



Allegheny Foothills Chapter Newsletter

Chairman's Corner

By Otis Barber

I am writing this on October 12th. A light rain has started after a long string of dry, warm sunny days. I used to take vacation time in early October in anticipation of some nice Fall weather like we have been enjoying. It is a good time to get ready for winter and tie up a lot of loose ends. My wood shed is full. I met that October 17th deadline mentioned in my last article. Now I have to concentrate on all those other projects that are part of preparing for winter. I have a 1/4 mile driveway so having the tractor and plow ready are important. Hopefully mid-November will be soon enough for that.

I hope to do some TSI before snow fall. That's an acronym for Timber Stand Improvement. I am not using it to impress you. I haven't known what it stood for for very long and in all likelihood someone reading this is also unfamiliar with the acronym and what Timber Stand Improvement means. It is (very simply put) an action that removes less valuable or inferior trees to enhance growing conditions for more valuable trees. It is possible in some cases to use a timber sale for this. I am sim-

ply going to remove some poor trees for firewood that will free my better ones to grow. I am also trying to redefine and open trails through the woodlot to be better able to know and manage it.

My neighbor Tony Pingitore, an MFO (Master Forest Owner) has walked through my woods with me on several occasions and has been very helpful by sharing knowledge and ideas. If you have not taken advantage of the services of an MFO volunteer I encourage you to. The MFO training to be certified comes highly recommended. It is an investment of about 4 days time and \$100.00. The training takes
continued on Page 2



NYFOA-AFC Annual Christmas Holiday Party

Come to our Christmas Party December 3, 2011 at the Randolph Community Building, Randolph, New York. The time is roughly 10:30 to 2:30. Meat, beverages and table service will be provided. Please bring a dish to pass and if you want to participate in the gift exchange bring a hand-made or low-cost white elephant gift, \$5.00 max. If you play an instrument and/or like to sing Christmas songs, by all means join us for the entertainment. Also, story tellers are welcome. The gift exchange is always fun, the food is always good and the music is exuberant. Come meet your fellow NYFOA members and chat a while. See you there!
-Tony Pingitore

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

CHAIRMAN'S CORNER, HOLIDAY PARTY	1
WNY WILDLIFE DYNAMICS	2
STEERING COMMITTEE	2
DEC SUMMER CAMP SCHOLARSHIP	3
MEMBERSHIP, WOODS WALK	4

Chapter Board of Directors:

- Otis Barber- Chair (716) 962-8175
- Jeff Rupp- Vice-Chair (716) 257-5652
- Kim Sherwood- Secretary (716) 287-3331
- Tony Pingitore- Treasurer (716) 962-4041
- State Association Rep Vacant
- Dan Anderson- Planning Coord. (716) 386-7802
- Membership Coordinator Vacant
- Shari Lake- Newsletter Editor (716) 560-6458

Chairman's Corner continued...

place in September at Arnot Forest near Ithaca. More MFO's are needed. I will make sure more details are in the newsletter about the program prior to training next Fall.

A scheduling change with the State NYFOA Board Meeting made it possible for me to attend the Woods Walk in Rushford at the Kurtis's. It was a great day and as always very rewarding. Thanks to the Kurtis Family for hosting the walk.

Don't forge the annual Christmas Party at the Community Center in Randolph on December 3rd. We schedule it early in the month to avoid conflicts with all the other activities of the Holidays. It is always a great time. See details elsewhere in this newsletter. -Otis Barber

Wow! It's a, a, a Cougar?

By Dan Anderson

A cougar sighting in Western NY is the stuff of legend. My wife informed me that the husband of a lady that she works with hit and killed a cougar with his car, right here in Chautauqua County. The cougar was chasing a deer, and carried DEC ear tags. Wow!

This was the first solid cougar evidence among so many rumors of the big cat. My favorite of the myths was the friend who vowed to send me a cougar picture taken near Panama, N.Y. Oh it was a cougar, all right, it's just that the Ponderosa pines in the background are not found in Western N.Y.

So what animals have taken residence in our area that weren't here during my boyhood? (My wife just yelled out that my boyhood was in the late 1800s-very funny). Coyotes, while not new arrivals, are definitely well established. Black bear used to be a very unusual animal in our parts. Their population, according to one Cornell biologist, has increased dramatically. One female bear actually gave birth to five cubs, with twins and triplets not being that unusual.

Fisher are in our area. The brother of a friend took a picture of one with his trail cam near Allegany, N.Y. Otter have been stocked in some of our creeks. The thirty-five pound bobcat is here. Wild pigs seem to have moved through much of Pennsylvania, and three were taken in Allegany State Park, although it is not certain how they arrived there.

Some of the animals in our woods are clearly different species than they were. Oh, the cougar hit by the car, you ask. I called the husband to find out that it wasn't him, but someone that he knows. Oh, it wasn't the person they know — leading to an endless chain with no conclusion, again. Who knows.

If you read the October, 2011, Conservationist Magazine, there is an article about a 140 pound cougar hit by a car in Connecticut. The DNA study indicates that it traveled from the Black Hills area of South Dakota, probably through New York State.

Was that a growl outside of the window? The dogs are going wild. Cougar? Who knows!

Steering Committee Meeting Highlights

The NYFOA-AFC Chapter held their fall meeting at R&M Restaurant in Randolph on Monday, October 3rd. Tony Pingitore presented the Treasurer's Report showing a savings account balance of \$1,763.14 and a checking account balance of \$4,241.74. The Camp Fund balance is now \$1,036.00. The Treasurer's report was accepted by those present. New business discussed included Nuts (no one stepped forward to take over coordination of the annual collection) and Christmas Holiday Party. Old business included State Board issues, Newsletter, DEC Camp, MFOs in AFC Region and County Fairs. If you are interested in becoming more active with the AFC Chapter, please contact any Board member listed on the front page of this newsletter.

For many years, NYS Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) has been enriching the lives of young people, ages 12 through 17, at their Environmental Education Summer Camps. DEC's website states: *"At DEC environmental education camps, campers experience a balance of environmental education, sportsman education and outdoor fun. Games, lessons and hands-on activities teach kids about forests, water quality and other aspects of nature. Swimming, hiking and canoeing are on the agenda, too, as campers learn new outdoor skills. Campers come away with a life-long passion for nature and dedication to stewardship of our natural resources. Campers participate in discovery groups, completing six lessons including group dynamics, explorations of different habitats, and human impacts on the environment. Campers learn science, solve challenges, play games, keep a journal, catch salamanders, net butterflies and discover the interconnectiveness of life on earth. All of the camps offer Sportsman Education."*

These are experiences AFC NYFOA believes are important for today's youth, just as they were decades ago when our members were young. As our society veers away from understanding relationships in the outdoors, our precious natural resources become more and more at risk. We believe it's important for young people to not only understand the natural world, but also be able to interact with others intelligently as society puts more and more demands on those assets. The great thing about the DEC camps is that campers have a great time while they're learning!

The details about the 2012 camps will not be available until November 1 on DEC's website (link below), after press time for this newsletter. However, here's some information about the 2011 season and we expect 2012 to be similar.

1. Camp sessions run for a week, from Sunday to Saturday and there were seven week-long sessions total. Camp was in session from July 3 to August 11. Campers could attend more than one session, but there were no overnight stays on Saturday so that DEC staff could prepare for the next session.
2. Camp costs were \$350 per camper, per week.
3. All camp counselors had at least two years of college in natural or biological sciences, natural resources conservation, environmental education or primary and secondary education. All counselors are certified in First Aid and CPR/AED. All staff had background checks performed on them.

As we have done in past years, AFC NYFOA will sponsor two or more campers to attend Camp Rushford in Allegany County. To apply for our sponsorship, prospective campers submit an essay explaining why they want to go to camp. Both the essay and a completed DEC application, available from their website, should be sent to us at the address below by January 10, 2012. (Applications are processed by DEC on a first-come, first-served basis. Applications from sponsored campers can be postmarked starting in mid-January, two weeks earlier than those from non-sponsored campers.)

Last year, AFC NYFOA was late to get the word out about this fantastic learning opportunity for youth in our area. We won't make the same mistake twice. We know there are interested youngsters who would love to attend this camp as our guests. Please help us help young people better understand the world around them by encouraging family and friends to apply and **submit an essay and completed DEC application to us by January 10, 2012!** They should be sent to: Mr. Otis Barber, 6399 Route 380, Sinclairville, NY 14782-9653.

Please note that with NYS's precarious funding situation, as of press time for this newsletter, we assume the camps will be operating again in 2012. We strongly encourage interested campers to keep a close eye on the situation by navigating to this website: <http://www.dec.ny.gov/education/29.html> or using the search term "NYSDEC Environmental Education Summer Camps" in one of the online search utilities (Google, Yahoo, etc.). 2012 camp applications will be posted on that website after November 1, 2011.

**NEW YORK FOREST OWNERS
ASSOCIATION**

Shari Lake, Editor
214 Huxley ST
Jamestown, NY 14701-5929
Phone: 716-560-6458 Cell
Email: afcnewsletter@yahoo.com

UPCOMING EVENTS

**DECEMBER 3
CHRISTMAS PARTY**

10:30 AM—2:30 PM

RANDOLPH

**BRIEF BUSINESS
MEETING FOLLOWED BY
A SMORGASBOARD OF
FOOD,
ENTERTAINMENT AND
WHITE ELEPHANT GIFT
EXCHANGE**

New Internet resource for private woodland owners—A social network site, <http://CornellForestConnect.ning.com>, allows woodland owners to learn about the ecology and management of their property's resources and connect with other woodland owners having similar interests. Anyone can view the content of the site, but posting to the site requires an owner to join the site. You can visit the main site www.ForestConnect.info for more information.



Wisdom is the power that enables us to use knowledge for the benefit of ourselves and others.
-Thomas J. Watson

Welcome New Members: Bob Ott, Gowanda, NY; Justin Crosthwaite, Mansfield, CT. **301 Total Membership**

On September 26 I had the pleasure of joining other folks on a woods walk at the property of Mark and JoAnn Kurtis near Rushford in Allegany County. It was a great day for a ride across the 3 counties of our chapter. The Kurtis's have one parcel that has been in their possession for about 20 years and have recently acquired a neighboring parcel. We observed the contrast between the newly acquired parcel where it had been left pretty much to manage itself and the neighboring parcel where TSI and other projects had been implemented.

The challenges of deer versus regeneration were discussed and the effects of deer browsing were observed. There were some nice Ash trees on the property and I was encouraged to hear the opinion that the Ash Borer moves very slowly on its own. New infestations occur when firewood or logs or nursery stock that is infested is transported by people to a new area. Given that, some woodlots might be safe for many years. Thanks to Zachary Kurtis for making the walk fun and interesting for my 3 Grandchildren! -Otis Barber (pictured above)

The *Allegany Foothill Chapter Newsletter* is published for members of the Allegany Foothills 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 interest of woodland owners. The Allegany Foothills Chapter was founded in 1989 and encompasses Allegany, Cattaraugus and Chautauqua Counties.

Membership is open to anyone interested in understanding how to manage a woodlot. For information on becoming a NYFOA member, contact Liana Gooding at (800) 836-3566. Annual membership is \$30 for individuals and \$35 for families and includes: subscription to this wonderful newsletter; the bi-monthly NYFOA statewide publication, *The New York Forest Owner*; attendance at Chapter meetings; and at statewide meetings. For more information visit www.nyfoa.org

Please email your comments to afcnewsletter@yahoo.com

