

The Western Finger Lakes Forest Owner



Spring 2023

Volume 37, Number 1

Forestry for Wildlife

By Colette Morabito

The next Western Finger Lakes (WFL) General Meeting is scheduled for Tuesday April 4, 2023 at 7:00 p.m. at the United Church of Christ, 8758 Main Street, Honeoye, NY 14471.

Please consider joining your WFL neighbors and members for our first meeting together in 2023. With spring in the air our attention, reflections, and plans move to our wood lots. **Forestry for Wildlife** is the topic for our spring meeting. Come and listen to the various forest management practices which directly benefit wildlife. Emily Bonk and Mike Palermo (see bio's below) plan to discuss young forests, Timber Stand Improvement (TSI) that creates rotting logs and snags, vertical structure, killing invasives, promoting native plant diversity, Best Management Practices (BMP) for vernal pools, and late-successional forests. They plan to highlight overlooked wildlife-super plants (e.g., serviceberry, spicebush, chokecherry, flowering dogwood, viburnums). Mike Palermo will bring the wildlife angle and will discuss what flora and fauna will benefit from the forest related work discussed by Emily Bonk. A great team of hands-on professionals that we can learn from, to whom we can ask questions, and then take their recommendations right into our own wood lots. Whether you are new to forestry or a seasoned lumber-jack, this presentation will be relatable to all.

Emily Bonk is a Forester in the Bureau of Wildlife for the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC), Region 8. She is a Canandaigua native. Emily attended the State University of New York, College of Environmental Science and Forestry (SUNY/ESF), located in Syracuse, where she received a B.S. in Natural Resource Management and an A.A.S. in Forest Technology-specifically at the ESF Ranger School. Ms. Bonk has been employed with the DEC since 2011. She began as a Forest Technician and became a Forester with Wildlife in 2015. Those who attended the Hi Tor woodswalk last April will remember Emily as the leader of that walk.

Mike Palermo is a Certified Wildlife Biologist with the Bureau of Wildlife for the DEC, Region 8. He, like Emily, is also a Canandaigua native, and graduate of SUNY/ESF. He earned a bachelor's degree in Wildlife Science in 2007 and a master's degree in Conservation Biology in 2011. He has been employed with the DEC for 11 years and has been a Wildlife Biologist with the agency working on forest management for the past 8 years. He is a lifetime member of NYFOA (since 2020) and a member of the WFL chapter. With two very young children at home, participation in chapter activities has been challenging. However, as a speaker at this meeting, it will be the perfect opportunity for him to meet us all.

Editor's note

By Mike Seager

As you can see from the schedule of upcoming events in this issue, we are holding a number of events this year that we hope will be interesting and informative. In particular, we are looking forward this October to the revival of our annual dinner. This has been our best-attended event since its inception more than 10 years ago. We obviously had to curtail it, along with many other events, during the pandemic. We hope it will be as successful in the future as it has been in the past. Watch this newsletter and your email for details as we firm up our plans. Before that time, there are plenty of other events coming up to keep you engaged. We have meetings in April and May, and woodswalks in June and July. Summaries of all of them appear elsewhere in this newsletter. Please mark your calendars, and we hope to see you all several times in the coming year.

Once again, I want to encourage everybody to consider contributing something to this newsletter. If you are doing something interesting on your property, share it with the rest of us. It doesn't have to be a big or exciting project, or even a successful one. Small ideas are often the most useful to others, as they can be implemented quickly and at low cost and so are more likely to apply to others. And while sharing your experiences with a less-than-successful project might seem daunting, helping people learn from your mistakes can help others avoid those same pitfalls.

(Continued on page 7)

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The *Western Finger Lakes Forest Owner* is published for members of the Western Finger Lakes 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 interests of woodland owners. The Western Finger Lakes Chapter was founded in 1988 and encompasses Genesee, Livingston, Monroe, Ontario, Orleans, Seneca, Steuben, Wayne, and Yates Counties.

Membership is open to anyone interested in understanding how to manage a woodlot. NYFOA membership can bring returns in the satisfaction of growing quality timber, stabilizing forest industries and markets, providing permanent jobs, increasing the value of your woods, enlarging areas of natural beauty across the state, and leaving behind a monument in living trees to bless the tomorrows for the youngsters of today. For information on becoming an NYFOA member visit nyfoa.org, or contact Liana Gooding, NYFOA Secretary, NYFOA, P.O. Box 541, Lima, NY, 14485 or at 1-800-836-3566. Annual membership for an individual or family is \$55 and includes: subscriptions to this newsletter; to the bimonthly NYFOA state-wide publication, *The New York Forest Owner*; attendance at chapter meetings; and to statewide meetings. Two-year memberships are available for \$100, three-year memberships for \$150, and Lifetime memberships for \$500.

Readers are encouraged to submit articles for publication in this newsletter. Articles should be mailed or e-mailed to Mike Seager at the address to the left. Electronic submissions are preferred. Any letters should be sent to the Chair for consideration.

For event reminders and late-breaking news, subscribe to our email list by sending a blank email to nyfoa-wfl-news-subscribe@npogroups.org

Note: The deadline for the Summer 2023 issue is May 15

Longmeadow Woodswalk

By Eileen Schaefer

We will meet for our next woodswalk on Friday, June 9, 2023, 9:00 am at The Tschorke family cabin, Longmeadow.

Longmeadow has about 40 acres, with a cabin and barn. 30 acres of that is wooded with Northern Hardwoods and stands of conifers as well. The ten acres of fields include about seven acres of blue lupines, which are quite impressive in early June. Tom created a 500 yard long road last summer, selling off the red pine saw logs that he cleared. A pond was dug two years ago (huge learning experience!). Tom has taken out a lot of ash (commercial salvage cut followed by firewood cuts). More ash to pull out still and he has also planted and protected hundreds of trees/shrubs to get some reforestation going.

The DEC created a Forest Management Plan for him 3-4 years ago, and it was updated last summer. Tom received a USDA CSP grant last summer, with projects scheduled over a five-year period. The plan includes invasive removal, forest thinning, and a couple of one-acre patch cuts to create new forest.

Woodswalks are held rain or shine, so come prepared. Bring a bag lunch if you wish.

****Directions to "Longmeadow" Tschorke Family Cabin, 6242 Butts Road, Prattsburgh, NY 14873**

Coming from the north into Naples, NY:

- Head south on NYS Rte 21 through the center of Naples.
- Continue straight ahead onto NYS Rte 53 towards Prattsburgh.
- Drive 7.6 miles towards Prattsburgh on NYS Rte 53.
- Right (south) onto Mattoon Rd (called Block School Rd on the other side of Rte 53).
- Drive 2.5 miles to Butts Road.
- Right (west) onto Butts Road (becomes dirt road quickly).
- Drive 1.2 miles to our grass driveway on the left, after cresting the hill.
- Signpost with name Tschorke and #6242 at driveway entrance.

Park in log landing just prior to driveway, or follow signs. Walk 750' to cabin area. For special circumstances, someone can be dropped off by continuing down Butts Rd further to where split rail fences mark cabin entrance, but no parking is available there. Please avoid parking on Butts Rd, if possible, due to large farm equipment regularly using road.

Learning to live with Beaver

By Mike Seager

As we all learned in elementary school, beaver once thickly populated most of North America, including most of New York State. From the earliest days of European contact, the popularity of beaver fur led to aggressive trapping of the animals. By the late 1800s trapping and then habitat loss had extirpated beaver from large swathes of their original territory. By 1900, only a few beaver remained in the state and they were in remote areas of the Adirondacks. When I was growing up in the 1970s, seeing a beaver in this area was a rare and exciting event.

How times change. Beaver are now common in much of western New York. Changing fashions and falling fur prices mean that they are not trapped much any more. A revived interest in preserving wetlands and streams that began in the 1970s has made more land suitable for beaver habitat. Beavers have shown themselves to be adaptable and opportunistic, taking advantage of marginally suitable land and converting it into prime real estate (from their point of view) by building dams to flood it.

Beavers are nearly unique in the animal world as creatures that can manipulate the world around them to create their preferred habitat. This makes them fascinating to study. It also makes them an incredible nuisance if their goals conflict with yours. Beavers returned in force to the creek in my old pasture about 20 years ago, and in those two decades I have learned a lot about dealing with them. That learning process continues with each additional year. In this article I want to share how I have come to terms with having beavers for neighbors and some of the things I have learned along the way.

When I first found a beaver dam in the creek on my property, I was pretty excited – new wildlife in the area is always exciting to me. A few weeks later, as I was wading along paths that used to be dry land, I wasn't so sure. I thought perhaps the beaver should go. As more time went by and I saw an increase in other wildlife – ducks, herons, frogs, mink, muskrats and other wetland creatures – I changed my mind yet again. This turns out to be a complicated situation.

Over the years I realized that I needed to analyze the circumstances like I would any other situation – by making a management plan. The first step in coming up with a plan is to consider what one's goals are, and it is important that those goals be realistic. Eliminating beaver entirely from my property is not realistic in the current world – if I get rid of all the beaver, more just move in from nearby areas. And eliminating them isn't desirable, either; as noted above, beaver ponds and wetlands are attractive to lots of other wildlife, and that is all to the good. My goal, then, is to maintain them at the "right" level, so I get the benefits of wetland habitat but don't lose access to some of my favorite trails.

In order to manage something you have to understand it. Under the tutelage of a trapper who has been helping me develop and implement my beaver management plan, I have learned that beaver live in family

(Continued on page 5)

See the Forest

By Colette Morabito

Please join us on Tuesday, May 16, 2023 at 7:00 p.m. for a Western Finger Lakes General Meeting. Susan Hughes-Smith will be speaking at the Henrietta Public Library Community Room. This meeting will start promptly at 7 p.m. We look forward to seeing you there.

Her topic will be of the utmost importance for all forest owners: **"See the Forest"**

Ms. Susan Hughes-Smith states "Humanity has increased the amount of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere by 40% since the start of the industrial revolution, changing our climate. The impacts are quickly unfolding. However, problems created by people can also be solved by people. In 2019 New York passed the strongest climate law in the nation to achieve a net-zero carbon economy by 2050. After three years of development and public input, the implementation plan has been approved. It is full of detail, let's not lose sight of the forest for the trees. The path to reducing emissions has received a lot of attention but increasing our capacity to absorb and store carbon is of equal importance."

She will provide an overview of the goals of the Climate Law and key details from the Scoping Plan that are significant for forest owners. Achieving the goal of the Climate Law is an opportunity to reinvest in the people and places of rural New York.

Susan Hughes-Smith is a mom, environmentalist, and educator serving in the Monroe County Legislature. She teaches Environmental Health at SUNY Brockport and Environmental Studies at the Rochester Institute of Technology. As an environmentalist, Sue has spent more than a decade advocating for climate policies at all levels of government. She co-founded a local non-profit focused on climate solutions and a small business that successfully implemented community-wide renewable energy purchasing in 7 municipalities in the greater Rochester region. In addition, Sue is the Vice-Chair of the Monroe County Climate Action Plan Advisory Committee and a board member of the Monroe County Soil and Water Conservation District.

Beaver (Continued from page 4)

groups, typically with one adult pair and several young. When the youngsters get to be a couple years old they are evicted from the family home and have to seek new territory. Beavers also take time to learn their trade; big, solid, impermeable dams are built by experienced older beavers, while young beavers tend to build smaller, more porous dams that are subject to washout in the spring flood or a heavy rain.

With all that in mind, over the past few years we have tried to tailor our management activity to the types of dams we see on the property. When a large dam arises and signals the presence of experienced construction workers, we try to trap them before the dam gets too high and floods large areas. When there are only small dams around, we believe that indicates the presence of only younger animals whose activity will not (yet) cause problems, and we take no action against them.

So far, this strategy seems to be working well enough. This winter, for example, there was one large dam and several small ones on the creek. We trapped three beavers, two of around 50 pounds and one around 35 pounds. The latter was probably a younger one whose presence I could have tolerated, but trapping is

(Continued on page 7)

Woodswalk at the Albers Woodlot

By Eileen Schaefer

On Saturday, July 15, 2023, at 9:00 am we will have a woodswalk at the Carl and Susan Albers Woodlot, Wilbur Creek Road, Bath, New York.

In October of 2022, Carl Albers, Forest Landowner and Amateur Nut Grower spoke to us about his adventures in his woodlots. He graciously accepted our request to host a woodswalk and show us first hand all he has accomplished with family and friends.

Some of the highlights we can expect:

1. a much improved skid trail system;
2. results of an ongoing hemlock harvest...lots of tops;
3. an emerging fern problem; and
4. some crop tree release.

In Mr. Albers words, "this is a work in progress, far from where we'd like our woodlots to be". I believe every woodlot is a "work in progress" and we can never stop learning how to manage for our goals.

We will be heading into Steuben County, onto Wilbur road near Jellystone Park of the Finger Lakes. Mr. Albers has provided detailed directions, no address number is assigned to the location.

Directions: Take Exit 39 off of Route 86 (formerly 17) and head south towards Risingville on County Route 11 (Babcock Hollow Road) for approximately 2 miles. Once off the highway and again heading south you will pass Wagner Hill Road, Nash Road, and East Union Road on your right (west). Across from the Jellystone Park of the Finger Lakes is Wilbur Road (the 4th right,) turn onto it and proceed west for approximately eight tenths of a mile. The Albers woodlot is on the left (south) side of the road. High clearance vehicles can venture down the driveway to the flat area next to Wilbur Creek - well drained gravel. If your vehicle doesn't have good ground clearance (waterbar) please park on the left (south side) of Wilbur Road just past the driveway entrance. Our tour will require us to walk across Wilbur Creek which can be problematic if we receive a lot of rain prior to our Woods Walk, however, if so we will visit another woodlot we own farther west on Wilbur Road. Woodswalks take place rain or shine, so be prepared for either situation. The first location has an outhouse, the second does not. Bring a bag lunch if you like. It is very peaceful next to Wilbur Creek so bring your camp chairs if you wish to sit and relax. There is spotty to no cell phone coverage on Wilbur Road, but if you need additional information you can try calling Carl at (607) 346-5226.

∞ Upcoming Events ∞

Note: For possible updates to these meetings and to learn about events in neighboring chapters and across the state go to our NYFOA website's EVENTS section at

<https://www.nyfoa.org/events>

Tuesday, April 4—Forestry for Wildlife discussion with Emily Bonk and Mike Palermo. See page 1 for details.

Tuesday, May 16—Monroe County Legislator Susan Hughes-Smith will discuss the recently-passed New York State Climate Law, focusing on its relevance to forest owners. See page 5 for details.

Friday, June 9—Woodswalk at the Tschorke Family Cabin at Longmeadow. See page 3 for details.

Saturday, July 15—Woodswalk at the Albers nut plantation. A follow-up to the talk by Carl Albers at our October meeting. Details on page 6.

Welcome New Members

Brandon Bulkley	Prattsburg
Curvin Z. Garman	Penn Yan
Lory Ghertner	Sodus
Trish Gorman	Hammondsport
David Owen	Rochester

Classifieds

Generator for Sale—5000 kw portable, Coleman, Powermate with manual asking \$275 Call Dale Schaefer 585-367-2849

Tree Tubes for Sale - Member(/Non-Member) price: 4' w/o stake (\$6.00/\$6.50); 4' w/ stake (\$7.00/\$7.50); 5' is special order... please call (585) 880-1799 for price quote. Proceeds benefit WFL chapter.

PLEASE NOTE: Space permitting, the WFL Board of Directors allows members to place free classified ads in this newsletter pertaining to good stewardship practices. However, ads pre-

3rd Annual Garlic Braiding Class set for August, 2023

August is garlic braiding season for members of Western Finger Lakes (WFL). This is the 3rd year we will be attending the garlic braiding tutorial at Harmony Acres Garlic Farm in Mount Morris, NY. Michelle and Tim Scutt kindly open their beautiful property to teach all the wonders of garlic and how to tame 12 gangly stalks with bulbs attached, into a delicious, locally grown, healthful wonder. Mother Nature and Michelle will be forthcoming with the date. Stay tuned for a more precise day and time in your summer issue of the WFL Forest Owner newsletter or an email blast. As always, RSVP's are obligatory as Michelle has work and preparations to attend to the night before the class. Please consider making the trip with us. Its great fun; hope to see you there!

Editor's Note (Continued from page 2)

If you would like to write something but can't think of a good topic, I have a list of subjects that I think would make good reading. Feel free to contact me for ideas. As I have said before, this is a volunteer organization and it is stronger the more people get involved. Writing for the newsletter is a way to contribute to NYFOA and WFL without making a major, ongoing commitment of your time.

Beaver (Continued from page 5)

not an exact science and he wound up in a trap. I still see plenty of signs of activity – freshly chewed trees and half-hearted attempts to build more dams – but the population seems to be at the “right” level at the moment. By next winter some of these young animals might have grown up and learned their dam-building trade well enough that we will repeat this same cycle again. In the meantime, the beaver are helping me with my management goals of creating a healthy and diverse habitat for a wide variety of wildlife and lots of opportunities to see that wildlife.



New York Forest Owners Association

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A four-foot high beaver dam can hold back a LOT of water.
See page 4 for the story.

Mark Your Calendar

- Tuesday, April 4—General meeting on Forestry for wildlife. See page 1.
- Tuesday, May 16—General meeting on the New York Climate Law. See page 5.
- Friday, June 9—Tschorke Longmeadow woodswalk. See page 3.
- Saturday, July 15—Albers nut farm woodswalk. See page 6.
- October—the WFL annual dinner returns. Watch future newsletters and your email for details.

Note: For event reminders and late-breaking news, subscribe to our email list by sending a blank email to-

nyfoa-wfl-news-subscribe@npogroups.org