

CFA News

The Newsletter of the Catskill Forest Association, Inc.
Volume 27, Number 4 - Fall 2009



INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

**NATIVE AMERICANS BURN DOWN FORESTS!
Forestry Component at 2009 Cauliflower Festival
2009 Annual Meeting Great Success!
Member Showcase -- The Porters**





CFA News
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Subscriptions: *CFA News* is mailed quarterly to members of the Catskill Forest Association. If you are interested in joining CFA, give us a call, visit our office or fill out and mail in the form on the back cover of this publication. Contact information is located above. Please submit address changes to Michele at the address above.



Cover Photos: One of many Hikes lead by Ryan of CFA. This hike was taken on November 11, 2009 on the Mohonk Preserve in the Eastern Catskill Mountains. Be sure and take advantage of one of these! (Taken by Nicole Day)



Chestnut & Pitch Pine Forest of the Escarpment Area in Fall.

Table of Contents:

New Members.....	2
Executive Director's Message.....	3
Native Americans' Effect On the Forests of The Catskill Mountains.....	4 thru 7
Forestry Component at Cauliflower Festival.....	8
CFA's 2009 Annual Meeting a Great Success!.....	9
Member Showcase.....	9 & 10
Website Info & Calendar of Events.....	10
CFA's Tree Marking Program.....	11
Membership Application.....	Back Cover

Welcome New Members!!!

August

Edmund Bennett – Fleischmanns
 Jen Cole – Denver
 Annette Bombarger – Delhi
 Walter Garigliano – Monticello
 Elizabeth Aivars – Cragmoor

September

Argyle Farm & Properties LLC - Andes
 John & Jane Callahan – Narrowsburg
 Mike Larison – Big Indian
 Joan Saturno – Gilboa
 Andrew Bauer – Halcottsville

October

Gary Mead – Fruitful Furnishings – Arkville
 Jeffrey Kinstler – NY
 David Congdon – Phoenicia
 Lester Bourke & Cyndi Wright – Andes

November

Catherine Abate – Spring Glen
 Sullivan County Airport – Monticello

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE



I have now been living and working for CFA in the Catskills for 8 years. My previous 25 years of work experience has taken me through the forests of Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont and the Adirondacks. One of the more significant differences that I have observed is the lack of harvests with the objective of regenerating the forest. (Other than in the Adirondack Preserve.)

In effect, landowners in the Catskills, with their light harvesting of the larger trees, thereby leaving behind a heavy canopy of smaller trees, are preventing the sunlight from reaching the forest floor. Besides the "high-grading" effect of removing the largest & best and leaving the rest, this is also averting the establishment of a new forest. I've seen this happening virtually everywhere I travel here.

There are only a few species that can grow in the dark and they come in sporadically; certainly not in numbers large enough to overwhelm the deer's hunger. If this continues, we will end up with a forest that is non-diverse in its age and species composition.

A monoculture of this type provides fewer economic opportunities in the form of dollar return to landowners and material supply for manufacturing; and this negative economic impact is exasperated by the subsequent loss in jobs and revenue for the region. At the same time, being made up of only a few species, it exposes our forests to becoming seriously devastated by just one or two insects or diseases. As the forest matures and the healthier trees are removed, it becomes less healthy and is more vulnerable to natural destruction as well as insects and pathogens. This type of homogeneous makeup provides much less diversity in wildlife habitat, resulting in favoring only a few deep-forest species. There are many other negative impacts on water quality, recreation, and air

quality that are too numerous to list here.

(Just a note because of it now being hunting season -- Our forests could support many more deer if only the deer had more browse. It's pretty bleak habitat out there for them and that's why most of them are out by our highways and hamlets.)

In this economic climate, can we really leave it to "nature" to take care of the forest?...and can we eliminate man's influence anyways? I think the answer to both of these questions is no. If this continues, our forests, climate and future generations will suffer as a result of our neglect and mismanagement. This is one of the most important things that we (CFA members, board members and staff) can be advocating for. That is, to educate landowners to begin looking at regenerating those stands that have already been cut over and are done providing us with a good economic return. We do have firewood markets and hopefully will have new markets available, but getting it started now may require sacrificing some trees to make room for a new and healthier forest. I can't over-emphasize how important this is to our region - a region so dedicated to forest cover.

I hope you all enjoyed your summer, held onto your jobs and spent some time walking in, not driving through, the wonderful resource that we call the Catskills, that is really Eden.

Naturally,

Jim Waters

Buy someone a CFA gift this year! Pick from the following gift packages:

Gifts For A New Member Only:

Package 1 -- Any of the Membership Levels at a 20% discount for the first year.

Package 2 -- Package 1 together with an on-site visit for \$80 (\$20 off the normal rate of \$100) plus the normal mileage fee of \$.55 per mile.

Package 3 -- Packages 1 and 2 together with tree marking at \$40 per acre (\$5 off the normal rate of \$45 per acre) for a maximum of 10 acres.

Gifts For Members:

Package 4 -- An on-site visit for \$80 (\$20 off the normal rate of \$100) plus the normal mileage fee of \$.55 per mile.

Package 5 -- Package 4 together with tree marking at \$40 per acre (\$5 off the normal rate of \$45 per acre) for a maximum of 15 acres.

This offer expires on the 1st of August, 2010.

All visits and marking appointments need to be scheduled by the 1st of September, 2010, but may be scheduled after that date.

Call Michele at (845) 586-3054 to arrange the gift timing. CFA will give you a gift letter or mail it directly to the recipient with a message from you.

All gifts must be pre-paid to CFA.

NATIVE AMERICANS' EFFECT **ON THE FORESTS OF THE CATSKILL MOUNTAINS**

Note from the Editor: As in all research, this is a "work in progress" and there will most certainly be new discoveries made and facts uncovered that will result in changes to our beliefs and knowledge of "life in the past". (See.....we can change history!) In fact as more information is gathered it seems to raise even more questions and thought.

The acid wood and charcoal industries:

My decades-long interpretation that the acid wood industry created the large northern red oak populations in the greater Arkville area has been turned upside down, inside out, and completely discarded! I began to suspect that something was wrong with the interpretation during several hikes in the summers of 2007 and 2008. (See the CFA News, Summer/Fall 2008 article "The Oaks of Cold Spring Hollow", page 11, about one of these hikes.)

Since then, evidence against the acid wood industry origin of the oaks began pouring, not dripping, in with a June 4, 2009, exploration of the very hill behind CFA's office in Arkville!

This forest at the southern end of Morris Hill has not only northern red oak, but white oak, mountain laurel, American chestnut sprouts, maple-leaved viburnum, and panicked hawkweed. This combination of plants is not at all representative of forests of the interior of the Catskills. It is more like that along the Catskills eastern escarpment, the Hudson Valley and the Shawangunks. The nearest location to the east where all these species occur together is on Mount Tremper in the lower Esopus Valley below Phoenicia. To the north, one would have to travel to the Schoharie Valley in Schoharie County. To the south, such forests do not appear until southern Sullivan County.

There are herbaceous species which individually grow in places unburned as well as burned, and therefore cannot tell us much. However, these species growing abundantly in combination with others do suggest old burns. Such combinations do not occur in the unburned high peaks of the Catskills interior. Examples of these are bracken fern, wintergreen, lowbush blueberry, and pincushion moss.

There are large stands of northern red oak in the Catskills interior (on Pakatakan Mountain, Fleischmann Mountain, in Cold Spring Hollow, on the ridge north of Haynes Hollow, and on Garretson Ridge - the southeast spur of Belleayre Mountain between Birch Creek and Lost Clove). I had initially interpreted they were caused by the charcoal and acid industries. Between about 1880 and 1900 for the former, and between 1900 and 1915 for the latter, these industries nearly cleared all of the trees off of these areas; much light was permitted to reach the forest floor and hence the profusion of the oaks. Black birch, which frequently accompanies the oaks, is, like the oak, a less shade-tolerant species than the usual sugar maple-beech-eastern hemlock stands of the Catskills interior.

The breakdown of an interpretation:

In September of 2007, I began to find evidence which did not fit my acid wood industry interpretation. Ring counts of recent oak stumps revealed that many of these trees were established well before the acid wood industry became active in the Arkville area. In the forest above Hill Road on Dry Brook Ridge and on Morris Hill behind CFA's office, some oaks dated back to 1870; on Pakatakan Mountain some dated to 1865, in Cold Spring Hollow to 1845, and on Fleischmann Mountain to 1824.

The discovery of white oak, American chestnut, and mountain laurel on the hill behind CFA's office has already been described. When I reported this stand to CFA's Education Forester, Ryan Trapani, he told me about another stand of white oak which he had visited near the north shore of the Pepacton Reservoir in the vicinity of the former hamlets of Shavertown and Pepacton. On July 17th of 2009, CFA's board member and DEP forester, Seth LaPierre gave us a tour. Not only were there white oaks, but also chestnut oaks, shagbark and bittersweet hickories, sprouts of American chestnut, and mountain laurel. Ryan felt right at home there; he comes from the Shawangunks where all of these species are common!

Further exploration of the greater Arkville area revealed that some of these species are more locally common than I had ever imagined. Bittersweet and Shagbark hickories occur in the Roxbury area, on the ridge west of Denver, and on Pakatakan Mountain. Limited quantities of American chestnut occur on Garretson Ridge and Fleischmann Mountain; on Pakatakan Mountain, there are many sprouts and some trees which are approaching maturity - so far having not been stricken by the Chestnut blight that has all but made American Chestnut extinct! In addition, one small population each of mountain laurel and white oak was found on Pakatakan Mountain.

From all of this evidence in the forests around Arkville, a new interpretation is developing.

Native Americans in the Hudson Valley and Shawangunks:

Oaks, hickories, chestnut, and mountain laurel which dominate the Hudson Valley and Shawangunks occur on sites that have been burned over and over again by Native Americans. This has been well documented by anthropologists, archeologists, by writers of nineteenth-century county histories, and by early European explorers such as Henry Hudson and Peter Kalm.

All these sources seem to agree that the human population increased dramatically in the Hudson Valley sometime between 7000 and 5000 years ago. I suspect that it was during this period that the northern hardwood forest began to experience more frequent fires and was replaced gradually by the oak-hickory-chestnut forest migrating in from the south.

In order for the oak-hickory-chestnut forests to be established, the northern hardwood-hemlock stands had to be removed first. Wind, ice damage, heavy wet snow, and disease can all do this, but so can fire. Several years ago, I believe it was the United States Forest Service which published material on the future effects of global warming on the Northeastern United States. These publications spurred a number of newspaper and magazine reporters to write "scare tactic" articles: The fall-colorful northern hardwood forests would disappear as the climate warmed and would be replaced by drab, brown southern oak-hickory forests. (The Forest Service writers who first proposed this idea seem to be somewhat lacking in their forest history training and failed to realize that oak-hickory forests can replace northern hardwood forests only when the latter are removed. A warming of one to a few degrees in temperature alone cannot do this).

Native Americans began cultivating maize (corn) crops, almost exclusively on the flood plains of major rivers; in what is now New York State about 1200 years ago (and some other crops even earlier). Forests had to be removed first. Removal by stone axe was slow and difficult work, but by fire it was far easier. Fire was used to remove and/or modify forests for a number of other reasons including greater ease of travel, defense, and hunting; fire was used also to encourage the growth of blueberries, and I suspect, the fruits (specifically, nuts) of trees such as oaks, hickories, chestnuts, and walnuts for wildlife and human consumption. Many fires escaped and burned over areas not intended.

Europeans continued setting fire to a good portion of the Hudson Valley and Shawangunks after Native American burning had ceased. Such frequent burns by Europeans (often to maintain blueberry crops) ceased by 1909 when strict fire prevention laws were created in New York State. Oak forests created by burning in New York State are not unique to the Hudson Valley and Shawangunks. The oak openings in western New York State have the same origin, as do the oak forests along Lake George and Lake Champlain.

Native Americans in the greater Arkville area:

So, have some of the forests around Arkville also been burned over by Native Americans? The answer to that question is probably yes, but with less severity and frequency, and involving less acreage. The burned areas are much more local; the oak-hickory-chestnut forests are islands in a sea of northern hardwoods (sugar maple-beech with some red maple, yellow birch, and black cherry) and hemlock forest which most likely has not burned.

Native American occupation of the East Branch of the Delaware Valley has been described in the early histories of Delaware County (Gould in 1856, Munsell in 1880, etc.) and well-documented by reports of New York State archeologists and anthropologists....but none of these sources describe in detail the effects of these early people on forests; this is because archeologists and anthropologists generally are not trained also in the botanical sciences, particularly in forest history.

(As a result, this writer has begun interviewing local students of Native American cultures and is learning a great deal from them, particularly from Paul Trotta (who has professional forestry training) and Brian Broad.)

Specifically to the greater Arkville area, I suspect that many of the local fires which burned up the slopes were accidental escapes from the intended burning of the East Branch Delaware River flood plain below. Nearly all the oak-chestnut-hickory-mountain laurel sites are on south or south-west facing slopes; these slopes tend to be warmer and drier than slopes facing in other directions and might permit flames to sweep upslope toward the ridge lines more easily.

CFA's Executive Director, Jim Waters, tells me that in Maine, one of the best indicators of serious burns are spot fires, i.e. local fires which are ignited by hot windborne ashes and embers from main fires already in progress. These ashes and embers can travel from the main fire for considerable distances. I suspect that many of the locally-burned sites in the greater

Arkville area were spot fires.

It is possible that some of the local pockets of burn species in the East Branch Delaware valley (e.g. Shavertown and Pakatakan Mountains and Morris Hill) are not the result of local spot and/or escaped fires separated by large tracts of unburned northern hardwood-hemlock forests. There is another possible explanation: current evidence is that on many of these sites, the oak, hickory and chestnut trees are not reproducing well; they are instead being replaced by northern hardwoods and/or hemlock. Could it be that these burn species were once uniformly and almost continuously distributed along most of the length of the East Branch Valley, from below Downsville to Grand Gorge?.... and that over the centuries northern hardwoods and/or hemlock have replaced most of them? Do oaks, hickories, and chestnut exist today only on sites which burned more frequently and/or severely centuries ago? Are what we see today fragmented burn remnants rather than local spot fires? I suspect that both explanations - spot fires and remnants occurred.

Records of major forest fires since European settlement in the greater Arkville area in the interior portion of the Catskills are far and few between. The Native American settlement of Pakatakan, on the flood plain where Dry Brook and the Bush Kill enter the East Branch of the Delaware River, was first settled by Europeans temporarily in the 1760s, while the acceleration of permanent settlements waited until after the Revolutionary War. With the population of Native Americans dwindling during this period, I suspect that the fires had ceased by the end of the eighteenth century.

In some of the Catskills' interior stands, the oak-hickory-chestnut forests are reproducing, but in others, sugar maple, beech, and/or eastern hemlock are currently replacing them. There are localities in the Catskills' interior where forest fires were caused by European settlers, primarily in the nineteenth and very early twentieth centuries. These burns have not been invaded by oak-hickory-chestnut stands at all, but rather by common pioneer species of the Catskills interior (such as yellow and paper birch) leading to northern hardwood-hemlock and/or spruce-fir forests. Examples are on Hunter, Plateau, and Terrace Mountains.

Charcoal:

A search for charcoal as further evidence of old burns on the oak-hickory-chestnut sites has begun. The results so far have proven negative. The reason is that although charcoal cannot break down chemically (decomposer fungi, bacteria, and invertebrates cannot rot elemental carbon), it can disintegrate physically with freeze-thaw. Also, on steep slopes, it can wash down during heavy rains. Perhaps a microscopic examination of soil samples might reveal tiny fragments of charcoal?

One way to learn to estimate the rate of physical disintegration of charcoal over time is to study the soils on peaks in the Catskills with known dates for the most recent forest fires (e.g. Overlook Mountain, Burnt Knob, Shokan High Point). Such a project will begin shortly.

Migration:

If the Native American burn origin is true for the oak-hickory-chestnut forests of the interior of the Catskills, then the next big puzzle to be resolved is how did these species migrate here? Obviously, they moved in from the south and southwest, but with what mechanism(s)? They had to "skip and hop over" large tracts of intervening, unburned northern hardwood-hemlock forest. Was it large birds such as passenger pigeons, crows, jays, grouse, and turkeys?..... Mammals?.....or were seeds and nuts planted by the people themselves? Perhaps a combination of all of these mechanisms were the driving force.

Further disproving of the acid wood industry hypothesis -- Russell Brook:

There is yet another way to disprove the acid wood industry hypothesis on the origin of oak-hickory-chestnut stands. Myers (1986) published a highly-detailed book on the acid wood industry. In it, he describes the Trez operations in the Russell Brook watershed, between Downsville and Roscoe. On four occasions in 2009, I had the opportunity to visit this watershed which had been nearly completely cleared by Trez during the first few decades of the twentieth century. I had expected oak-hickory-chestnut forests there today, but no. The forest is northern hardwood-hemlock and mostly black cherry had regenerated in the cleared areas. The cherry is being replaced today on many sites by the more shade-tolerant sugar maple, beech, and hemlock. The forest is returning to its original nineteenth-century condition.

A burn index map:

To obtain an estimate of the degree to which different portions of the Catskills have been burned over, I have prepared what I call a "burn index" map. I have read through over forty years of field notes from over a hundred Catskills peaks and valleys. As I perform this work, I document the number of oak-hickory-chestnut burn species present along with other "southern" burn species such as mountain laurel, maple-leaved viburnum, and black birch. As of now, I have about two dozen burn species on my list - trees, shrubs, and herbs.

Those peaks in the interior of the Catskills which remain in first-growth (e.g., the Slide-Panther-Peekamoose, Balsam-Eagle-Big Indian, and

Beaverkill Ranges) have been assigned a burn index of zero. Those peaks which may have minimal burn history (only northern red oak and/or black birch present) have been assigned a burn index of 1 or 2. Those peaks with a moderate burn history, like the hill behind CFA's office, have a burn index of between 5 to 9 assigned to them. Peaks near the Hudson Valley, along the Escarpment, and in the Ashokan Basin, have been assigned a burn index from 10 to 20 or more.

All of these burn index numbers have been plotted on a map of the Catskills. Contours have been drawn around the burn index numbers so that a much clearer picture of the intensity of the region's forest fire history might emerge. (These contour lines do not represent slope as they would on a topographical map.)

Reading the burn index map:

The map on the following two pages has six contours. They are numbered '1', '3', '5', '8', '11', and '13'. The contours refer to the number of burn species. The '1' contour separates areas of zero burn species from areas with one or two burn species. The '3' contour separates areas of one or two burn species from areas of three or four burn species. Likewise, the '5' contour separates three to four from five to seven, the '8' contour separates five to seven from eight to nine, and the '11' contour separates eight to nine from ten to eleven. The '13' contour separates areas with ten to eleven burn species with areas with thirteen or more. The higher the number, the more likelihood of frequent and intense historical fires.

In locations where the burn index contours are close together, e.g. along the Escarpment area to the east, the change in vegetation as one hikes a distance of less than one mile is very dramatic. In contrast, where the contours are far apart, vegetation changes very little over a distance of several miles.

The greatest concentration of burned areas is located along the Escarpment, the Ashokan Basin, the lower Esopus Valley below Phoenicia, the area from Grand Gorge north to the Schoharie Valley in Schoharie County, and in the Arkville-Margaretville and Shavertown localities.

Some caution must be used in interpreting the burn index map. It should not be used to determine the frequency, severity, and location of Native American fires for any specific site. It should not be used to distinguish between fires deliberately set and escaped spot fires. In fact, there is no absolute proof that some areas burned at all; the vegetation only suggests it. The map can be used, however, to locate burn vegetation in a general way over large portions of the Catskills.

CATSKILLS BURN INDEX MAP

3 — burn index contours indicating number of burn species

— — — — — streams and water bodies

• villages & hamlets

△ mountains

Michael Kudish and the Catskill
Forest Association
November 17, 2009

Scale: 0 4 MILES 8

1:250000

One inch = 4 miles

NORTH



WALTON

HAWLEYS

"SHAVERTOWN
MTN."

DOWNSVILLE

Pepacton
Reservoir

Trout Pond

MARY
SMITH
HILL

LEWBEACH

42°

EAST
BRANCH

Beaver Kill

ROSCOE

Willowemoc

LIVINGSTON MANOR

Little Beaver Kill

NeverSink
Reservoir

STAMFORD

PLATTEKILL MTN

MT. PISEAH

ANDES

MARGARETVILLE

PAKAT
MTN

TOUCHMENT
MTN

BAL

VAST

Mongaup
Pond

N



NEW FORESTRY COMPONENT AT ANNUAL CAULIFLOWER FESTIVAL -- A GREAT SUCCESS!

This year's new addition to Margaretville's Cauliflower Festival got lots of attention. The tent and outside exhibitors and demonstrations were buzzing with activity all day long. Among the exhibitors, and we thank them, were:

Gary Mead - Furniture That Will Blow Your Mind
American Beauty Art - Wood Turnings (Home Accents)
 Customo Wood Furniture & Accessories
 Hawken Outside Wood Boilers
 The Tinder Box - Wood & Corn Stoves
Catskill Rentals - Husquarvarn Chainsaws, Etc.
 Historical Maple Exhibit
NYS DEC - Land Stewardship and Invasive Insects
 New York Forest Owners Outreach
Catskill Mountain Club & Catskill Landowners' Assoc. Outreach
 Cornell Agro-Forestry Outreach
Watershed Agricultural Council Forestry Program Outreach *
 Delaware Soil & Water Conservation District Outreach
 Catskill Forest Association Outreach *
 Hud-son Forest Equipment
 Catskill Outback

* -- Special thanks to the hosting and sponsoring efforts from both of these groups

There was everything from wood products to sawmill and firewood equipment to kayaks, canoes and a zip-line across the East Branch of the Delaware River. **It was so much of a success that CFA is going to put on a "CATSKILL FOREST FESTIVAL" next spring, on Saturday, May 22nd.** There will be a focus on our forests and all of the benefits that we derive from them -- including sporting. We promise that it will provide lots of entertainment, opportunities to purchase items of need and want, education and fun! It's date was selected for all to shake the cabin fever off and supply people with energy after hibernation.



2009 ANNUAL MEETING A GREAT SUCCESS!



50 people attended this year's Annual Meeting at the Andes Hotel. The food and venue were terrific and the presentations informative and very entertaining. Those of you who were unable or chose not to attend really missed out on a good one!

Pat Davis, had the audience spell-bound with his hunting stories. We think Pat could almost make a living this way!



CFA's Executive Director, Jim Waters led a group discussion on gas well drilling. He gave a brief update on recent activity and went through a sample lease and there was a lot of input from just about everyone who attended.

Charlie Fiscella, from the Quality Deer Management Association gave an excellent presentation on the management/philosophy and practice that unites landowners and hunters. All who attended were treated to new information that they all could understand and apply in their own situations. Just about every attendee can tell the age of a deer now and has a much better appreciation of the deer around us and what they can do to improve their health and vitality.



The business meeting was short and provided updates on membership, events, activities and the financials. The officers re-elected to a three-year term on CFA's Board of Directors were Joseph Kraus and Gordon Stevens. Thanks goes to both of them for their continued support.

As always, the auction provided much entertainment and some financial support. Special thanks goes to those who bid on items and those who donated items. CFA brought in about \$1,500 and most all of this was from the auction.

Can't wait 'til next year's Annual Meeting. Suggested themes/topics/entertainment are always appreciated! (We will start the planning process in January.)

MEMBER SHOWCASE:

The first I heard of Mike Porter was from my landlord. I had just moved to Margaretville from Frost Valley and wanted to know where I could tap some sugar maples for the upcoming maple sugaring season. I soon found out that "Mr. Porter" had the Village of Margaretville *tapped out*, so I moved on to Dunraven where I currently tap. That's okay. Mike and his wife Becky have been most helpful in my maple sugaring endeavors and many others as well. Mike and Becky have been members of the Catskill Forest Association since 1998. However, their interest in forest management and natural resources stretch back much farther. Mike has been backyard maple sugaring since 1971. Back then, he used 3 small pans as an evaporator over a refabricated 200 gallon oil drum. Since then Mike has upgraded his operation and made some changes along the way that have made the job a lot easier. He now has a 2ft. by 4ft. stainless steel maple evaporator that has increased the boiling surface area from the use of drop flues or fins; these make boiling much more efficient. Mike also no longer boils outdoors like he used to but rather inside a 10x10 sugar house he constructed some time in the mid 1990's with the help of his father-in-law. Each spring he manages approximately 110 taps from sugar maple trees located on various forest owners' property throughout Margaretville. Mike would probably tap more, but Becky has admitted to hiding the new taps he purchases along the way.

After tapping, the sap is brought back by truck to the sugar house where it is then boiled down to maple syrup and sometimes made into maple cream, maple candy or fused to maple walnuts. In return, he pays the landowner with maple syrup. Depending on the season, Mike produces anywhere from 22 to 25 gallons. His best season was in 1997 when he made 35 gallons. The last 2 maple seasons have been great and Mike has made around 30 gallons in each season.



His

most recent innovation is a pump that he has developed in order to make sap collection easier. The pump easily attaches to the hitch on his truck. The sap can be poured at waist level into a receptacle that pumps the sap into the tank located on the bed of his truck. A great example of backyard ingenuity!



During maple sugaring season, the Porter's sugar house is frequented by neighbors, friends, family and children who huddle around the evaporator and help keep Mike company after a good sap run. Mike and Becky are almost always willing to educate those who are unfamiliar with the process or entertain those that are all too familiar with the process.

During the remainder of the season the Porter's keep quite busy both in the woods and outside. After sugaring season, Mike and Becky gather next year's firewood from a neighbor's property or at the 17 acres they own in the Town of Andes. Mike fells the trees while Becky limbs them up. If they are lucky, Mike's daughter Megan will be around to stack and cover the firewood so it can then season properly. Mike uses the wood for both sugaring and heating his home. On his property in Andes he has been selecting trees for firewood that are competing with the crowns of healthy sugar maples in order to enhance forest health; growth; and conditions conducive to maple sugaring there in the future. Other trees he has harvested on the property are Scotch pine. In 1988 Mike and Becky harvested and milled the trees themselves using a chainsaw mill. The cabin was built near a pond they also had constructed. His son Jed and daughter Megan also helped out in the process especially in the bark peeling that had to be finished before milling.

At the dinner table, the Porter's enjoy fresh vegetables from their garden in Margaretville and deer meat from Becky's sister's farm. Lindy keeps cows on her farm, while Becky and her twin sister Betsy hunt the woodland cows that frequent the farm; white-tailed deer. When the Porter's are not in the woods they can be found helping out in the community on most days. The Porter's provide ice skates to those who want to skate near the Pavilion in Margaretville. Mike is a volunteer Fire Fighter and has been since 1974. The idea of joining occurred to him back when he was living nearby the firehouse and the alarm would wake him anyway. Though Mike no longer lives as close to the firehouse today, he has served voluntarily ever since. For exercise and fun, the Porter's go on extremely long bicycle trips around the Pepacton reservoir, to their daughter's home in Schenectady and around Lake Erie. Mike's longest trip was a trans-America ride where he finished at his home in the Village of Margaretville.

This spring and summer Mike and I have exchanged labor in firewood processing in order to build up our supply for the upcoming firewood and sugaring season. Mike and Becky are almost always around for some good advice whether it is on the forest, the garden or why it is that some people in Delaware County identify serviceberry as bilberry, or a splitting maul as a Go-Devil.

See you around!

Ryan Trapani

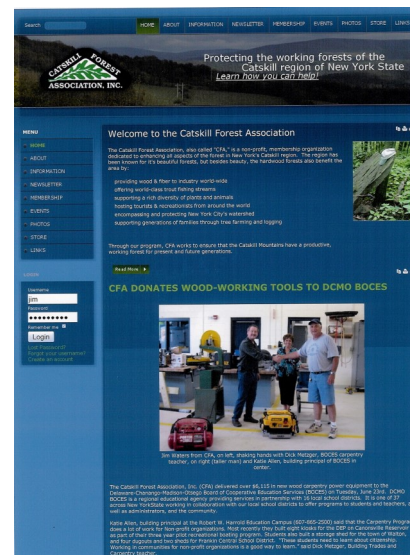
SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT!

For a CURRENT listing of CFA's EVENTS you must visit CFA's Website!

(This saves room in the newsletter for more information and will provide you with up-to-date additions & changes.)

www.catskillforest.org

NEW CFA WEBSITE: www.catskillforest.org
CHECK IT OUT!



If you have not received an email with your user ID and password or if you have lost it please send an email to: cfa@catskill.net with the following information:

Name
e-mail address
Home Address
Telephone Number

Without this information you will not be able to access the areas open to members only or purchase from the store with the member discount.

Soon we will be posting the Newsletters there and adding more items to the store. We need to crawl a little before we can run.

CFA Tree Marking Program!

This is a great way to get an area marked that will provide you and others with firewood as well as improve the health of your forest. You are welcome to join us during the marking to learn how to do it yourself. This could save you money down the road as it will sharpen your understanding of forest management and you will be developing your own tree selection skills. Thinning out the forest will make it more resistant to insects and disease, a better water filter, better wildlife habitat and increase the value of the timber.

WE MARK DURING THE WINTER ALSO!!!

DETAILS:

1. You must be a CFA member.
2. An "on-site-visit" fee of \$100 plus mileage will be charged for selecting, designating on the ground the area to be marked, and determining the acreage to be included.
3. After reviewing the forest management plan (if there is one) and taking into account the landowner(s)' objectives, a prescription for that stand will be recommended by the representative and the marking guidelines agreed upon by both the representative, the landowner(s)' forester (if there is one) and the landowner.
4. A maximum of 10 acres will be marked for each landowner in any one calendar year.
5. A fee of \$45 per acre will be charged for the marking.
6. \$15 of this \$45 can be claimed as a tax deductible contribution to CFA, a 501-c-3 not-for-profit organization.
7. The trees marked will be the trees that are considered "crop" trees (These are the trees that are the "keepers".) They will be marked by tree-marking paint at or just below eye height, most of the way around the bole of the tree, and on the stump.
8. It will then be up to the landowner to remove or kill all of the trees without paint. In most cases these trees will not be useful for anything but firewood. There may be an occasional saw-log tree, but unless there are a sufficient number of them, it will not be worth-while to have them delivered to a mill. The goal with this program is to improve the forest by removing the "weed trees". In some cases the trees can be left as fertilizer and wildlife habitat.
9. In the case that the landowner does not want to do the work themselves, a list of professionals will be given to them by CFA to contact in order to have the work done.
10. There is a limited amount of this we can get to, so sign up soon! Fill out the application below and mail it in. We will call to schedule.



A thinning typically removes about 4 to 5 cords per acre. If you had 10 acres marked, that would be about 45 cords of firewood being made available to you! That means that for an on-site fee and somewhere around \$10/cord you would get a rare and valuable educational experience along with the wood marked by a professional forester from CFA.

CFA is holding several special programs in chainsaw safety and use for landowners. (See the Calendar of Events in this issue.)



CFA TREE MARKING APPLICATION

Name _____

Address of Property _____

Email address _____ Date _____

Phone Number and best time to call, where you can be reached during the weekday _____



PO Box 336
Arkville, NY 12406

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

I believe in enhancing the quality of the forest land in the Catskill Region through proper forest management.
To that end, I am interested in joining the Catskill Forest Association and supporting its efforts.

Name _____

Mailing Address _____

Phone #: _____ E-mail: _____

Membership Categories (Select the level & if you'd like, make an additional donation):

Membership	\$50 + \$ _____
Contributing	\$75 + \$ _____
Business / Supporting	\$100 + \$ _____
Supporting	\$150 + \$ _____
Sustaining	\$250 + \$ _____
Benefactor	\$750 + \$ _____

Do you own land in the Catskill Region? Yes _____ No _____

Property address: _____

Telephone #: _____ County: _____

Total acres: _____ Forested acres: _____ Pond Y / N Stream Y / N River Y / N

Would you like a CFA forester to come to your property and spend 3 hours walking your forest, making suggestions and giving you impartial and confidential advice? (It just costs \$100 plus our mileage to do so.) Y / N
(If so we will call you to schedule an appointment.)

Amount enclosed \$ _____

All membership dues and donations are fully tax deductible to the extent allowed by law. A copy of the most recent financial statement filed with the New York Department of State is available upon request.