

THE OVERSTORY

SE ADIRONDACK CHAPTER NEWSLETTER



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Summer 2008

From the Editor's Desk... Welcome and thanks for joining us once more in the shade of "The Overstory!" Our "forestry events menu" for this issue ranges from the highly successful SAC-Cornell woodlands management workshop in early May, to the latest gains in combating the dreaded Emerald Ash Borer, scourge of the Midwest and now literally poised on our doorstep. As you make summer vacation plans, please strike a blow against this and other invasive insect pests by strictly heeding DEC's new firewood regulations. On a brighter note, check out Cornell's new pest management tools, and Mascoma Corp's plans for turning wood and other biomass products into motor fuel. Finally, special thanks to Chapter Secretary Barbara Hennig for "Notes from an Armchair Forester", which we hope will encourage others to share their favorite reads. Just dial morrison15@verizon.net, or call 518-765-4121. Thanks again!

Bob Morrison

Chairman's Report

John Sullivan, June 2008

If you were there on May 3, you would probably agree that *Putting Your Woods to Work*, the forest owners' workshop SAC sponsored in conjunction with Cornell Cooperative Extension and NY Tree Farm, was an outstanding success. Some 109 people immersed themselves for a full day in woodlot management topics ranging from the basics of management plans to firewood production to tax strategies.

Some drove as far as 400 miles to attend, and they had good reason: the overwhelming majority want additional income from their woodlots and – most important – want to adopt new management strategies to get it. This information comes from an evaluation survey prepared by CCE's Laurel Gailor. The survey revealed the best part of all: 29 of the 75 people surveyed said they will develop a management plan and take the two most important steps in that direction – mark their boundaries and select a forester. Another outcome was that 22 new members signed up for NYFOA membership.

And for our next trick: Response to this event was much greater than we expected, and even before we opened the doors of the Roaring Brook Ranch on May 3 we had started planning the next one, which for now I will call *Money Grows on Trees, But Can You Keep It?* The date is December 6, 2008. This time, the subject is forest management finance, and we will cover in depth such things as profitable harvesting, income tax issues, property tax strategies, and estate planning. We have one speaker already booked: Steve Goodman of the IRS, a forester who works with Extension and the USDA Forest Service to provide tax seminars for professionals.

Thank You. We were able to conduct *Putting Your Woods to Work* and schedule *Money Grows on Trees...* only through the generosity of many. Laurel Gailor devoted herself and the resources, staff and facilities of Cornell Cooperative Extension's Warrensburg office to the workshop's success. Peter Smallidge, CCE's chief forester, gave his time and found some grant money that supplied the guidebooks that each participant received. A number of business sponsors contributed money and products. And the NY Tree Farm Committee and its two successive chairs, Mike Burns and Erin O'Neill, provided a major grant and the original impetus for the workshop.

Many SAC members devoted their time, imagination and enthusiasm. They include Chris and John Wiley, Jane and Dave Jenks, Peter and Betty Gregory, G. Bob Baker, John Hastings, Steve Warne, Renee Bouplon, Bob Manning, Bob Morrison, Ed and Donna Welch, Bryan Clothier, Ron DeWitt, Jim Allen, Rod Nielsen. Also Bob Beyfuss, Mike Farrell, Erin O'Neill and Rich McDermott. Thanks are also due to those who were unable to attend or work directly on this event, for lending your support in a variety of ways so that we were encouraged to go forward.

One Last Word: At the very end of the day on May 3, as I was giving a pitch for NYFOA membership, one man rose to ask a question whose answer is simple, obvious and too often overlooked: "Do I have to own forest land to join NYFOA?" he asked.

Why didn't I think of that? Of course not! Ownership is not important. What IS important is understanding and devotion – understanding of the great role forests play in our economy and ecology, and devotion to protecting our forests' ability to continue that role. Let us continue.

Forest Enemies Face New Lines of Attack

Despite various setbacks, foresters and forest owners in the Northeast are getting new help in fighting destructive insects, invasive plants and tree diseases. Aid is coming chiefly in the form of strengthened environmental regulations, and more enlightened knowledge of the habits, biology and genetics of the principal forest pests we face. Recent examples follow.

▪ ***WASPS USED TO TRACK AND PURGE EMERALD ASH BORER***

In early July, scientists in New Hampshire and Ontario announced that they had begun using ground-nesting wasps to successfully detect EAB infestations, a key step in speeding eradication of the deadly beetle, while preserving the health of the host trees. The wasps apparently consider wood-boring beetles a delicacy for their larvae, setting out regularly to bring the insects home to their nests. By closely tracking the types of beetles favored in these excursions, the investigators hope to pinpoint the deadly EAB's presence more readily. Historically, EAB detection has been difficult and costly, while available eradication methods, such as debarking, are usually fatal to the infested trees. The hope is that early EAB detection will improve both lines of attack.

▪ ***STRENGTHENED FIREWOOD REGS TAKE EFFECT***

DEC has just redoubled its efforts to halt the introduction and spread of invasive insects in the Empire State, in light of mounting evidence that the pests are a fast-spreading, lethal danger to our rural and urban forests. Attention is again focused on the Emerald Ash Borer, because it represents a new danger for New York's woodlands, and has steadily advanced toward our borders since its discovery in Michigan in 2002. Other targets include the Woolly Hemlock Adelgid, Asian Longhorn Beetle and Sirex Woodwasp.

The latest DEC initiative comes in the form of strict regulations governing possession, sale and movement of firewood, both within the State and from outside its borders. Essentially, the new rules

require that all firewood brought into New York from an outside source, or moved in-State more than 50 miles, must be heat treated for eradication of invasive insects, fungi and pathogens. As defined in the regulations, “treatment” means heating the wood until its core temperature reaches 71° C (160 °F) or higher and holding it at that level for at least 75 minutes.

Spotlight On Emerald Ash Borer

Having wreaked havoc with urban and rural forests in Michigan, Pennsylvania, Ohio and other areas over the past 6 years, the EAB has gotten priority status in New York’s latest anti-pest efforts. The ash-loving beetle was recently discovered at two sites in the Province of Ontario less than 50 miles from the Empire State, and at sites in Pennsylvania and Ohio less than 100 miles from New York’s borders. Aside from this close proximity, the beetle’s apparent ability to hitch casual rides in firewood is well documented. In Michigan’s Upper Peninsula, for example, the pest has been found regularly in firewood being moved by campers and other vacationers, while a recent West Virginia case involved infested material discovered at a recreational campground.

These and other incidents have underscored the need for prompt, aggressive measures to control what has apparently become a readily available avenue for infestation, particularly during the vacation season. Besides dealing with the immediate biological danger, the aim is to raise public awareness of the acute threats these insects pose to humans and to the environment, and how easily those threats can multiply through casual movement of firewood.

Firewood Regulation Highlights

- The current emergency regulations became effective on June 3, 2008, for a period of 90 days. During that time, DEC will submit a formal rule-making proposal to the Governor’s Office of Regulatory Reform. Approval by that Agency will trigger a public comment period.
- The regulations do not affect landowners who cut wood on their own property, *for use at the same location. However, firewood moved more than 50 miles, for personal use or otherwise, must be treated as described above.*
- Anyone who cuts and transports firewood for personal use, within the 50 mile limit, must carry a completed *Certificate of Source*, a one-page PDF form available under Question 17 of “Frequently Asked Questions for Firewood Regulation,” at www.dec.ny.gov/animals/44008. Copies are also available at DEC Regional Offices.
- Unless heat-treated as specified above, firewood may not be transported, used or sold outside the 50 mile limit, regardless of its ownership or origin.
- “Firewood” is defined as wood, of any species, cut into a form and size suitable for use as fuel (e.g. kindling, logs, chunks, boards, etc).
- Logs, or log-length materials, are *not* covered by the regulations, unless they are used to produce firewood. Logs used for lumber, pulp, biomass, poles or pallets are not affected, because the related manufacturing processes are usually adequate to eliminate the pests of concern. *Movement of these materials may, however be subject to existing Federal and/or State quarantines.* Refer related questions to the DEC office listed below.
- The 50 mile transportation limit is defined as “a 50 mile linear distance determined by using the scale bar on a NYS road map, atlas or gazetteer.”
- Standing alone, the practice of “kiln drying” used to reduce the moisture content of green wood may not be sufficient to meet the temperature and exposure standards included in the regulations. Those criteria are considered controlling, in all cases.

New Regulations Well Received

These new rules are getting strong support among business and environmental interests, including the Empire State Forest Products Association; the Campground Owners of New York; the Residents Committee to Protect the Adirondacks; the Nature Conservancy; the Adirondack Council; and NYFOA.

For further information, call the DEC Division of Lands and Forests, at (518) 402-9425; consult the web sites listed below; and watch for more *Overstory* coverage.

www.dec.ny.gov/regulations/2359

www.dec.ny.gov/animals/7253

www.dec.ny.gov/regulations/44008

www.na.fs.fed.us/fhp/eab/firewood/

www.eneraldashborer.info

▪ **CORNELL OFFERS NEW PEST CONTROL REFERENCES**

Fortunately, New York's forest owners can now call on a variety of excellent pest management references for help with insects, invasive species and other unwanted visitors. Three examples follow. The first two may be reached at Cornell's ForestConnect web site (www.ForestConnect.Info), while the third is found at www.nysipm.cornell.edu/aes_ornamental.asp (Note: Be sure to include an underlined space between "aes" and "ornamental" when entering this address.). Look for additional pest control developments in future *Overstory* issues, and let us know how well they are meeting your needs:

- **ForestConnect Fact Sheet Series:** This collection of compact, handy references on a variety of subjects, from enhancing wildlife habitat to forest gardening, includes two pieces dealing with pest identification and management:
 - [Tree and Forest Health](#), offers an outline of primary forest health problems, including organic (insect and disease) and abiotic (nonliving) factors. The latter include root compaction, ice damage, drought and floods. Common signs and symptoms of tree stress are summarized, along with causal agents, control methods and prognosis. Additional readings and web sites are included.
 - [Controlling Invasive Species in Woodlots](#) includes a table of unwanted plants, by class, commonly found in New York's fields and forests, covering trees, shrubs, vines and forbs. Common and biological names are listed for each species, accompanied by its usual habitat (e.g. sun vs. shade), distribution strategy (via seeds, root suckers, etc.) and suggested control methods. Related web pages provide additional references.
- **ForestConnect Web Cast Series:** Another in the popular web cast series begun last winter, the latest program, entitled "[Managing Undesirable Vegetation](#)", offers a wide-ranging discussion of plants commonly classified as invasives, including their appearance, growth habits and various methods of mechanical, chemical and biological control. Dr Peter Smallidge, Cornell University's Extension Forester, presented the web cast to a live audience of about 60 participants on June 18. An audio recording of the program is available through the ForestConnect web site. A complementary discussion, on managing for high-quality hardwoods, will be presented on July 16, by Dr. James Finley of Penn State University. This web cast will also be recorded.
- **Interactive Plant Manager:** This new diagnostic tool will help forest owners, arborists, landscapers and forestry professionals effectively diagnose and deal with a wide range of insect pests affecting ornamental as well as forest trees. Through a new Cornell website, the user can access a full set of symptoms, signs and remedies for a variety of woody plants, accompanied by fact sheets, range maps, photos of pests and the damage they cause and life cycle charts to help the user select the most effective and least-toxic controls. The site can be found at www.nysipm.cornell.edu/aes_ornamental.asp

ROUNDTABLE PONDERES PRIVATE FORESTLAND ISSUES

Last April, NYFOA participated in a daylong roundtable discussion of a recent study organized by the Northeastern States Research Cooperative. The main research topic was public recreational use of private lands, but the discussion ranged widely, focusing especially on public treatment of forest landowners and how to make forest land ownership less challenging.

Tax issues were important, particularly the role taxes play in forcing subdivision of woodlands. Linked to taxes are rapid turnover of land ownership and the changing nature of that ownership. For example, one fifth of the properties studied in the Adirondacks had changed hands in the past 10 years, and one in ten had been subdivided. This contrasts sharply with historical practices in the area, which often saw large holdings remaining in a single family's ownership, undivided, for generations.

Additionally, forestland that had been held for timber or firewood is now being sold to buyers seeking not production but privacy, beauty and recreation. It seems that the rural ethic, at least in many places, is being replaced by an urban and suburban sensibility.

One conclusion to be drawn is that NYFOA's educational abilities are going to be tested in the coming years, as new landowners with new purposes are introduced to the importance and opportunities of woodland management. It's an important challenge, because it is the wise management of forestland that feeds New York's enormous forest products economy, including maple production and other types of agro-forestry and, ironically, the tourism that introduced many of the new owners to their lands.

There is much more to the research than can be covered here, and in the coming weeks there will be other roundtables in Vermont, New Hampshire and Maine. Check the research team's website, <http://www.privatelandaccess.org/index.php>, to learn more and follow the ongoing discussion.

Reported by John Sullivan

ALTERNATIVE FUELS GET STRONG BOOST FROM BIOMASS FIRM

Do you ever wonder if recent spikes in gasoline prices might spark an increased demand for ethanol and other alternative automotive fuels? What if that demand could be filled, in part, by converting ordinary wood chips and other wood-based materials to these new-age fuels, through a cost-effective, environmentally acceptable process? Finally, how might this affect the forest products business in New York State, particularly for the non-industrial landowner?

Enter Mascoma Corporation, a Boston-based chemical research company that hopes to begin producing viable gasoline substitutes nation-wide over the next several years, using such non-food biomass materials as wood, straw, paper pulp and various agricultural waste products. By concentrating on renewal energy sources that aren't part of the human food chain, the firm hopes to reduce American dependence on foreign oil, while helping to ensure a steady supply of clean, renewable energy and avoiding damage to the nation's food supplies.

Mascoma's business plan is clearly ambitious and far-reaching, with the potential to positively affect our lives and fortunes in many ways. However, the journey from pulp, wood chips and other

cellulose products to clean-burning fuels at the pump is a long one, and probably won't be finished for some time. The company is pleased with its progress, but cautions against quitting our day jobs just yet.

Meanwhile, Mascoma is currently building a wood chips-to-ethanol demonstration plant in Rome New York, scheduled to open by year's end; it has also just committed to building a full-scale wood-using facility in northern Michigan, to be finished by 2012. A series of these full-scale plants will be constructed at various sites around the U.S., each designed to use locally available raw materials, from switch grass to pulp waste. The hope is that these and other initiatives will hasten the day when biomass-based fuels are a cost-effective reality.

We'll do our best to bring you news of these exciting breakthroughs as they occur. Meanwhile, hats off to Mascoma and their brethren, as they toil in the vineyards of clean, renewable energy!

Notes from an Armchair Forester (Or: "Books and Magazines I have Enjoyed")

Barbara Hennig

Although I always enjoy those occasional woodwalks I go on, my forestry interests are now largely met by the newsletters, magazines, and books on the subject, either showing up in the mail or sometimes purchased. Some years ago *The Overstory* carried a short list of forestry books that members had and, as I recall, were willing to lend out.

I'm not sure that is practical, but nonetheless it would be interesting to compare notes on some of the books you all have acquired. I'll start by reporting on one of my favorites, *The Body Language of Trees, A handbook for failure analysis*. It's unexpectedly a fun book. I noticed the book in the catalog of The Forest Shop, a mail-order bookstore in Perth, Ontario, but which has a US postal address in Ogdensburg. I now see that both Amazon and on-line Barnes & Noble carry the book, as well as other books by one of the authors.

The general purpose of this book seems to be to avoid getting sued. The writing is folksy and clear (but serious), with numerous clever cartoon-type explanations. It originally was written in German by Claus Mattheck, a scientist, who "compared trees with mechanically optimal structures and found that trees are perfectly fashioned." The multiple illustrations, often with humorous captions, well show this relationship. If you took high school physics, this book is a good review of the mechanics unit.

The other author is Helge Breloer, a lawyer, knowledgeable about arboriculture, the value of trees, and of course the law, and is concerned with public safety. She gives many court cases (which happen to be in Germany, of course) but which illustrate the application of common sense (yes, even in the field of law).

The original book, *Handbuch der Schadenskunde von Baumen*, was published in 1993 and later translated into English by Robert Strouts, with editing by David Lonsdale, for the UK Department of Environment. Alex Shigo, well-known in the United States for authoritative books on trees, has a Foreword concerning tree biology, and Hans Kubler has a Foreword on the mechanics of trees; he is listed as a professor at the University of Wisconsin.

So with this start I would encourage any of you to tell of unusual books, or favorite books, you have valued. I still have a note from Peter Gregory from a year and a half ago, for example, mentioning

Thom McEvoy's *Positive Impact Forestry*. Someday I'll look into it.

As to magazines, *The Northern Logger and Timber Processor* out of Old Forge gives "for real" situations, the hard truth of working in or owning a forest, as a business. I particularly like Eric Johnson's editorials, and have to shamelessly admit those grisly accidents on the last page, in yellow, have a kind of fascination -- "better you than me."

Northern Woodlands thoughtfully addresses the many human aspects of life in the swath of northern forests (largely from Tug Hill into Maine), gently balancing disparate views. All NYFOA members received sample copies of this magazine recently. I have subscribed for a number of years.

Age doesn't stop me from enjoying my armchair, or rather the dining room table, which is my favorite reading site.

SAC Upcoming Events

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| July 15 –30 | Saratoga County Fair www.saratogacountyfair.org
Call <i>Brian Clothier</i> at 654-6620 to volunteer for booth duty. |
| August 18 – 24 | Washington County Fair www.washingtoncountyfair.com
Contact Ron DeWitt at newtwood@wildblue.net to volunteer. |
| September 21 | Fall Woods walk at Peter & Betty Gregory's – Shushan, NY
Picnic to follow; look for directions in a special mailing. |
| December 6 | "Money Grows on Trees" - Holiday Inn, Lake George, NY
A SAC-NYFOA Workshop on financial and business issues affecting forest owners. More details in the Fall <i>Overstory</i> . |

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NEW YORK FOREST OWNERS ASSOCIATION
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And Now For The Back Page...

About 25 people showed up on a gloriously sunny Saturday morning, May 17 to walk Burt Morehouse's woods and hear forester Steve Warne and Burt discuss their management decisions, mixed with plenty of ribbing about the proper way to fell a leaning pine (or maple) where you want it. Burt has about 80 acres of white pine and northern hardwoods in Diamond Point on Lake George, which he manages with the help of Steve. Hats off to both for a well-executed woods walk, and to their audience for arranging the weather!