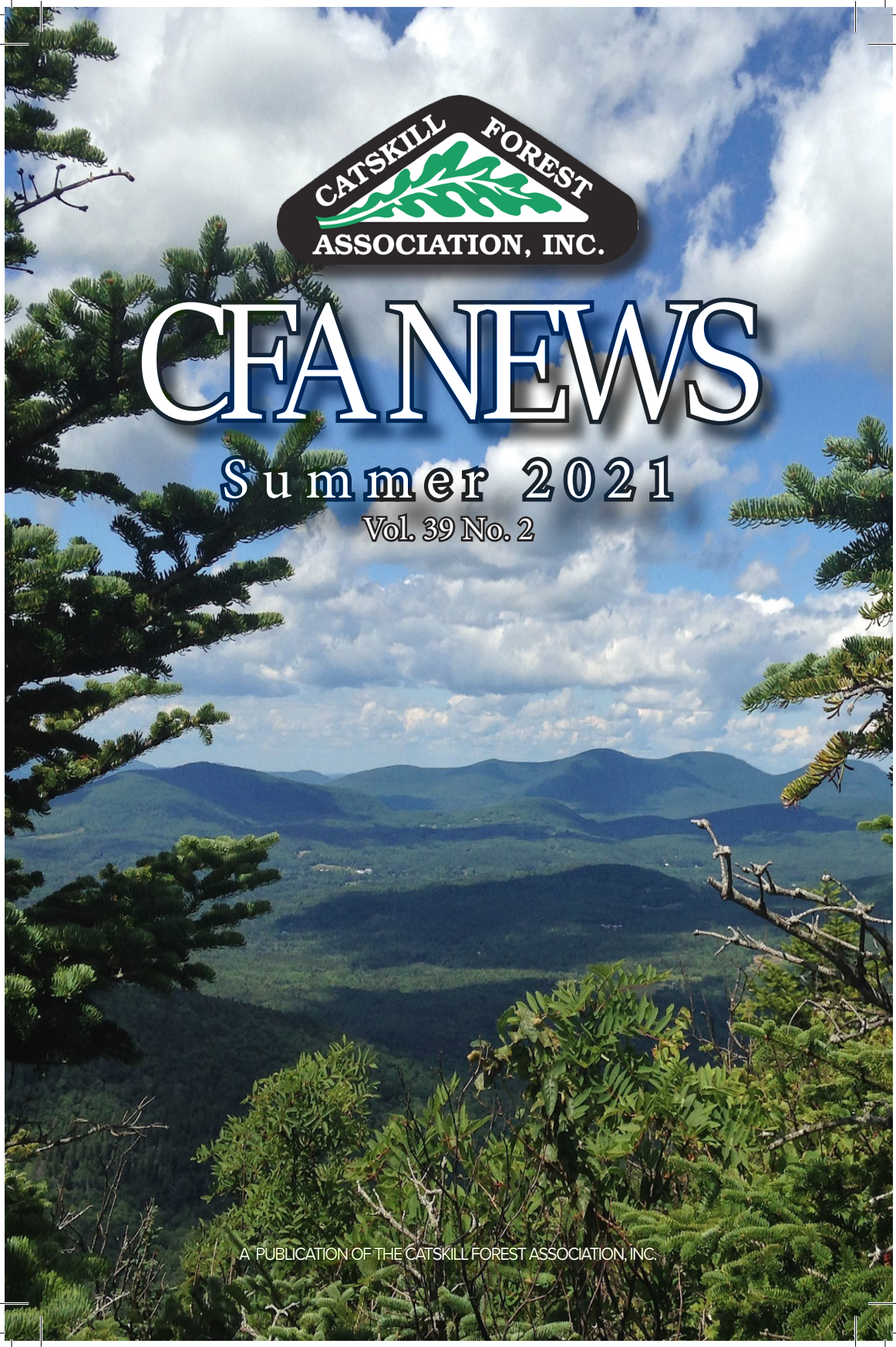

CFA NEWS

Summer 2021
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CFA NEWS

Summer 2021

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From the President's Desk Summer 2021-

By: Mike Porter

Let's Be Creative

Congratulations to CFA for eclipsing the 1000-member plateau. When I came to the Board of CFA we were languishing at around 350 members. We had program offerings that amounted to on-site visits and some forestry advice. There were mostly members who had larger land holdings and they were mostly interested in classic forestry activities. New landowners were purchasing smaller parcels and there wasn't much for that new landowner type. As new landowners bought smaller parcels and typical forestry activities were not practical, or of interest, the staff, under the fresh leadership of Ryan, began to expand programs in creative ways. By listening to members about their wishes and interests they developed a consultation where a staff member visited a member and discussed all the possibilities their land offered.

Those discussions and the creativity of the staff rapidly led to the development of several new and popular programs. As these new programs came on board, new members came on board also. With more members providing input into what we could offer there were more new programs proposed and developed. Most recently we began preparing for our 12th program. In six years, we have added eight programs to keep all staff busy 12 months of the year. The increases in members and programs has become a cycle of increases in CFA membership. That's creative!!

How can creativity work for each of us as landowners? We can each take the suggestions of our CFA staff member at our consultation and all the other resources available to us and do things with, and to, our land that make our land ownership more creative. Learn to use the tools of the forest; chainsaw, pruners, and chippers or whatever you have. With the tools to get you started and the programs of CFA you can develop a plan to do really neat stuff. You can plant and prune your own fruit trees after watching Ryan, John, or Zane prune what you have. You can burn firewood and get good exercise and save

on fossil fuel consumption. By improving your forest through thinning, you can have that firewood or a great supply of useful wood for projects. Get some power tools or experiment with classic hand tools to create woodworking projects.

I have made kids' blocks from firewood that were too nice to burn using an old jointer given to me by my father-in-law. I have made furniture that has been built with varying degrees of either precision or rusticness. It all depends on the wood and what I see in it. I continue to create new things from wood growing on our 17 acres.

Becky has created a small-scale deer exclosure as we have cut trees for other things. The tops and brush have been piled in a tangled circle around a patch of ground. The goal is to create a safe haven for forest plants to get a foothold and repopulate our woods without deer eating them. Each year we will add new material to compensate for decay and settling. Only time will tell if this truly works but it is creative.

I can't begin to discuss all the possibilities for creativity on your land. It all depends on your skills, trees, interests and ability to listen to those CFA staffers. If this column spurs something creative in your life and in your woods please share your results with CFA staff by sending a summary of what you did or are doing and how you came up with the idea to CFA. We will publish it in a newsletter or letter to members. Your idea might trigger someone else to do something creative on their land.

Your creativity could lead to more creativity just as increased membership and member interests leads to more programs and participation in those programs.

Until next time.

Mike Porter, President
CFA Board of Directors

WHERE WAS STAGHORN SUMAC IN THE CATSKILLS 300 YEARS AGO?

By: Michael Kudish
Photographs by David Turan

For the last two issues of *CFA News*, inquiries from colleagues inspired me to write about the origins of various shrubs and small trees in the Catskills. How did they migrate into the region postglacially and where were they before European settlement? In the Winter 2020 issue, I wrote on hobblebush (a.k.a. witchhobble). In the Spring 2021 issue, I wrote on speckled alder and highbush blueberry. For this Summer 2021 issue, I am writing about staghorn sumac, inspired by an inquiry from a colleague from across the Hudson, Conrad Vispo.

This article will be different, however. Because I have not mapped the PRESENT distribution of staghorn sumac, there is more speculation. The present distribution, once mapped, may offer us clues to its past distribution. I suspect that it is now abundant in almost every major valley.

Staghorn sumac is a very shade intolerant large shrub or small tree. It therefore requires, and is most common today in, open sunny areas such as along roadsides, along fencerows between pastures, and in abandoned fields, i.e. in an agricultural landscape. But where was it before?

Natural openings in the forest were uncommon in the Catskills before European settlement. Then, as now, we had blowdowns, floods, landslides, ice and snowstorms, and rare lightning forest fires. These very localized disturbances might not have been enough to maintain large populations of the sumac.

NATIVE AMERICAN AGRICULTURE

Then I thought about Native American agriculture. What if staghorn sumac, pre-European settlement, was concentrated around

hubs of Native American activity – villages, farms, trade routes, and hunting and fishing camps? We know where most of the major hubs were in the greater Catskills region (see the accompanying map locating the major hubs).

1. Esopus Flats around Kingston.
2. Village of Pakatakan just northeast of Margaretville, with activity extending northward along the East Branch Delaware River to Roxbury.
3. Villages of Pepacton and Papakunk (the latter later Lower Shavertown), now under the Pepacton Reservoir.
4. Schoharie Valley, especially from Blenheim north through Middleburgh and the Village of Schoharie.
5. Confluence of Charlotte Creek with the Susquehanna River east of Oneonta. This village was named by Europeans as Adequentaga.

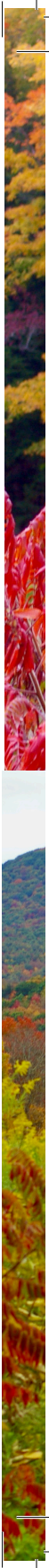
Suppose staghorn sumac, from about 1000 years ago when agriculture was supposed to have begun in what is now New York State, through the 17th and early 18th century, had been concentrated around these hubs. Then when Europeans began clearing more acres for farms at the end of the 18th century and into the early 19th, staghorn sumac expanded from these hubs into the freshly-cleared agricultural lands.

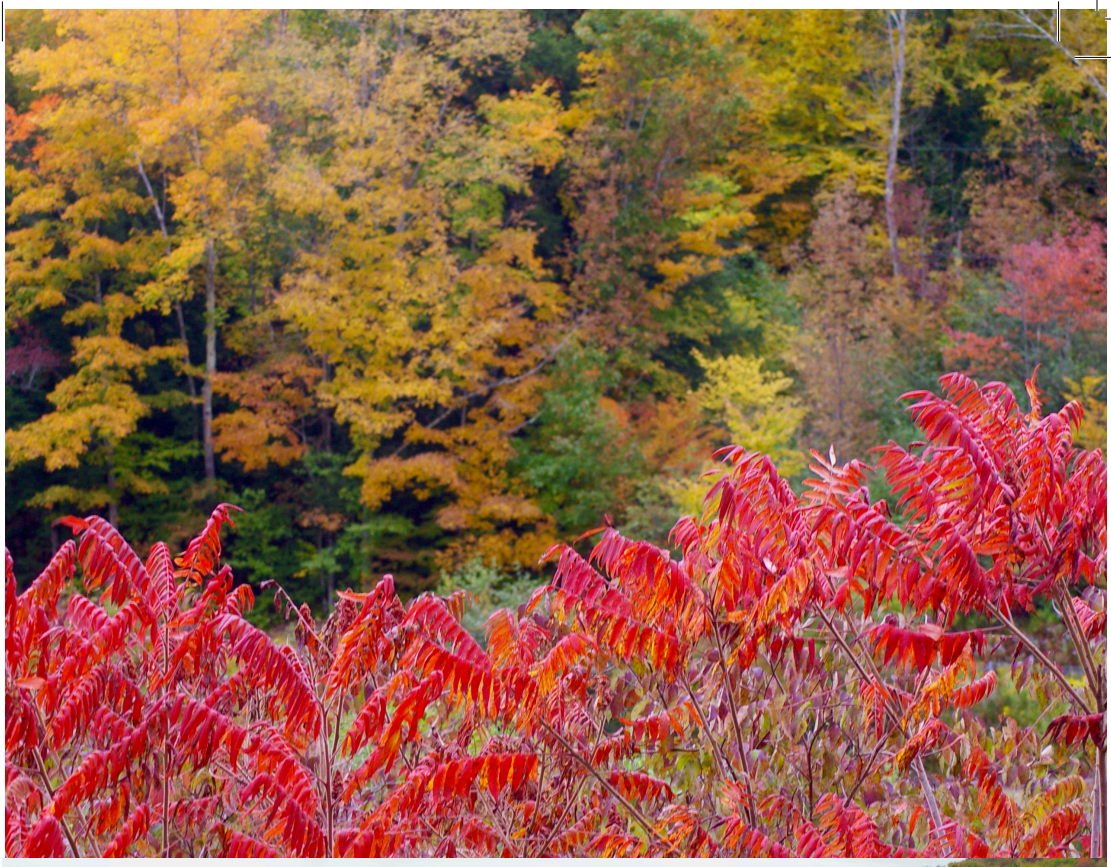
NATIVE AMERICAN BURNS

Also, we have to consider that staghorn sumac may have exploited lands that Native Peoples burned repeatedly and maintained as semi-open. We know where most of these lands were (See the seven articles in *CFA News*, from 2008 through 2019, indexed on page 11 of the Summer 2020 issue. You might enjoy especially the article in the Fall 2009 issue: "Native Americans Effect on the Forests of the Catskill Mountains" on pages 4 through 7).

A CHALLENGE TO CFA MEMBERS

I challenge CFA members to map the distribution of staghorn sumac in their own valleys – noting where it is and where it is not.





See how far up the valleys it goes. To the last farm perhaps, both extant and abandoned? Then we can assemble a detailed map of the current distribution and overlay it with the Native American hub map accompanying this article. Does the present distribution look like streamers radiating out in many directions from the hubs? If so, then we know that the bulk of staghorn sumac populations pre-European settlement WAS located in these hubs.

A WORD ABOUT SCIENTIFIC AND COMMON NAMES:

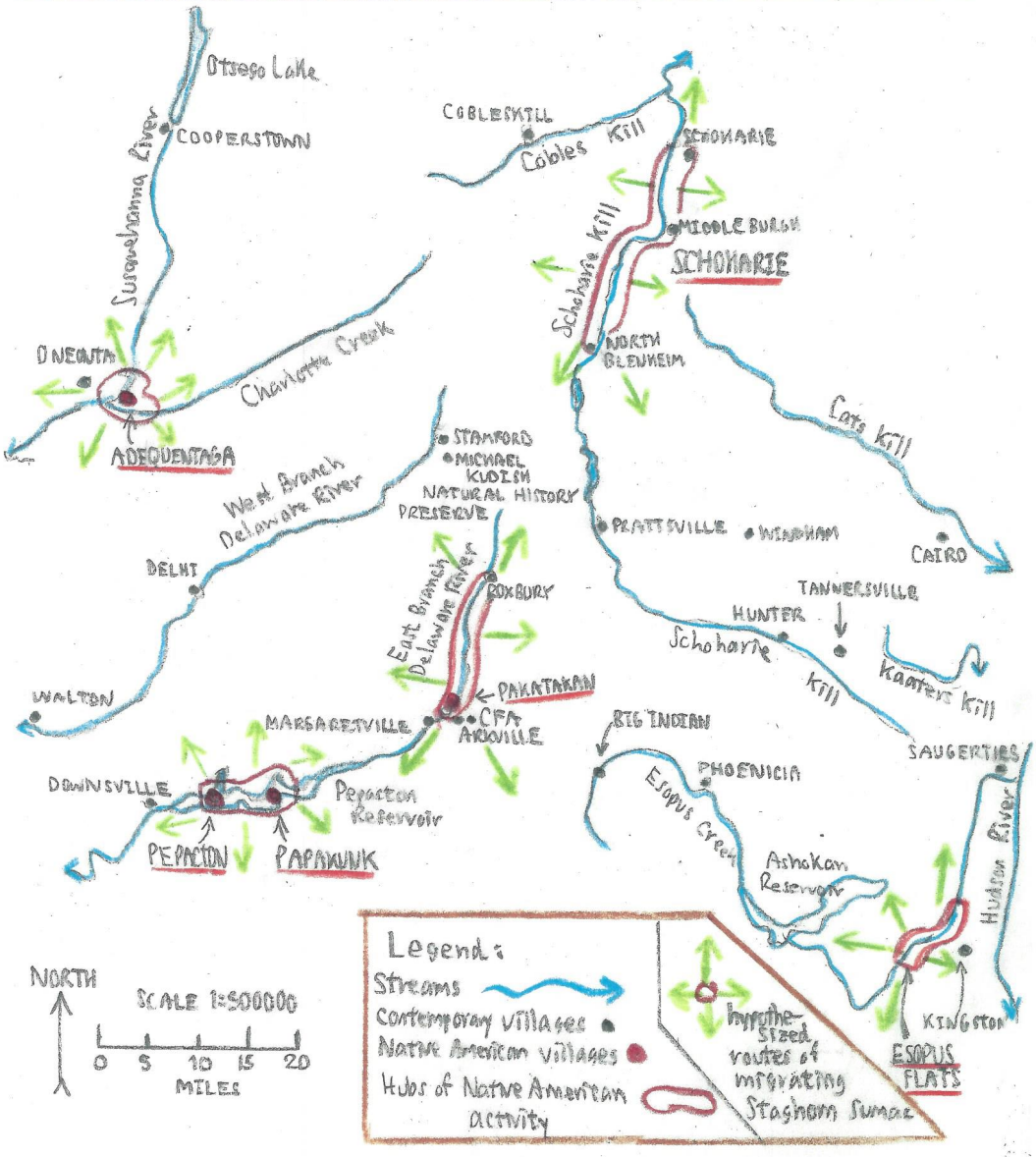
The scientific name of staghorn sumac is *Rhus typhina. Rhus* is both the old Latin and Greek name for European sumacs. The specific name *typhina* means a small cattail because the brown fuzz on the twigs looks like a cattail. *Typha* is the scientific name for cattail, and "ina" means small. The common name staghorn refers to the resemblance of twigs to the velvet of a buck's antlers.

The computers at the CFA have had a rough time with scientific names. This is common with computers generating newsletters for many other organizations. The rule is, when written in a sentence, that scientific names are to be either underlined or italicized, not both. I use italics. But no matter how hard we try, our editor Dorothy Monforte and I, the computers insist on eliminating the italics. Computers are not trained in the rules of plant nomenclature. Let's see what they do this time.

Staghorn sumac is in the Anacardiaceae, the cashew family. Pistachios are classified here. This family includes several other non-poisonous sumac species as well as poison ivy (see *CFA News,* Summer 2018, for poison ivy distribution in the Catskills) and poison sumac. Staghorn sumac is harmless. On several occasions while leading tree and shrub i.d. walks for college students and the general public, I would casually walk up to a staghorn sumac and quietly chew off a leaflet – to the horror of those who believed it to be poisonous!

MAP OF THE CATSKILLS REGION SHOWING HYPOTHESIZED SOURCES OF STAGHORN SUMAC POPULATIONS AND ITS RADIATING MIGRATION

CFA NEWS, SUMMER 2021, MICHAEL KUDISH 5/1/21



Diversity in the Forest

By: Ryan Trapani, Director of Forest Services

Diversity. It's a trendy word these days. It seems to recall positive feelings for most people. The antithesis of diversity would be monoculture, which seems to recall mostly negative feelings. On a farm, the spectrum from diverse to monoculture seems more straightforward since most of the plants are annuals or are planted that year. In this manner, the farmer or grower is mostly responsible for plants that grow there. But is this the case in a forest where the dominant plants are trees? Are some forests more diverse than others? And if so, how come?

In early April, I got to leave the Catskills and venture north to Lake Placid, in the Adirondacks for a Wilderness First Aid training. I rarely leave the Catskills, but when I'm able to, I like to see what's growing. This was not my first time in the Adirondacks. I went to school at the New York State Ranger School from 2003 to 2004 and had my one and only Dendrology class. Walking around Lake Placid brought back some of my experiences at the Ranger School. The mountains and lakes there are spectacular, but for me, it mainly reminded me that I missed the diversity found in the Catskills when it came to the tree department.

Back in 2003, I was excited to learn the various trees, their peculiar attributes, common and Latin names too. When I returned to my home in the Hudson Valley, I quizzed myself while walking around the mountain above my house. Up there, I was doing well. There were stands of trees like those found in the Adirondacks – maple, beech, birch, and hemlock. Also included were some white pine; No problem. But, when I ventured down into the valley, there seemed to be more oak species than I remembered. We just didn't see oak up at school in the Adirondacks. There was mulberry, hackberry, juniper, yellow poplar, catalpa, sassafras, various walnut and three types of hickory and white oak! Black gum and pitch pine oh my. And we haven't even ventured into the planted varieties and non-natives very much.

More Trees in the Valley

Our Ranger School professors were aware of the lack of diversity too. To see more species of trees, we would leave the Adirondacks and venture down to the St. Lawrence Valley. I remember –

somewhere outside Canton – when the Dendrology professor stumped a class of Ranger School students. Now, let's put this into context for a second. These were 40 students that barely left the Ranger School's campus, which was chock full of Northern Hardwoods: maple, beech, birch; and boreal trees too: red spruce, and balsam fir. Farms? There were no farms within 45 minutes; just a lot of trees, muskrats and Ranger School students. In any case, the professor stopped and leaned against a big, gnarly, overgrown, bushy tree about 25 feet tall. Its bark had an olive-drab camouflage appearance that flaked or exfoliated throughout. It was early fall, but there happened to be no fruit, but only simple, oval leaves. Many couldn't name it; It was a darn wild or volunteer apple tree – Malus spp. I was so used to looking at spruce and fir, that I too had forgotten what an apple tree looked like through my newly acquired Adirondack tunnel vision.

The point here is, why did the Ranger School students have to leave the Adirondacks and venture to the big valley of the St. Lawrence to find more tree species? Why did I find more oak and hickory – in addition to Northern Hardwoods – in the Hudson Valley and Catskill Mountains? Why is "biodiversity" lacking in the Adirondacks? The answer – to me – mostly lies in land-use history, or the lack thereof. Yes, humans have been a self-loathing bunch these last few decades. I seem to hear mostly about their "destructive" or "exploitive" ways. I also hear that humans are "reducing biodiversity." But is this always true?

Humans in the Forest

I can't say whether diversity has increased outside the purview of forestry, but when it comes to tree species richness or diversity, humans are a positive attribute. To explain this phenomenon is beyond the scope of this short article, but I will briefly cite three examples. First, is with Native Americans. There is plenty of evidence that wherever they existed, fire was used in the forest to promote nut and berry trees/shrubs. To this day, their pyrogenic legacy lives on in plants that are most fire-adapted – i.e. wintergreen, pitch pine, low-bush blueberry, sassafras, oak, hickory, chestnut, mountain laurel, etc.

The second example is more anecdotal, until I stumbled upon a study several years ago agreeing with this experience. In short, it hypothesized that there seemed to be more forest regeneration

and species diversity in and around "party spots" where high schoolers gathered in the woods. After all, these guys burned the woods occasionally, cut trees and created incidental canopy openings for sun-loving plants to grow. Perhaps they scared away the deer too from browsing everything? I witnessed this outside Middletown, Orange County. The member had just acquired the property and it was being used as a well-known adolescent hang-out. More importantly, I couldn't believe the oak and maple regeneration that was growing there. Oak and maple seedlings are highly preferred by deer that normally hammer them down to stubs, killing them. Here they were establishing above the deer-browse line. That "teenage wasteland" was accidentally being made into a "healthy forest."

The third example – and also accidental – has agricultural roots. Forests that happen to reside say near a large apple orchard also seem to benefit from a satisfied deer herd. In other words, the deer are placated by the abundance of food in the orchard and are browsing less in the forest. One member's forest in the Town of Plattekill, Ulster County had some of the best forest regeneration I've seen since. However, his 200-acre ridge was surrounded by apple orchards, and the deer just weren't dumpster-diving as much on forest regeneration. Agriculture also creates accidental pluses in the tree species department by adding sun-loving or shade-intolerant species to the mix, especially when "farm abandonment" occurs. Also, non-native species – such as wild pear, apple, white mulberry, and raspberries – add to the forest fruit palette as well.

Diversity in the Catskills

I would argue that the Catskills are plenty more diverse – when it comes to trees – than the Adirondacks for the above-mentioned reasons. The Catskills have a far richer land-use history than their northern brother, mainly due to the tanning industry and agriculture. Tanning in the 19th century may have removed many hemlock trees, but the regrowth that occurred afterwards was much more diverse. Famous 19th Century Naturalist John Burroughs in one of his essays discussed recently cut areas for tan-bark and remarked about the quantity of blackberries that grew afterwards. Some of our black cherry, oak, and aspen gained a foothold in this otherwise dark forested monoculture of hemlock. Don't get me wrong, I love a hemlock

stand, but we're just discussing "diversity." And when it comes to agriculture, the Catskills had plenty. As most farms were abandoned, mainly beginning shortly after the Civil War, and continuing to modern times, this also created patchworks of age-class diversity as well as spaces for shade-intolerant plants to grow. Sections where humans have been least involved in the Catskills, also include some of the least diverse forests and are reminiscent of the those you might find in the Adirondacks. For instance, the upper West Branch and East Branch Neversink Valleys near Frost Valley are completely absent of oak, and this is probably due to the lack of humans there for hundreds – if not thousands – of years. We know oak can grow there despite colder climates due to elevation, but it is missing in the forest.

Final Notes

I really didn't discuss the more deliberate ways humans can encourage diverse forests, or what we call forest management or forestry outside Native American burning. Obviously, this too can help encourage certain species over others through large and small canopy openings, thinnings, or "crop tree releases" to name a few. CFA has written and demonstrated these practices, while offering them as Programs to members, mainly through its Wildlife Habitat Management Program.

On a final note, perhaps you might be thinking that humans add a lot of non-native plants to the mix that become "invasive." I am more concerned about "invasive" insects that kill healthy trees than introduced non-native plants, and it is here that I part ways with many of my "colleagues" in Natural Resources Management. To this day, it should be reiterated that no native plant – that I know of – has been eradicated or extirpated by a non-native plant in the northeast. As USDA Biologist Tom Rawinski states, if native plants have a fair shot, they will almost always win. What he is referring to is a fair shot or level playing field with deer. Tom would tell land managers to put up a deer fence, and this often would work. Once the deer issue was controlled, the natives could compete with those non-native plants that deer wouldn't eat. I believe the "invasive" nature of many plants – whether native or non-native – is due to their ability to resist deer browse. In other words, the mere abundance of one plant over the other is often a symptom of a greater problem – the lack of forest management

and intensity of deer-browse. Contrarily, I have seen how many of these non-natives have simply added cover and food for wildlife in areas that otherwise would be lacking in both due to browsing.

Apple trees, honeybees, and white mulberry are a few European/Asian introductions to the northeastern forest that I would argue have greatly improved the richness and quality of our forests, including native fauna. There are many more examples, but any plant – whether native or non-native – should be judged on its ecological role that weighs both negative and positive attributes. And the same might go for humans. Some too, might consider us "non-native" or "invaders into 'their' habitat." But, any good argument should contain a cost-benefit analysis. And I would argue that humans – in the rural landscape – can offer a net-positive role in forests. And if you partially agree with that, we at CFA hope to foster that notion and make your piece of woods better than when you found it. As humans, you can take away, but you can also give by planting trees, or sowing sunlight by cutting the right tree for others to grow.

Summer of the Cicada

By: Zane Lawyer, Forest Program Technician

If you haven't heard all the buzz, you certainly will soon enough. Entomologists, amateur bug collectors, and all admirers of the diversity of insect life are anticipating one of the most unique natural phenomena ever to occur throughout the northeast beginning late May and continuing to mid-summer: the mass emergence, sexual congress, and generation of a whole new brood of Magicicada septendecim, a.k.a. the periodical cicada.

Periodical cicadas belong to the order of insects considered true bugs. Members of this order use their sucking mouthparts mainly to feed on plants and have membranous wings that lie flat when at rest. Aphids, water striders, leaf and tree hoppers are all common examples, but none create as much of a spectacle as the emergence of the periodical cicada—believed to be the largest of its kind on earth.

These cicada's have two distinct races which are based on the length of their life cycles: a 17-year northern race and a 13-year southern race. In each race there are 3 distinct species. M. septendecim is the most common cicada you will see (and hear) this year. Populations of these cicada's are called broods and multiple broods occur in separate regions of the northeast but sometimes overlap. The largest group of 17-year cicada's, both regionally and by sheer number of individuals, is called Brood X and its members practically emerge overnight to trill loudly from the nearest tree by dawn.

How Does a Cicada Set Its Watch?

The heat of summer is signaled in the daily high temperatures that begin climbing up towards the end of May through mid-June. Many plants and animals take this shift in day length and the accumulation of warmer and warmer days as cues to their development. But what if you spent most of your life in darkness and at temperatures so low that most biological activity slowed to a crawl? What signs do you use to indicate your next move?

For periodical cicadas, its knowing which way the sap flows.

Living beneath the soil between 3 and 15 inches, cicada nymphs develop slowly by feeding on the xylem fluids of tree roots. Without light or a calendar, the nymphs are thought to clock the annual flux of nutrients or hormones as they flow upward in the spring and downward in the fall. This recurrence at natural intervals allows the cicadas to mark their development year by year. Simply put, seasonal fluctuations in light and temperature, channeled through plant life down into the soil, signals to the feeding brood when its safe to surface. That is one hell of a timepiece.

Nature's Noisemaker

The last major emergence of periodical cicadas in the northeast was in 2004. Some fun facts from that year are as follows: Shrek 2 was the highest-grossing film of the year, the Boston Red Sox won the World Series for the first time since 1918 (breaking the Curse of the Bambino, of course), the first episode of The Apprentice premiered on NBC, newly coined words include podcast, social media, e-waste, and waterboarding. For me, it was my last summer before entering high school. At the time, I couldn't tell a hickory from a hawthorn, but I did notice that some summers were much louder than others.

When I say loud, I don't simply mean noisy. Vacuum cleaners are noisy, city traffic is noisy. For context, leaves rustle at roughly 30 dBs, the average lawnmower rumbles along at 90 dBs, and a full-throttle chainsaw puts out between 106 and 115 dBs. Considering that anything above 80 dBs may be harmful to the human ear without proper hearing protection, it's startling to learn that a brood of male cicadas chirring from the treetops at mid-day can register anywhere from 85 up to 100 dBs.

Fittingly, it's the male cicadas that make the big hoorah in an attempt to attract a willing female. After 17 long years, periodical cicada nymphs will wait for the average soil temperature to reach the mid 60's which signals that summer has arrived. Thousands of male and female nymphs will then emerge from the earth (millions per acre!) and begin crawling to the nearest tree. Overnight they will molt for the first and last time to complete their simple metamorphosis. By morning, their exoskeleton

will have hardened to reveal a blackish body with shades of green, bulging red eyes, and a pair of crinkly transparent wings with yellow trim. At this point a whole different clock will start ticking because the males will have 20-23 days to stay alive, stand out from the choir, and find a match alongside a swarm of other eligible bachelors.

I distinctly remember encountering the hollow exoskeletons of these insects in my family's backyard clinging to the bark of our blue spruce trees. I still recall the mixture of awe and disgust I felt after plucking the sepia-toned shells from the trunk and imagined what ungodly creatures might have discarded them. Their stout body and claw-like appendages made them seem like some landed crustacean that would scrape, bite, and sting if you ever crossed its path.

Order Up!

17 years later, a little older and a little wiser, I now know that looks can be deceiving, especially when it comes to periodical cicadas. It turns out they aren't evolved to haunt my dreams. They don't bite, sting,

or use their claws to sever the digits of timid middle schoolers (instead their forelegs are adapted for tunneling up and out of the ground). They are virtually harmless. In fact, they have many natural enemies who take their mass emergence as mad dash for valuable protein. Any creature with two hands and a mouth will end up gorging themselves on a full diet of adult cicadas as they clumsily attempt to evade capture. Yet, in a bit of a sick twist, this slaughter is all to the good. By lying in wait most of their life, cicadas can sidestep natural disturbances in their environment and build up enough numbers to overwhelm the opposition. Entomologists refer to this phenomenon as an evolved strategy of predator satiation. Essentially, it's nature's way of bum-rushing all the hostiles in order to increase the odds of successfully reproducing a new brood. From the point of view of evolution, it may not be the perfect solution but it's certainly one that works.

True Romance

Be forewarned, this mass cicada carousel will leave its mark on the forests of the Catskills. After successfully mating and glutting all potential threats, the few remaining females will use a tube-like organ, called an ovipositor, to saw their way into the small stems of trees to deposit their fertilized eggs. A single gravid female will oviposit up to 20 times and lay around 600 eggs in the protective woody tissue of hardwoods to incubate. For some trees, all these slit-like puncture wounds will lead to their twigs being girdled causing their leaves to turn brown and dieback.

Oak, hickory, ash, maple, hawthorn, apple, black locust, and dogwood are all native species who will display these symptoms most clearly. After 6 weeks the eggs will hatch and the new brood of cicada nymphs will fall to the ground, burrow down to the roots, and start sucking sap like their forefathers did. Come August the clock will start ticking again for this new brood to emerge in the summer of 2038. In the evolutionary race for survival, periodical cicada's have learned that there is no point in running. You only need to leave on time.

Cuius est solum, eius est usque ad coelum et ad inferos
Whoever owns the soil, holds title all the way up to the heavens and down to the depths of hell.

By: David N McIlvaney

I need to knock down a tree at my camp. It has been bugging me for a while. Not that it has done anything wrong, it's just in an inconvenient place—at the edge of a small clearing by one of my bunkhouses—and I'd like to claim that piece of sky back. I take "holds title all the way up to the heavens" literally.

My hands can do remarkable things; communicate meaning from afar, cup a child's face, flip a coin to make a decision; but they're just not strong enough to cut down a tree. So, I turn to tools. Specifically, an axe.

The axe is my superpower.

Yes, I have chainsaws. They are very convenient and incredibly efficient. When I use them, however, I always feel as if I'm a servant to the machine. I have to feed a chainsaw what it demands and follow its very specific rules of use. And while I can tame it, I'm always aware that at any moment a chainsaw can turn on me.

An axe, however, is an extension of my body. It lengthens my arms, adds weight and power to my hands, and turns my fingernails into an efficient cutter. Once I connect to the axe and centre it on my core, my swing becomes tireless. Lumberjacks hated double-handed tree saws as they required exhaustive effort whereas using an axe was considered "rest time". I'm not sure why wielding an axe comes so easily to me. The Canadian thing perhaps—what's bred in the bone will out in the flesh. Physical structure maybe. Probably just the sheer joy.

The artist, Andy Goldsworthy, once said that gloves have memory of the work they've done. He's right. Look at a used pair of gloves and you can easily tell the difference between those of a stone mason or a mechanic. If true, then tools must have memory of the hands that have held them. My axes seem to. They know what's expected

of them when I carry them to a tree. If they don't, they certainly do when I use the poll to sound the wood and spin it for the first bite. I can feel that memory flow from the head down the handle and into my body and my intent flow back down.

My favourite falling axe is 32" in length with a 4 ½ lb. hand-forged head of Swedish steel. The handle is American hickory and after working it with 0000 steel wool, boiled linseed oil, sweat, sap, and blood, it just feels right. But today I'm using a US-made WoodlandPRO Fallers Axe with a 5 lb. Dayton head and a 28" handle. Mostly just to try it out.

The axe is heavy, and I prefer a longer handle, but it's meant to be a workhorse—big, bold and brash. This is an axe designed for the great forests of North America.

This particular tree is a red maple of approximately 80 feet in height. Good tree, bad location. And the top was starting to die back which could be a result of some root compaction from the bunkhouse.
The first thing I do is use the axe as a plumb to check lean. You can't really wedge a tree against its lean with just an axe as you need a thin cut to drive a wedge into, so you have to fall a tree in the direction it wants to go. I'm lucky as the weight of the tree slants away from the bunkhouse. (There are ways to wedge a tree over without a saw, but they are beyond the scope of this article.)

And then I check the wind. A strong breeze can make ruin of the best laid plans (and roofs of cabins or brainpans of idiots). I luck out as the forest is still.

The advantage to an axe over a chainsaw is you can take your time and slow the process down so much that mistakes are rarely made. But this still is a few thousand pounds of weight crashing down, so I clear a good working area around the tree to make sure that my swing won't be impeded. Then I mark my escape path.
Before I get to it, I use a small forest axe to clean off the bark of the working area. This helps me visually define my face cut and lets me sounds the tree for rot.

Ready.

Raise, swing, bite. A solid hit releases tension. Both in the tree and in me.

Raise, swing, bite. My hips, back and arms begin to work together with the axe and the centrifugal force.

Raise, swing, bite. Two high hits to release the fibres, then one low to remove the chip.

I begin to sweat and lose a layer of clothes as I recall an old truism – there are no fat lumberjacks.

The facecut roughed in, I clean up the notch to make sure it's level, straight and still pointing in the right direction, then come around the back side for the felling cut.

An axe felling cut is typically higher than a saw cut, and I mark out an area in my mind that will give me a decent hinge. I cut the new notch in the same manner of the first until I hear the first light crack in the tree, then I step back and watch. The tree is ready to fall, and time slows down. That's the magical thing about falling a tree with an axe … everything begins to move in slow motion.

Ensuring that the tree still leans in the correct direction, I make another swing. Two more and the sound of the next crack is louder. I move in the direction of my safe exit and wait. In the most beautiful expression of time slowed, the tree gently begins to fall as I back fully out. Neither it nor I are in a hurry—it has stood there for decades and I want to respect that.

It crashes down four feet from where I was aiming which I consider a success.

Now comes the limbing and bucking as the branches need to be moved to a brush pile and the trunk stacked to dry and split later. And here, I fully admit to "cheating" … I reach for the chainsaw.

My superpower does not have a masochistic bend.
David and his wife have a camp at the end of the road at the end of another road in the Western Catskills. They have been members of the CFA since 2015.

Milestones at CFA

The Catskill Forest Association, Inc. (CFA), welcomed its 1000th member Tuesday, March 30, 2021. Andrew Zimmerman, Denver NY, has recently moved back to the Catskills and plans to use CFA's programs and knowledge to learn more about his forest and how to care for it. CFA also celebrated Sue Doig for 18 years of service as a CFA Board member. To show CFA's appreciation of her and her dedication, Board President Mike Porter presented Doig with a lifetime member with the organization.

In reference to CFA Doig stated, "It's a great organization…. I've enjoyed it so much." CFA is a membership based non-profit organization that provides forestry education and services to private Catskill landowners. CFA is currently caring for over 79,000 acres worth of private properties across Delaware, Greene, Otsego, Schoharie, Sullivan, and Ulster Counties. In her 18 years of service, the organization as gone from around 300 to over 1,000 memberships. The variety of programs and services, like the Portable Sawmill and Forest Consultations, make the organization useful to new and existing landowners. Doig served as CFA Board Secretary and Treasurer from 2005 to 2018 and is currently a Coldwell Banker Associate Broker.

At the socially distanced presentation, that took place outside of CFA's office in Arkville, Doig expressed her love for the organization, "It's great to be a part of something you never hear bad things about." With the large push to get back to the great outdoors, CFA extends a helping hand to all Catskill residents in achieving their woodlands goals.

Programs & Services -

Learn more at catskillforest.org/programs

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

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Arkville, NY 12406
catskillforest.org
(845) 586-3054

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 ($75)	CONTRIBUTING ($175)
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: $_____