

The Western Finger Lakes Forest Owner



Fall 2009

Volume 23, Number 3

What I've Been Doing in My Woodlot

It is kind of like waiting for the other shoe to drop. This spring, with the guidance of my forester, I sold some timber. That all went well; the contracts made their way through the mail on schedule, a check showed up and now resides in my bank account. And then nothing.

The contract says they have a year to do the cutting, so there is plenty of time. And it has been fairly wet this summer, so it is probably just as well a crew hasn't shown up to churn up a lot of mud. But it feels a little strange, walking around the woodlot knowing that, although I own the land I am walking on, I don't own the trees I am walking past – at least the ones with paint on them. I feel a bit constrained in doing anything in the woods until the logging is done.

So, inspired by last year's "Forester for a Day" seminar Dick Starr's recent articles about measuring basal area, I decided to spend a recent afternoon making some rough measurements. Armed with a

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Fourth Annual Dinner and Chapter Meeting

Wednesday November 4th, 2009, 5:30 to 9:00PM

**Monroe County Cooperative Extension Building Auditorium,
249 Highland Avenue, Rochester, NY 14620**

New York State Forest Owners Association members, families and friends are invited to attend the Western Finger Lakes Chapter's fourth annual dinner and chapter meeting. In addition to a delicious dinner, and socializing with fellow forest owners, you will thoroughly enjoy listening to Captain Michael Van Durme of the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation as he shares aspects of conversation law.

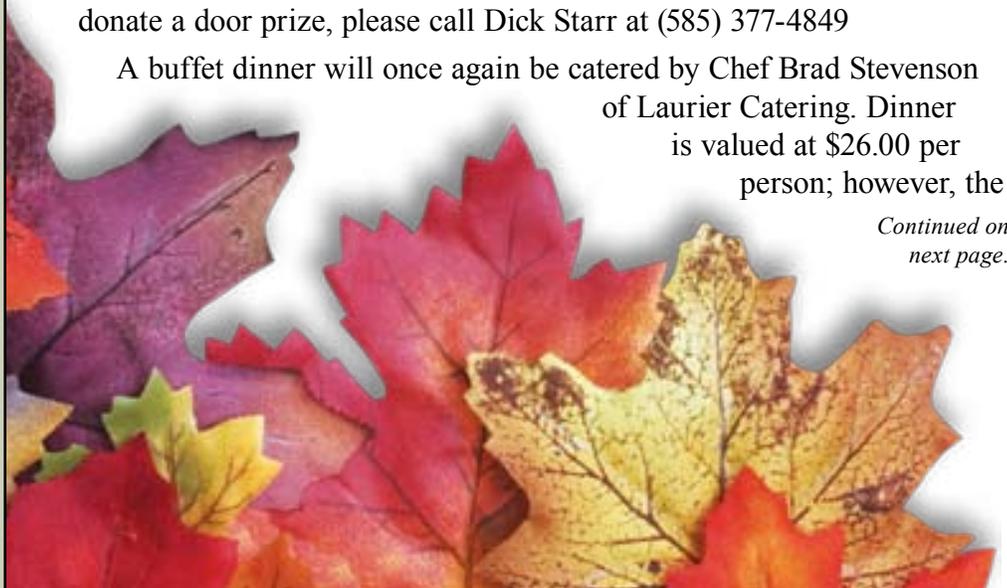
Captain Van Durme is a landowner, a black powder, bow and shotgun deer hunter and member of NYFOA. He has a staff of 28 Environmental Conversation officers who cover region eight and are responsible for enforcing the law as it relates to pollution, criminal hazardous waste, hunting, fishing, illegal logging and more.

Captain Van Durme spoke at our January 28th Chapter meeting which only a few members were able to attend due to some very inclement weather that evening. Those who did hear him speak have reported that we are fortunate to have been able to re-schedule this excellent speaker for the annual dinner meeting.

There will be door prizes and a fifty/fifty raffle. If you would like to donate a door prize, please call Dick Starr at (585) 377-4849

A buffet dinner will once again be catered by Chef Brad Stevenson of Laurier Catering. Dinner is valued at \$26.00 per person; however, the

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What I've Been Doing in My Woodlot

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pad of paper, a pencil, and a basal area gauge, I wandered around and satisfied my curiosity about the density of my woodlot.

Before I go into details, a couple disclaimers. This is similar to what my forester did, but I am not a forester and I was not very rigorous in my measurements. There are guidelines for how to choose points to make sample measurements, both the number and their location, to ensure the accuracy of the resulting measurements. I didn't follow them; I just picked points to measure arbitrarily as I was out for a walk. So this was educational and fun for me, but it is no substitute for the work of a professional forester.

I arbitrarily chose to measure basal area at 10 points, because that makes the arithmetic easy. On a 40 acre stand that is not enough to be very accurate, but, again, this is just my afternoon's diversion. So I set out, and at each of the ten points I picked to measure, I jotted down two numbers: the total number of trees that my basal area gauge said I should count, and the number of those trees that were marked to be cut. I did

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~ Upcoming Events ~

Fourth Annual Dinner and Chapter Meeting

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chapter will subsidize part of this so that cost will be \$19.00 per person. Mark your calendars so you don't miss this special annual event. Registration deadline is October 23th, 2009.

Register now by sending your check, made payable to NYFOA, to Ron Reitz, WFL NYFOA Treasurer, 6086 Canadice Hill Road, Springwater, NY 14560.

5:30PM - Late Registration and Appetizers

Display of Brie, Champagne Cheddar & Buttermilk Blue Cheese Served with Vegetable Crudités & Sliced Baguettes (Soft drinks & bottled water will be provided)

6:00PM - Buffet Dinner in the Lilac Room

- Salad of Mixed Greens, Dried Cranberries, Mandarin Oranges & Malt Vinaigrette
- Balsamic Glazed Pork Loin, Sautéed Mushroom & Apple Cider Sauce
- Roasted Potatoes, Tossed with Garlic, Parsley & Chives
- Sesame Seed Crusted Atlantic Salmon, Seasoned with Fresh Ginger, Garlic & Scallions
- A Selection of Matchstick Vegetables
- Sea Salt & Cracked Black Pepper

6:45PM - Apple Bavarian Cheesecake & Fresh Brewed Coffee

7:15PM - Brief Chapter Meeting

7:30PM - Captain Michael Van Durme

9:00PM - Program ends

Anne Ross

Ties to the Land Workshop

A two part workshop to help forest landowners navigate the many parts of passing on their land to future generations was held on May 13th and June 10th, 2009 at the United Church of Christ in Honeoye, New York. Twenty-two people attended the workshop sponsored by the Western Finger Lakes Chapter of NYFOA and Cornell Cooperative Extension. Shorna Broussard, an Associate Professor in the Department of Natural Resources at Cornell University presented the workshop. The workshop was prepared by Oregon State University Forestry Extension and some other partners. "Ties to the Land" can help landowners keep their dreams for their land alive into future generations.

This was a hands on workshop, with the two parts allowing attendees to get some work done between the sessions on how to get the family involved in planning the future of the property. Many of us may think of passing on our property to the next generation as involving estate planning to avoid or minimize taxes and to having our wills in order. This

~ Upcoming Events ~

workshop helped those of us who attended see that the human dimension involving our desires for the property and getting good communication amongst those in the family is as important as the estate planning aspect to keeping a working forest properly managed and in the family.

This was a very beneficial workshop to help us get started in the very important process of successional planning.

Keith Maynard

General Meeting: Cross Country Bicycle Trip

January 27th, 2010

Sara and Jim Kersting live in Canadice, and now watch sunsets from the east side of Canadice Lake after 25 years of being woken by sunrises on the west side. Since retiring from the National Technical Institute for the Deaf at RIT, they both spend as much time as possible outdoors. Sara works on flower, herb, and vegetable gardens, and Jim moves rocks from old fence lines to make garden enclosures, stone steps, and rock walls. They both are certain they will die on the land with either a shovel or pickax in their hand, or found squashed under a large rock. But not before having many years to enjoy their two grandchildren.

Both Sara and Jim have been active with the Finger Lakes Land Trust in a variety of roles including conservation easement donors, board president, sign painter, trail crew, and general “gofers”. Their land along County Road 37 and Holmes Road is protected with a conservation easement, and is one of four such easements in Canadice held by the Land Trust, and part of 11,000 acres protected by the FLLT.

The idea for the cross-country bicycle trip sprouted from their rural roots of childhood. Sara spent hers on a family farm in the Sacramento Valley, while Jim’s was with his Dad at the Kersting Dairy. Spending time in small towns and on back roads, and doing it at 12 mph, and 60 mile days seemed ideal. Jim and a fellow FLLT past president of the FLLT board, Brad Edmondson wanted to pedal the 3700 miles, and Sara was willing to drive the truck with the small pop-up camper in tow. She quickly earned the title “Sacagawea”. Through their association with the Land Trust, Jim and Sara became friends with another conservation minded Canadice couple, Al and Sybil Craig. Al took a great interest in the trip, but died months before the trip started. The Kersting’s decided to commemorate the Coast to Coast For Conservation ride in Al’s memory, and to also recognize another Land Trust friend, Betsy Darlington. With the support of Land Trust members, family, friends and even strangers, they were able to raise \$ 40,000 for the Land Trust. Their talk will include photos, and stories of people, dogs, food, and the unusual encounters when living and riding on the edges of this vast nation.

Keith Maynard

What I’ve Been Doing in My Woodlot

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not record any more detailed information about diameters or species.

The results I got, recorded as (total trees/marked trees) at my ten points, were (9/2), (11/2), (11/5), (14/3), (7/3), (11/2), (11/2), (9/4), (11/4), and (13/2), for a total of 107 trees counted, of which 29 are marked for harvest. That means by this estimate the stand currently has about 107 square feet of basal area per acre, of which 29 are marked for cutting, so the post-harvest density will be about 78 square feet per acre.

After getting back from my walk I dug out my management plan and checked the survey it contains. When that was done five years ago, my forester measured the density of this stand at 116 sq. ft/acre. It has probably increased a bit since then as I haven’t done any thinning in this area, but my estimate of 107 is in the right ballpark. One rule of thumb says that a stand needs thinning if its basal area is more than 100 sq. ft/acre, so all this reinforces that this thinning is, if anything, a bit overdue.

Another rule of thumb says that a stand’s volume

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should be reduced by no more than one third at a time, to avoid subjecting the remaining stand to undue stress. Cutting 29/107 of the stand works out to about 27 percent of the basal area, again well in line with that guideline.

It is comforting to know that this harvest seems consistent with these rules of thumb, but there is a lot more to a harvest than just getting the volume right. Anybody could mark 25 to 30 percent of the trees to be cut; the key to a good harvest is marking the right trees, based on species composition, health, timber quality, and other factors. That is why I get a professional forester to do the real work. I enjoy walking around checking things out with my basal area gauge, and if my rough measurements showed a large deviation from the expected rules of thumb I would want a good explanation of why (which says it would have been smart to do this before I had a contract in place). But playing at being a forester once in a while only makes me all the more appreciative of what a professional has to offer.

Mike Seagar

More Peach Thoughts

This is a follow up to *Free Peaches* that appeared in our summer newsletter and contains more thoughts and observations.

First, I should have been more patient. After the initial flurry of germinating seeds in early April, I figured it was over. Not so, as seedlings kept emerging over the next month or so but at a more leisurely pace of about 1 per day. I attribute this to varieties of peach seeds selected for the experiment but that's only a guess.



Photo by Dick Starr.

Second, they need critter protection from the get go. The seedlings are, after all, initially a seed which is obvious to squirrels and their chipmunk cousins who are eager to dine on them. In addition to squirrels & chipmunks, we also have rabbits, a woodchuck, voles and sometimes deer in our yard so I knew better than to just plant them and walk away. I protected them in a cylinder of concrete reinforcing wire with a green plastic mesh around that. This wouldn't keep out squirrels and chippies but by the time I planted them outside the seed itself was consumed by the growing seedling.

I gave most of my seedlings away. Two friends reported that after transplanting them outside, they returned to find the baby tree cut off at ground level. A third reported seeing a deer trying to remove his protective fence. I was confident my reinforcing wire cages with plastic mesh would deter veggie eaters. Mistake!

One morning in mid June we found something had chewed off a bar in the plastic mesh (see picture) thus gaining entrance to the tree nursery. The baby peach tree had been severed at ground level and the young victim was desiccated and clearly beyond resuscitation. I blame the voles but no witnesses have been forthcoming.

In an attempt to save our remaining 3 trees I purchased some metal screening which now encircles the plastic mesh which encircles the concrete reinforcing wire. I'm glad to report that as of mid August the 3 trees are thriving and approaching 4 feet tall.

Dick Starr

Make an Angle Gauge

Basal area (BA) is the total cross sectional area of trees measured at breast height in an acre of land. An angle gauge is a device for estimating BA by focusing one's vision. A simple angle gauge can be made by cutting a square viewing window in a piece of soft plastic. The plastic lids supplied with nut cans work well for this purpose (See the accompanying pictures).

Since arm length is a variable, a 1 in 33 ratio is used for purposes of standardization. Hold a quarter, diameter = 1", 33" from your eye and you have a 1 in 33 ratio. However, few of us have an arm this long.

The first step in making an angle gauge is to determine your arm length. Hold a coin between your thumb and index finger, extend your arm and measure the distance between your eye and the coin. It's safer for the eye to measure between the coin and your teeth.

Divide your arm length by 33 and you have the size of the viewing window needed in

your angle gauge. Or, having measured your arm length refer to the chart below to determine your needed window size. If

this all seems too complicated, simply cut your window $\frac{3}{4}$ " square.

To use the angle gauge, stand in a woodlot and hold it at arm's length. Close one eye and slowly rotate 360 degrees and count every tree that completely fills the square viewing window as in figure 1. Ignore trees that appear too small to fill the window as in figure 2. Try to hold the angle gauge to view trees at breast height.

Keep a running tally and multiply the total number of trees counted by 10. This gives the BA for your current position. For example, 9 counted trees would be $9 \times 10 = 90$ square feet of tree surface area. A BA number greater than 100 implies some thinning might be in order. BA estimates for several locations throughout the woods give a more complete picture.

The multiplier 10 is known as the basal area factor (BAF). Other BAF values are sometimes used and these require different ratio standards.

*Dick Starr
Mike Seager*



A tree filling the angle gauge window.



A tree too small to fill the window.

Photos by Dick Starr.

Arm Length	Window Opening
22 - 24"	11/16"
25 - 27"	13/16"
28 - 30"	14/16"

A Bike Rim?

Our chapter's visit to Chris Schaefer's mountain top estate on June 13th introduced me to nut producing American Chestnut trees. I'm hopeful of returning this fall to collect some chestnuts and trying to germinate them. In preparation I've done some on line reading and found it's rather similar to germinating peach seeds – see *Free Peaches* in our summer newsletter.

One article by E. L. Huffman appeared in a 1981 issue of *Mother Earth News*. To deter squirrels Mr. Huffman plants the nuts he wants to germinate inside a bicycle rim. He thinks the bushy tails see the rim as a trap and avoid stepping in it.

What?! Squirrels won't step inside a bike rim? I'd like to conduct a chapter wide experiment to test this. If you have something – a bird feeder perhaps – you'd like to protect from squirrels, place a bike rim around it and let me know your results and observations. My contact info is inside the back cover page.

Should the spokes be left in or removed? I've not a clue so let me know which way you did it. It's also necessary, of course, to deny squirrels access from adjacent trees, bushes, etc.

Dick Starr

A Memorable Visit

Over 50 people attended an inspiring site atop the Bristol Hills on June 13th for an informative and stimulating session on the world of solar and wind technology. Our host, Chris Schaefer, acquired his 100 acres in 1991 and set about to demonstrate the practical value of living "off grid." Chris derives all his power needs from sun and wind with occasional help from a back up propane generator.

Chris's background is in electrical engineering. When combined with his creativity he can help others learn about energy efficient building techniques and technology. He uses his home as a laboratory for installing and testing new and unique energy systems.

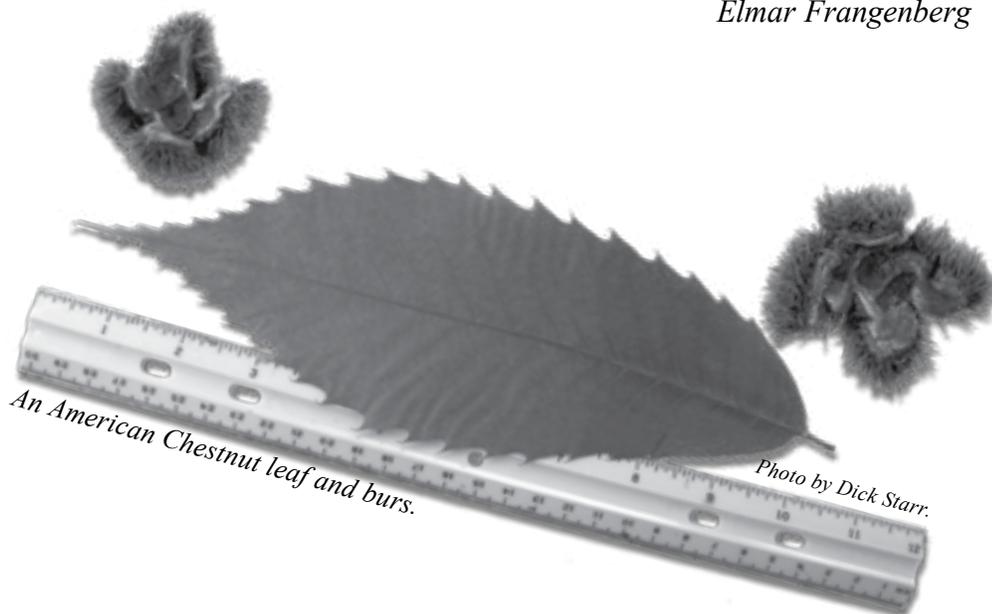
His workroom has an array of electronic monitors for measuring incoming DC from the solar panels and the state of charge for the storage batteries, a \$15,000 investment. Inverters change the battery DC to 120 volt AC for powering computers, lights and all other domestic electrical needs.

Using foam concrete construction Chris has finished the basement of his 3 story home. A pickup truck sitting atop the basement proved the strength of this method. His dream is to use timber frame construction and, when ready, have an old fashioned barn raising for the upper floors. A vacuum tube solar panel supplies all domestic hot water and a wood fired backup furnace has never been used. The tightness of his buildings require an air exchange system that operates 20 minutes of every hour 24/7.

Our tour ended with a visit to a grove of American Chestnut trees. Spiny burrs from last fall's crop were evidence the 8 to 10 inch diameter trees are producing nuts. Sadly they also show signs of the blight.

Chris gave us insights into his pioneering efforts to change our reckless energy consumption, gain an increasing independence from foreign imports and live and work in harmony with Mother Nature.

Elmar Frangenberg



Tree Tubes for Sale

Proceeds benefit the WFL Chapter

	Member Price	Non-Member Price
4 foot tube	\$3.80	\$4.30
4 foot tube with stake	4.25	4.75
5 foot tube	4.35	4.85
5 foot tube with stake	4.85	5.35
<p>Contact:</p> <p>Ron Reitz, <i>WFL Treasurer</i> 6086 Canadice Hill Road, Springwater, NY 14560 (585)367-2847 • rrrlpr@aol.com</p>		

Welcome New Members

Rich Aguirre
Conesus NY

Brad Bliss
Canandaigua NY

Keith Frum
Penn Yann NY

Steve Hoock
West Henrietta NY

Ron Merritt
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The Western Finger Lakes Forest Owner is published for members of the Western Finger Lakes Chapter of the New York Forest Owners Association (NYFOA) and is published 4 times per year. NYFOA was founded in 1963 and is organized to encourage the wise management of private woodland resources in New York State by promoting, protecting, representing and serving the interests of woodland owners. The Western Finger Lakes chapter was founded in 1988 and encompasses Genesee, Livingston, Monroe, Ontario, Orleans, Seneca, Steuben, Wayne, and Yates counties.

Membership is open to anyone interested in understanding how to manage a woodlot. NYFOA membership can bring returns in the satisfaction of growing quality timber, stabilizing forest industries and markets, providing permanent jobs, increasing the value of your woods, enlarging areas of natural beauty across the state, and leaving behind a monument in living trees to bless the tomorrows for the boys and girls of today. For information on becoming a NYFOA member, contact Liana Gooding, NYFOA Secretary, NYFOA, P.O. Box 541, Lima, NY, 14485 or at 1-800-836-3566. Annual membership is \$30 for individuals and \$35 for families and includes: subscriptions to this newsletter; to the bimonthly NYFOA state-wide publication, *The New York Forest Owner*; attendance at chapter meetings; and at two statewide meetings. Membership at the Contributing level (\$50- \$100) and Supporting level (\$101 & up) are also offered. For more information visit www.nyfoa.org.

Readers are encouraged to submit articles for publication in this newsletter. Articles should be mailed or e-mailed to: Richard Starr at the address to the left. Electronic submissions are preferred. Any letters should be sent to the Chair for consideration.



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