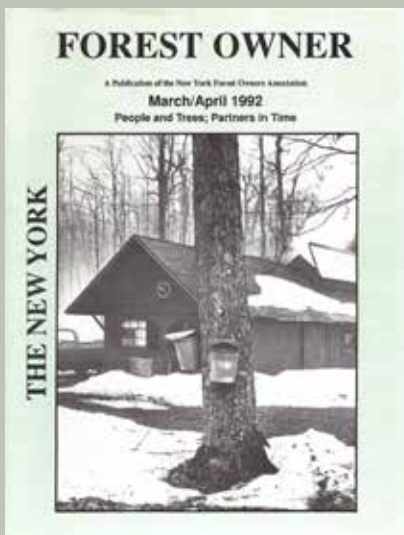
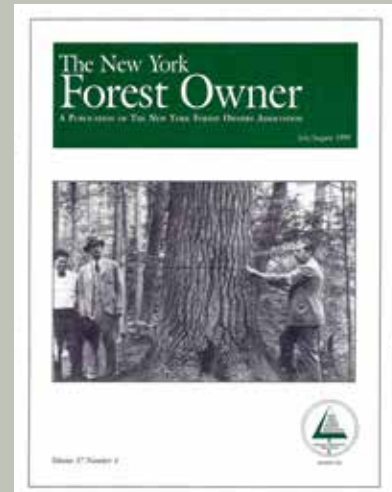
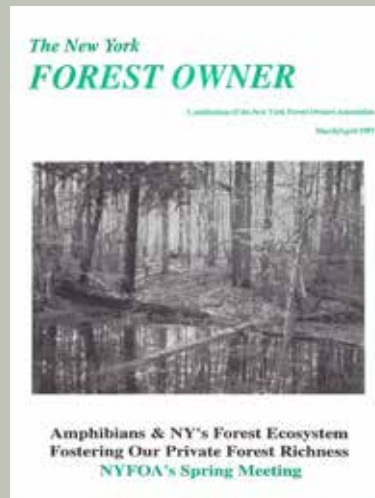
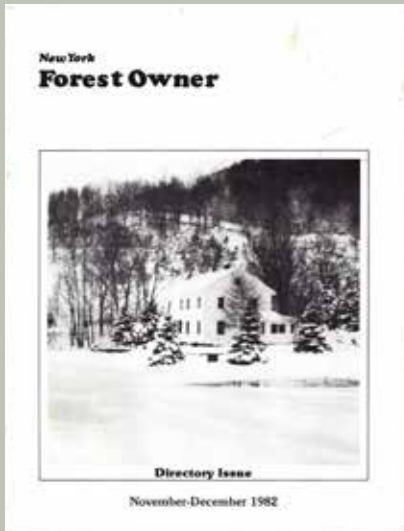


The New York Forest Owner

A PUBLICATION OF THE NEW YORK FOREST OWNERS ASSOCIATION

For people caring about New York's trees and forests

September/October 2021



Hugh Canham's History of NYFOA, Part I

Volume 59 Number 5



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

A PUBLICATION OF THE NEW YORK FOREST OWNERS ASSOCIATION
VOLUME 59, NUMBER 5

Jeff Joseph, Managing Editor
Mary Beth Malmshiemer, Editor

*The New York Forest Owner is a bi-monthly publication of The New York Forest Owners Association, PO Box 541, Lima, NY 14485. Materials submitted for publication should be sent to: **Mary Beth Malmshiemer, Editor, The New York Forest Owner, 134 Lincklaen Street, Cazenovia, New York 13035; Materials may also be e-mailed to mmalmshie@syr.edu; direct all questions and/or comments to jeffjosephwoodworker@gmail.com. Articles, artwork and photos are invited and if requested, are returned after use. The deadline for submission for the November/December issue is October 1, 2021.***

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: Despite the many changes in it's image over the years, NYFOA has remained unwavering in its commitment to the woodland owners of New York State.

From The President

An old Greek proverb: “A society grows great when old men plant trees whose shade they know they shall never sit in.” Fast forward a lot of years. So here I am, a Greek-American guy “of a certain age,” sitting in the sun trying to get our family woodlot on track. I am armed with the key prescriptions learned through NYFOA and the Master Forest



Owner (MFO) program and implemented with lots of sweat equity and EQIP contract money. My family has tried hard to control invasive vegetation, thin the woods where

needed, battle extensive deer browsing, and plant a lot of trees native to our area. Through all of this, I like the sitting in the sun and NYFOA parts — the old Greek man imagery, less so. The point is that NYFOA continues to provide its members with the information and tools to be good stewards of the land. We are doing this primarily through chapter sponsored events, the *NY Forest Owner* magazine, the NYFOA website, our e-newsletter *The Woodlot*, support of a joint bird habitat program with Audubon NY, and our continued enthusiastic involvement in the MFO program. I believe the overarching goals of NYFOA members are powerful, motivating, and simple: leave our woodlots in better condition than when we acquired them and know when and how to pass the baton intelligently to the generations that follow.

These days, there is a much discussion in the federal and NYS governments about using carbon credits to mitigate the impact of climate change. According to a 2020 World Economic Forum report, by paying someone else to either reduce their emissions or capture their carbon, companies can compensate for their environmental footprint and even, in the most ambitious cases, use carbon credits to get to carbon-neutral status. The key concept is that carbon credits convey a net climate benefit from one entity to another — for example, the private woodlot owner selling carbon credits to a business seeking to reduce its carbon footprint and tax exposure. There are lots of variations on how this could work in NYS and nothing is settled. We will be keeping a careful eye on this important issue and will provide information on carbon credit programs that may benefit (or concern) the private woodlot owner as we go forward.

Shifting gears, we have made excellent progress on recruiting talented people for the NYFOA board and certain committees. On July 14th, the state board elected Suzanne Treyger, Forest Program Manager at Audubon New York, and Tracey Testo, Agriculture and Natural Resources Program Coordinator with Cornell Cooperative Extension, to fill board positions. Recently Mike Jabot, Allegheny Foothills Chapter and Suzette Morabito, Western Finger Lakes Chapter, took on editorial oversight responsibilities for NYFOA’s e-newsletter. Suzette and Lew Ward, Southern Finger Lakes Chapter, are

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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.

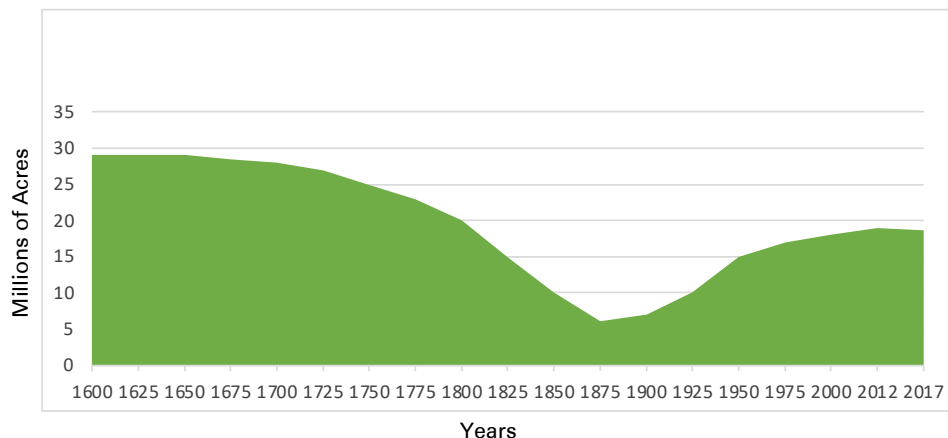
History of the New York Forest Owners Association, Part I

BY HUGH CANHAM

For over 50 years the New York Forest Owners Association (NYFOA) has educated forest landowners, helped influence public policy, and has informed the public about the critical role New York's forests and woodlands play in the economy, environment, and well-being of the 19 million people who live and work in the Empire State. In part, the evolution of NYFOA is due to the particular social and physical geography and history of New York, but is also typical of landowner associations across the United States. Hopefully, reading this history will help in planning for the future of NYFOA and other similar organizations.

The Setting

European settlers in the 1600's found 95% of the New York region covered with forests, over 28.7 million acres covered with trees. Land grants resulted in subdivision, sale, or lease of lands. In the Adirondacks and southwestern New York large forest products companies acquired lands for timber harvesting: logs for lumber, then pulpwood and specialty wood products. Land across what is now New York State was



New York forest land area 1600-2017 (early data estimates)

inhabited by settlers wishing to subsist by farming small tracts, which later developed into market-oriented farms supplying milk, cheese, meat, grains, fruits, and vegetables to the growing metropolitan areas in the region. By the turn of the 20th century only 20% (6 million acres) of New York State remained in forests and wooded areas.

Farming became more mechanized and market oriented; less productive fields, and those away from transportation corridors (canals, railroads, highways) were retired and

the native tree cover quickly returned. Societal events, World War I, the Great Depression, World War II, etc. led to further concentration of farmlands and regrowth of forests on former agricultural lands. Today over 65% of New York State, almost 19 million acres, is covered by trees.

Along with regrowth of forests, types of landowners, and reasons for owning rural land in New York, changed. Early farmers and settlers were primarily interested in obtaining wood products for on-farm use

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(fuelwood, fence posts, lumber) or to sell logs to commercial sawmills. Most of these lands have now passed into ownership by the new “family forest owners.” In the heavily forested regions of the state (Adirondacks and southwestern New York) where lumber and paper companies once held and harvested large tracts along with some large private estates, individuals or investment corporations now prevail.

The new family forest owners hold 59%, over 11 million acres of New York’s forests and woodlands. Their reasons for ownership are extremely varied. Some hold land for investment returns from future sale of the land or

timber products, but surveys reveal the most common reasons for owning the land are wildlife enjoyment, recreation, part of a home site, and other nontimber uses.

A thriving wood products industry exists in New York State and timber harvesting conducted by industrial foresters and loggers provides financial return to landowners. Equally important, harvests can enhance the land for these other forest values and ownership objectives. However, many family forest owners are unaware what can be done with their woodlands and how to obtain professional technical advice and assistance.

Interest in educating and assisting nonindustrial forest owners has long been a part of government programs in the United States. Examples in New York State include Cooperative Extension Service, related programs of the US Department of Agriculture, the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, the State University of New York College of Environmental Science and Forestry, and others. In northern Europe, a somewhat different kind of approach was taken. There, organizations of family forest owners have a long history. New York State seemed like a good place for a forest owners association.

Founding

The New York Forest Owners Association, Inc. was formally organized with 212 members on April 27, 1963 and incorporated under the laws of New York State on August 12, 1963. Dr. Svend Heiberg, Dean of the College of Forestry at the State University of New York at Syracuse University, now State University of New York College of Environmental Science and Forestry (SUNY ESF), is credited with the initial proposal to establish the Association. Originally from Denmark, Dr. Heiberg was internationally known for his work in silviculture. His insight and first-hand observation of successful forest owner associations in Scandinavia sparked the movement for an organization here in New York. He enlisted the assistance of Dr. William Duerr, forest economist, and Dr. Paul Graves, forest policy specialist, both at the College. Duerr, a native of Iowa, had done his Ph.D. work with forest owners in Appalachia. Graves was a native New Yorker. They and several other forestry leaders in New York discussed the need for an organization of forest owners to give forestry in New York the organized strength, clarification of objectives, and unity of purpose that are shown in agriculture by Farm



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Ask A Professional

PETER SMALLIDGE



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

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

Getting started as a new woodlot owner

Question: We just purchased a property where we plan to build, but don't know how to get started with the 12-acre woodlot. We're new to this, are there things we should do? (Sarah S., CDC)

Answer: Getting started with a new woodlot may create a dual sensation of excitement and trepidation. There is the excitement of anticipating all that is possible, but also the recognition of knowing the appropriate steps to ensure you sustain and care for current and future opportunities. There are several actions to take, listed here in approximately descending priority.

Your enjoyment with and how you use your woods is directed towards one or more end goals or objectives. These goals might be privacy, enjoyment of nature, collecting firewood or maple sap for syrup, or a variety of recreational activities. Knowing what you want, and what is desired by the members of your family is essential to retain or create features of your woodlot that serve those interests. For example, if someone is interested in cultivating gourmet mushrooms, then having a patch of conifers for shade

near a stream or pond would be ideal (Figure 1), or making maple syrup requires maple trees with access to collect and transport sap. It's often a challenge to get started with a list of objectives because you don't know all the options. A free visit from a Cornell-trained woodland owner who serves as a volunteer might identify

some possible objectives, and they can also share sources for educational or technical resources. Request a free Master Forest Owner volunteer visit at www.CornellMFO.info. The NYS DEC service foresters can also help by preparing a stewardship plan. Find your local service forester at <https://www.dec.ny.gov/lands/4972.html>. As a member of NYFOA or similar organizations such as the NYS Maple Producers Association, you can participate in visits to other owners and learn about how they identify and accomplish their objectives.

In town, good fences make for good neighbors. In rural lands, well-marked boundaries make for good neighbors. Marking of the boundary might be with posted signs or painted blazes (Figure 2). Posted signs do not reduce your liability, so simple blazes might be sufficient. The absence of posted signs does not imply people are welcome to trespass on your private property. A correctly installed and maintained posted sign is an official notice that allows for a legal response to trespassers. The location of the



Figure 1. Mushroom bolts rest in a laying yard next to a stream and below a canopy of eastern hemlock. An owner interested in these activities needs to plan for trail or road access, and to avoid disturbances. Unfortunately, many hemlock are suffering from the hemlock woolly adelgid.



Figure 2. Boundary markers inform others of the location of your property. Inspect and refresh the boundary markers annually.

boundary should be based on the work of a licensed professional surveyor. A marked boundary helps ensure that activity on adjoining property stays on the adjoining property.

Some owners have privacy as a single objective, but most other

objectives benefit by having access throughout their property. The access is typically provided through trails used for walking, ATVs or UTVs, snowshoes, x-c skis or an old pick-up truck. As you think about these modes of transportation, it becomes clear that



Figure 3. The owner of this road had a backhoe create a ditch on one side and pile the spoils onto the road. The road is now high and dry, serving needs for firewood, winter recreation and more.

the design of the trail needs to align with how the trail will be used. Trail use may also depend on season, with some trails not accessible during wet or snowy seasons. In general, trails should have a gentle incline, avoid ledges or cliffs, have some curve though not too much, and be wide enough for the widest object. Spend some time with your county Soil and Water Conservation District staff to learn if you have wet or poorly drained soils to avoid. Plan locations and design of trails to manage small amounts of slow moving water. If a friend or neighbor has a back-hoe, you can ditch one side to allow water to drain (Figure 3). You can start with surveyor's or forester's ribbon to mark a new trail, and build the trail through repeated use. Take a handsaw or pruners on your morning or evening walk, and make improvements each day. For wider trails, you may want to hire someone who has a Fecon or similar grinding head to chop and pulverize any vegetation on the trail you marked (Figure 4). "Trail Design for Small Properties" by Baughman and Serres (2006) from the University of MN is free with an internet search. While working on some new trails, be alert to former trails that may have been conveniently located and just need some trees removed. Alternatively, some former trails were put in poor locations and those should not be reactivated.

Most owners want their trees and woods to be healthy. The definition of a healthy woods is detailed, but assumes that the trees are functioning normally for a particular age and site quality. Trees die every year in all woodlots, but older woods and on less fertile sites will have higher levels of tree infection, infestation and death. Some scattered tree death is normal, but clustered or numerous dead trees may require you contact a specialist. Other signs and symptoms to look for include small tree crowns, browsed seedlings, defoliation, such as with the gypsy

continued on next page



Figure 4 (Left). Fecon mowers have a mulcher head on a skidsteer. They can make quick work of brush and small trees.

Figure 6 (Right). The HealthyWoods app, developed through several eastern land grant university extension forestry specialists, prompts the owner for information and pictures which are used to provide a report and educational resources. The app is available for iPhone and android.

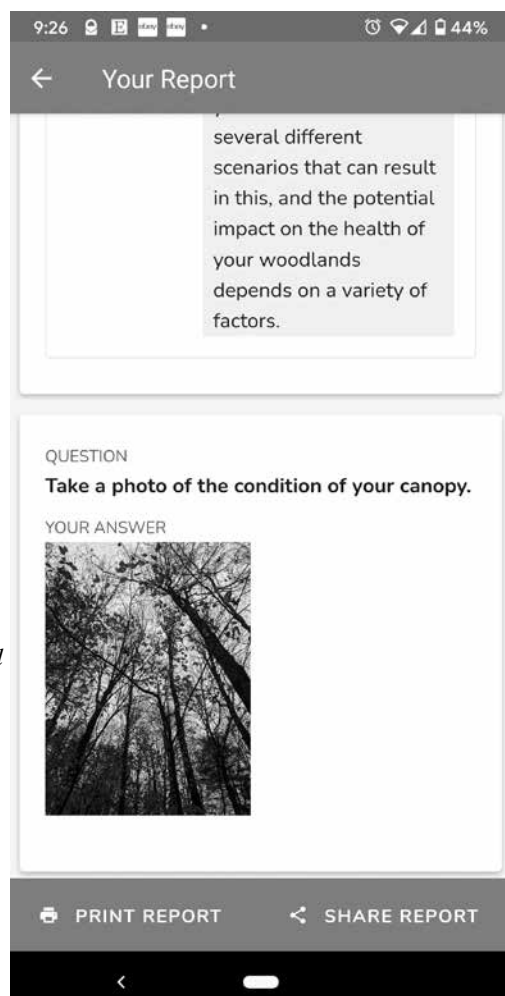


Figure 5. Gypsy moth defoliation was widespread in most of NY in May and June 2021. This picture from near Lake George shows nearly complete defoliation of hardwoods. Overwintering egg masses are numerous and portend concern for 2022, but evidence of biocontrol fungi and virus have been observed. Photo by Randy Rath, Lake George Association.



Figure 7. A list of trees on your property will help you think about different ways to enjoy your woods. Similar species, such as red pine (left) and eastern white pine have distinctly distinct cones to help with identification.

moth outbreak of 2021 (Figure 5), and dieback of branches in the upper crown. Defoliation is often associated with a single insect, but dieback is a sign associated with multiple causes, which usually indicates a disruption of the tissue that connects the roots and the shoots. These examples are all broadly considered stressors, which are events that limit the ability of a tree to carry out normal physiological functions. Tree can usually survive single stressors, but multiple concurrent or sequential stressors may result in tree death. Many woodlots have health concerns associated with plants that interfere with the owner's objectives for access, biodiversity, the establishment of new seedlings, etc. The interfering plants are usually a

result of heavy deer impact. A phone app recently developed by eastern forestry extension specialists helps owners look at their woods with new eyes, and creates a report you can check against each year; look in your Apple or android app store for "HealthyWoods." The app prompts you with questions and for pictures from your woods to document the conditions you have, and offers general technical assistance on the information you provide (Figure 6).

A final addition to the list of top priority activities, though not of interest to all owners, is to make lists of the species of whatever interests you. A woodlot owner almost certainly will be interested in which trees they have (Figure 7), but they

also might want to include lists for birds, wildflowers, ferns, reptiles and amphibians, or insects. Talk with other owners at the next New York Forest Owner chapter woods walk and see what lists other owners use, and which books are best for identification in your area. 📖

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

Wild Things in Your Woodlands

CORY SNYDER

NORTHERN GOSHAWK (*ACCIPITER GENTILIS*)



The northern goshawk is a medium- to large-sized raptor. Adult goshawks most often have a blue-grey back and a grey and white barring pattern on the underside. Juveniles have brown coloration in place of grey on both the top and in the barring patterns. Both juveniles and adults have either black or dark bars on their tails as well. Juveniles begin life with yellow eyes that darken towards a deeper red color after their second year. Along with the change in eye color, adults have a white eye bar that looks just like a set of eyebrows. Goshawks are the largest of the Accipiter genus with females being significantly larger than males. Males can range up to 22 inches long, weigh up to 2.6 pounds and have a 41-inch wingspan. The larger females can reach up to 27 inches long, weigh 4.85 pounds, and have a 50-inch wingspan! The northern goshawk can also reach flying speeds up to 38 mph (see <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=waNQmNF6Sgs> for an amazing video)!

Perched high upon the last branch of a magnificent red oak sits the northern goshawk. The goshawk makes its home in mature forests. They can be found in old growth stands of both deciduous and coniferous forests. They prefer areas with a mostly closed tree canopy (around 60 percent). With their range spreading across all of New York State, the northern goshawk can survive at altitudes from sea level to the alpine regions of the Adirondacks. In the Northeast US, the

northern goshawk can be found nearly everywhere from Pennsylvania north all the way up to the arctic with some populations stretching down the Rockies into Mexico. Although fairly widespread, sightings of the goshawk are not common as the birds are often found in hard to reach areas.

The habitat occupied by this species plays to its strengths. The goshawk is both an agile flyer and a voracious predator. It feeds mainly on smaller


bird species, small reptiles, and small mammals. It uses its daredevil like acrobatic abilities to swoop in and out of, through, between, and around all obstacles in the forests it calls home. The northern goshawk can also plough straight through thick brush or even dive into water in pursuit of its prey. Once its meal has been captured, the goshawk has been known to store its prey in the crook of a tree before consumption.

continued on next page

When breeding season approaches the goshawk has several different interesting behaviors. Before laying eggs the birds will perform a flying courtship dance consisting of the male swooping down at the female from high above. Once the partner is chosen a clutch of up to 5 eggs is laid in a large nest. Goshawks make a nest up to 4 feet long, 2 feet wide, and 2 feet deep. Nests are typically built on the largest available tree in the area. A pair of goshawks may build and maintain up to 8 nests in any given area, choosing to either nest in the same site the next year or shift to an alternative nest for reasons like a failed brood in the previous nest. While nesting, goshawk parents fiercely protect their young. They will kill other raptors and owls they perceive as a threat and may even attack a wandering human who strolls too close to the nesting site. Nesting occurs in the spring, typically in the months of April and May.

In September and October, northern goshawks are one of many raptor species that take part in a great southern migration. Thousands of hawks including northern goshawks, Red-tailed hawks, broad-shouldered hawks, and other species fly along ridgelines catching the

thermal winds off the faces of the slopes and gliding to conserve energy. Although the northern goshawk does not migrate nearly as far as other species, individuals from the colder northern reaches of the range move toward the southern portions of the range, while individuals nesting in the southern portion of the range may just move to lower altitudes for winter.

Although northern goshawks are listed as a least concern species they are at some risk. They are listed by the US Forest Service as sensitive species due to their preference for large areas of mature forest. Because goshawks favor large tracts of mature forest, they are highly susceptible to activities that remove forest permanently or break forests up into smaller pieces. Habitat fragmentation, disturbance, and removal of suitable nesting trees can heavily affect goshawks. Maintaining large, intact forests within the landscape will help goshawks succeed. 

Cory Snyder is a senior majoring in Environmental and Sustainability Science at Cornell University.

Is there a certain animal that you would like to see featured in an upcoming "Wild Things" column? If so, email Kristi Sullivan at kls20@cornell.edu

From the President (continued)

working to expand NYFOA's presence on social media — recognizing the need to use these tools to attract a wider demographic of potential members. Darryl Wood, state board membership committee chair and Southern Tier steering committee member, and NYFOA Executive Director Craig Vollmer put together an excellent plan to streamline NYFOA's committee structure — which the board approved in July. Kristina Ferrare, board member from the Central NY Chapter and Craig Vollmer are working on the Phase I upgrade to NYFOA's booth presence at larger events. We will test drive Phase I at the early August Empire Farm Days. From these recent examples, it is clear that volunteers throughout the state, supported by the skilled guidance from our Executive Director and Liana Gooding, NYFOA's long- serving and

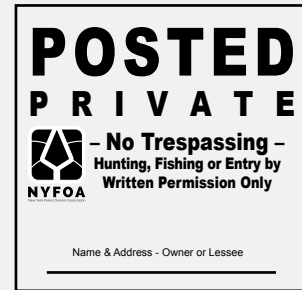
extremely capable administrative officer, are working their magic to provide valuable member benefits and generally improve our association in tandem with the chapters. There are many more examples but not enough space to recognize every contribution — only to say that I wish to thank all of our great volunteers, along with Craig and Liana, for their efforts.

Two requests: Please support your chapters by attending in-person events now that COVID restrictions have loosened up somewhat — and bring a friend who could benefit from becoming a NYFOA member. Second, enjoy the wonderful summer weather in your woods and plant some native trees this fall that will benefit future generations.

—Stacey Kazacos
NYFOA President

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Gypsy Moth Infestations

What to Know

BY ERIC JENKS



Many parts of New York and the Northeast in general have had an unwelcome guest this year; *Lymantria dispar*, better known as the European gypsy moth. “They’re definitely an issue as their populations have built up to high numbers this year,” said Betsy Lamb, the Coordinator of Ornamentals, who is a Senior Extension Associate at the NYS Integrated Pest Management Program, a part of Cornell Cooperative Extension. “We can expect to see them for another year or two before their populations crash. We’ve been getting reports about them from Christmas tree farms for the past several years; while the moths typically focus on deciduous tree species, they can also feed on the cones and even defoliate evergreens as well. But it was on one or two trees, not an entire forest. This year infestations have been very severe.”

According to Lamb, reports of egg masses, which often look like a fuzzy mud like coating on a tree, started coming in last fall. “The pupae are brown and are stuck on the tree bark, usually in crevices where they aren’t typically seen, but because of the numbers currently people are seeing the pupae,” said Lamb. “The larvae have red and blue dots on their backs, but those aren’t always obvious when they’re young. They’re a small furry dark caterpillar with a lot of hairs, which is a problem because birds don’t like to eat them because of that hair. The moth itself looks differently depending upon the gender. Males are a little brown moth that you might not notice when you only see one, but do when there are a lot of them around. The females are lighter with brown zigzag stripes. They

tend to be a whitish to tan color, and while bigger than the males they do not fly around. The males find the females, mate with them and then the females lay the eggs right where they are located. This can be wherever the moth has been blown to — maple, oak, I even found them laying eggs on my laundry.”

Thankfully there are biologic controls that limit the duration of the infestations when they occur. “One thing that causes population crashes is a virus that effects the moth. They spread it from one to another, and the more you have, the more they come into contact with each other, passing the virus along. Another side effect of a high population is that it does draw in the few birds and predators that eat them. Normally they might not seek the moth out, but this is akin to putting your hand into a bowl of M&Ms and tossing them down.”

If you’ve noticed the moths on your property or tree farm, there are some things that you can do to help limit the population. “Scraping the egg masses off the bark of a tree is a bit hit or miss for controlling them,” said Lamb. “It’s easy to scrape off what can be hundreds of eggs per mass, but if you have tall trees where you can’t reach all of the egg masses, it can be questionable that you’re making a real dent. The larvae can hatch and balloon out to other trees, keeping the infestation going. It’s also something that is only going to be successful locally for a little while, depending on the level of infestation around you. Another control is using something like *Bacillus thuringiensis kurstaki* to control them. It does effect other moths and butterflies, but not many others. It’s best to spray it when they’re small. If you’ve seen them and know they’re about, it’s good to

scout around and scout early and spray. You have a chance to use it and get control if you can get the timing right.”

While unsettling and damaging, an infestation isn’t the end of the world for most trees. “Tress will tolerate being quite defoliated,” said Lamb. “A small tree may not survive, but larger trees can survive even when all of their leaves have been lost. The problem is if the infestation continues for more than two or three years in a row, the tree’s resources can be used up. Most trees will produce a second set of leaves in the same season to help combat that though.”

If you have further questions, Lamb encourages you to reach out to your local Cornell Cooperative Extension. “If they don’t have an answer, they’ll come to us, but it’s good to talk with your local people. It’s good for extension so they know what’s going on in a region, and it’s good for people to know where they can ask questions and build a relationship with their extension team to help with any projects they might have with their property. 🌲

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

Would you like to receive an electronic version of future editions of *The New York Forest Owner*? If so, please send Liana an email (lgooding@nyfoa.org).

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.

Making Biochar the Cheap Way

BY BRIAN CALDWELL

On my farm, I produce piles of brush when clearing land or cutting trees. In the past, these have either resulted in annoying areas that were difficult to mow around and provided homes for varmints, or big bonfires. The bonfires were fun, but did take time, and the fire department came once (if you do an agricultural burn, be sure to call them first!).

A few years ago I saw Sean Dembrosky, owner of Edible Acres in Trumansburg, NY, make biochar from just such a pile. Next to it, he dug a cone-shaped hole about 3 feet in diameter and 3 feet deep. He lit a fire in the bottom. Then he piled brush across the top of the hole and got a strong fire going. As he added more brush or pushed in the sides of the pile, the flames burned strongest at the top of the hole and charcoal accumulated in the bottom. The flames above create a low-oxygen environment below, so the charcoal doesn't burn completely and builds up.

Immediately after the brush pile is used up, the fire is quenched with LOTS of water. It is easy to underestimate how much is needed. The 3' diameter hole will need 50 or more gallons. It is best to dig around in the charcoal to be sure there are no hot spots, since the whole pile may re-ignite. A few days later, a surprising amount of charcoal—biochar—can be removed from the hole.

The hole gets filled in and voila!—the brush pile is gone and has been turned into a beneficial material!

I copied Sean's method and have been pleased with the results. A similar procedure is done on a larger

scale at a local cider orchard, with winter prunings.

Such biochar is produced at relatively high temperatures and is thus likely low in any creosote or other undesirable contaminants, though I have not tested mine. It is chunky; not ground finely like purchased biochar usually is. But it is very permeable to liquids and so should interact well in the soil. It should be "charged" before use as a soil amendment. Raw biochar has the capacity to remove nutrients, so you want to add them to it first. The way I do that is to mix it in my compost pile, which is static and sits for a year. The material that comes out is compost mixed with charged biochar, which I use in the garden and in the holes when planting trees.

Another thing I've tried for the first time this year is adding raw biochar to wood chips used for mulch. I have plantings of hazelnuts and chestnuts that I've mulched this way. In theory, since the mulch is above the soil surface, there should not be an issue with any tie-up or removal of nutrients. And of course both the wood chips and biochar are weed-free. So far it seems to work well.

This method can produce small to moderate amounts of biochar on site, without any expensive equipment, while getting rid of nuisance brush piles. ♻️

Brian Caldwell is retired from Cornell University and operates Hemlock Grove Farm in West Danby, NY. His main crops are organic apples, pears, chestnuts, and hazelnuts.



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

BE PREPARED...

BY MARK WHITMORE

Be prepared is one of those almost mantra-like phrases that was a part of my early life in Boy Scouts. It was fun to learn about sharpening knives and starting fires that were sometimes way too big, but being prepared was sort of nebulous beyond the scope of camping. However, as time has passed the meaning of the phrase has taken on depth with its application in work and everyday life. Last summer was a lesson in *not* being prepared for the surprisingly widespread defoliation across much of New York by *Lymantria dispar dispar* or gypsy moth (GM). NYSDEC estimated that there were nearly 700,000 acres defoliated, primarily in the northeastern and western part of the state (Figure 1). This event caught a lot of people off guard and many of the calls I received were too late in the growing season for any management to be effective. I'm hoping that we can change that scenario so that next spring the outcomes will be different, and that forest owners will "Be prepared."

This may seem like a rehash of earlier articles I've written, and it is, but I'm writing about this again because the stakes can be high. GM not only prefers oak, a valuable forest tree in NY that can make or break a harvest on your woodlot, but it will also defoliate the all-important sugar maple, apples (my orchard was heavily defoliated this year), and just about anything else, including hemlock!



Gypsy moth egg cases, fresh on left, old on right.

Defoliation of hemlock by GM is new to me and we will be following it carefully to see if they deal the final blow to those infested with hemlock woolly adelgid.

There are lessons from GM to be gained regarding other pests as well. The one that comes to mind first is the forest tent caterpillar, *Malacosoma disstria* (FTC), another early season defoliator with outbreak cycles at about 12 year intervals and is overdue

in some parts of the state. Although FTC is a native insect it can still cause significant harm, especially to a sugar bush. With the invasive GM in the mix I'm concerned that there may be more harm to trees in a stand with both of these defoliators present.

Widespread GM defoliation in most of New York has been a rarity since it first appeared in the 1980's, primarily due to the presence of natural population controls: a nuclear

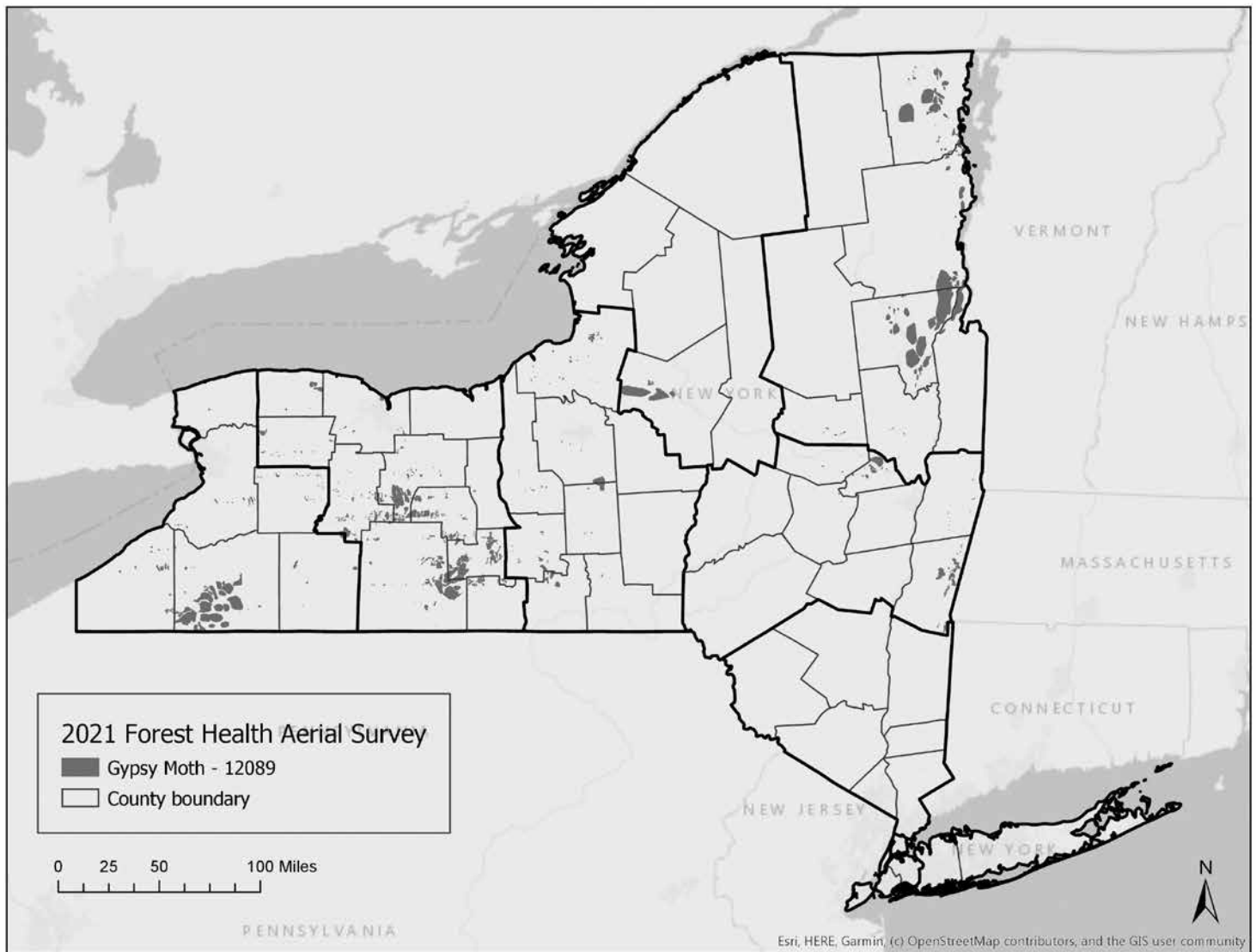


Figure 1: Distribution of gypsy moth defoliation in spring and early summer 2021. NYSDEC.

polyhedrosis virus (NPV) and the fungal pathogen, *Entomophaga maimaiga* (EM). There are many factors that could have led to the sudden resurgence of GM and it was most likely a combination acting at the same time. One possibility is that the virus and fungus, which are favored by moist weather, were negatively impacted by the dry summer of 2020. Yet there have been many dry years since the 1980's and GM has not caused such widespread defoliation. One of the observations I had of the recent defoliation was that in fringe defoliation areas it appeared that sites with poor soils had more severe defoliation, a phenomenon common in Pennsylvania on the ridgetops. Perhaps

populations built up on stressed trees in these sites and then spread with minimal impact from the microbial controls during the dry year. This is all speculation and fodder for further research, but suffice it to say, the possibility of severe defoliation in 2022 is staring us in the face and we need to pay attention to minimize impacts.

Regardless of the cause, we need to pay attention to what may occur next year. Perhaps the best predictor of potential defoliation is a survey of egg masses in fall. The reason this is so important is that the egg masses reflect the reproductive success of the current year's adults. Caterpillars may have done a heck of a lot of defoliation, but because it was such a wet early

summer, the impact of NPV and EM may have been significant enough that number of egg masses are fewer than you might expect. This is the same case with FTC. A careful survey of egg masses can lead to an accurate prediction of potential defoliation and it's not that difficult to do if you take the time to read step by step instructions in links provided below. You will need binoculars or a spotting scope to look into the canopy and you'll need to study up to know what to look for. The real trick is conducting the survey just after the leaves have fallen so the egg masses are easy to spot and you can discern if they are the current year's eggs, not those from years past.

continued on next page

If you don't feel confident with these surveys I'd suggest hiring a forester if the decision is an important economic concern. Basically, if there are more than 500 egg masses per acre there will be noticeable defoliation and more than 1000 per acre predicts likely tree mortality.

Armed with this information you can begin planning your management actions. Healthy trees defoliated one year will re-leaf and often easily survive a second year of defoliation, but mortality is not unknown even after a couple years of defoliation. Indeed, if you have sugar bush your tolerance for defoliation may be low because of the potential for reduced sugar production and the impact on tree health. Although sugar maple is not a preferred host of GM, stands can be defoliated.

Treatment options in a forest are basically limited to aerial spraying with Bt (*Bacillus thuringiensis* var. *kurstaki*) in NY. Bt is a naturally occurring bacteria and the variety *kurstaki* specifically affects only caterpillars. This specificity reduces non-target impacts, however it does kill other species of caterpillars so application should be made only when GM populations are high. Bt acts by poisoning the gut of the caterpillars as they consume Bt that has been applied to leaves. Protein crystals present in Bt are toxic only in the unique alkaline environment of a caterpillars digestive system. Bt has no effect on humans or other animals because of their acidic digestive system. Young, early instar caterpillars will stop feeding soon after consuming Bt and die in a few days BUT larger, older larvae can survive consumption of Bt. It is therefore critical that application of Bt be made early in the season, just as the leaves are enlarging and GM larvae are small. Because Bt can be washed from leaves with rain and is destroyed by sunlight application timing is an important decision that should be made in consultation with the applicator.

New York is a big state covering many growing zones. The best way to think about planning application of


Bt would be to use models of growing degree days (GDD). GDD is basically a measure of heat accumulation in the growing season. Studies have found that GM egg hatch and presence of 1st instar caterpillars is from 145 to 200 GDD and young caterpillars are present through 450 GDD. FTC egg hatch is similar at about 125 to 250 GDD but development is much faster with pupation occurring at 450 GDD. The Northeast Regional Climate Center at Cornell University made an online GDD map of New York that can be accessed and help you think about GDD accumulation at your location: <http://www.nrcc.cornell.edu/industry/gpsymoth/>

As I've said before, if my woodlot was threatened with another year of severe defoliation and potential tree mortality (using the egg mass counting technique) I would be talking with my neighbors right now to see if we could gather together to hire an aerial applicator. Don't delay because they get booked up in the short window when the young GM larvae are vulnerable. Costs are significantly reduced with a larger application area. The real trick is to plan ahead and act early in the

season. I've got my supply of Bt ready to go for next spring in my apple orchard. Luckily my apple trees are dwarf so I don't need an airplane for application. Most folks don't really notice the defoliation until early summer when GM larvae are large or have finished feeding, and even control with more traditional pesticides, like carbamates, on urban trees will do little to help the already defoliated trees. Indeed, next year GM will just float in from surrounding untreated areas for another round of feeding.

Be prepared!

NYSDEC Gypsy moth egg mass sampling protocols: https://www.dec.ny.gov/docs/lands_forests_pdf/gmprot2005.pdf

Vermont Forest tent caterpillar egg mass survey protocols: https://fpr.vermont.gov/sites/fpr/files/Forest_and_Forestry/Forest_Health/Library/Forest%20Tent%20Caterpillar%20Egg%20Mass%20Survey%20Instructions.pdf 

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

Please send your suggestions to:

Mary Beth Malmsheimer, editor at
mmalmshe@syr.edu

or

Jeff Joseph, managing editor at
jeffjosephwoodworker@gmail.com

Welcome New Members

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

Name	Chapter	Name	Chapter
Don Brady	AFC	Kerry Reardon and	
DCO & Sons Forestry LLC	NFC	Gonza Pita	CNY
Tyler Evans	SOT	Josh Rudder	CDC
Adriaan & Sam Finnerman	LHC	David Ruston	SOT
Dana Isaman	NFC	Tracey Testo	CDC
Jeff Koppars & Sons	WFL	Paul Thomas	WFL
Chris McCarthy	WFL	Dennis Waziak /	
Peter Meybaum	SFL	The Geneganslet Lake	
Andrea Murray	SFL	Assoc.	SOT
		Ron Weiss	SOT

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The New York Forest Owners Association believes in:

- Promoting science based resources to support woodland stewardship.
- Supporting woodland owners in the long term stewardship of their forest resources.
- Raising public awareness of the challenges to sustaining our forests.
- Seeking collaborations with other organizations having similar goals and objectives.
- Respecting private property rights as they relate to sustainable forest stewardship.

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 STATE Department of Environmental Conservation

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<https://www.dec.ny.gov/lands/119950>

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. 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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NYFOA History (continued)

Bureau, the Grange and Dairymen's league.

Dr. Heiberg headed up a faculty committee on forest ownership in New York which led to two forest landowner forums, on November 9, 1961 and October 9, 1962, sponsored by the College of Forestry, the New York Forest Practice Board, with backing from New York State Conservation Department (now DEC) and Cornell University College of Agriculture. NYFOA was officially organized shortly thereafter, and the first issue of the *New York Forest Owner* magazine was published in July 1963. This publication remains the official organ of the Association.

NYFOA's first president, Theodore Buckley, stated in 1963, "With over 250,000 forest land owners in New York State and half of the State's 30 million acres consisting of forest land, our Association has an outstanding opportunity to help develop more wood wealth, job opportunities, and recreational appeal as the people of New York State become aware of the vast tree growing resource. We invite those interested to join us in making New York State truly proud of this great forest potential. Better managed

forest land can bring additional benefits to numerous communities where forest land is the most important single natural resource." The main points in that statement are still true today.

Goals and Purpose of NYFOA

The Association has stayed with its formally stated objectives and the more recent codified Mission statement, as put forth below. However, in addition to its formal objectives NYFOA provides a valuable social role. It is a place for members to get together, discuss forestry-related issues and equally important, to get to know each other on a personal basis. Annual picnics, comma, and other events held by some chapters, have led to the development of long held friendships. These and other social interactions have evolved over the years. On the surface it might appear that after 55 years the statewide organization is primarily a collection of 10 local "clubs." However, the statewide organization carries out vital roles and is one of the major ways' information is disseminated to the public. The major goals of NYFOA are:

1. To encourage forest landowners

to identify their individual objectives, to use natural resource professionals in developing management plans with practices to help achieve those objectives, and to support owners in their implementation activities;

2. To promote public understanding of the benefits derived through sound forest stewardship, including cleaner water, improved wildlife habitat, continued recreation opportunities, and the wood products essential to meet society's everyday needs;

3. To support economically sound use of privately owned forest lands through studies and education to allow enjoyment of forest benefits today, without compromising the ability of future generations to also meet their needs;

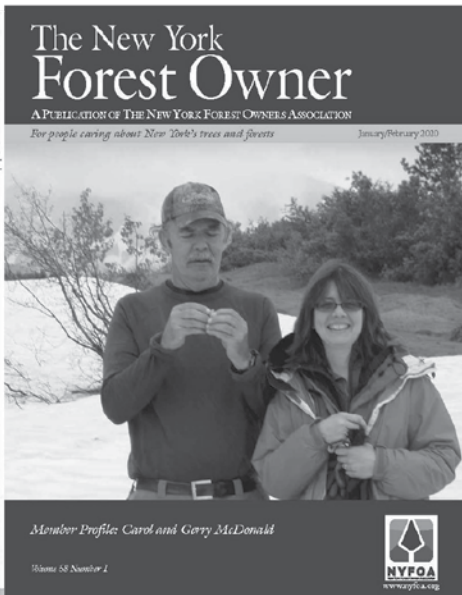
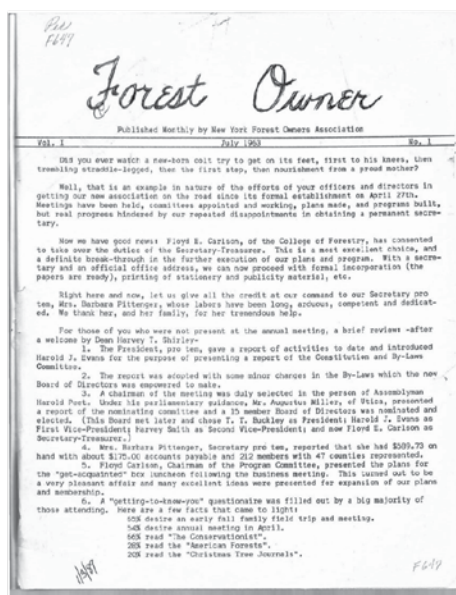
4. To provide resources and information to the public to increase their understanding of the concepts and importance of sound principles of forest management;

5. To foster communication and cooperation with other organizations and agencies with similar purposes and among and between all participants in the forest product cycle, such as landowners, harvesters, sawmills and processors, pulp mills and manufacturers, wildlife, recreation, and other natural resource interests, industrial, commercial, and domestic consumers, and others.

Through local chapter and statewide activities such as woods walks and tours, the bi-monthly *New York Forest Owner* magazine and other publications, and affiliation with other organizations with similar objectives, NYFOA helps woodland owners to achieve their management objectives for their properties and encourages the appreciation of the qualities and importance of New York's forests.

Membership

Membership in NYFOA is open to anyone interested in the forests and





there were 1,467 members.

Over the decades various initiatives have been undertaken to increase membership. Some have helped to bring in more members, others did not result in much change. The most successful ones were those that presented

woods of New York who pays the annual membership fee (\$3.00 in 1963, now \$45.00). The organization attracts mainly the family forest owners who control over 11 million acres of New York's 19 million acres of forest land (USDA Forest Service statistic). Over the years, other organizations and several of the large industrial ownership joined the organization to support its activities. Finch-Pruyn Corporation and the Empire State Forest Products Association became members and lent their various expertise to helping NYFOA. Westvaco (West Virginia Pulp and Paper Corporation) and Cotton-Hanlon were early supporters and Cotton-Hanlon still supports NYFOA. W. J. Cowee Corporation joined in 1969.

By October 1963 there were 302 members. The newly formed Board of Directors posed the question, "What is the optimal growth rate of NYFOA?" a question that has been pondered many times since. Within that first year, membership doubled and by January 1965 there were 561 members. The organization continued to grow to 734 members by 1966. Two Membership meetings were held each year, as specified in the original bylaws; the winter meeting usually held at SUNY ESF and a fall meeting rotating around the state. By 1967 there were 805 members. Membership rose and fell but 13 years later, in 1980, there were only 664 members. As of January 2020,

something useful to landowners; local wood walks (described below), information and assistance in developing management plans for specific objectives such as birds, other wildlife, trails, etc. The organization has realized that attracting more landowners and other members is not the objective, rather the goal is to provide services and activities that interest in New York's woodland owners want, and from that new members will evolve. Interaction with other natural resource and environmental groups across the state has been an important activity.

Activities of the State-Wide Board of Directors

Governance of NYFOA is by a board of directors. From the beginning of NYFOA, up to the year 2016, directors were elected by the membership. In that year, the bylaws were revised to have directors selected by the current board. This change was brought about by two factors. First, over the years very few members voted. (Similar situations exist today in many corporations where stockholders are asked to vote at an annual meeting.) Second, the federal regulations governing tax-exempt member organizations changed in 2016.

From the beginning of the organization, the board of directors has taken a major role in advancing the association. Enthusiastic and

energetic presidents provide continuous leadership. Presidents come from many different backgrounds: Some have been trained foresters, some local or state legislators, many are retired professionals from varied careers; most owned some woodland during their tenure.

Board members have also come from various fields. Many own some woodland, but the only requirement to be a board member is a strong interest in the organization and willingness to serve. In the early years, many faculty members, and staff of the College of Forestry (SUNY ESF), and Cornell University served, and were regular contributors to technical articles in the *New York Forest Owner* magazine.

The number and function of committees varied over time. In 1966 NYFOA Board committees were:

- Membership\
- Meeting registration
- Program
- Forest taxation
- Personnel
- Heiberg memorial
- Meeting Arrangements
- Publicity
- Harvesting

continued on next page



By 1973 the number of committees had grown to:

- Accreditation
- Annual reports
- Archivist
- Budget & finance
- Editorial board
- Education
- Fall meeting
- Forest industry
- Forest taxation
- Heiberg award
- Job description
- Land acquisition
- Legislation
- Membership
- Natural resources & planning
- Nominating
- Personnel
- Publicity
- Printing and mailing
- Program
- Spring meeting
- Timber harvesting
- Trespass
- Woods walks

The great increase in committees reflects the added activities of both the board and the interests of members. Committees have changed over time but still reflect the many different tasks that a growing organization must face. By 1977 the number of committees had shrunk to 12 but a new one, a Board of Trust Managers was added. This was in response to requests from persons wishing to donate land or money to NYFOA. After 1981 the Trust Board was in suspension, but 3 people served on the board.

In 1983 a long-range planning committee was established. By that time, it was deemed necessary to examine where NYFOA was and what should be its priorities and plans for the coming decades. Subjects discussed included executive director, chapter development, membership growth, public policy activities, and youth education.

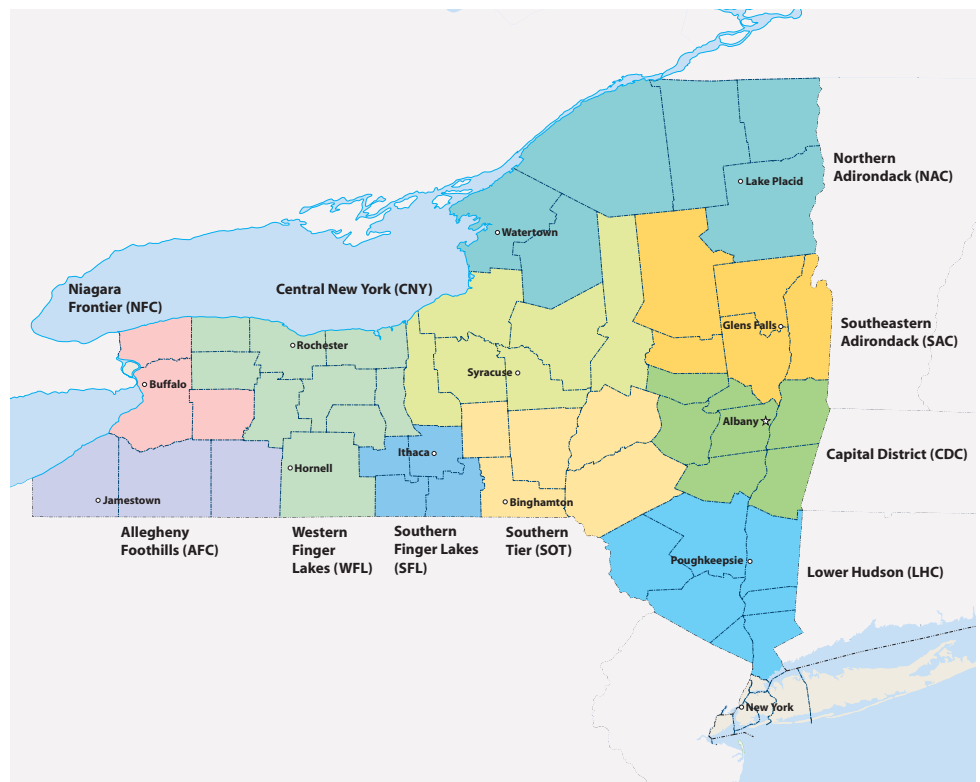
One task of the board is keeping the bylaws up to date to reflect changing conditions. Changing bylaws can raise objections and NYFOA

has experienced these occasionally. Member organizations, as defined in government rules and regulations, depend on having the membership actively involved in all activities and decisions. NYFOA was set up with this in mind; patterned after cooperatives such as farm marketing, rural electrification and other endeavors started in the 1930's. This system appeared to work well at the beginning of NYFOA with only 300 members and frequent interaction among all. People got to know each other and met regularly and exchanged not only forestry ideas but also social news and personal gains and losses. A type of family atmosphere prevailed. However, as membership grew, and people became geographically separated, organization officers and the board of directors were forced to make more decisions. Some charter members of NYFOA resented the shifts of decision-making to the board and its executive committee, but changes were enacted to meet changing conditions. This is not unlike changes taking place in other member organizations: religious

groups, school boards, and shareholder financial corporations.

Chapters

The original NYFOA bylaws contained a clause that any county having 10 or more members in NYFOA could organize a county chapter and elect a chapter chair, vice chair, and secretary (NY Forest Owner Vol. 18, no.6). The subject of chapters arose many times over the years. The 1984 bylaws contained a section on regional affiliates allowing the board of directors to designate any appropriate group in New York as a regional affiliate of NYFOA. In 1985 Cayuga County became the first chapter. In 1986, the Southern Tier chapter was formed, and that same year two regional affiliates were recognized, THRIFT (Tug Hill Resources-Investment for Tomorrow) and the Catskill Forestry Association. These two actions brought NYFOA membership above 1,000. Other chapters were soon formed and by 1991 there were chapters or affiliate member organizations across the state except for Hamilton County in the Adirondacks,



and in the New York City-Long Island region. Membership had grown to 1,600. This growth was attributed to the formation of local chapters, and increasing the profile of NYFOA by connecting with the broader forestry community.

Chapters have a representative on the state-wide board of directors as did affiliate members. The category of affiliate members was discontinued in the 1999 revision of the bylaws and chapter boundaries and extent would thereafter be determined by the board; another reflection of the maturing of NYFOA is the transition to a director run organization instead of the older style membership organization.

Activities of chapters include business meetings, presentations on various forestry related subjects, woods walks, social picnics and pot-luck suppers, staffing booths at county fairs and other public events, and publishing a chapter newsletter. There have been discussions over the years concerning the role of chapters versus statewide activities. The chapter activities have also developed a social focus. While some have argued this takes away from the overall mission of NYFOA, others point out that the interpersonal relationships that can develop at the local level bring a much-needed human dimension to the organization.

Meetings

At the beginning of the organization two membership meetings per year were held, in the spring usually at the College of Forestry at Syracuse, and in the fall at various locations throughout the state and incorporating a field trip to a local industry, member's woodlot, or other place of general interest. Spring meetings were well attended but over the years, attendance dropped at fall meetings. With the rise of chapters and their own woods walks, the 1984 bylaws stipulated only one annual statewide meeting although statewide fall meetings were held some years around New York State. Meetings featured speakers on pertinent topics, a business session, catered lunch,



and awards to outstanding members. A silent auction or raffle was often featured with the funds going to support general expenditures or dedicated to a scholarship fund. In 2003 the location of the annual spring meeting was moved to the Syracuse Fairgrounds in conjunction with the Farm Show. At this annual show various organizations, including NYFOA, had been conducting 3 days of seminars/talks on forestry and it was hoped that NYFOA members could attend some and then go to the annual

meeting. This arrangement continued until 2013 when the annual meeting was moved back to SUNY ESF. Attendance at the annual meeting was dropping and many people expressed a preference for facilities at the college over those available at the fairgrounds. Subsequently there has been a spring statewide meeting of NYFOA at SUNY ESF. 🗺

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