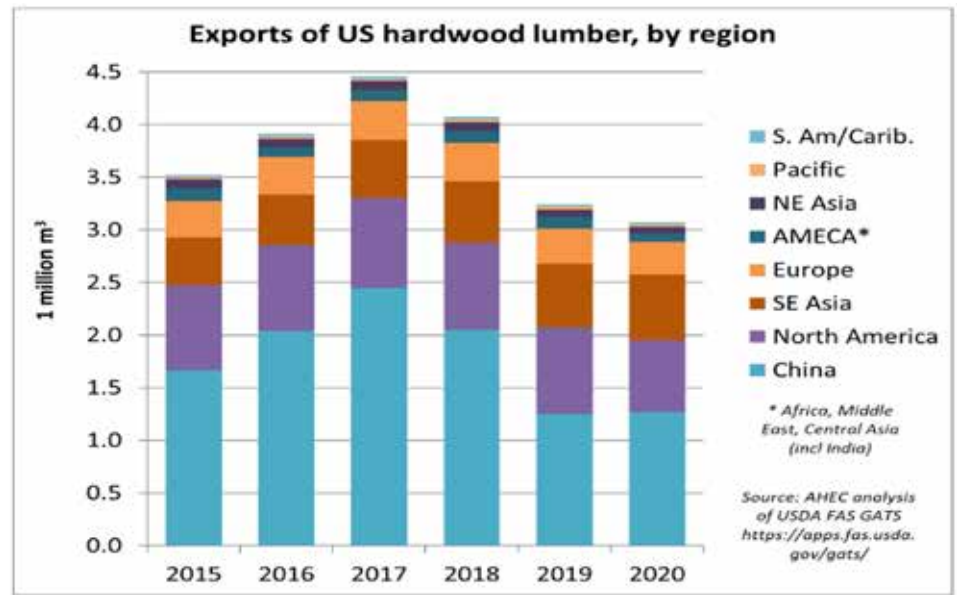


Figure 1

of landowners) are probably aware, the state of the lumber and timber industry is very strong. Ok, for those of you that just wanted the basics, you are all done and you can go split firewood now. For those who want a little more info, allow me to start with some background information on how we got to this strong market.

As a disclaimer, I will not be citing specific timber prices. They do tend to fluctuate seasonally depending on how you present your product to the marketplace; they also vary considerably by region and of course, by site due to quality and access issues. For those looking for specific pricing information, you can reach out to the

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



winnakee
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From The Executive Director

Thank you very much for the warm welcome. I am humbled and honored by the opportunity to serve as NYFOA's Executive Director. As I settle in, it seems appropriate that I take a moment to tell you a little about myself.

I love the outdoors. Growing up in the 70's and 80's in a rural part of Oswego County I spent a lot of time playing in the woods, swamps, and creeks there; my parents rarely worried where I was, as long as I showed up (albeit muddy) for dinner. I was a Boy Scout; I camped, canoed, and hiked all over Tug Hill and the Adirondacks. We were not a family of hunters, but I became an avid one after leaving home. Forestry seemed like the logical career choice for the outdoorsman I had become.

I was only the third person in my extended family to go to college. I started at Morrisville College for an Associate's, and then went on to the College of Forestry (ESF) for a Bachelor's. I graduated during a war and a recession; full time jobs were few, so I took a temporary one, and then returned to ESF for a Master's and a research assistant position. Taking that temporary job turned out to be a very good decision.

I interned the summer after my junior year (and on a few projects after) with Art Brooks of Brooks Forestry, a consultant in Oswego County. He taught me a lot and gave me some needed experience for when I graduated. He is a mentor and lifelong friend.

The temporary job I took was as a forest technician for Lyons Falls Pulp & Paper (LFPP) in Lewis County, working for Mike Virga. As luck would have it, the research for my thesis kept that relationship alive afterwards as one of my sites was on their land. During my last semester of graduate school, Mike offered me a full time job as the Procurement and Forestry Services Manager there. What a gift! I bought all the pulpwood and chips for the mill, provided forestry services to private landowners, and helped manage company lands. Mike is also a mentor and lifelong friend.

Three years later, LFPP sold its 70,000 acres of land like many paper companies did then, and I was going to lose my job. But I quickly landed a position with Baillie Lumber as a procurement forester at their Boonville mill in Oneida County; a year in I was promoted to Senior Forester & Procurement Manager. It was an exciting time. We cut a lot of timber, and sold a lot of lumber and veneer/export logs. My time with Baillie and Lyons Falls was action packed and I learned a lot about the business of the forest industry.

Six years later, Art Brooks invited me back to be a partner in his growing consulting business. My previous experience helped me better serve landowners as a consultant. I found my true calling and passion for working with landowners, and have done so for the last 20 years.

I had started a family before our partnership began. Art and I worked well together, but at that time I was the sole provider for our family and after six years together, sadly, decided to leave for something more stable with benefits than self-employment could provide. With my family in tow, I accepted the position of Chief Forester with the consulting firm FORECON and moved to Chautauqua County. It was a great opportunity for me to work with many wonderful private landowners, and I grew considerably over the 15 years I was there.

I have been an active member of the Society of American Foresters (SAF) my entire career, holding several leadership positions — Chair of the NYSAF; Representative to, and then Chair of, the national SAF House of Society Delegates (all the State Chairs across the country); and Chair of the Certification Review Board that oversees the Certified Forester Credential for SAF. I was also a member of the NY Institute of Consulting Foresters, where at the end I was an ex-officio advisor to the Executive Committee and served on the Policy Committee. I am an active member in our church, serving in leadership roles there too, and I am an

Assistant Scout Master in our local Boy Scout Troop.

I have had the opportunity to work just about everywhere in NY. All of these experiences have lead me to, and prepared me for, this position with NYFOA. I am grateful for that, and to you for trusting me with this responsibility.

My wife Marge and I met at Morrisville College. We have been happily married for 27 years and raised two boys into fine young men, Joel (22) and Graham (19). Joel is also a graduate from Morrisville in Agricultural Business, and is a crop consultant for a company near Rochester. Graham will be attending SUNY Plattsburgh this fall to study Supply Chain Logistics. Marge grew up on a dairy farm and has a degree in Agricultural Business; she is a sales representative across western and central NY for a company that distributes agricultural products and pharmaceuticals. She also spends time on our hobby farm caring for her two beef cows and newborn calf, a goat, and 20 chickens in the barn I built for her on our 4 acre home property. We own a 65 acre wooded property nearby, which I love dearly — we manage it to hunt deer and turkeys, for timber, and to have fun. I have been a woodworker for nearly 25 years and when I am not performing my duties for NYFOA, I spend the other half of my time running my own woodworking business — The 1812 Shoppe. It hasn't always been easy, but it's been a pretty good life so far.

I have three basic passions: the woods, hunting, and woodworking. I know I share one of those passions with all of you and expect I share more than one with many of you. I have had the pleasure of meeting several of you so far, and hope to meet everyone over time, and that we might enjoy these shared interests together.

Until then...go to the woods — take it all in and love it until you can't. 🌲

—Craig Vollmer
NYFOA Executive Director

Ask A Professional

PETER SMALLIDGE



Peter Smallidge

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

To Cut or Not to Cut – Tree Selection for a Harvest

Question:

During a timber harvest, is it worth the damage to nearby trees to cut down a tree that is only good for firewood? Any benefit to the forest, or is it only for financial gain? (Anonymous, SFL)

Answer:

Questions about whether or not to cut low-value or "firewood" trees during a harvest have at least three facets to consider. These are (i) is there benefit or harm in cutting a firewood-quality tree (and is it really a firewood-quality tree), (ii) what guidance do silvicultural principles offer in thinking about which trees to harvest, and (iii) what are the specific attributes of trees that should be retained versus those to be cut? Harvests often have a financial outcome, so the question of whether to cut a low value, presumably low-grade, tree is slightly more nuanced. While it might be possible to differentiate among low-grade, low-value and firewood-quality trees, those distinctions aren't relevant for the question of whether or not to cut.

Benefits: Financial, Logistical and Silvicultural

Benefits from cutting a low-value or low-grade tree might include a

combination of financial, logistical, and silvicultural aspects. The latter is addressed below. Low-grade trees are those used in markets that provide products having lesser and broad standards of quality and that sell for little money. Examples of these markets include firewood, pulpwood, chips, or pellets. As a specific example for firewood (Figure 1), a tree that is 12 inches dbh has a volume that is less than 0.25 cord and maybe 1000 lbs green



Figure 1. The value of cutting a low-grade tree is largely from the benefit of increased sunlight to adjacent trees, in this case a black cherry. Trees are not created equally, and this tree is worth a couple dollars.

weight depending on species. The most recent NYSDEC stumpage price report lists firewood value at \$6 - \$12/cord on the stump, and values for other low-grade products are comparable. It's a bit disheartening to look at a towering tree that might be 50 to 70 years old and realize that its best financial value is less than a flat of tomato starts from your local garden center. Perhaps this is why firewood cutting for personal use is one of the most common woodland owner activities. Further, it costs the logger the same effort and machine time to fell and move a low value as high value trees of similar size. It's doubtful there is a substantial profit motive to cut an additional low-value tree, especially during a commercial harvest.

It's worth mentioning that unscrupulous people might suggest that a tree is of lower grade and value than it is, and thus inconsequential to cut. Avoid this concern by working with a reputable forester and logger.

Logistically, there may be benefit for an unmarked tree to be added into a harvest to simplify the felling or maneuvering of other trees and logs. It is possible that when the forester marked the trees to cut, there was oversight on some reality of applied physics that warrants cutting an additional tree that complicates



Figure 2. The Game of Logging teaches loggers and landowners how to directionally fell a tree. The feller can then decide where to safely position the tree to avoid damage to other trees.

the harvest or moving of logs. The argument on logistics is palatable once or twice, but becomes suspicious with multiple occurrences.

Related to logistics is the potential for damage to adjacent trees. Loggers who are trained in and who use directional felling as taught through the Game of Logging program (Figure 2) are usually able to fell most trees in a manner that avoids damage to residuals. While the Game of Logging doesn't override the laws of physics, loggers fell trees as part of their profession and are often

quite talented. Many take great pride in their ability to make a tree behave. If there are particular attributes of your woodland that are essential to protect, have a specific and direct conversation about your objectives with the person running the chainsaw and the skidder.

Silvicultural Motives to Remove Trees

Silviculture is a science that guides management decisions for ownership objectives related to the establishment, composition (i.e., mixture of species), growth, and quality of forest vegetation.

It is through these four goals that the retention or removal a single stem might influence the future stand. Admittedly, a single stem has minimal impact, but the principles are worth reviewing.

Canopy trees influence establishment through changes in local environment and the provision of seed or root sprouts. The specific benefits versus detriments of the tree in question depend on many factors. Trees influence the local environment, and thus the establishment of seedlings, through shading, slowing of wind currents, and perhaps changes to soil moisture through root uptake of water. Trees also provide seed. If the species is desired for ownership objectives, the seed is likely of benefit. Some species are less desired, or are overly abundant and removing one or more may balance the species mixture of the seed in the forest. In some cases, retaining a tree may create an environment that limits the establishment of some less than desirable trees.

Many owners have objectives that connect directly to composition, or the mixture of species present. Adjusting the proportion of stems among the various species influences these objectives. Species-specific objectives might include future value for timber, maple syrup production, fruit for wildlife, fall color, and aesthetics. The species retained will influence the seeds distributed (Figure 3). Stems removed reduce the prevalence of that species as future germinants.

Tree growth is directly related to the availability of sunlight. Removing one tree will almost certainly benefit an adjacent residual tree. This is perhaps the most immediate benefit of cutting a tree of low value, because of the increased growth on the residual tree that receives more sunlight. Numerous studies report that thinning to ensure adequate sunlight to desired trees increased the growth of those trees. The extent of increased growth varies, but a 50% increase of various growth metrics (e.g., diameter increment, basal area increment, cord volume) wouldn't be a surprise.

Quality can be assessed at the tree and the stand level. At the tree level, removing a low value tree could

continued on next page



Figure 3. The abundance of seeds depends in large part on having a sufficient number of healthy and mature trees of the desired species present. Many of these red oak acorns will germinate into oak seedlings.

increase growth of clear wood on an adjacent residual tree. As the residual tree accumulates wood, the inner core with knots and defects is buried by wood with no or less defect. Through time, the quality of that tree increases. At the stand level, a tree is low value because of either unmarketable species or a poor quality stem. In either case, removing that tree while retaining high value trees results in a higher proportion of high value trees.

An additional perspective on quality is how a stem or species contributes to other objectives. Trees, live or girdled, might have value for wildlife, fall color, aesthetics, or other values. Be thoughtful about whether and where to create a snag by girdling (Figure 4).

While there are silvicultural advantages to removing a low value tree, there may also be disadvantages. A principle disadvantage is an unfavorable shift to suboptimal stocking. Stocking is the quantity of a resource (e.g., trees) relative to the capacity of an area to provide for the needs of that resource (e.g., sunlight on an acre). Forest stocking is often reported as basal area in sq. feet per acre. Reducing stocking too much may cause an undesired understory response, or allow for too much wind turbulence. Conversely, retaining too much stocking can stunt the growth of desired established seedlings. The details defining the correct stocking level are beyond the scope here, but can be discussed with your forester.

Selection Criteria for Trees to Cut or Retain

There are exceptions to criteria for which trees to cut or retain, but some general principles are helpful. In

general, focus on what should or could be retained rather than what should be cut.

- Focusing on those trees to retain requires an acceptance of the relativism of trees...you can only work with the best of what you have. Some woodlot have been high-graded or selectively logged such that few “good” trees remain. While an owner might decide to aggressively reset their woods and start over, more often they accept that perfect is the enemy of good (or sometimes of mediocre). Avoid the temptation to cut all the less-than-perfect trees.

- Retain species that are aligned with the soils of the stand (Figure 5) and that support your ownership objectives. Strive for a variety of species based on what is available. Sometimes species establish on soils for which they are not well suited. Those stems are of poor vigor, low resilience to stressors, and generally perform poorly. They offer little opportunity for the future,



Figure 4. In some specific cases girdling is an appropriate tactic to allow other trees more growing space. The girdled tree eventually falls, and not necessarily when or where it is most opportune.




Figure 5. Sugar maple is a good example of a species that is finicky about its site. Sugar maple doesn't perform well on these poorly drained soils as evidenced by the two trees with stubby ("stagheaded") tops.

and removing them may provide some benefit.

- In addition to species, the attribute of a tree mostly likely to connect with an owner's objective is stem form. Beauty is in the eye of the beholder, so a stem of given form might be perfect for one owner and a bane for another owner. The beauty assigned to a tree might change depending on the specific location on the property.

- A tree's identify fundamentally relates to its ability to photosynthesize. Thus, the tree's crown is central to the success of a tree as a tree. In a managed forest, trees are eventually cut. Until the regeneration phase of a stand, retaining upper canopy trees with balanced, deep crowns that lack dieback ensures those trees are most likely to take advantage of any sunlight they receive and disperse seed.

- Some trees with weak forks, severe canker damage or other physical injury may be more likely than not to break or fail (Figure 6). Not all of them will, as evidenced by large trees with these features. However, when thinning a woods, removing trees with low structural integrity reduces the risk that tree will shade a more viable trees before the weak tree eventually succumbs.

- Trees that may die before the next opportunity to harvest are often, but not always, better to harvest during the current harvest. This is particularly true for the owner who sees some tangible utility in that tree. Some owners are able to get into their woods several times a year, while others are physically remote. The owner with regular access can monitor tree vigor, and if they are DIY owners, can harvest as needed to capture value. Owners without the option for direct involvement need to capture the value of trees before they die. 

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



Figure 6. A canker or other defect may predispose a tree to eventually fail through breaking of the stem. These are good candidates for removal sooner than later to allow the felling to be safe and to reallocate that growing space to another species.

Wild Things in Your Woodlands

KRISTI SULLIVAN

SCARLET TANAGER (*PIRANGA OLIVACEA*)



The scarlet tanager is a medium-sized songbird, about 7 inches in size. Strikingly beautiful, the male tanager is a brilliant scarlet red with solid black wings and tail. In contrast, the female tanager is olive green on the back, with a yellow underside and dark brown or black wings.

As warmer weather arrives and the trees begin to leaf out, many songbirds make their annual trek to the Northeast to nest and raise their young. Having spent the winter in montane evergreen forests from Panama to northwestern South America, the tanager seeks out mature deciduous and mixed forests upon its return. The male tanager arrives first to set up territory.

This beautiful bird lives throughout New York State, especially in large woodland areas. However, because tanagers spend most of their time high in the forest canopy, they can be difficult to pick out, despite the male's vividly colored plumage. A telltale sign of the tanager's presence is its hoarse, robin-like song and a characteristic call of "chip-bang," emanating from high in the treetops.

Tanagers usually nest in deciduous trees, building a shallow cup of twigs, grass, bark, and rootlets about 20 to 30 feet above ground. They construct the nest on a horizontal limb, about halfway out from the trunk of the tree, and usually at the junction of two or more smaller branches. The tanager lays 1-6


eggs (usually 4) that are greenish blue in color with fine reddish specks. Eggs are incubated for 13-14 days prior to hatching. After hatching, the male helps to feed the young. To find enough food and successfully raise a brood of young, a pair of tanagers needs at least four wooded acres, with eight being optimum.

The tanager forages mostly by gleaning or hawking flying insects. When a bird is gleaning, it catches insects and other invertebrates by plucking them from within foliage, or sometimes from the ground. In contrast, a bird that is hawking will watch for prey from a suitable perch. When it spies potential prey, the bird will chase it and catch it in its beak, then return to the perch. In addition to invertebrates, the tanager also eats buds and fruits.

Hawks and owls prey upon adult tanagers. Squirrels, crows, and blue jays will raid tanager nests, feeding on the eggs and young. Brown-headed cowbirds parasitize more than half of all tanager nests in some areas, particularly where the forest has been cut up into smaller pieces by development. Cowbirds are brood parasites that lay their eggs in the nests

of other birds. When parasitism occurs, the adult host birds often raise the larger, more demanding cowbird young at the expense of their own.

The best way to provide habitat for the scarlet tanager is to maintain large, contiguous areas of forest habitat, and to encourage wooded connections between smaller patches of forest. Encourage a healthy forest canopy with small gaps, allowing the sun to reach the forest floor, promoting understory growth. This will create a forest with many layers of vegetation at different heights, which in turn provides feeding and nesting sites and abundant food. Retain a variety of tree species and encourage individual tree health to help create a healthy, resilient forest, and benefit the scarlet tanager as well as other wildlife.

To hear the call of the scarlet tanager, visit http://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/scarlet_tanager/id 

Kristi Sullivan works in the Department of Natural Resources and the Environment at Cornell University. She is Director of the New York Master Naturalist Program.

From the President (continued)

related organizations. We have been a key sponsor of the Cornell University Master Forest Owner (MFO) program. Under the innovative stewardship of Peter Smallidge, Cornell's State Extension Forester and ex-officio NYFOA board member, MFOs have helped hundreds of private woodlot owners improve stewardship practices and continue to provide post-visit support as needed. Similarly, NYFOA chapters have developed productive professional relationships with their local Cornell Cooperative Extension (CCE) offices. We have ongoing contacts with SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry (ESF), the Empire State Forest Products Association (ESFPA), the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), and NY Tree Farm. We maintain regular contact with the NY Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC). Our goal in the coming period will be to deepen these relationships through regular communication and in-person meetings as appropriate. By doing this, we can increase our value to members by knowing and being in a position to refer the services, programs, and information developed by the various organizations and academic institutions.

E. Advocacy: While NYFOA is not a lobbying organization, we continue to follow and report to our members information about legislation and regulations from Albany that may have an impact on the private woodlot owner. We are in the process of updating NYFOA's selective set of position statements thanks to the diligent efforts of board member Hugh Canham.

F. Executive Director: On February 1, 2021, NYFOA retained Craig Vollmer as an independent contractor to serve as Executive Director of our association. Craig comes to us after an accomplished career as a consulting forester. He has worked with scores of private woodlot owners and has had regular dealings with the MFO program, the DEC, NY Tree Farm, and many more. Craig is a past President of the NY chapter of the Society of American Foresters and brings a deep understanding of association management to NYFOA. He received his masters and bachelor's degrees from SUNY ESF, and is an approachable person who knows how to get things done. Please view him as a resource whose role is to improve the association.

G. Getting Past COVID: As of this writing, we are getting closer. The intensive U.S. vaccine rollout is taking hold and the COVID infection rate is dropping. The decision to hold in-person NYFOA events will rest with the chapters, provided they follow CDC guidance (social distancing, wearing a mask, and frequent hand sanitizing) and respect for local regulations governing in-person events during this COVID time. As the "herd" becomes a true force, I think in-person events will be widely possible and safe. We are watching this closely and will continue to keep you posted on any changes in NYFOA's COVID guidance.

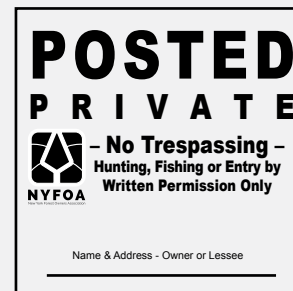
H. Our Outgoing President Art Wagner: Last but not least, I wish to recognize Art Wagner, who has been an exemplary leader of NYFOA for the past three years and has now reached his term limit. Art has been a driving force in NYFOA, as he led our efforts to hire an executive director, strengthen our chapters through several creative initiatives, opened the door to grant funding from Audubon for program support, improved key relationships with the DEC, ESFPA, Audubon, Cornell University, ESF and others. Art has been an accessible leader who always took the time to understand each of the myriad issues we faced and treated everyone with respect and good will. We owe Art a debt of gratitude for his outstanding stewardship of our association. Thank you Art.

I am highly motivated to lead NYFOA and hope we can have the active participation and support of all members as we head for some exciting times. Please feel comfortable contacting me. I like to discuss NYFOA topics and welcome suggestions on ways we can add value and help our members achieve their woodlot goals. Let's keep things interesting, lively, useful, and positive. In the meantime, get out and enjoy your woodlot. 🌲

–Stacey Kazacos
NYFOA President
skazacos@nyfoa.org

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Audubon NY has Three Grant Funded Projects for NY Forest Owners

BY ERIC JENKS



In partnership with New York Tree Farm (NYTF), New York Forest Owners Association (NYFOA), and several other organizations depending upon the specific grant project, Audubon NY was awarded three grants by the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF). “Through financial support from NFWF, Audubon and our partners can work together to improve forest habitat for declining bird species in each project area,” said Suzanne Treyger, the Forest Program Manager for Audubon NY. “Working with NYTF and NYFOA helps us reach and engage more forest owners and forestry professionals and that’s critical for our success.”

The first grant-funded project is Woods, Wildlife, and Warblers, which started in Vermont in 2016 and expanded into the Lake Champlain and Upper Hudson Watersheds in NY in 2018. “The latest round of funding further expanded that project area into the entire Lake Champlain Basin in VT,” said Zack Boerman, the Forest Program Associate for Audubon NY. “We’ve partnered with Audubon VT, Vermont Woodlands Association and Vermont Tree Farm, NYTF, NYFOA, Vermont Coverts, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), Vermont Fish and Wildlife, and NFWF. In NY, we’re reaching out to private landowners in the Lake Champlain and Upper Hudson watersheds to educate and engage landowners in forest management for forest bird habitat restoration. The focus of this project is to improve

breeding habitat for forest birds experiencing significant population declines, including American woodcock and golden-winged warbler in early successional habitats, and wood thrush, Canada warbler and black-throated blue warbler in mature forests.”

With the Woods, Wildlife and Warblers project, Audubon NY meets with landowners and provides them with technical assistance. “We walk the property, assess forest habitat conditions, and give them a habitat assessment report,” said Boerman. “With the assistance of a professional forester, the management recommendations in the assessment can be incorporated into a future or current forest management plan, by working to amend the existing activity schedule. The project also gives us the opportunity to put on workshops and woods walks that we invite foresters and private landowners to so that they can learn more about the project’s priority birds and management techniques to meet their habitat needs.”

While the projects all focus on declining forest birds, the work has larger ramifications for the environment when implemented. “Birds are a bioindicators of ecosystem and ecological health,” said Treyger. “They’re easy to detect; you can see and hear them and they also respond relatively quickly to environmental changes that impact their habitat. We can monitor birds and use that information as indicators of larger issues, like forest health and resiliency. Birds can signal that something bigger is happening, and by improving

bird habitat you’re helping other ecological issues that might be at play. Another important thing that we try to communicate is that that managing for improved bird habitat can also benefit other wildlife species that need the same healthy and diverse forest conditions. It isn’t just about wood thrush or Canada warbler, etc. These species are in decline and need help, but there are a number of other associated wildlife species that use the same habitat. We may highlight these particular bird species, but it goes beyond that to other birds, mammals, amphibians, etc.”

The Woods Wildlife and Warblers project also includes Audubon’s Bird-friendly Maple program, which originated in VT and expanded into NY in 2019. “Audubon will work with maple producers to conduct a sugarbush forest inventory and habitat assessment,” said Boerman. “If they meet the recommended habitat guidelines, which may necessitate incorporating active management, they are eligible to receive Audubon branded materials for their maple products as a sign of supporting healthy bird habitat. These can be labels for syrup and other maple products, along with signage for their sugarhouse or display materials in their store area or at a venue like a farmers’ market.”

For more information on this grant, you can visit <http://www.woodsandwildlife.org/>, or contact Boerman at zachary.boerman@audubon.org.

The second grant-funded project, Harvests for Habitat, is based in the

Upper Delaware and East Branch Delaware River watersheds, and partners include Audubon NY, NYTF, NYFOA, and the Watershed Agricultural Council. “We are working with forest owners, foresters, and loggers, to improve habitat for wood thrush, cerulean warbler, and associated wildlife species,” said Treyger.

A unique aspect of this particular project is that it provides financial assistance for loggers and foresters so that they can implement management that improves habitat through different forest management applications. “There has been significant population decline in these birds,” said Treyger. “We’re talking about a fifty percent decline in the past 50 years. We are working with all of our partners to provide outreach education, and technical assistance to forest owners, foresters, and loggers in the project area. If we can help move forest owners along a pathway to implement forest management that improves habitat, over time we hope that we’ll see these bird population declines start to stabilize and reverse. And these management goals aren’t in a vacuum. Managing for forest birds is compatible with many landowner goals and objectives, like timber management, water quality, carbon sequestration and storage, and recreation. We’d love to offer financial assistance to help move forest habitat management forward everywhere in NY, but in this project area, there really isn’t a great market for the low quality wood that often comes out of forest habitat management. It typically involves removing trees off of land that isn’t timber quality, potentially requiring the landowner to pay the logger to do the work. The financial assistance helps get over that hurdle and get the work done.

For more information contact Treyger at suzanne.treyger@audubon.org

The last NFWF grant-funded project covers portions of NY and PA in the Upper Allegheny and Sinnemahoning watersheds. Audubon NY is working

on the project in conjunction with their colleagues in PA, along with NYTF, NYFOA, NYS DEC, Lyme Timber Co., and Appalachian Mountains Joint Venture.

Similar to the other projects, the Allegheny Highlands Project works to engage forest owners and foresters to improve habitat for priority forest birds in the project area. This includes the American woodcock, golden-winged warbler, cerulean warbler, black-throated blue warbler, prairie warbler, and wood thrush. “It’s important to mention that all of these priority birds have different habitat needs,” said Treyger. “Some love young forest and early successional habitats, some love more mature forests. The goal is to identify forested landscapes that include working forests, or forests that can be managed, and then work with landowners, foresters, and our partners to improve forest diversity at a landscape scale. We’re also expanding Audubon’s Bird-friendly Maple program in this region too.”

For more information on this project area, contact Andy Hinickle, Conservation Biologist with Audubon NY, at andrew.hinickle@audubon.org.

Please note, since all of these projects are recently funded, those interested in getting involved in their efforts

have a rolling window of opportunity over the next 2-3 years. “We’re going to be available and working on these projects for the foreseeable future,” said Treyger.

For more information about upcoming educational programs and woods walks in all project areas, forest owners can check here for Audubon events: <https://ny.audubon.org/events>. In addition, their forest resource center (<https://ny.audubon.org/working-lands/forest-resources>) is available to provide more background on Audubon’s forest bird work. If you’d like to connect with Audubon staff about habitat on your property, their landowner assistance form is available in the online resource center, and a staff

Eric Jenks is a freelance writer with Morning Ag Clips, LLC. Morning Ag Clips is now managing the Tree Farm column.

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

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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

THE ROOT OF THE PROBLEM

BY PAUL HETZLER

The love of money may be the root of all evil, as the Bible maintains, but where trees are concerned, a heck of a lot of evil is due to root damage. This problem (root damage, not the love of money) is often considered an urban forestry issue, and with good reason — it's the ultimate cause of the vast majority of tree decline and mortality in landscape and urban settings. However, it's also a legitimate forestry concern, and one which is escalating.

Forest owners and managers who are interested in multi-generational forest health would do well to consider root damage when planning harvests, and really any time a machine heads into the woods. Because maple producers may have equipment in a sugarbush for thinning, culling, or sap collection operations on an annual basis, they stand to benefit most from adopting practices that minimize root damage.

To briefly revisit some tree biology, about 90% of tree roots are in the top 10 inches of soil, and 98% reside in the upper 18 inches. Unless there are physical barriers such as waterways, skid roads, or rock outcrops, roots will usually extend between two and three times the branch length. Foresters are aware that tree species like hickories, oaks, walnuts, and certain pines can have a substantial taproot. Even so, mature trees of all species here in the Northeast have root systems which are for the most part shallow and flat. It's no coincidence biologists often refer to these as root *plates*.

One of the reasons root damage has not been recognized as a forestry problem



Author indicates where roots of this windthrown white pine were severed by equipment along a trail. Photo credit: Jan Hutslar

is that it can take 3-5 years for the first symptoms to show, and another decade for an affected tree to decline and die. Another thing which masks the effect of root injury is that when acute events like droughts and defoliations cause tree death, the slightly higher incidence of mortality among root-damaged trees is hard to notice unless one is looking for it.

In sugarbushes and small woodlots, equipment is usually of a modest

scale, but even "light" tractors will cause lasting harm to the forest unless conditions are either very dry, or frozen. Roots get oxygen directly from soil pores, which form when healthy microbial communities create irregular clumps (aggregates) that lead to natural channels. Freeze-thaw cycles also help make soil pores. When these spaces get mashed shut, roots become far less efficient at absorbing water and nutrients.



Today's skidders leave deeper ruts and cause more severe root damage. Photo courtesy of Peter Smallidge.

This bogs down the photosynthesis factory and reduces sugar production.

Moisture reduces the soil's shear strength, or ability to maintain its form under pressure, which is why harvesting in dry conditions is better for the woods. Depending on soil type (clay soils being more vulnerable to compaction) and moisture content, one pass with a tractor can crush or "puddle" the soil structure for years to come. Trees whose roots traverse the machine's path will experience greater stress than those in undisturbed areas.

But it's not just a matter of reducing oxygen availability to roots. You may have read about the importance of mycorrhizae in other issues of *The New York Forest Owner*. These fungi, which are often host-specific, contribute a tremendous amount to tree health. But mycorrhizae need a robust soil microbial community and good soil structure to thrive. Compacted soils are much less hospitable to them, and their prevalence drops.

Sugar maples have become species of concern, with greater mortality following

tent caterpillar outbreaks, slower growth rates, paucity of red fall coloration (a stress marker), and other signs of stress. Adirondack sugar maple growth-rate research led by SUNY-ESF and published in October 2015 is beyond alarming. As study co-author Dr. Neil Pederson, an ecologist at Harvard Forest in Massachusetts, put it, "I have never seen anything quite like this." Given what we know about the state of sugar maples, it's even more critical to avoid harming roots and introducing further long-term stress.

On the commercial side, the hitch (so to speak) is that forestry equipment is bigger now. Like many of you, I can recall when a John Deere 440 was considered good-sized, so my jaw dropped when in 2007 a contract logger showed up for a thinning cut at my 20-acre woodlot near Colton with a JD 640. This beast weighs 36,790 pounds, over three times the mass of a 440, and the ruts it made will persist for generations.

The carnage left in the wake of modern forwarders and skidders goes beyond compaction — we're talking

about roots being sheared with every pass. This is why I lump skid trails with rock outcrops as equal obstructions to root growth. Knowing that a typical root system extends twice the branch length at minimum, it's easy to gauge how badly a tree right on a skid trail is harmed.

"That is not all. Oh no. That is not all!" as the Cat in the Hat said. Root injury results in trees toppling over. In his excellent piece on post-harvest windthrow in the March/April NYFOA issue, Peter Smallidge writes that "One reported study noted that the best predictor of windthrow was proximity to skid trails." Peter suggests that "...it is root damage in general that should be avoid[ed]" in harvest operations.

When a long-time maple producer from Canton decided to get out of the business in 2000, he had a forester manage a partial harvest of his sugarbush, after which he gave the parcel to his son, a friend of mine. That was an especially wet summer, and the JD 640 wallowed up to its belly pan in ruts, but the loggers cut exactly as the forester had marked. Unfortunately, the operators backed up to every tree rather than parking on a main trail and spooling out cable. Trees began to decline quickly in about 2004, but they didn't get a chance to die. By 2016, not a single hard maple was standing on the site, every one of them windthrown.

Timing of forestry operations is more important than ever. It's not a perfect world, of course, and we can't always wait until things dry out to work in the woods. Plus, the Northeast is already wetter on average than it was 50 years ago, a trend that is only expected to continue. Records show that across northern NYS, we now get a full additional inch of annual precipitation than we did in 1970. But we can stay on our forest roads, and demand that loggers do the same. Maybe we can even help operators figure out what that cable on the back of their skidder is used for. 📷

Paul Hetzler is an ISA-Certified Arborist and former Cornell Cooperative Extension educator.

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

Chair Camp 2021 July 29, 30 & 31

ED NEUHAUSER

Become one with the forest! Submerge yourself this summer in the mysteries of making heirloom Windsor Furniture at the seventh annual "Chair Camp 2021," hosted this year by Ed Neuhauser and Peg Coleman in Groton, New York, (16 miles north of Ithaca) July 29, 30, and 31.

As in years past, David Abeel from Traverse City, Michigan will be leading the workshop, and a 10% discount will be available to active members of the New York Forest Owners Association. There are no prerequisites to take this class. Beginners to experts are welcome. Teens must have permission of the instructor or be accompanied by a guardian. Teams or couples are welcome to work together on a project.

Courses are designed for participants who can work on their feet all day with enough stamina for a seven hour day.

Class will be maker's choice with a menu of 7 different projects to choose from: natural edged benches with or without comb, tall kitchen/shop stool, comb back side chair, comb back arm chair, comb back rocking chair or 42 inch comb back settee.

Makers can choose from cherry, walnut, maple, oak, pine or poplar for their project components. Some projects will be completed in 2 days and some will



require 3. By the end of class all work will be glued up and leveled, ready for a coat of paint or varnish at home.

All turned parts, materials and tools will be provided but you are welcome to bring hand tools from home. If you have a rechargeable drill or orbital sander it might come in handy if there is a big class. The class will be a great opportunity to get familiar working with a bending form, travishers, a compass plane, various spoke shaves, hand planes, and drawknives. We also will practice determining sightings lines and drill angles for drilling your seat. Chair comfort, solid engineering and symmetrical design will all be emphasized. All secrets will be revealed!

To enroll in this year's chair camp email or call Ed Neuhauser at 607-898-3614 or edward.neuhauser@gmail.com to reserve your space. Ed will be diligent at checking messages and getting back to you. **Class size will be limited so make your call ASAP.**

For participant and instructor safety, all participants will be expected to have gotten a Covid vaccination.

In regard to the charge for class, it depends on what project you have selected. **There is a 10% discount for**



active NYFOA members. You can pay by check or cash on the day of class.

Tall Kitchen Stool w Double H Stretcher—\$200; NYFOA member—\$180

Boot Bench without back—\$200; NYFOA member—\$180

Boot Bench with Back—\$290; NYFOA member—\$260

Side Chair—\$290; NYFOA member—\$260

Arm Chair—\$345; NYFOA member—\$310

Rocking Chair—\$395; NYFOA member—\$355

Settee—\$495; NYFOA member—\$450

Chair or tech questions? Call, text, or email David Abeel at 734-646-2064, abeeldavid@hotmail.com, or go to David Nelson Abeel on Facebook to see samples of class outcomes throughout the past year.

We look forward to seeing you this summer. 🌲

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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.



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Regenerate NY:

Through Regenerate NY, private landowners can receive financial assistance for projects on their property that support healthy forests and forest regeneration. Any individual, partnership, for-profit/not-for-profit entity that owns 10–1,000 acres of connected forestland or land suitable for establishing forestland can apply.

photo credit: mywoodlot.com

All applicants must use Grants Gateway to apply. Pre-registration required, see our webpage for more info.



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New York's forests need our help regenerating due to the encroachment of invasive understory vegetation, intensive deer browse, and climate change impacts. Regenerate NY, a cost-share grant program through the NYS DEC's Division of Lands and Forests, is kicking off this spring. This program consists of four practices to promote and enhance forest regeneration on private lands. Landowners hoping to plant trees, control competing vegetation, restore a degraded forest stand, or exclude deer are encouraged to apply for project funding through the Grants Gateway. DEC will be hosting a Grants Gateway training webinar on Wednesday, May 13th at 1:30pm to assist applicants in navigating the grant process. Private landowners are encouraged to team up with a cooperating forester who may assist with applications. Check out the Regenerate NY webpage on the DEC website for more information.

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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
Paul Miraglia	LHC
Stephen Wilder	LHC
Dave Daut	NAC
Jennifer Bronstein	NFC
Nancy Currie	SOT
Kathy Sheets	WFL
Gerry Gacioch	WFL
Mike O'Connell	WFL

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Hardwood Lumber Markets (continued)

NYS Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC). The DEC puts out a semi-annual “Stumpage Price Report” that does give specific pricing by species and by region in NYS.

The lumber industry

For all intents and purposes, I will focus on hardwoods. This is the primary growing stock in NY and by far the greater value of NY’s forests. In the north country, the pulpwood market plays a large role in the value of timber, but I will not focus on that here as prices are contract driven and relatively consistent, it is demand by the paper companies that has the most impact on supply, not price.

When timber is harvested there are three major groups of products that come from the forest: veneer (1-3% on avg), sawlogs for grade lumber (50-85%) and low-grade logs (a.k.a. industrial) which goes into the pallet, railroad tie, and pulp markets (10-50%). The reasons for the wild percentage differences in sawlog and low-grade percentages are regional in general and depend on how your woodlot has been managed historically. In the Southern Tier and Western New York, you could expect to be in the high range of the sawlog %; in the north

country, probably the opposite; the same goes for well managed vs. high-graded woodlots.

When lumber is sold, there are four major markets to speak to: domestic lumber, China, export lumber (other than China), and industrial markets. Currently, there is a rare convergence where all four major markets are pointing in the same direction at the same time: They are all riding strong pricing and strong demand at the same time for the first time in a very long time. You could consider export log markets as a fifth market, but since their value is also derived from the veneer and lumber industry abroad, the influence does not change the dynamic, so I will not go into too many specifics there. As a note of caution, I will share with you a common saying in the hardwood lumber business, “We have never seen a good market that we have not been able to kill with overproduction”. Regardless, this one is hoped to be around for the rest of the year and into 2022, but one would expect things to level off as the year goes forward.

Let us go through each of these market arenas to paint an overall picture and get into the individual species after.

After a couple of sluggish years due to our trade war with China, grade markets in the U.S. started 2020 with a bang. Housing was optimistic, the Chinese tariffs were removed in February, and prices were improving. When the COVID pandemic hit the US in March, lumber production took a major hit. All types of wood products facilities were idled, or even shut down. The entire supply chain from the woods to sawmills to transportation and secondary manufacturing was disrupted in a big way. Our industry is very integrated, and that disruption rippled across state lines. With the closing of schools and day care operations across the country, many employees were unable to report to work, causing operations of all kinds to run at reduced levels for extended periods, creating shortages in logs, lumber, and reduced inventory levels and availability for many products (i.e., flooring, furniture, and cabinets). Wet winter weather in the southern U.S. further complicated supply chain issues.

Additionally, value played an important role in supply in 2020. With depressed lumber pricing, the hardwood log and timber supply chain slowed dramatically. Meanwhile, the softwood industry heated up dramatically due to DIY homeowner projects. There were many hardwood sawmills that had the option to cut softwood (generally southern states) and were happy to do so. This further reduced hardwood lumber availability.

Combine these factors with a recovering economy, including a strengthening housing market, and you see shortages turn into price increases!

The next biggest market is China. As you can see in Figure 1 (page 4), China is by far the largest importer of North American Hardwoods, purchasing 40-50% of the exported grade lumber. China’s removal of the export tariffs on US forest products brought a quick surge in demand of lumber from the U.S. in early 2020. It was short-lived, however as the virus scourged the country. A surprising aspect of this downturn was the speed with which the Chinese

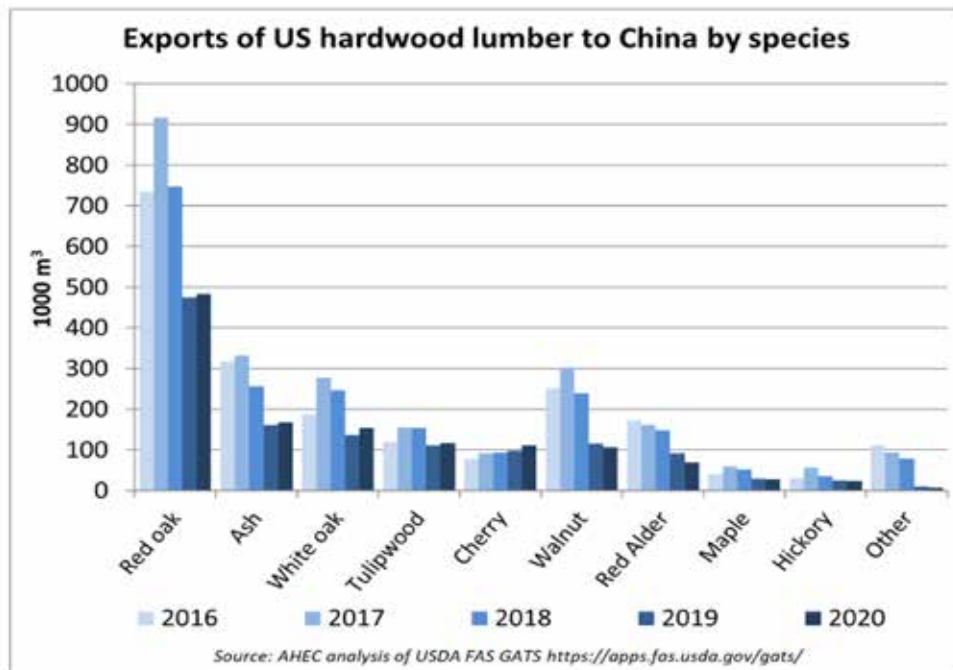


Figure 2

continued on page 22

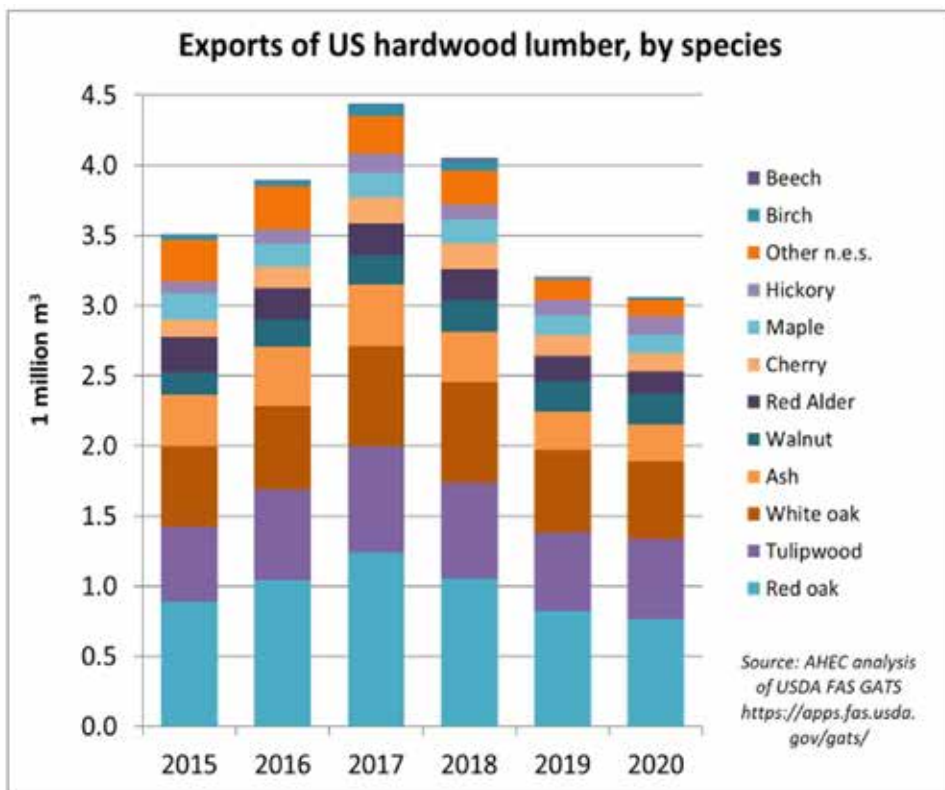


Figure 3

economy recovered. With the surge of the COVID virus, price gains that may have been hoped for through the removal of the tariffs were negated, but by the end of the year China was very interested in U.S. hardwoods and an increase in pricing started in the fall of 2020, carrying into the spring of 2021.

Chinese importers buy a lot of red oak, ash, walnut, and cherry (see Figure 2). But by far, red oak is king. When the Chinese slow down their buying of red oak, the price generally goes down. It has been somewhat fortunate that their increased appetite for ash coincided with the emergence of the Emerald Ash Borer, because without the Chinese market, there would likely have been significant unrecovered losses by forest owners in the US, and NY had one of the largest concentrations of ash timber in the U.S., so it was particularly pointed for us.

Even when we talk about export markets other than China, it is hard to overstate the importance of the Chinese market to the US hardwood lumber industry and the sheer size of their consumption. As you saw from Figure 1, China is an export market

equal to the rest of the world combined. However, the other export markets play an important role in NY timber values, as they also use species that the Chinese do not. We are fortunate in NY that many species play a role in our forests and create a return for NY forest

owners (see Figure 3). Currently, due to worldwide appeal, all of NY's timber species are in demand.

The last, but not least market group is industrial lumber. It is an overlooked aspect of timber values. Each log that is generated from harvesting trees has a "cant"; the center of the log that is of very poor quality and does not generate enough grade lumber to process further. These cants are sometimes of sufficient size to make a railroad tie, but most go into the hardwood shipping pallet industry. In NY, 25-35% of the volume of a log goes into this product line depending on species and the quality of the timber. It is all calculated in the price of the timber, but due to the volume is an important aspect of a valuation. Some logs are shipped directly to these markets, but when sawing lumber it is a factor in the yields. With the improved economy, shipping pallets are in strong demand and this portion of the market is also underserved due to the factors mentioned above. Hence, pricing on this important product has also been on the increase.

As I mentioned earlier there is another piece of the puzzle — export log sales to China, Canada, Europe, and other Asian nations (see Figure 4). You could look at export markets

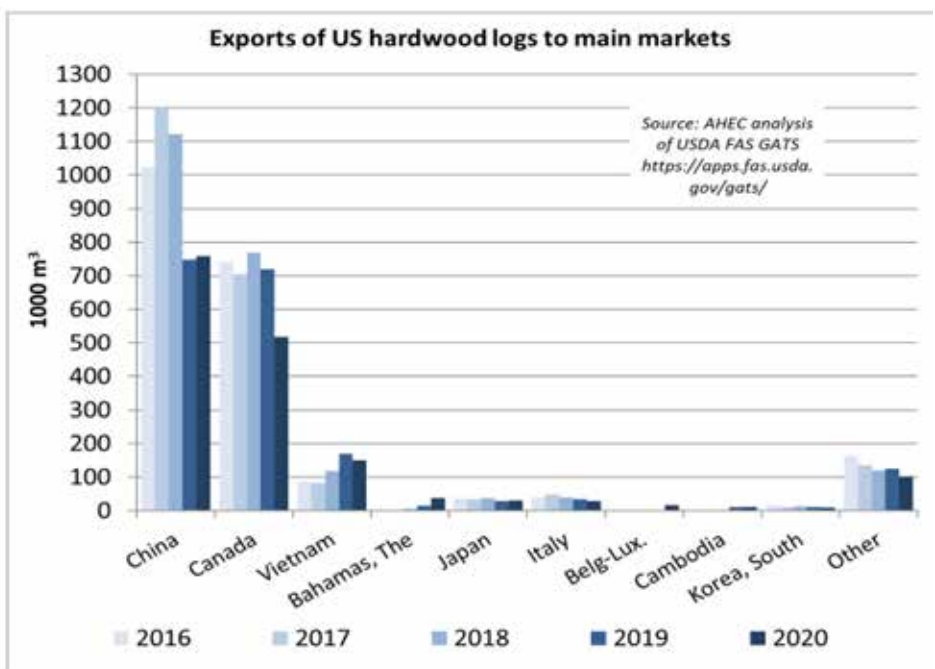


Figure 4

as another veneer and sawmill/lumber market, except overseas.

The export log business in NY is sizable enough to have an impact on timber pricing and is very species specific. Again, the Chinese presence looms large and red oak is king (see Figure 5). Figures 3 and 4 show the volumes shipped by species and destination.

Now for some specie specific comments:

Red oak has a strong demand domestically as well as in export. The export is mainly to China, but increasingly to Europe as well. Being the most populous species produced in the U.S., it is used for many different applications, from flooring to staircases. Due to its wide geographic range, red oak is looked at as a bit of a commodity and pricing is less volatile than other species. When it hits highs, it is generally for shorter periods as supply and demand usually balance out quicker. Demand for red oak has been very strong and seems to be driving the price of logs and timber up.

White oak has been a steady market; very strong domestically, as well in both Europe and China. White oak should stay strong as there is somewhat limited availability due to the variety of markets it serves: staves for barrels (wine and whiskey), building

construction in Europe, flooring, and furniture. White oak has been undersupplied for a long time and it is a relatively minor, but important species in NY.

Hard maple (sugar and black maple) is very important to NY forest owners and this is generally sold into the domestic market, although the Chinese have shown stronger interest of late. Due to the surge in housing, hard maple has enjoyed a strong demand for cabinet stock, flooring, and furniture. This species has also seen nice gains in the past six months and often slows down in the summer due to staining concerns during processing, which may not be the case this summer if supply remains tight.

Soft maple (primarily red maple) has wide application as a hard maple substitute in cabinet components and as framing stock in upholstered furniture. This species is generally sold domestically and with the same concerns in the summer months as hard maple. With hard maple availability tight, manufacturers turn to soft maple to fill in gaps. This is good news for the most populous tree in our state!

Cherry has had a long lull after its heyday in the 90's and 2000's. Since the great recession, cherry has been in low demand. A resurgence spurred by interest in China has had prices slowly

rebouncing, but we are unlikely to see the boom times return anytime soon; however if gains are made due to the lack of availability of other woods, NY forest owners stand to benefit as there are areas of our state that grow beautiful cherry timber.

Ash as we all know is on the decline. When EAB was discovered in NY in 2009 no one knew what the market would bear, but strong interest in China and a small, but steady market in the US has allowed us to keep up with the ash borer and process much of the standing inventory into lumber instead of it dying on the stump. That story is changing however as the insect has gotten in front of production and much timber is dying before it can be harvested. The volumes on the market for the past decade have been more than adequate to satisfy demand, however this year (like many others) the lumber has not been there, and improved pricing has occurred here too.

Hickory has been on the rise as well and is not readily available. This popular cabinet and flooring wood is prominent in NY's southern tier forests.

Tulip Poplar is as hot as it has ever been. Not a prominent NY hardwood, it is a bit regional for high quality timber, but the market is very strong due to the strength in housing, as this wood is valued highly for moldings and trim since it holds paint well, is lightweight and easy to work with.

All in all, the last six months have been very good for timber values in NY. We have seen values across the board rise 20-30% over this time last year. The landowners who are best positioned to take advantage of this change in fortunes are those who manage their forests for long term health and productivity. This generates the highest quality stands for those utilizing sound, sustainable forestry practices and for those that have been patient over their years of management. Enjoy it, you've earned it! 🌲

Tom Gerow is General Manager of 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.

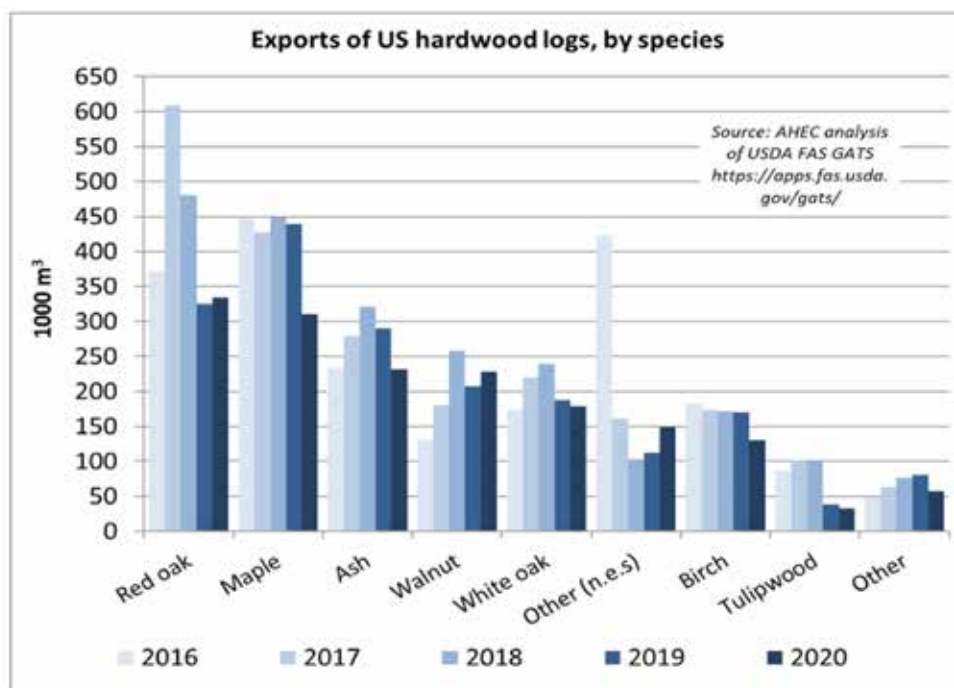


Figure 5



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