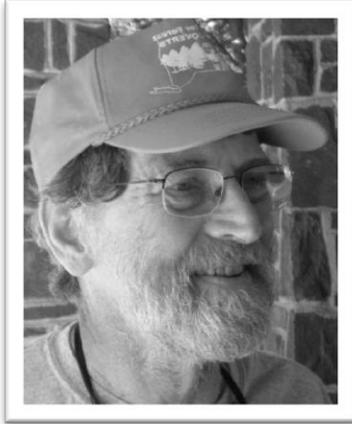


New York Forest Owners Association Capital District Chapter Newsletter

Volume 25, Issue 1

January 2015

Message From the Chair



Presently we are having our first real introduction to the looming winter. We have had tastes of cold weather, rain, even eight inches of snow, but now we are getting ice, sloop, and more of the mix. The personal

challenges of winter are matched by those facing the woodlot. In some areas of the CDC I suspect heavy ice coating is wreaking havoc. What with health issues, care-giving, and myriad other non-forest issues, we make it through one day at a time and hope the forest is OK to be on auto-pilot for a while. But it is also a very a good time to renew my familiarity with trees. See the article below on not drifting into benign neglect forest management.

Do you remember Fleetwood Mac's "Bare Trees" album [1972]? You may have it in your collection. The cover photo is a grey foggy view of bare tree silhouettes. We played it hundreds of times, and the songs and the photo fit my sentiments today. I love the ability to really see the detailed outline of trees in winter, from trunk up to last reaching branches. I would like to gather your input of favorite forest or tree related songs. Possibly your favorites run more like Hank Williams "Setting the Woods on Fire" [1952]? I am sure a "Forest Owner's Playlist" could be an interesting project. Send your favorites to me and I will assemble a play list of forest related favorites to share. Possibly we can listen to some of them at the annual meeting January 17th. There! I just created another project for myself!



As I look out my own window on this December day I see a shagbark hickory with long hanging bark shards, bent stems of competing trees, limbs on a White Pine stand I planted 40 years ago that are now self-pruning with the heavy ice testing every lateral new growth. More practically, it is a great season to be in detailed contact with your woodlot and get to know each and every tree for what it really is and where it is headed. The summer foliage can disguise the harsh reality of a tree's health. While the trees are dormant I need to be actively engaged in my thinking and forest management plans. A good part of that is to get out into the woods during January.

Dick Gibbs

Winter Gathering Speaker

How many bees must work a full lifetime to make a single teaspoon of honey? You'll get the answer from our speaker at the winter gathering pot luck supper Saturday January 17th. Lori Rulison will be telling the story of Rulison Honey Farms and to answer your questions. The honey farm is a fourth generation family business which started in 1893. The farm is located at 237 Shellstone Road in Amsterdam.



Lori Rulison shows a bee keepers hat

Honey bees are important in agriculture because they are responsible for pollination of approximately one third of the United States' crop species. This includes peaches, apples, pears, cherries, raspberries, blackberries, cranberries, cantaloupes, cucumbers, and strawberries.

A current concern of bee keepers is Colony Collapse Disorder, which has killed hundreds of millions of bees and spread into more than 30 states since appearing in Florida in the fall of 2006. Some studies have linked bee losses with use of certain pesticides found in consumer garden care products and also used to coat nearly all corn seed as a protection against pests as the plant grows. The pesticide

gets into the plants' pollen and nectar, which are consumed by bees and fed to their young.

The Rulisons rent their bees to local orchards, such as Indian Ladder Farms, for pollination of fruit trees. They also produce a variety of honey products which are sold in stores throughout the capital region.

You'll have an opportunity to hear from an expert about the care and management of honey bees and the manufacture of honey products. You'll also have an opportunity to purchase a jar or two of honey!



Gary Rulison working with some of his winged employees



Products from Rulison's Honey Farm

A Visit to Hudson River Hardwoods

Hudson River Hardwoods held an open house on Saturday, October 18th for the Capital District Chapter. This facility in Leeds, New York, is a log sort yard owned and operated by Jason Post who is a chapter member. It was a great educational experience for everyone who attended.

Jason sells the logs wherever they will bring the highest price. Log sort yards encourage more accurate grading, scaling, and sorting and offer an opportunity to merchandise logs into higher value products (bucking long logs into various short log products like sawlogs, peelers and slicers).



Jason explains log grades



Jason Post

Jason started by showing us how he cuts logs from full length tree trunks that are delivered to the yard. The objective is to maximize the value of each tree trunk as it is bucked into shorter logs.

Once the logs have been cut out they are measured, tallied, tagged and sorted into different piles depending on the species and quality. The logs are then ready for shipping – some to Canada, some overseas, and some to domestic mills – all depending on where they will bring the best price which determines how much the landowner receives.

Jason started the business eleven years ago with the purchase of a vacant parcel of land on route 23b in Leeds which is near Catskill. One of his goals was to provide woodland owners the opportunity to sell timber and get good prices without overcutting the woodlot. Although he does not have a logging crew, he works with several experienced and reputable local loggers who will cut a landowners timber.



A delivery of logs to the yard

Forest conservation is important to Jason. His motto: "sustainable forests are the beginning of a future, exploited forests are the beginning of an end"

Making Syrup – Carl Wiedemann

If you like pancakes covered with real maple syrup as much as we do, then you know that the syrup is the most expensive part of the experience. Around here it goes for \$50 a gallon and up. The high cost of syrup and the challenge to “do it yourself” provided the incentive to try making our own backyard variety some years back. It was fun (mostly) and we gained a much greater appreciation for how much time and effort goes into making syrup.

You don't need a woodlot to make backyard maple syrup, and back then we didn't. You just need a few sugar maple trees to tap, a suitable container to boil the sap, and a supply of firewood. You may have some suitable candidates right in the yard that can be tapped. In our case we bordered a small patch of woods owned by a neighbor who graciously gave me permission to tap a half dozen maple trees. On average each tap hole will yield a quart of syrup over the season. It takes 40 gallons of sap to make a gallon of syrup.

My sap buckets were the empty plastic one gallon milk jugs from the kitchen. The sap spiles were 3" sections cut from a length of 1/4" copper tubing. Once a tap hole was drilled the tubing was just pushed in. During a run the sap flowed easily from the homemade spile into the jug which was tied to the tree trunk with some baling twine.



Milk jugs substitute for sap buckets

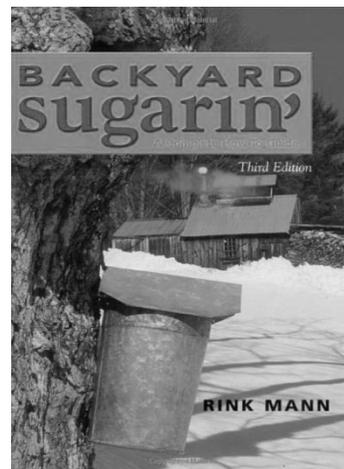
When the weather conditions are right, the sap runs into the jug. I left the tops on to keep any rain or insects out and simply poked a hole near the top where the spile entered.

The most challenging part of getting set up was finding a suitable pan. Fortunately, the local junk yard was not opposed to selling some items from their collection which included some commercial size cooking pans at a very reasonable price. So, with the pans set on concrete blocks in the backyard, some firewood, and several gallons of maple sap we were all set to make syrup.



A backyard evaporator

Boiling off maple sap to make syrup is a slow process, depending on the surface area of the pans. The biggest challenge we had was keeping track of the fire and keeping the sap in the pan from all boiling off. Unless you monitor what going on out there, you'll either lose the fire or worse, overcook the syrup. We had both experiences and learned that it's easier getting a new fire started than cleaning burnt maple sugar from the bottom of a scorched pan!



An excellent guide to making backyard syrup [Backyard Sugarin'](#) by Rink Mann - \$9.30 on Amazon.

Woodlot Management by Benign Neglect – Bill Cook

“The best way to predict the future is to invent it” – Alan Kay

Benign neglect, at best, is a state of good intention without action. Oftentimes, the failures of omission have more dire consequences than errors of commission. In other words, what we don't do can be just as important as what we actually do. Forests are far too often “managed” through benign neglect.

Doing “nothing” generates opportunity for unpleasant things. A vegetable garden ignored is a garden lost; forests are much the same way.

Many well-intentioned forest owners allow “nature” to take its course, thinking that nature “knows” best. Nature “knows” nothing. However, natural processes have predictability. More often than not, this leads to unintended and undesirable consequences.

In a way, “natural” forests don't exist, at least not in the romantic sense of some set of pre-human environmental conditions. We have inherited a legacy shaped by historic over-harvest, wildfires and exotic species introductions. Therefore, forests can no longer follow an entirely natural course. The notion of returning to “pre-Euro-American” forest conditions is not only ecologically impossible, but it is absurd from the social and economic standpoints as well. Forests may “look” natural to the casual observer, but the way something looks is an exceptionally poor indicator of forest health and quality.

Looking to the future and imagining what might be is a far more valuable exercise than benign neglect. Securing a healthy and vigorous forest that meets the demands of society takes more than good intentions; it takes management and a sense of community welfare. We often forget the importance of forests, other than for “trophy” possessions or a place to stick a house into. Forests are essential elements for our survival. Relegating forests to a mere recreational role is extremely short-sighted and calls into question a range of social justice issues. Owning forest land opens up a rich and exciting set of purpose-driven possibilities.

Forest resources produce valuable commodities. Some folks may not acknowledge their personal use of wood-based products, but wood is just as vital to our livelihood as oil, coal, gas, metals, water and any other raw material. One main difference, of course, is that wood is renewable. If we put our

collective minds to the task, more of our supply could be produced domestically, and responsibly.

Forest resources also have a wide range of non-commodity values, such as wildlife habitat, water and soil protection, recreation, etc. Recognition of these values has been longer-in-coming in some cases, but they are also important values that can be enhanced through management.

Benign neglect can lead to the degradation of all these values. There are numerous examples. Timber quality and dollar values decline long before the trees become outwardly unhealthy. As stream-side forests crumble, they may not be replaced by new forests. This can lead to deterioration of both stream quality and trout habitat. Careless recreation has introduced and spread a variety of exotic and invasive species. The patterns of second home and retirement construction are alarming. Forests that grow too dense will lose structure, affecting wildlife habitat, and slowed tree growth creates a forest under stress, an unhealthy condition. Too much shade or too much light can prevent the regeneration of many trees, shrubs and flowers. Mismanaged and unmanaged forests frequently have less tree species diversity, making the forest more susceptible to diseases and insects. The ravages of beech bark disease in the eastern Upper Peninsula and the spread of oak wilt across the region are good case studies of forest damage tied to human neglect.

Forest management seems to be one of those activities with numerous win-win outcomes and is the only sensible choice to deal with the increasing pressures on our forest resources. Cultivating a sense of stewardship through better management becomes a cherished mission. Not only can competitive and renewable revenues be enjoyed, but all the other benefits of forest ownership can be increased, and forests can be better protected. According to Michigan State University Extension, forestry is a solution to many of our environmental challenges. We practice benign neglect at our own peril.

Bill Cook is Extension Forester, Michigan State University. Reprinted with permission of the author.

Upcoming Events

What: Winter Gathering Potluck Dinner

When: Saturday, January 17th starting at 4:00 **Where:** Bethany Presbyterian Church, 21 Lyons Avenue, Menands, NY

Questions?: ph 785-6061

Plan to attend our Annual Winter Gathering and share the great food prepared by the many good cooks in our chapter. Just bring a dish and/or dessert to pass. Beverages and all dinnerware are provided. Our special speaker this year will be Lori Rulison of Rulison's Honey Farm to tell us all about raising bees and making honey. Join us for good food and conversation, and a very interesting speaker!

What: Sugar Bush & Sap House Tour

When: Saturday, March 21, 2015 at 10 a.m. but is dependent on the sap flow – call first.

Where: 245 Hidley Rd., Wynantskill, NY

Questions?: ph 283-0155

This is a great opportunity to see a small scale maple sugaring operation, starting with a tour of the woods to learn about tapping. There we will also see the sap collection system via lines and vacuum pump. The tour will move to a nearby property where the sap house is located. The operation is a good size for a landowner or farmer who wants a maple sugaring side business. Dress for the weather on this program!

Finally, note the steering committee next meets on Tuesday January 13, 2015 at 6:30 pm in the William K Sanford Library, 629 Albany Shaker Road, Loudonville NY to plan events to come. We welcome your input and hope you become active in the chapter and help foster stewardship of our forest resources.

For more news and information about enjoying and managing your forest, log onto: www.nyfoa.org. If you would like to receive reminders of future chapter events, contact Phil Walton (pw Walton518@gmail.com) to be added to the electronic mailing list.

Welcome New Members

Got Trees?

Get More from Your Woodlot Learn More, Earn More

Free programs at the NY FARM SHOW

February 26-28, 2015

State Fairgrounds - Syracuse, New York

Free Programs to help landowners realize more benefits from their woodlots will be presented each day during the 2015 Farm Show in Syracuse by the New York Forest Owners Association.

New for this year: "Ask a Forester" is made possible by the State Department of Environmental Conservation with a forester in the booth area on each day of the Farm Show. Visitors are invited to bring their questions to the Show, or pause at the booth area before or after attending a seminar program. The DEC foresters and trained volunteers are there to help with resource materials, displays and offer expert advice.

Learn More, Earn More seminars are open to all. Topics include improved wildlife and bird habitat, using private foresters, profitable timber sales, federal cost sharing for woodlot improvement, woodlot development and growth over time, income taxes, and family legacy experiences. Programs start on the hour and allow time for questions and discussion.

NYFOA will have an information booth on the main corridor of the Arts and Home Center, and the Seminars are held in the Somerset Room just steps away on the lower level of the Center.



These programs are presented by the New York Forest Owners Association with the cooperation and backing of the NY Department of Environmental Conservation, Cornell Cooperative Extension, SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry and with special thanks to each of our expert speakers.

CDC Steering Committee

Jim Beil, Secretary jbeil.tr7@gmail.com	ph 355-4471
Mike Birmingham, Member mjbirmin@nycap.rr.com	ph 758-2621
Ron Bernhard, Member rgb138@msn.com	ph 765-4600
Fred Bockis fbockis@ymail.com	ph 253-9856
Renee Bouplon, Director* bouplonrj@gmail.com	ph 929-7832
Jim Bulich, Member bettyjim@mhccable.com	ph 943-5047
Dick Gibbs, Chair rgibbs@nycap.rr.com	ph 283-0155
Jeff Kehoe, Member jekehoe@syr.edu	ph 596 9040
Ron Pedersen, Director* rwp22@nycap.rr.com	ph 785-6061
Jason Post, Vice Chair jasonrpost@gmail.com	ph 577-4101
Dave Schmidt, Member	ph 237-8327
Bob Sheedy, Member rms47@aol.com	ph 482-1288
Phil Walton, Director* pwalton518@gmail.com	ph 895-5346
Carl Wiedemann, Editor wiedeman@nycap.rr.com	ph 895-1028
Marilyn Wyman, Member mfw10@cornell.edu	ph 622-9820

* Director – member of the NYFOA state board of directors

Special Note To Chapter Members:

By now you should have received your issue of The New York Forest Owner which describes the NYFOA Gift Membership program. With the gift-giving season upon us we now have the opportunity to make a significant increase in our membership, and you can perhaps solve a gift giving problem for yourself. Your Chapter Steering Committee and I are writing to ask you to join us in availing ourselves of this Gift Membership program. A growth in membership translates to a stronger impact and a bigger contribution to the health of the forests of New York. Read member Dean Faklis' article and find many other compelling reasons to introduce people to NYFOA at the special rate.

Your membership in NYFOA already demonstrates a commitment to our mission of good forest stewardship and we trust that you have benefited from membership in both our chapter and the state organization. With this program you have the opportunity to play a special role in the furtherance of our shared mission. Certainly you have family and friends who would be interested in what draws you to your woodlands and neighbors who have property with similar issues and concerns as your own. By taking advantage of this program (and, perhaps, solving some gift-giving uncertainties) you can spread the word within your own community. Those members wishing to give gifts can use the mail-in form in the 'Forest Owner' or download the form at our home page (www.nyfoa.org). Also on our home page you can link to an on-line form for direct submission. Individuals giving the most gifts will be written up in the 'Forest Owner', will be recognized at our annual meeting in March, and will be able to select a prize of their choosing from the NYFOA store (page 5 of the 'Forest Owner').

The success of this program depends on you, our members, taking the time and making the effort to bring new people into the fold. We hope that you will make a gift membership or two.

I also want to take this time to wish each of you a Happy Holiday season!

Sincerely,

Phil Walton
for the Capital District Chapter Steering Committee

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 \$45.00 for an individual or family.

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