



CFA NEWS

Spring 2021

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CFA NEWS

Spring 2021

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Welcome, New Members!

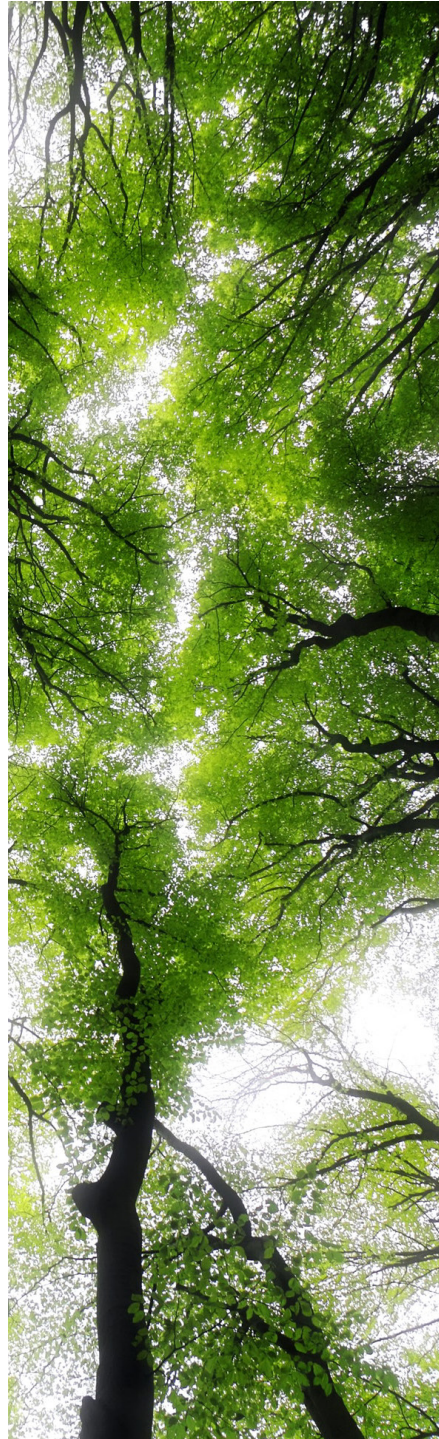
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From the President's Desk Spring 2021-

By: Mike Porter

Last week, 1-18-2021, CFA was notified that it was chosen to receive an award for providing quality forestry education and communication by the NYS Society of American Foresters. CFA member and NYCDEP forester, Collin Miller, submitted an application to SAF for CFA to be considered for the award. In preparing for the presentation, I considered all the educational and communication programs CFA has engaged in over the years.

One of CFA's major missions is to educate landowners and everyone else interested in the workings of our forests. In the grand scheme of things, the staff of CFA spend all their time carrying out some form of education for its members. Whether it is a consultation, a special event open to members and non-members alike, a column in a newspaper, a member's participation in one of CFA's 10 Programs, the quarterly newsletter or the radio show,



“From the Forest,” members are exposed to many opportunities to learn.

To single out one activity of CFA to celebrate, SAF chose to highlight “From the Forest.” The weekly radio show heard each Wednesday at 6PM is one of, if not the longest running show on WIOX radio. Heard on several mediums, WIOX radio (91.3FM), MTC cable channel 20, at wioxradio.org or on podcasts at fromtheforest.podbean.com. Director of Forest Services, Ryan Trapani and Forest Program Manager, John MacNaught host the show together virtually every week.

Whether it is someone local who has special interests that Ryan and John share, local educators or scientists who relate special information aimed at improving local knowledge or special guests from around the country who are widely renowned for knowledge in their field, the radio show rarely disappoints.

Several times I have suggested ideas for the show and Ryan and/or John follow-up and find the best possible guest for the idea. I found the quality of the guests to be second to none. It means that they find and present

people who are very articulate about their subjects. There is a very wide range of subject matter covered on each of the weekly shows. Without fail, there never seems to be enough time to cover all the material. Time flies when you are talking about good things.

I am not sure how many of you listen to “From the Forest” so as an encouragement here is an idea. Becky and I listen regularly or record the show and listen to it as a date night dinner. Virtually every Wednesday evening we sit in the living room, eating something, and listen to the show. Our plan has been successful and we recommend it to people every time we talk about the show to friends or family. Also, one member that I know, downloads the podcasts of the shows and listens to them on his commute. A great way to take advantage of the podcast feature and fill in travel time.

In reviewing the available podcasts, I was reminded of all the quality topics and guests the show has and continues to have. The honor of being a guest on the most shows goes to Gary Mead, the owner of Fruitful Furnishings in Margaretville. He is a master woodworker, sawmill owner and

CFA's poet laureate. He is on the show every third Wednesday and talks about a different local tree species each week. His insights are best when he talks about the working quality of the woods. He ends each show with an original poem.

Several other local people are semi regular as they talk about seasonal specialties like maple syrup season, turkey hunting, deer hunting and fishing season. To repeat a good thing, go to

fromtheforest.podbean.com to search through the list of shows and speakers available.

I know this will be redundant but I want to highlight a few topics that were very timely and appropriate to today's forest owners. There have been several shows on "deer management" and forests. As landowners we should all be aware that deer are the major threat to our healthy forests so these shows will aid in that understanding.

There have been specialty shows on the New England cottontail, bees, otters, bears, opossums and turkeys. Each of these shows gave insights on the species and their impacts on our forests and vice versa. For example, we all have heard of the threat of the loss of honey bees.

The bee expert, Kass Urban-Mead, told us of the 400 plus species of wild bees that could carry the pollination chores needed. These are shows that really inform you.

Exotic species or tree diseases are commonly discussed with treatment plans and future outlooks explained. Leading scientists discuss their research as it relates to these issues in easy to understand language. Having an awareness of these topics and the Tree Saver



and Forest Saver programs of CFA will help you in making decisions about your trees and forests. Listen and learn about these topics.

In regards to the more specialized shows and topics, I want to relate a few of my favorites. An interview with Costa Boutsikaris, a film director, who is working on a series of short films dealing with topics in Forestry. The series called, The Woodlanders is available on-line and allows the watcher to experience many forest topics from



around the world. The series is well worth the time you would invest in watching the films.

As a retired Earth Science teacher, I found the show on the “Ancient Trees of the Catskills” with Dr. Chris Barry of Cardiff University in Wales, UK extremely interesting and informative. The discussion centered on the ancient forest in the area of Gilboa. It is really cool to realize that our area is home to one of the four oldest fossil forests in the world. Knowing something of the Catskill geology, I was enthralled with this show.

As a final favorite, out of about 490 shows, is the one where Charles Mann was interviewed about his book, 1491. It deals with the Americas

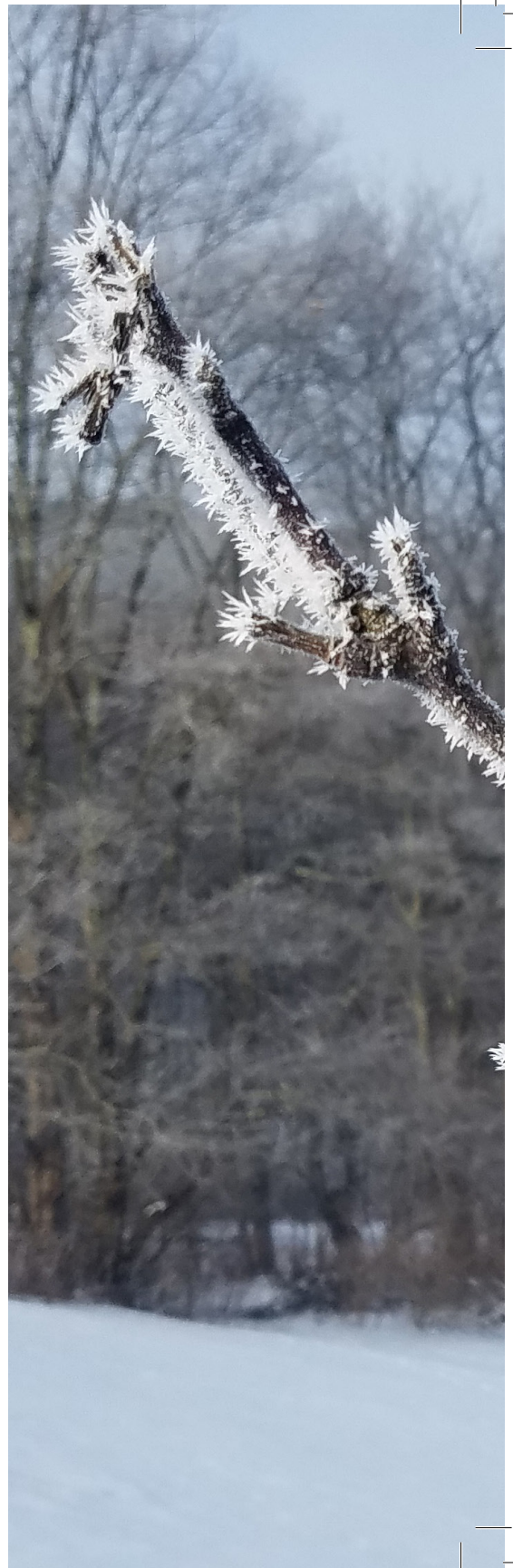
pre-Columbus discovery. The archeological finds and anthropology discoveries have divulged very sophisticated societies all through the Americas. His second book, 1493 discusses the world in post-Columbus times. Both books are well worth the read. Listen to Mann’s interview with Ryan to get a feel for the topic.

Radio shows talking about CFA programs are also valuable to members and non-members alike. By listening to staff members

discuss seasonal programs, a customer can get great information on programs of interest including new offerings. Two recent shows covered the new tree planting program and the custom sawmill program. Seasonally, reminder shows are done regarding apple tree grafting and pruning. By finding the shows dealing with CFA programs a listener can then contact the CFA office and discuss a program with a staff member and not be confused.

Once you visit the podcast site and find the available topics, if there is anything you might be interested in hearing about, contact Ryan at ryan@catskillforest.org or John at john@catskillforest.org with ideas. They are always looking for ideas that haven't been covered or offer a different viewpoint on any subject.

From the President's Desk
Mike Porter, President
CFA Board of Directors





CATSKILL FOREST ASSOCIATION RECOGNIZED FOR FORESTRY EDUCATION

ARKVILLE, NY – At a recent virtual business meeting of the New York Chapter of the Society of American Foresters (NYSAF), the Catskill Forest Association (CFA) – a forest-based non-profit organization founded in 1982 – was presented with the NYSAF Forestry Education & Communication Award for their continuing efforts to engage others in keeping forests healthy across the Catskills Region.

In 2017, CFA was given an award by NYSAF for their work on “From the Forest” - a weekly, one-hour talk show hosted by CFA on WIOX Public Radio; now with over 300 archived episodes online.

“The previous award was very well deserved, but now there are additional reasons to recognize CFA,” stated Collin Miller, a local forester and member of both CFA and NYSAF. Miller said that over the last five years, CFA added staff and capacity to offer more non-traditional forestry services such as apple tree pruning and grafting, spot treatment for invasive plants and insects and more recently, portable sawmilling. “Their weekend workshops are often at full capacity and the Catskill Forest Festival has grown into a destination event drawing thousands of visitors to the Central Catskills every July to learn about our forest heritage and connect with others around the care of their forests,” added Miller.

According to Dorothy Monforte, CFA Marketing & Outreach Director, the organization’s membership has swelled to over 900 landowners and forest businesses across the six-county Catskill Region – a growth of over 140% since 2016. Monforte says that forested parcels in the Catskills are changing hands more frequently than ever as a new generation takes a keen interest in the benefits of rural life. “CFA is well positioned to be a resource for helping both new and longstanding owners become not just owners of woodlands, but good stewards as well.”

For more information on CFA and its programs, visit www.catskillforest.org.

Chartered in 1918, the New York Society of American Foresters represents over 350 professionals in the care and management of New York's forests. NYSAF is the state chapter of the national SAF whose mission is to advance sustainable management of forest resources through science, education, and technology; to enhance the competency of its members; to establish professional excellence; and to use our knowledge, skills, and conservation ethic to ensure the continued health, integrity, and use of forests to benefit society in perpetuity.



Planting for the Future

By Ryan Trapani, Director of Forest Services

You've heard the saying before – "The best time to plant a tree was 10 years ago" – or something like that. Often, when it comes to discussing tree planting – especially with older members – I hear a similar rebuttal. "Yeah, but I'll be dead by then." Before I had children, I could better understand this sentiment. Now I feel differently.

The fact is, few of us who risk having children know whether we'll be able to see "the fruits of our labor." Sure, I look forward to seeing my kids find their first crush or riding a bike. I think every parent looks forward to seeing their kids find their own way; perhaps hooking their first fish, killing their first buck, or tying their own shoe. We all want to bear witness to their potential success: A first meaningful job, a house, or something else. The truth is none of us can count on reaching these milestones. But, isn't it fun in between? Isn't it fulfilling to watch them grow? The little things. For instance, my 7-year-old daughter came out last week – at night – to help me shovel snow off the driveway. She said, "I just didn't want to see you shovel it all by yourself." The next thing I know I know the shadow of a pink



2015



2016


snowsuit was trailing my tracks everywhere I went, picking up what I left behind.

Watching Trees Grow

The same is true of trees. We don't know if we'll get to see "the fruits of our labor" either. But, to me, that is no reason not to plant. I look forward each spring to my fruit trees. First, the buds begin to swell – Silver tip, green tip, pink, and then bloom (flowers). Hopefully, fruit is on the way. I haven't had as much luck with my apples due mostly to clayey, wet soils. I must be extra careful about how and where I plant them. I have had better luck with pears so far; they seem to tolerate these poorly drained soils better. Even trees that will never bear edible fruit are fun to watch grow. I transplanted a sycamore tree – more like I ripped it out of the ground from down the road – to my front yard. It was growing in a gravel pit that is now being developed for houses. It seems happy now and is growing a couple feet each year.

There is one pear that I planted the year my first daughter was born. I have taken photos with her standing beside this pear tree over the years. The first year or 2, I thought maybe it would never grow. It was slow to accept the site and its new home. I made a cut or 2 on this little whip to train its central leader





into something straight and sturdy for the future. But it just kind of sat there and its growth was “subpar.” Then, a few years back, it had an unexpected “growth spurt” and took off. It grew so much that this winter I had to go back to the sugarhouse and retrieve my 3-legged apple ladder. I placed the 10-foot ladder carefully next to the tree to reach its top. It was well above 14 feet! I had to subordinate or reduce the top (or leader), while subordinating the lateral branches so they knew the central leader was “boss.” Pears grow like a snow-cone or column. For this reason, it’s best to go with their natural tendency and shape them with a strong central leader. So, I’m standing on the final top rung, hoping I don’t fall from 10-feet, and it occurred to me that I could use my right foot and place it onto my prized planted pear tree for support; It was strong enough – for the first time – to take one foot. And to me, that was a milestone worth planting for, before a single pear had come to fruition. So, plant a tree and watch it grow. To me, it’s just as fun as watching birds arrive at a feeder or my daughter grow up onto her own 2 feet. CFA now has a TREE PLANTING PROGRAM where you can start your tree today, that “should have been planted 10 years ago.”

A young girl with blonde hair is standing in a grassy field next to a bare tree. She is wearing a red and white striped short-sleeved shirt with a red bow at the neck, a bright red pleated skirt, and colorful patterned leggings. She is also wearing dark purple rain boots. She is holding onto a branch of the tree with her left hand. The background shows a grassy field, a fence, and some trees under an overcast sky. The year '2020' is written in large white text at the bottom of the image.

2020

SPECKLED ALDER AND Highbush Blueberry: The Catskills' "Donut Hole"

By: Mike Kudish

Often queries from CFA members and colleagues inspire me to write explanations. One such query from a CFA member, Steve Lanner, concluded with the article on hobblebush for the winter 2020 issue of CFA News. A query from two colleagues who study the Neversink and Rondout Valleys within the Catskills, Molly Marquand and Brenden Wagner (see footnote at end of this article), is the inspiration for this article. They asked me why they find no speckled alder in their valleys, and yet a few miles to the west in the Fir Brook – Willowemoc valleys it is plentiful.

When I looked at the distribution map I made of speckled alder in the Catskills, I noticed a great similarity with the distribution of another primarily wetland shrub – highbush blueberry. I thought I'd combine the two in this article. These two species grow commonly in the regions AROUND the Catskills (e.g. Hudson Valley on the east,

Delaware County on the west, and Sullivan County on the south) and along the Escarpment (the Catskills' eastern boundary), but are rare to completely absent in the High Peaks central interior. When plotted on a map, the stations (i.e. locations) for these shrubs look like a giant donut surrounding the Catskills, with their absence in the central High Peaks forming the "donut hole".

SPECKLED ALDER: TAXONOMY and ECOLOGY

Speckled alder, also known as tag alder, is in the Birch Family, the Betulaceae. I first learned it as *Alnus rugosa*, but some taxonomists now consider it only a subspecies of the European alder, *Alnus incana*: hence *Alnus incana* ssp. *rugosa*. In either case, the name *rugosa* refers to the leaves roughened by sunken veins. The "speckled" refers to the conspicuous white lenticels on an otherwise dark bark.

Speckled alder is a wetland species, growing in swamps and fens, and following slow-moving streams. It is not very shade tolerant and therefore

seldom grows under trees. It can be very difficult to walk through because the lower branches tend to grow horizontally, tripping the explorer constantly as he or she climbs over and ducks under them. This shrub bears nodules of symbiotic nitrogen-fixing bacteria on its roots, so that wherever it grows, the soil is enriched with nitrogen – a major nutrient for all life.

Speckled alder can attain diameters as great as 3 or 4 inches, heights of 10 to 20 feet, and ages up to 30 years.

HIGHBUSH BLUEBERRY: TAXONOMY AND ECOLOGY

Highbush blueberry is in the Heath Family, the Ericaceae. It is *Vaccinium corymbosum*, the specific name referring to its flowers and fruits borne in clusters called corymbs. And yes, the generic name *Vaccinium*, like the word vaccine, refers to cows! Of the seven blueberry species native to the Catskills, highbush is by far the tallest, often reaching heights of 10 feet or more.

Highbush blueberry, although it grows most commonly in wetlands, can grow also in well-drained soils. I recall as a child picking

highbush blueberries with my grandparents on abandoned pastures in central Sullivan County. Like speckled alder, it is not very shade tolerant and therefore will not grow under a forest.

AN ATTEMPT AT AN EXPLANATION OF THE “DONUT HOLE”

To try to answer Molly and Brenden’s query on why speckled alder is absent in the Neversink and Rondout Valleys, yet abundant along the neighboring Willowemoc and Fir Brook Valleys, I need to consider 15000 years of postglacial plant migrations around and into the Catskills.

WILLOWEMOC CREEK AND FIR BROOK VALLEYS

I wrote two articles for the CFA News on the postglacial migration of red spruce (spring 2013, pp. 12 to 14) and balsam fir (Fall 2012 – Winter 2013 combined issue, pages 12 to 14). These two northern trees migrated into the Catskills about 14000 years ago from the Poconos, and took a narrow path up the Willowemoc and Fir Brook Valleys; they left behind remnant existing populations

along the way. They continued marching northeastward into the High Peaks of Ulster and Greene Counties on their way to New England and Canada.

Speckled alder is also a northern species. I suspect that some alders migrated into the Catskills postglacially also from the Poconos along with the spruce and fir – marching up the Willowemoc Creek and Fir Brook Valleys, but they reached a “dead-end”.

These valleys have long, nearly flat and treeless reaches where the streams flow slowly and meander - suitable for numerous alder thickets and beaver meadows. The hills bordering them, this far west in the Catskills, are not as high and not as steep as they are in the eastern High Peaks. I think that the alder populations in the Willowemoc and Fir Brook watershed reached a migrational “dead end” at the headwaters of these two streams. They were stopped by no more suitable habitat: the scarcity of nearly treeless meandering streams in the High Peaks that lay ahead to the east.

I recall in 2006 trying to canoe up Fir Brook with a friend through endless alder thickets;

we finally had to turn back after pulling the boat over beaver dam after beaver dam! Fir Brook Valley is special. Whenever I have guests from the Adirondacks and they become homesick, I bring them to Fir Brook. The spruce-fir forests, combined with alder thickets and abundant beaver meadows, create that portion of the Catskills most like the Adirondacks!

THE NORTHWARD MARCH AROUND THE CATSKILLS

I suspect that more alders approached the Catskills from the south, but did not attempt the Willowemoc-Fir Brook route. Those marching northward in the Hudson Valley from the southeast were able to continue to migrate up the Hudson Valley and along the adjacent eastern Catskills Escarpment. Those in Pennsylvania from the southwest were able to continue to migrate northward into the Delaware Watershed of the western Catskills. Therefore these alders simply marched AROUND the High Peaks.

NEVERSINK AND RONDOUT VALLEYS

The upstream portions of the Rondout and Neversink Valleys WITHIN the Catskills (generally

SPECKLED ALDER AND HIGHBUSH BLUEBERRY

Michael Kudish for CFA News

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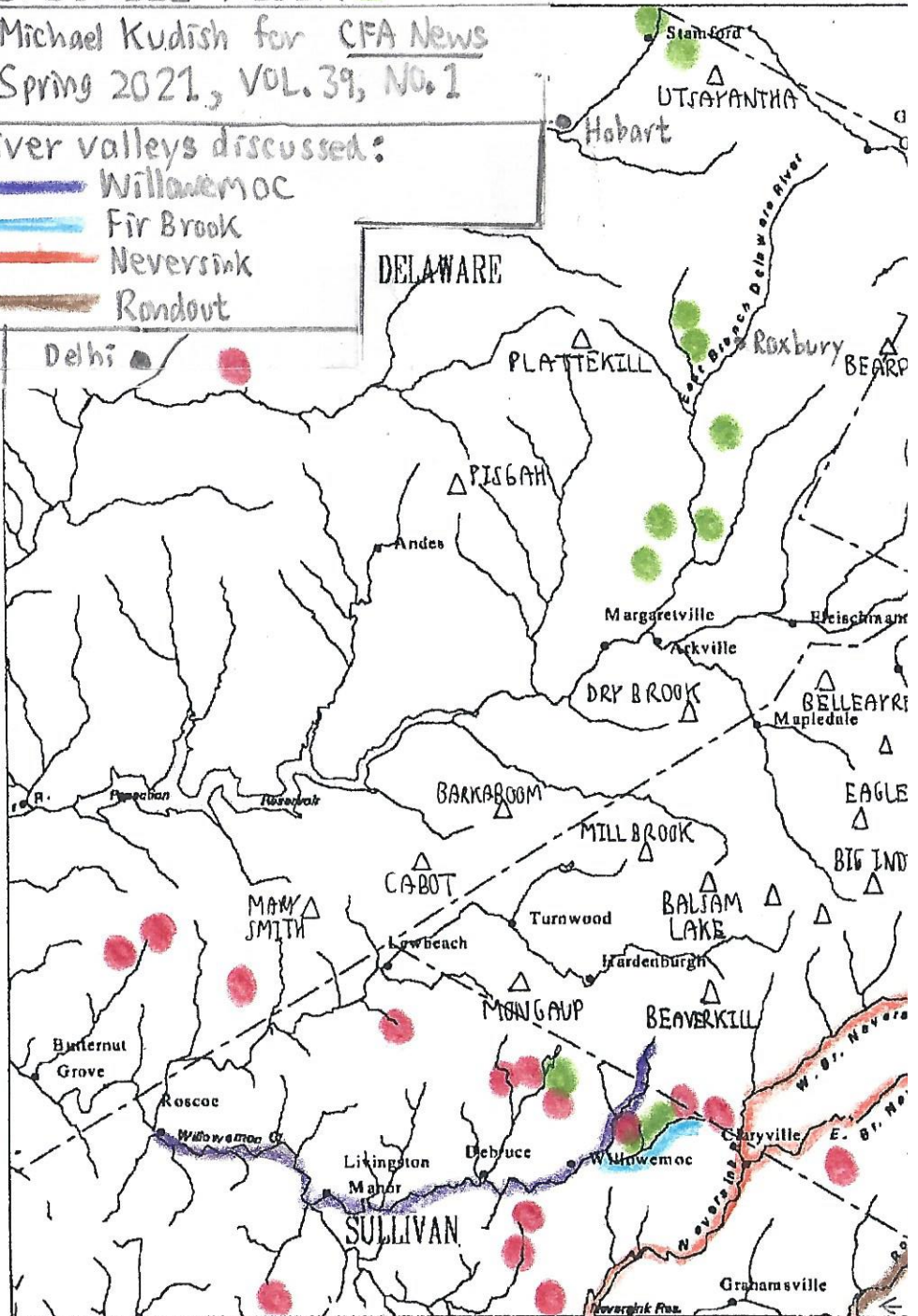
river valleys discussed:

Willowemoc

Fir Brook

Neversink

Rondout



upstream from the present reservoirs which bear their names) offer few nearly treeless reaches and beaver meadows where the streams flow slowly and meander. With a few exceptions, they flow fast and steeply down along the bases of the rugged slopes of the highest peaks of the southern Catskills.

Those alders that approached the Catskills from what are now the Towns of Denning and Neversink on the south, like those alders in the Willowemoc Creek and Fir Brook Valleys, were also stopped by the High Peaks. Lack of suitable habitat created another “dead-end”, halting their northward march. The difference is that the Willowemoc-Fir Brook alders were able to move farther up their valleys into the Catskills interior than the Rondout-Neversink alders were able to move up theirs.

HIGHBUSH BLUEBERRY'S NORTHWARD MARCH

I think that highbush blueberry behaved the same way, creating a similar “donut hole” among the High Peaks. When it migrated northward postglacially from what is now New Jersey and Pennsylvania and approached the Catskills High Peaks, it found little

to no suitable habitat and went AROUND them, not through them.

THE ACCOMPANYING MAP

There are additional stations for highbush blueberry northwest of the area shown on the accompanying map; I know of at least six stations where highbush grows in wetlands in the Towns of Harpersfield and Davenport, Delaware County. The map is designed to give CFA members a general idea of where speckled alder and highbush blueberry occur and where they do not; CFA members will surely be reporting additional stations.

If you want to pick highbush blueberries and enjoy tripping over alder branches, don't visit the High Peaks!

FOOTNOTE: Here are the two folks who inquired about alder distribution and provided the inspiration for this article: Molly Marquand is from the Mid-Atlantic Regional Seed Bank and the Greenbelt Native Plant Center. She supplies plant seed to the Rondout-Neversink Stream Program of the Sullivan County Soil and Water Conservation District. This Program is coordinated by Brenden Wagner.

Programs & Services -

Learn more at catskillforest.org/programs

Program	Description	Time
Consultations	<i>One-hour property visits by field staff to help you learn about what your property holds</i>	All Year
Apple Tree Pruning	<i>Pruning helps keep apple trees healthy and improves quality and quantity of yields</i>	Jan. - March
Apple Tree Grafting	<i>A horticultural technique to help bring old, neglected trees back to fruition</i>	April - May
Forest Bird Program	<i>High-Nesting Bird Boxes for ducks, owls, etc. and/or Canopy Bird Feeders that protect against squirrels & bears</i>	All Year
Invasive Species Management	<i>Care for trees against invasive insects, and care for forests against invasive plants</i>	May - Sept.
Portable Sawmill Program	<i>We bring a state-of-the-art portable sawmill directly to your property and mill your logs to lumber, on the spot</i>	Spring - Fall
Property Mapping	<i>Custom property maps highlighting the property features you want to see</i>	All Year
Trail Camera	<i>Ever wonder what wildlife is around when you're not?</i>	All Year
Tree Planting	<i>CFA will find prime placements for up to 3 trees</i>	Spring - Fall
Wildlife Habitat Management	<i>Forestry practices to help improve your woodlot for wildlife</i>	All Year



MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Become a member at www.catskillforest.org/membership or send a check/cash with this application to:
Catskill Forest Association, Inc. PO Box 336, Arkville, NY 12406.

NAME: _____

MAILING ADDRESS: _____

PROPERTY ADDRESS: _____

PHONE: _____ EMAIL: _____

TOTAL ACRES: _____ FORESTED ACRES: _____ POND [] STREAM [] RIVER []

CATEGORIES (PLEASE CIRCLE)

BASIC (\$65)	CONTRIBUTING (\$150)
Events free or discounted; CFA News Subscription; CFA Member Property Sign; Access to CFA Programs	SAME AS BASIC + 20% Discount on Services; CFA Totebag
BUSINESS (\$200)	SUSTAINING (\$500)
SAME AS BASIC + 10% Discount on Services; CFA Website Listing; Email Referral Advertisements; Free Booth at Forest Festival	SAME AS BASIC + 30% Discount on Services; CFA Backpack

ADDITIONAL DONATIONS

GENERAL OPERATING FUND	\$
ENDOWMENT TRUST FUND	\$
SCHOLARSHIP FUND	\$

Total Amount: \$_____