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nyfoa.org/join



Crossing hay fields to the forest at the Hidley Farm woods walk. Photo: Mike Birmingham

Letter from the Editor

Katie Campbell-Nelson

Why did the mushroom go to the party? Because he was a 'fun guy'. Why did he leave the party? Because there wasn't 'much room'. The forest is teeming with a fungi party right now! The recent heat and humidity may have made some of us feel a suffocating desire to head for the woods and streams to join the fungi. In this issue you will hear from members across the region who are expressing joy for the forests they care for through a recipe, forestry events, management strategies for hemlock wooly adelgid, and depths of perspective only a lifetime of stewardship may impart. Join the party! Become a member: nyfoa.org/join

Members' Notebook

Here, members submit short entries about the forested lands they love and steward from the counties (Albany, Columbia, Greene, Montgomery, Rensselaer, Saratoga, Schenectady and Schoharie) in our chapter and beyond. Any member is invited to submit a contribution of about 150 words and a photo if relevant. The next one is due October 30th, 2026 for the fall issue.

Albany County

Carol McDonald. Chanterelles have started fruiting here in southern Albany County. Gerry brought a few beauties home and sauteed them up in butter for a lovely side dish for dinner. He added a fresh peach to the mix and created a delicious pairing with our dinner. It's a simple sauté on medium high heat with a careful eye on them to prevent over cooking. If you are feeling more adventurous the recipe below



Chanterelles. Photo: Carol McDonald.

makes a great lunch or an easy dinner should you be lucky enough to harvest some chanterelles in your woods.

Chanterelle and Apricot Flatbread or Naan

3-4 oz of fresh chanterelles clean and cut if on the larger side

1 teaspoon of butter

1 teaspoon olive oil

2 fresh apricots pitted and sliced - you can leave the skin on or take it off your choice

2-3 tablespoons crumbled feta or ricotta cheese

1 tablespoon of chili paste - this is optional and or less if you don't care for spice

1 sprig of tarragon leaves with leaves removed for sprinkling over your flatbread

Preheat oven to 450 degrees

Melt butter in a pan over medium high heat and sauté the chanterelles for about 5 minutes, let cool. Place naan or flat bread on a cookie sheet and brush lightly with olive oil.

Top with apricots, mushroom, feta or ricotta, and chili paste.

Add tarragon.

Put in oven 10-12 minutes or until brown on the bottom of the naan/flatbread.

Cut and serve.



Sliced chantarelles. photo: Carol McDonald.

Columbia County

Hope for Eastern Hemlock by Mike Birmingham, Entomologist. Hemlocks planted near my home years ago became infested with hemlock woolly adelgid (HWA) soon after planting, yet they remain healthy even after all this time. The infestation of these isolated hemlocks may be connected to birds

transporting adelgids during their northward spring migration, as the trees are located next to bird feeders. While the survival of these hemlocks is uncertain—especially since many stands in the county have died—one possible explanation lies in natural controls of HWA, as reported in the Pacific Northwest. There, a beetle called *Laricobius nigrinus* preys on HWA, attacking western hemlock and preventing widespread decline. This beetle has been introduced to New York State and released in several locations. Now, the beetles are reproducing and spreading.



Hemlock woolly adelgid white woolly masses. photo: M. Birmingham

Woodlot owners should inspect HWA and, if found, consider timely salvage cuts. Although biological control of HWA offers hope, it is unlikely to arrive soon enough to save most hemlocks in Columbia County. HWA was reported in Adirondacks in 2017 and continues to move northward in the state, having first been detected in the early 1980's on Long Island.

Addendum by Katie Campbell-Nelson. Did you know that New York has more hemlocks than any other state¹? Researchers at SUNY ESF Pack Forest are experimenting with 'crown release' of hemlocks to increase airflow and distance between infested canopies. And, the New York State Hemlock Initiative continues to monitor HWA mortality while also releasing high numbers of the predator *Laricobius nigrinus*. Some good news - winter (2025-2026) mortality of HWA was relatively high on average across New York State (84.5%)². Do you

¹ Craig, G. (2026, March 30) Can Cutting trees save Adirondack hemlocks from tiny killer insects? *Adirondack Explorer*. <https://www.adirondackexplorer.org/environment/invasive-species/hemlock-invasive-species/> (accessed 7.11.2026)

² [2026 New York State Hemlock Woolly Adelgid Winter Mortality Survey](#) (accessed 7.11.2026)

have hemlocks? Get involved in hemlock conservation:

<https://blogs.cornell.edu/nyshemlockinitiative/get-involved/>

Greene County

Master Forest Owners Had a Field Day! *Shane Stevens, Cornell Cooperative Extension of Columbia and Greene Cos.* Every spring, woodland owners and stewards from across the state join a program run by Cornell Cooperative Extension to become Master Forest Owner (MFO) Volunteers. After the training, MFOs visit with peer woodland owners to share resources and experiences about owning and managing woodlands. This peer-to-peer network helps landowners make informed decisions to achieve their woodland goals. This program is especially important in New York state where there is almost 19 million acres of forest land- 73% of which are owned by more than 700,000 private land owners.

The training includes several open discussion weekly Zoom sessions on the rigorous forest focused curriculum. Following the online sessions, each region hosts an in-person field day to practice tree identification, forest health assessment, crop tree management, silviculture basics, and more! This hands-on outdoor day allows volunteers to visualize terms, interact with topics, and become more acquainted with the mission of the MFO volunteer program.



New Master Forest Owner volunteers practice estimating board feet in standing timber using a Biltmore log scale stick. photo: S. Stevens

The Catskills/Lower-Hudson Region hosted their field day this year on June 27 at the [Siuslaw Model Forest](#) in Acra, NY - Greene County. 23 participants toured the demonstration areas, discussed forest management, and learned how to use a Biltmore log scale stick to estimate the board feet in standing timber. These woodland stewards will go on to join the 110 active MFO's in the region to share their knowledge with peers to keep forests healthy and productive while achieving landowner goals.

Want to enhance your knowledge and become a Cornell Master Forest Owner Volunteer? Visit CornellMFO.info.

Montgomery County

A 15-Year "Timber Stand Improvement" Look Back, *Marylin and Dick Wyman.* Fifteen years ago we had our first timber harvest in July of 2011. It was part of our forest management plan developed by Dan Gaidasz, a DEC forester. Our good friend and forester, Mike Greason, had marked the timber and arranged the harvest for us before he passed away in March of 2011. A great loss to those who value responsible forest stewardship. John Rubel, a one-man operation, conducted the harvest with his feller- buncher. Mary Spring, our forester, finished the work that Mike started. The harvest occurred in two pine stands, the result of pasture land allowed to revert to forest. One became a mixed deciduous/pine stand with harvestable white pine and poplar. The second was dominated by many white pine with terminal bud damage. We also harvested poplar to allow maple and oak saplings to grow more fully to produce bolts for future shiitake mushroom production.



Maple stand well sized for shiitake bolts. photo: M. Wyman.

The white pines are thriving. Unfortunately, hay scented fern, new to our forests, have become established in the tracks of John's equipment. And extensive deer browse has impacted regeneration as well. Wonderfully, a healthy stand of maple and oak poles is doing well. When walking through our forests, we appreciate the professional work done by many and consider the harvest a worthwhile and educational experience.



Hay scented fern after timber stand improvement. Previously observed were Christmas, ostrich and sensitive ferns . photo: M Wyman

Rensselaer County

Alps Mountain Farm, Caryn Allen. Every walk this month has felt like traversing a different property across the 111 forested acres we steward on the Rensselaer Plateau. A few weeks ago the forest floor was flat and brown, easy to pass without a second look. Now it's fern-thick, humid, loud with green. Stumps and standing deadwood that looked finished for the season are covered in shelf mushrooms, some of them bigger than my hand. That's the part that has stuck with me: even the dead is alive here. What looks like the end of something, a dead stump, a fallen limb, is actually mid-process, feeding something else, becoming something else. Nothing on this forest floor is idle, even the parts

that look like they've stopped. The forest floor doesn't announce these changes. It just makes them, quietly, on its own schedule, and waits for you to notice.



Ganoderma sp. mushroom. photo: C. Allen

Landowner Open House with Hudson Taconic Lands, Phil Walton, June 17, In mid-June, NYFOA-CDC joined seven conservation and outdoor related organizations to meet with landowners to encourage them to steward the land they own. Organized by the Hudson Taconic Land Trust, mailers were sent to Rensselaer County property owners meeting certain criteria, inviting them to the Landowner Open House at the Sky High Adventure Center in Averill Park.

Over the three hour length of the open house, long time CDC members Dick and Shari Gibbs spoke to the 100 or so folks stopping by to learn about NYFOA and what we do. We emphasized that we are a group of volunteers who like to work in the woods, sharing experience and knowledge with each other.



Dick and Shari Gibbs (NYFOA members) tabling and chatting with Jim Bonesteel, Hudson Taconic Lands Executive Director. photo: P. Walton

We heard good stories, tales about the frustration of trying to eliminate Japanese knotweed, multiflora

rose, buckthorn and other invasive species - experiences familiar to all of us. But it was clear that many attendees were just starting out, and we encouraged these landowners to schedule a Master Forest Owner visit. Many asked how to find a forester, something we often share through woods walks (see events section). Each person who visited our table had strong interest in doing the best for their land, and Dick and Shari were the right folks to encourage people to love their land as much as they love their Hidley Farm. They were sincere and enthusiastic about encouraging people to tend and enjoy their woods and join NYFOA to gather first hand experience from other members.

To add a little fun and excitement to the afternoon, we raffled off three prizes - two books and a NYFOA branded coffee mug. This seemed a fitting way to make a lasting impression for the educational resource that NYFOA is.

Learn More about Hudson Taconic Lands: <https://hudsonataconic.org/>

Learn More about the Cornell Master Forest Owner program: Visit [CornellMFO.info](https://cornellmfo.info).

Nature in Transition

Hidley Farm Woods Walk, June 6, 2026 by *Dick Gibbs*



Forester Mary Spring at the Hidley Farm woods walk.
photo: M. Birmingham

On June 6th, a NYFOA woods walk was held at Hidley Farm and Forest. Our group of nearly twenty was composed of equal parts old NYFOA stalwarts and an eclectic mix of new visitors, all led by our forester, Mary Spring. Mary's frequent stops gave her the opportunity to share enlightening observations about what there was to see within the different forest stands. This mutual sharing of knowledge among walkers, followed by easy conversation while sitting on the Hidley House deck, made the event deeply enjoyable and worthwhile. The perfect weather and Mary Spring's commentary truly were a perfect mix. The event gave me opportunity to reflect on the season.

Winter was too long, and it didn't seem to stop just because we turned on Daylight Saving Time. Earth's systems don't answer to our commands or our clocks. Right on cue, the Norway maple next to our house put forth amber-colored leaves that turned green in a matter of weeks. Now, the long, drawn-out cold of lingering Winter is finally gone, and the maple's canopy is fully green. The once-browned grass is already well over a foot high and gone to seed. On the woodlot floor, the Mayapple colonies are in decline

as the closing hardwood canopy wins the competition for sunlight. I find myself behind on multiple fronts, flailing about in my attempts to steward the totality of this homestead. Still, I hang on to the well-worn phrase, "beauty is in the eye of the beholder..." and I am certain the opposite holds true as well. Fortunately, I still succeed at seeing the beauty in these June progressions.

Overshadowed by July, *Hepatica* lives along the shallow bank of the seasonal creek, sheltered under sugar maples over a century old. She endures the dry heat, waiting through the dazzling autumn and the looming, cold dark of Winter. Come next April—when the weather is cold and we are still unsure if Winter is done with us—she will bring her surprise of joy and beauty once again. Her internal, faultless clock ticks perfectly. Then, gone again, she is quickly replaced by Mayapple colonies and Garlic Mustard, only for all of them to be subsumed by the closing crown of the maples, leaving the woodlot floor in a quiet séance. By August, they go entirely underground. It is altogether too easy to think that I somehow discovered all of nature's cycles and embedded crosslinks during my short, fifty-year span of ecological stewardship.

In reality, the invisible cycle of life goes round and round—growing, grinding, and resting all at the same time across a million living forms. That final resting place, just beneath the surface, belongs to the vast kingdom of fungi. They decompose, rebuild, and create the very soil that allows all above-ground systems to thrive. Dust to dust.

In the minutiae of this endless grinding, I am reminded of John Prine's lyrics: "...ain't it strange how an old broken bottle looks just like a diamond ring..." Indeed it does. When I walk through the fields or into the farm woodlot, the "diamond ring" is visible to my failing vision in every tree, every patch of moss, and every single leaf.

NYFOA woods walks are a vital part of these cascading cycles—living life forms knitting themselves together to preserve and sustain the woodlands we all enjoy and need!

Events

Forestry Friday: Rensselaerville State Forest

When: Friday, August 7th at 8:30 AM arrive, kick-off the walk off at 9:00 and likely wrap up before noon.

Where: Rensselaerville State Forest, It is strongly suggested that you come in from Cheese Hill Road and not Route 353. Location 42.501751,-74.217680 [Google Maps](#).

This walk is a jointly sponsored event with the Capital District Chapter of NYFOA and Tyler Levy DEC Forester and ISA Certified Arborist with the Division of Lands and Forest DEC Region 4. Rensselaerville State Forest is a good example for softwood plantation management and has a variety of treatments that have occurred over the years (strip cuts, intermediate thinning, overstory removals, etc.) and ongoing work. This area will demonstrate the potential for softwood plantations and what regeneration after harvests look like. Parking is somewhat limited and we will be driving to a few different locations in this state forest, if you can carpool that would be great. There will be a little walking through the project areas.

RSVP to: happyinthehollow@gmail.com.

Annual Capitol District Chapter Picnic

When: August 23, 2026, 11:30am – 4:00pm

Where: Thatcher State Park, Paint Mine Pavillion

Parking fees will be covered by the Chapter, but you must see Phil for your ticket when you arrive.

Join us for a meal, catch up with and meet new members, enjoy an educational presentation or walk in the woods. It's always a relaxing and enjoyable time with like-minded folks.

We will provide beverages and a main course but appreciate a contribution of appetizers, salads, desserts or any special dish you might like to share. Let us know what you are bringing when you RSVP.

RSVP to: happyinthehollow@gmail.com.



Enjoying the view at the 2025 annual picnic. photo: M. Birmingham

Forestry Friday: Beebe Hill State Forest

When: Friday, August 28th at 8:30 AM arrive, kick-off the walk off at 9:00 and likely wrap up before noon

Where: Beebe Hill State Forest. Location: 42.341253, -73.472070. [Google Maps](#).

This walk is a jointly sponsored event with the Capital District Chapter of NYFOA and Tyler Levy DEC Forester and ISA Certified Arborist with the Division of Lands and Forest DEC Region 4.. Beebe Hill State Forest is primarily hardwoods which recently had an intermediate thinning to prepare for the regeneration harvest. We will see first hand what managing hardwoods might look like and talk with the DEC team about the process and other relevant topics and support for taking on such a project on private lands.

The walk will be about 100 yards from the parking area identified on the map below to the log landing area. If anyone has mobility concerns, they can park at the log landing but space is very limited.

RSVP to: happyinthehollow@gmail.com.

Albany County Woodswalk

When: October 24th, 2026, 9:00am arrive, kick-off 9:30

Where: 249 Stanton Rd. Coeymans Hollow, NY 12046
Gerry and Carol McDonald will host featuring a look at a clear-cut area performed six years ago to see tree regeneration. In addition, see other timber improvement areas and discuss the funding process used to support the efforts. We have transportation options for folks with limited mobility. The walk area has roadway.

RSVP to: happyinthehollow@gmail.com. Let us know if you need any accommodations to participate.

Wildlife Tracking with Daniel Hansche

When: Monday, November 9, 2026, 9 AM - 12 PM

Where: Siuslaw Model Forest - Cornell Cooperative Extension Acra, NY

Cost: \$50 per person. Limited space available. [Click Here to register.](#)

This event is hosted in partnership with Cornell Cooperative Extension.

Join international wildlife tracking expert Daniel Hansche for a walk afield in search of the tracks & signs of our wild neighbors. Landowners, foresters, and citizen scientists can key in on dozens of wild mammals by searching for the signs they leave behind. Tracks, scats, feeding signs, homes, and many more signs help us to know who lives in a property or woodlot and what they need to thrive in the landscape.

Wildlife tracking is experiencing a great resurgence as an essential field skill for those managing, monitoring, hunting, or protecting landscapes in North America and beyond. Participants will return to their place with clear tips and practical skills, leading them to know where and how to look for more signs of their local wildlife.

Meet Daniel Hansche: A full-time wildlife tracker with 30 years in the field, Daniel's work in conservation & education has taken them to wolf dens, rhino encounters, lion trails, wild pig families, and more - every moment a special one. Daniel is a Track & Sign Evaluator with Tracker Certification North America and certified in Eurasia & Africa. Daniel has mentored 100's of trackers and taught 1000's through workshops, trainings, and certifications. Brimming with creativity, Daniel's approach to tracking is wholly unique. Everyone has unique gifts, needs, & styles. One of Daniel's virtues is in learning, respecting, and

serving each student's needs. Spur Wander was founded to offer high-quality experience & trainings to wildlife trackers worldwide.



Daniel Hansche Photo Credits: Carla Rhodes

Resources

Do you own or manage property near a stream in the Hudson estuary watershed?

Dustin Meny and Beth Roessler, Hudson Estuary Trees for Tribs Staff

The [Hudson Estuary Trees for Tribs](#) offers free native New York trees and shrubs for planting along the tributary streams in [Hudson River Estuary Grant boundary](#) (PDF). Planting trees can help protect water quality, create fish and wildlife habitat, and reduce erosion and flooding.

Our staff can support you with:

- selecting plant species that align with your project goals
- creating a planting plan
- preparing your planting site
- offering installation advice
- sharing other information to improve the odds of your project's success

Anyone in the Hudson Valley that owns, manages, or can partner with a landowner that has property along a stream, can apply for free plants. If your project is selected, you will be responsible for preparing, planting and maintaining the site. We encourage applicants to recruit local volunteers and/or environmental groups to support planting and maintenance.

Visit [Hudson Estuary Trees for Tribs](#) for eligibility requirements and application instructions. Submit

your application by **August 1** for a fall planting in October 2026.

**New York State Department of Environmental Conservation | NYS Water Resources Institute
Hudson River Estuary Program**

21 South Putt Corners Rd, New Paltz, NY 12561

P: (845) 256-3159 or (845) 256-2253

| HudsonEstuaryTFT@dec.ny.gov

www.dec.ny.gov | @NYSDEC on Social Media | [Podcast](#)



Volunteers planted 100 trees along the Kinderhook Creek in Spring 2026

Capitol District Chapter Steering Committee

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