

New York Forest Owners Association Capital District Chapter Newsletter

Volume 20, Issue 3

July 2010

Chair's Message:

I'm pleased with the stewardship focus of this newsletter. These are concerns we can try to raise public awareness about so that we may positively influence policies affecting your ownership of your woodlands. If NYFOA's efforts serve to lower real property taxes or discourage timber theft; discourage exploitive harvesting (high grading) or improve on the negative impacts of invasive species and diseases, our organization becomes more relevant.

Very recently I testified in a timber theft case. The logger had already pled guilty to stealing the timber; so the court date was just to determine restitution. The defense attorney asked the judge to set the award below fair market stumpage value so the thief would not lose money. After-all, he had only removed the butt logs of the best trees; so he had not been paid for any of the whole trees he had cut. If the judge awards \$250 per tree, plus treble damages, the logger will feel mistreated according to his attorney. This is after he admitted to cutting the cable and stealing from two properties. It was not a case of possibly not knowing where the property line was; he had no legitimate claim to any of the trees. The prosecuting attorney had told me, during our wait for the judge, this logger had been before this same judge several times for timber "trespass" before. I hope I will hear the outcome soon and I hope the judgment discourages this individual from stealing again. It reminds me of the story told by one of our more active members who has been a victim of several timber thefts where the logger complained about the cost of prosecution. The judge said, "Well, next time steal less."

Our chapter was involved with three events assisting Marilyn Wyman and Dr. Peter Smallidge at the Agroforestry Resource Center on May 14th and 15th. The topics were: low impact harvesting, flame weeding, and a forest management primer. Our members helped with skidding logs, providing a torch for participants to girdle unwanted stems using flame, and talking about forest history and personal experiences in owning forests. The hands on exercises were well attended and we will try to plan more of this type of popular event. We also helped with the Master Forest Owner refresher course and had the opportunity to join Tom Wessels, author of [Reading the Forested](#)

[Landscape](#), in leading a woods-walk through the Suislaw Model Forest. We are fortunate to have a Cornell Cooperative Extension office so willing to include us in their programs.

Since Carl Wiedemann was not able to attend the statewide annual meeting at the New York Farm Show, I had the pleasure of presenting him with our Chapter Service Award and the Heiberg Award at our woods-walk on June 13th which is described further on in this newsletter. As our chapter newsletter editor and his several projects regarding exploitive harvesting and raising public awareness of the value of our forest resources, our chapter leadership decided to present him with the Chapter Service Award this year. After sending in the write-up for that award, President Mike Seager contacted me about having Carl be the Heiberg recipient as well. So, he received both awards and I had the fun of being able to give them to him in the presence of our members at the walk. Congratulations, Carl, on your well deserved recognition.



Mike Greason, Chair
Capital District Chapter

P.S. Please join us on July 18th at Thacher Park for our picnic and Hans Kappel's BBQ chicken & fixings!! The cost is \$6.00 only per person which covers chicken, beverage, place setting and entrance fee.

Guest Editorial

A Working Forest

Our world's forests and forestry itself are at a crossroads. As we enter the second decade of the 21st century, it is essential the larger populous begin to understand the importance of the stewardship of our forest resources.

The world's forests remain under siege, and their ecological and economic integrity are both at risk. This siege is relentless, and is coming from both extremes. Wealthy countries such as the United States are loving many of their forests to death with a lack of active stewardship, while poorer nations are physically destroying their forests simply to survive or export their forest products to the rich countries.

In the bigger picture, the decisions being made with regard to protecting the world's forest resources are not being made by trained forest ecologists, professional foresters or biologists. The future of forest resources is now in the hands of a global, political and social structure that has little understanding of forests and their critical importance to the world's survival.

The issues dealing with the world's forests are complex with no simple answers, yet our working forests are speaking to us every day, and we need to start listening. Every human being on this planet is dependent upon the protection and sustainability of earth's forest resources. If you breathe air or drink water, you need forests.

As a forester, I make decisions everyday to cut trees. In the last thirty-five years my decisions have resulted in the cutting of millions of trees on thousands of acres of land. These decisions were not made lightly. As we look towards the future of our forests, we all must keep looking backwards too. How have forest's responded to our past actions? By looking back, we see both the good and the bad results of our actions.

The future of our forest ecosystems can be a bright one, but only if we take the correct way at this crossroads. As my friend, Dr. Jerry Franklin has said, "We must be collaborating with nature." By a better understanding of how working forests are working for us, "We will be okay" as my friend Chuck Leavell says. And of course, as the first graders of Central School say, "If we take care of the forests, the forests will take care of us"!

Robert R. Williams
bob@aworkingforest.com
Certified Forester
Registered Professional Forester

Editors note:

Bob Williams is a consulting forester from New Jersey with 35 years of experience. He currently serves as the Chair of the New Jersey Section of the Society of American Foresters and is also an officer in the New Jersey Forestry Association.

In order to inform the public about the importance of forestry he has developed a website (www.aworkingforest.com) and produced a DVD with a stewardship message told by woodland owners and managers from across the United States.

Bob writes: "*The Working Forest is a video presentaion that allows folks who own, play, work and study the forest, speak in their own terms from their hearts. We must present the truth about our wonderful story of forest management and forestry, and we just have not done a good job with that with regards to the larger general public.*"



Would You Like To Be On Our Mailing List?

Email is a fast and inexpensive way to let members know of events and news, however, we're not reaching many of you. There are several current CDC members whose mail is bounced back when we attempt to send event notices to them at the address we have on file. In addition there are many other chapter members for whom we have NO email address. If you are not in either category, you should have received 2 notices from us last month about the Niskayuna woodswalk. If you did not, we may not have a correct address for you, either.

Please send corrected or new email addresses to the NYFOA Capital District email list -- NYFOA-CDC@juno.com. Thank You. Joan Kappel

Declining Wildlife Habitats¹

By Michael J. Birmingham, Forester/Entomologist¹

From my days clearing land for pastures in the early 1960's until present, I observed a major change from brush lands to forests. Brush lands and young forests provide habitats for more species than mature forests. A majority of mature forests in the Northeast were once agricultural lands, with the exception of the State of Maine, which was not deforested to the extent of New York and the remaining states of New England. Lands out of agricultural production were planted to trees but most acreage reverted naturally to trees. These reforested areas are now heavily forested with even aged trees typically 80-90 years old. The consequence of brush land loss is that populations of species dependent on early successional habitats have declined.

There is a false sense that mature forests are a natural and ideal state for wildlife. The premise falsely assumes that the pre European forest was little affected by human and natural disturbances. Missing from today's Northeastern forest are wildfires. Fire was once used by Native American Indians to improve land for hunting and agriculture. In modern times, wildfire is suppressed. Fire is little used in the NE for vegetative management. Storm disturbances are not enough to maintain early successional habitat abundance

Photo 1



Photo 1 shows pole size maples (foreground) and mature forest (background) of softwoods and hardwoods.¹ A majority of forests in New England and New York are mature. Mature forests are shady. Shade prevents sun loving plant growth and reproduction. Animals that live on sun loving plants have declined in numbers. Deer, for example, cannot find as much to browse in a mature forest as in a young forest. Many species of birds, reported in the last issue of the Warbler, have declined in abundance.

The mature forest is developing three canopy strata. The high canopy is Eastern White Pine (*Pinus strobes*). Its canopy tops shade tolerant trees such as maple, beech and hemlock at the intermediate canopy level and small trees and woody shrubs at the low canopy level. The three canopies shade the forest floor and reduce the number of species and populations of sun loving plants and animals.

Photo 2



Photo 2 of Reilly Pond is typical of aquatic habitats in abundant diversity of animals and plants. On May, I observed Yellow Warbler (*Dendroica petechia*) among Specked Alder (*Alnus incana*) on the pond bank. On the pond, a pair of Canada Geese (*Branta canadensis*) swam with two yellow plumaged goslings. Seventeen Painted Turtles (*Chrysemys picta*) were undisturbed by the geese, basked on a log in the pond. The tranquil scene is deceiving. Beneath still water the Common Snapping Turtle (*Chelydra serpentina*), prowls to ambush small creatures. Aquatic habitats are highly productive for plant and animal life.

Basking on a Log



Photo 3



Photo 3 depicts the early successional habitat that is declining in acreage in the Northeast and that is critical for early successional species abundance. Common Milkweed (*Asclepias syriaca*) and goldenrod (in foreground) are early successional vegetation. Unless herbs are mowed or grazed, the site they grow on is colonized with woody shrubs and trees as seen in photo. White pine is a colonizer. Pines (in background) are weeviled and weeviling creates a bushy crown that provides cover for wildlife. The diverse plants of this habitat provide food and cover for many animal and plant species. The proximity of early successional habitat at the sanctuary to water proves another critical need of wildlife. When walking this site, a Cotton Tailed Rabbit (*Sylvilagus floridanus*), bolted from the herbs into the brush. In Maine this species is becoming rare due to loss of habitat.

In New York State there are 240,000 woodland owners owning 10 acres or more. Most of the woodland is unmanaged and mature. Wildlife management on more of these lands could increase populations of early successional species. Management for increased species diversification requires creation of crown openings of different sizes to match the varying needs of wildlife. It also requires management leading to different age stands. Of greatest need are habitats with seedlings, saplings and pole size stands

¹ Ecology of wildlife habitats are from Technical Guide to Forest Wildlife Habitat Management in New England by Richard M. DeGraaf and others.

¹ Photos 1-3 of Wilson Powell Wildlife Sanctuary are by author.

¹ Common and scientific names are from Wikipedia.

The Chapter Welcomes The Following New Members:

Douglas Bernhard	Voorheesville, N.Y.
Lisa Hoyt	Cropseyville, N.Y.
Art Karis	Stephentown, N.Y.
Richard & Evelyn Kramer	Glenville, N.Y.
Jennifer LaFleur	Freehold, N.Y.
Jim Wysocki	Clifton, N.Y.

New York's 2010-2015 Forest Resource Assessment and Strategy

The 2008 Farm Bill and the USDA Forest Service require states to develop a statewide Forest Resource Assessment and Strategy (FRAS). The Department of Environmental Conservation recently completed this plan and it will soon be available for your review. It includes an analysis of forest conditions and trends and identifies the issues facing the State's forests. The three main themes are: conserve working forests, protect forests, and enhance benefits from trees and forests. The plan also includes a list of strategies that are intended to address the major forest resource issues. DEC will be scheduling a meeting with stakeholders, including NYFOA, early this fall to discuss the best way to move forward with the strategies in the plan.



A copy of the plan will be posted soon on the DEC website: <http://www.dec.ny.gov/>

Niskayuna Woods Walk

On Sunday, June 13th a group of about fifteen gathered at the Most Holy Redeemer Cemetery in Niskayuna for a woods-walk led by Mike Greason to inspect a post harvest operation. This was the same woodlot that the chapter visited two years ago just after the trees had been marked for sale.



The timber was harvested during the winter with a feller buncher, a machine which gives the logging contractor the ability to cut trees while in sitting in the cab and to place them on the ground. This makes felling safer for the operator and minimizes damage to residual trees.

A feller buncher cuts a tree.



This woodlot was 14 acres. There were 214 trees marked by the forester and cut by the logging contractor for a total of 37,000 board feet.

Top Ten Things Not To Do When Selling Timber

Trees are a valuable product; some woods can be worth several thousands of dollars per acre and if managed properly can earn you hundreds of dollars per acre per year. If you own woods, you should manage them properly. Part of management is selling timber; these are the basic things you should know if you ever sell timber.

1. DON'T SELL TO A TIMBER BUYER THAT IS NOT BONDED. Iowa has a bonded timber buyer's law that requires anyone that buys timber to be bonded. This may not mean that all bonded buyers are reputable but it gives you a good starting point.

2. DON'T SELL UNLESS EVERYTHING IS IN WRITING. A good timber contract can go a long ways to ensure that you have a good experience selling timber. The contract should state how the trees are marked, how many trees, the purchase price, time period to remove the timber, what logging conditions are acceptable (dry or frozen), and who is liable for damage to the property, etc.

3. DON'T SELL UNMARKED TREES. If the trees to be harvested are marked there is no question as to which trees should be harvested. It is also advisable to solicit comparable bids on the timber when each company is bidding on the same item. After the sale is done, don't add or exchange trees, remember trees vary considerably in value, by changing things the whole bid process can be ruined.

4. DON'T SELL TIMBER ON THE SPUR OF THE MOMENT. Think about what you are doing. Once you sign the contract or accept the money there is no going back. The deal will more than likely be there tomorrow, so take time to check it out. Timber varies considerably in price-know what you are selling.

5. DON'T SELL TREES ON A DIAMETER LIMIT. The size of the tree shouldn't dictate if that tree should be harvested, the condition or potential of the tree should. The woods contains many different species, each maturing at a different age and size, when selling on a diameter limit you often will over-cut the woods selling many trees that would increase significantly in value in the near future.

6. DON'T SELL ONLY YOUR BEST TREES. Trees vary considerably in value, often from only a few dollars to hundreds or on occasion thousands of dollars. Selling only the best trees is called high grading and can hurt the long term productivity of the woods. When selling timber sell the trees that are declining in value, sell the less desirable or weeds trees and mix in the best trees when they've reached

their peak value. The best trees are probably earning you at least 10% per year and you will always find a buyer who wants them.

7. DON'T SELL CUT AND SCALE OR ON SHARES.

Unless you know how to cut and scale trees you are relying on the buyer to determine what trees are worth and to maximize the yield from the tree. Some buyers may not want to mess with the lower grade logs at the tops of the tree even though there may be value in those logs. Sell your timber on a lump-sum, up-front payment and "take it or leave it" for only the marked trees.

8. DON'T ACCEPT CASH. Accepting cash may not be a problem, but it often may entice you into acting too quickly to sell. Don't forget once you accept the money and sign the contract it's a done deal - there's no going back.

9. DON'T ENTER INTO A MANAGEMENT AGREEMENT GIVING A COMPANY EXCLUSIVE RIGHT TO YOUR TIMBER. A management agreement may sound good, but there is usually a cost. The buyer has a conflict of interest if he works for the timber company and they want your timber.

10. DON'T INCLUDE TREES DAMAGED DURING THE LOGGING. This may sound like the logical thing to do, but the problem is trees can be damaged on purpose. When the trees are marked care should be taken to make sure the trees can be harvested without damage to the remaining trees.

From: Iowa Department of Natural Resources

2010 CALENDAR OF LOCAL EVENTS

CDC STEERING COMMITTEE MEETINGS

PLACE: COLONIE TOWN LIBRARY

DATES: JULY 13, OCTOBER 12

6:30 – 8:30 PM

LOCAL WOODSWALKS & WORKSHOPS

SMALL-SCALE WOODLOT MANAGEMENT & LOW IMPACT HARVESTING WORKSHOP

DATE: SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 25

REGISTRATION DEADLINE: SEPTEMBER 23

INFORMATION CALL PH 622-9820

LOCATION: COLUMBIA COUNTY

TIME: 8:30 A.M.-12:00 P.M.

COST: \$10.00 PER PERSON

ANNUAL CHAPTER PICNIC

PLACE: THACHER PARK – GLEN DOONE PICNIC AREA – NO CHARGE FOR PARKING

DATE: SUNDAY, JULY 18 11:00 – 3:00 P.M.

NYFOA MEMBERS, FAMILY AND FRIENDS INVITED. BRING A DISH TO PASS AND ENJOY HANS KAPPEL'S "SECRET RECIPE" BBQ CHICKEN @ \$6.00 PER PERSON

FOR RESERVATIONS: CALL: 861-8753

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Name This Critter ...

This mystery critter* was a commonly known pest in the great north woods many years ago. Of course, this was before the invention of chainsaws and skidding winches. Today it is probably considered an endangered species because the use of chainsaws to cut trees resulted in a "loss of habitat". I wonder if this issue was considered in the environmental impact statement when the chainsaw was invented.

Any NYFOA member who is old enough to remember the days before chainsaws, power winches, and loaders replaced felling axes, peaveys, and cant hooks will find this an easy identification. Of course, if you're that old... well, never mind.

Mystery Critter Can You Identify It?

Clue #1

The head of this critter is of a tomahawk-shaped appearance, and sits atop an irregularly thin body. A grotesque visage which this freakish mutt owes to the hatchet stems on which it subsists.

Clue #2

A member of the canine family, it is the bane of supply and depot camps on Northern logging operations. Has a head shaped like a Peavy. The body is slender and axe-handle shaped, with short stumpy legs. Looks a good deal like a dachshund, but really bears a closer resemblance to B. B. Bickford's bureau dog.

Clue #3

Distinctly a nocturnal prowler that hides in hollow logs or culvert pipes during daylight hours. Frequents logging camps after nightfall, hunting for axe and peavy handles, of which it is voraciously fond. Just one of these destructive critters has been known to consume two boxes of DB axe handles and sixteen six-foot peavy stocks in one night's eating.

Clue #4

They make nice pets, but are costly to feed. Jim Peters once tamed one. This was a short-sighted endeavor because Jim had a wooden leg made from an axe-helve. The only way he could keep his leg whole was to wear it to bed every night under a heavy woolen blanket. But he eventually got rid of the pup by feeding it red oak handles, which it dislikes as heartily as any experienced chopper.

What is the name of this critter?



Answer:

The Axe-Handle Hound
Canis consumens

*From Henry H. Tryon Fearsome Critters 1939.

Join Us!!

Help Support Forest Conservation

The New York Forest Owners Association is a not-for-profit organization which supports sustainable forestry practices and improved stewardship on privately owned woodlands. Our members are family forest owners and all others who care about the future of New York's trees and forests. If you are not a member, please consider joining today. Your membership can make a difference. Regular annual dues are just \$30.00 for an individual or \$35.00 for a family.

Contact: NYFOA, P.O. Box 541, Lima, New York 14485 1-800-836-3566 www.nyfoa.org