

New York Forest Owners Association Capital District Chapter Newsletter

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Message from the Chairman



Using a trail camera I began taking pictures of the various things that move about on the farm and forest. This became a sort of obsession in the late summer through fall. Mostly I have pictures and video clips of creatures I already know are out there, but everything is more interesting with a date stamp and infrared video in the dark of night. Coyotes, raccoons, foxes, birds, and also many video clips of reeds and leaves blowing in the wind end up discarded or kept in my computer when I download the photos. As we well know, mostly I have pictures of deer.

The Rensselaer Plateau Alliance [RPA] has been very busy with a wide range of activities and projects. I won't go into all of these, but do suggest you look at the RPA web site [<http://rensselaerplateau.org/RensselaerPlateau/default.aspx>]. There you can access the recently completed Regional Conservation Plan for the 118,000 acre forests of the Plateau, the three User Guides - one for municipal officials, another for land and forest owners, and a third for organizations that use the forest. In conjunction with the NYFOA endorsement, the RPA is hosting various landowner workshops in the upcoming months, including: a "Woods Forum" on Sunday, January 5th, 1-3 PM at the Darrow School in New Lebanon, NY. This is the third of four such workshops where landowners discuss among themselves how to maintain the value of their forestland for timber harvesting, wildlife, recreation and future generations.. These forums have been well attended. See the RPA website for more information or call Marybeth Pettit at 429-8526 for more information.

NYFOA-CDC is also sponsoring an RPA Estate Planning Workshop on Saturday, January 18th, 1-3 PM at the Stephentown Town Hall, 26 Grange Hall Rd. I know this is in conflict with our annual meeting. Come get an overview of estate planning from an experienced attorney. This workshop will explore Succession Planning and the human side of estate planning. It will focus on maintaining family ties to the land from generation to generation, building awareness of key issues facing family woodland owners and motivating families to address these challenges.

Jason Post is organizing two days of Game of Logging for February 8th and 9th. These classes will fill up fast, so if you are interested I suggest contacting Jason ASAP [phone 577-4101].

I hope you will attend the annual CDC-NYFOA meeting, January 18th at 4 PM [see info elsewhere]. I will be showing a film about logging in the Adirondacks from the 1930's called "Lumberjack Sky Pilot" filmed by a Chaplin for the logging camps. Hope to see you there.

It is full-time Winter now, and time to plow snow and keep the fires burning, both literally and in my head. While the trees may be dormant there are changes progressing at all times, in the woods, day-to-day management of the stands, and in our plans.

Dick Gibbs

Chair, Capital District Chapter

Welcome New Members!

The following members joined the Capital District Chapter since our last newsletter. Welcome all!

Hacker Murphy LLP	Latham, NY
Onteora Club	New York, NY
Mary Ann Randall	Albany, NY

Upcoming Events of Interest

Holiday Gathering Menands

Please join us! Chapter members, family, and friends are invited to attend the annual Holiday Gathering covered dish supper. If you have never participated before – bring a dish to pass and find out what you have been missing. This is a friendly, informal group of chapter members from across the region. Usually about 20-30 people participate. The event will be held on **Saturday, January 18, 2014** at the Bethany Presbyterian Church in Menands starting at 4:00 p.m.

Game of Logging - Altamont

The Capital District Chapter in cooperation with the Helderberg Rod and Gun Club will sponsor “The Game of Logging” on **February 8th and 9th** on Quay Road in Altamont. The Game of Logging is widely acknowledged as the premier training program in the country for cutting trees in the woods. Top instructors combine demonstration with participation to teach safety, productivity, conservation and cutting techniques. The training is offered to professional loggers, foresters, woodland owners, casual users, and anyone interested in learning any of the safety techniques.

Comments: “In all of the courses I've taken, all of the participants, from novice to expert, felt that the course was well worth it. Along the way, I've heard comments from participants such as; "NO ONE should go into the woods with a chainsaw without taking this course" , and; "After working with a chainsaw for 20 years, GOL has changed the way I work in the woods". The course material is well laid out and helps you understand the “WHY” of a given technique, rather than just memorizing a set of steps”.

The cost is \$125 for the eight hour workshop. To register contact Jason Post (ph 518 577-4101).

NYS Farm Show - Syracuse

The New York Forest Owners Association (NYFOA) has announced free workshops designed to help all New York landowners to get the most out of their woodlots. Fifteen free forestry programs to help owners realize greater benefits from their woodlands are scheduled for the 2014 Farm Show in Syracuse, **February 20-22, 2014**. Learn from experts. Come with your questions.

Forestry Awareness Day in Albany

Forestry Awareness Day will be held in Albany **March 17th**.

The forestry community in New York State knows we are blessed with extensive, productive forests, rich in biodiversity, providing priceless ecosystem services and a forest-based set of industries that provide many thousands of jobs, improve the economic climate of the state, and enhance the quality of life for 20 million New Yorkers. However, the greater public is not “in” on this knowledge. Woodland owners need to communicate this message to government officials. Those of us who are interested in seeing that the forest resource and the industries related to it are continued on a sustainable long-term basis need to inform and educate the rest. Especially important is the need to give factual information to our legislators and their staff, continuing recent dialogues and cooperative efforts to discuss important forestry issues with state leaders. FORESTRY AWARENESS DAY is an excellent way to achieve our communications goals.

If you are interested in attending and meeting with your legislative representatives please contact Muriel Church at mchurch@esfpa.org or (518) 463-1297.

Save Forests from Deer

By Jeffrey D. Corbin

New York's forests generate billions of dollars in economic value each year, from timber to tourism. They also generate billions more by providing clean drinking water, preventing flooding and erosion, and removing carbon from the atmosphere. Finally, they host more than 1,000 species of plants and animals, some of which are found in our region and nowhere else.

Unfortunately, our forests are in a state of crisis. The explosive growth in the number of white-tailed deer in recent decades threatens trees' ability to regenerate and provide these economic, recreation and ecological benefits.

The forests of the future can be seen in the carpet of tree seedlings growing slowly in the understory shade of their parents. However, that carpet is a thin one through much of our state, thanks to hungry deer who consume nearly every tree seedling save the few species they find unpalatable. Where there should be many young trees ready to replace adults as they die, instead there is little of the species variation that should form the raw material for successful resilience in the face of climate change and other environmental stresses.

High Deer
Populations
Threaten
Desirable
Forest
Regeneration
and
Biodiversity



Today, deer overpopulation poses a greater threat to New York's forests than anything except bulldozers. There are more than 1 million deer in New York, an average of more than 30 deer per square mile of forest. In some areas, particularly in the southeast including Long Island, the Lower Hudson Valley and the southern Catskills, you can find more than twice that density. Yet, studies tell us that forest damage is evident above 20 deer per square mile.

Scientists with The Nature Conservancy have found that in nearly one-third of the state, deer have stunted tree regeneration so much that our forests may

not be able to replace themselves. Deer also depress forest growth, reduce plant biodiversity and contribute to the decline of songbird populations and forest wildflowers.

In order to save our forests and all the benefits that they provide, the State Department of Environmental Conservation should sharply reduce deer densities. With few natural predators, hunting is the primary control on deer populations, and it should be a key component of strategies to reduce deer herds to appropriate levels. Hunters can maximize their effect by focusing on does, which drive deer population growth to a greater extent than the "trophy" bucks.

Recreational hunting alone, however, is not likely to solve the problem. Regulated, commercial hunting should be permitted in rural areas of the state. Such hunting could be encouraged by, for example, loosening restrictions on the sale of venison to the public.

Smaller deer populations make for a healthier forest. A healthier forest benefits all of the other components of the ecosystem — from the red-spotted newt to the cerulean warbler to the red trillium to the myriad of benefits that New York's forests provide to people.

And, a healthier forest benefits deer. Deer can so completely denude a forest that they run out of food. Deer have suffered spasms of starvation in the past, for example in the Alleghany Plateau of northwestern Pennsylvania in the 1930's. After witnessing this tragedy, along with the extreme damage the desperate herds did to the forest, no less a conservation icon than Aldo Leopold argued that managed culling was necessary to control deer populations.

A forest is more than a collection of the trees that make up its canopy. It is a community of plants and animals that interact in complex ways. Elevating any one species above the rest, as we have done with deer, is misguided and doomed to fail. Deer populations need to be managed properly — for the sake of our forests and the benefits they provides to people, and for sake of the health of deer populations themselves.

Jeffrey D. Corbin is an associate professor at Union College's Department of Biological Sciences.

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Oak Wilt Eradication in Schenectady County

A few weeks ago the Department of Environmental Conservation announced that they finished their oak wilt eradication efforts in the town of Glenville, Schenectady County. NYFOA members may remember that the disease was originally identified there in 2009. It was the first time that this disease had ever been found in New York State.

Seventy-five oak trees were cut and removed at that time to stop the spread of the disease. Every impacted property owner was offered a free maple tree as well as stump removal.



Oak Wilt on Red Oak Leaves

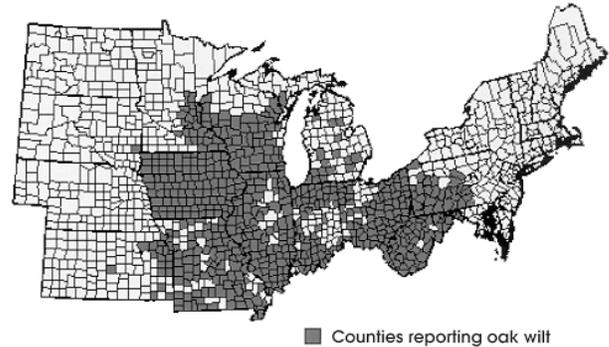
“We believe the disease has been successfully eradicated from this site and we are hopeful that further monitoring will confirm the eradication,” said Regional Director Gene Kelly in a written statement. “The last maple tree was planted in November which concluded our operational efforts in the Glen Oaks neighborhood.”

Oak wilt has been called one of the most destructive tree diseases in the United States with the potential of killing trees at epidemic proportions. Oak wilt is an infectious disease caused by the fungus *Ceratocystis fagacearum*, which invades and disables the water-conducting system in susceptible trees. All oaks (*Quercus* spp.) are susceptible to oak wilt to some degree, but some species are affected more than others. As water movement within the tree is slowed, the leaves wilt and drop off, and eventually the tree dies.

Oak Wilt is known to attack all species of oak but it kills red oaks quickly. It has been known to kill trees within a few weeks following infection. White oaks on the other hand may survive many years following infection.

Most of the tree mortality results from tree-to-tree spread of the pathogen through interconnected or grafted root systems, once an oak wilt center becomes established. New infection centers begin when beetles carry oak wilt fungal spores from infected red oaks to fresh, open wounds on healthy oaks. Wounds include any damage caused by wind, hail, vehicles, construction, squirrels, birds or pruning.

The map below shows where the disease has been found in the central and northeastern states.



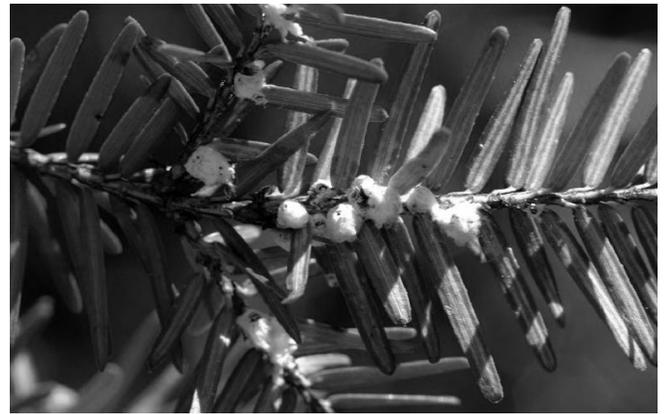
The following symptoms are associated with oak wilt. In early spring, young leaves simply wilt, turning pale green and brown, usually remaining attached for a period of time. Mature leaves develop dark green water soaking symptoms or turn pale green or bronze, starting at the leaf margins and progressing inward. This can begin on one branch and quickly engulf the entire tree. Red oaks generally die within 4-6 weeks.

DEC plans to continue to monitor the area to ensure that the disease does not reappear. A quarantine preventing the removal of any un-chipped oak material from the neighborhood will remain in effect until further notice from DEC.

It's advisable to regularly monitor the health of any oak trees you have on your property. If the trees appear to be infected, contact the nearest DEC forestry office. That would be either Schenectady or Stamford in the Capital District Chapter area.

Beetles to the Rescue

About five hundred laricobus beetles were flown in from the state of Washington and released this fall in Mine Kill State Park in Schoharie County. The beetles are predators of the hemlock woolly adelgid. Many hemlock trees in the park are infested with woolly adelgids. The goal is to control the population level of the adelgids which feed on hemlock needles. Heavy infestations result in defoliation and death of the trees.



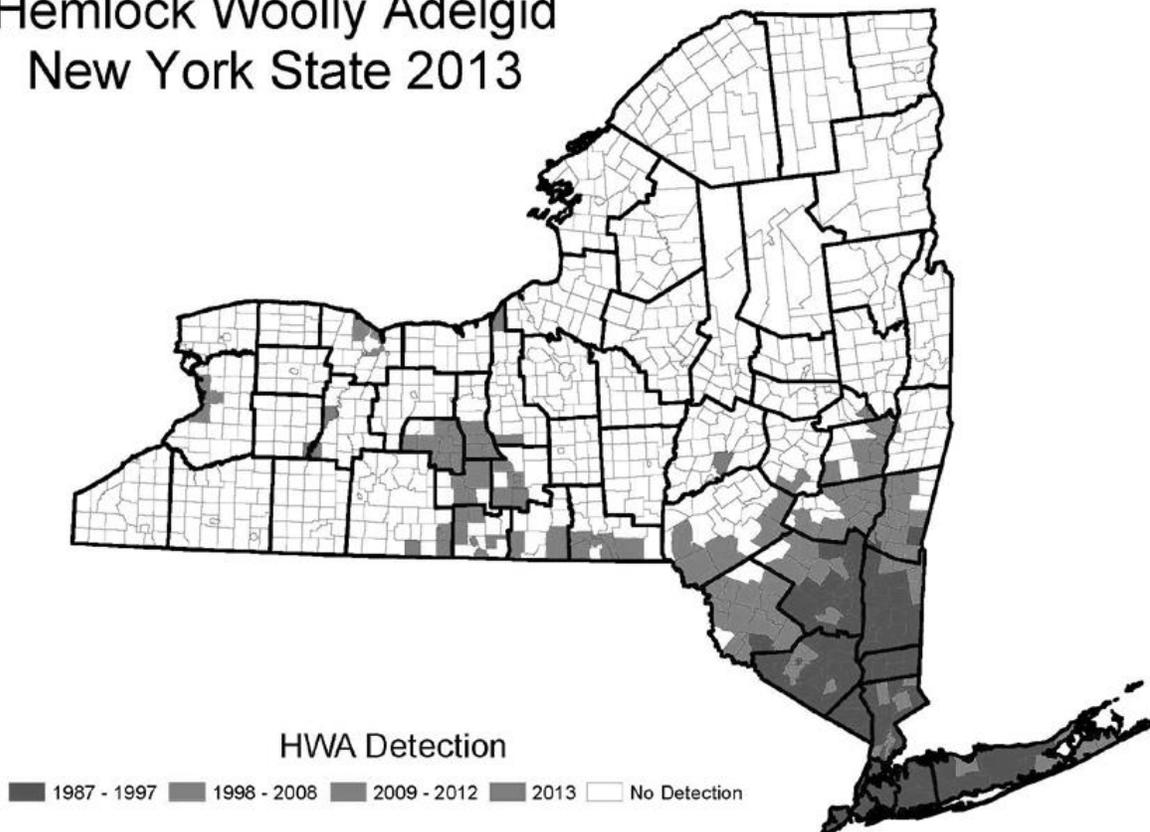
Woolly Adelgid on hemlock needles



Laricobius Beetle

The hemlock woolly adelgid was initially identified in southeastern New York State in the 1960's. It has been gradually spreading northward. The map below shows the progress of the infestation since 1987.

Hemlock Woolly Adelgid New York State 2013



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2014 Steering Committee

Meeting Schedule:

January 14th – 6:30 p.m.
April 8th – 6:30 p.m.
July 8th – 6:30 p.m.
October 14th – 6:30 p.m.

Note: Chapter members are encouraged to join the steering committee. Meetings are held every three months at the Colonie Library.



Woods Walk Sites Wanted

Have you been working in your woods to accomplish timber stand improvement, grow crop trees, nurture a crop of mushrooms, create special wildlife habitat, etc.? Why not share your experience and what you enjoy about your woods by volunteering your property for a woods walk? NYFOA's statewide Restore New York's Woodlands (RNYW) initiative will again be held in May and our chapter will participate with events distributed throughout our geographic area. RNYW offers special opportunities to consider the regeneration problem, but a woods walk can be scheduled for any time of the year. To volunteer, contact anyone on the steering committee and we will visit your site to plan the next step. Thanks.

Phil Walton, pwalton518@gmail.com or (518)895-5346

Tree Trivia

DID YOU KNOW

- Trees appeared on Earth long before the dinosaurs did - about 400 million years ago. Some trees can live to be more than 1000 years old.
- Trees are the largest of all living things - some species can grow taller than 300 feet and weigh more than 600 tons.
- The oldest living tree on Earth is a 4,700 year-old bristle cone pine tree in Nevada.
- There are 747 million acres of forest land in the United States - more than two-thirds of that land is privately owned.
- Trees are used to make more than 5,000 products, including houses, paper, furniture, medicines such as aspirin and quinine, and fuel.
- Trees produce a great range of edible fruit and nuts including apples, bananas, mangos, avocados, macadamias, and Brazil nuts.
- Trees improve water quality by preventing erosion and by filtering out unwanted nutrients and pesticides.

RIDDLE CHOICES

- A. Gum
- B. Plum
- C. Fir
- D. Palm
- E. Pine
- F. Ash
- G. Pear
- H. Crab
- I. Sandal
- J. Weeping Willow
- K. Elder
- L. Cork
- M. Lime
- N. Beech
- O. Bass
- P. Dogwood

RIDDLE ME TREES (Think Puns)

1. What tree sighs and languishes?
2. What tree is made of stone?
3. What tree grows near the ocean?
4. What tree always has a partner?
5. What tree is pulled from the water with a hook?
6. What tree is sometimes found in bottles?
7. What is the straightest tree that grows?
8. What tree is older than other trees?
9. What tree is found after the fire bums out?
10. What tree keeps animals warm?
11. What tree can be found in people's mouths?
12. What tree is very sad?
13. What tree is worn on your feet in the summer?
14. What tree does everyone carry in their hands?
15. What tree is an awful grouch?
16. What tree is easily recognized by its bark?

Answers: 1-E, 2-M, 3-N, 4-G, 5-O, 6-L, 7-B, 8-K, 9-F, 10-C, 11-A, 12-J, 13-I, 14-D, 15-H, 16-P

from the North Carolina Department of Forest Resources.

Join NYFOA

Help Support Sustainable Forestry

The New York Forest Owners Association is a not-for-profit organization established to encourage sustainable forestry practices and sound management of privately owned woodlands. Members include woodland owners and all others who care about the future of New York's trees and forests. Please consider joining because your support helps 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
