

**Cornell Cooperative Extension Columbia and Greene Counties** 

Issue One: 2023

# Welcome to In These Woods!

"In These Woods" is an annual newsletter series focused on sustainable woodland stewardship and protecting natural resources. Each issue includes insights and resources for landowners and stewards planning and implementing their management goals. This program covers wide-ranging topics relevant to the beginner and seasoned woodsperson alike. Participation is free and digital copies will be sent to your registered email address.

To register for the 2023 series, please visit our website today!

#### **2023 Issues:**

*Issue 2 -* Understanding Forest Ecology

Issue 3 - Woodland Enhancements

*Issue 4 -* Wildlife & Recreation

*Issue 5 -* Agroforestry

*Issue 6 -* Timber Management

*Issue 7 -* Invasive Species

*Issue 8* - Protecting Your Forest Assets

Issue 9 - Conclusion

#### **About Us**

The mission of Cooperative Extension is to enable people to improve their lives and communities through partnerships that put experience and research knowledge to work. Extension staff and trained volunteers deliver education programs, conduct applied research, and encourage community collaborations. Our educators connect people with the information they need on topics such as commercial and consumer agriculture; nutrition and health; youth and families; finances; energy efficiency; economic and community development; and sustainable natural resources. Our ability to match university resources with community needs helps us play a vital role in the lives of individuals, families. businesses, and communities in our region.

You can learn more about the programs and services we provide on our website. You can also contact us directly to help overcome a challange, share stories and gather tools to help you achieve your goals. Below is the contact information for our two offices. We look forward to hearing from you.

**Acra** (Greene County)

Agroforestry Resource Center 6055 Route 23 Acra, New York 12405 (518) 622-9820 **Hudson** (Columbia County)

Extension Education Center 479 Route 66 Hudson, New York 12534 (518) 828-3346

In These Woods Woodland Stewardship Series is a collaboration among Cornell Cooperative Extension of Columbia & Greene Counties, New York City DEP, USDA Forest Service, and the Watershed Agricultural Council's Forestry Program

#### CCE Columbia & Greene's

# Agroforestry Resource Center



Cornell Cooperative Extension's Agroforestry Resource Center (ARC) was established in 2003 to help sustain the vast, privately-held forest resources in the Hudson Valley, Catskill Mountains and surrounding region. It is home to the Agriculture and Natural Resources team who focus on regional education and outreach in all woodland and working landscape subject areas.

Agroforestry is defined as the combination of agriculture and forestry practices that create integrated, productive and sustainable land-use systems. These practices can include ginseng, mushrooms, maple and other high-value products.

Through a variety of programs and partnerships, CCE offers land stewards economically viable and ecologically sustainable practices to help preserve and manage woodlands. The ARC includes a diverse and talented group of natural resource educators, an interactive indoor space and a 142-acre model forest that supports an outdoor "laboratory" for demonstration, research and hands-on workshops.

To learn more about the Agroforestry Resource Center, visit: Agroforestry Resource Center

## **Siuslaw Model Forest**

Siuslaw (Sy-use-luh) Model Forest is our 142-acre living classrom. It's one of our greatest educational resources and sits right across the street from the Agroforestry Resource Center in Acra. Our Natural Resources team and its partners manage this diverse property for all to experience. It's home to innovative demonstration sites, habitat, trails, and real-world examples of woodland stewardship principles and best management practices.









#### Siuslaw as a Model

In 2007, Siuslaw was designated a NYC Department of Environmental Protection Model Forest. Siuslaw is one of four model forests in the region that all demonstrate the importance of sustainable land stewardship, forest health and water quality protection through education.

Today, Cornell Cooperative Extension hosts many public education programs in the forest and partners with researchers, ecological monitors, and other institutions and organizations like SUNY ESF and the Watershed Agricultural Council's Forestry Program to bring these resources to the community.

The Siuslaw Model Forest is open to the public during our regular business hours (8:30-4:00 Mon-Fri). There are miles of trails for non-motorized recreation and many interpretive signs that educate around best management practices and activities you can bring home to your woods.

#### **Agroforestry**

Check out our tree and understory crop demonstrations, along with the shiitake and oyster mushroom laying yard - great inspiration for your backyard or small commerical operation.

### **Timber Stand Improvement (TSI)**

See the different stages of growth and practices employed to restore habitat or thin dense stands of trees to encourage healthy forest conditions.

#### **Best Management Practices (BMP)**

Walk the woods roads and learn about open topped culverts, broad based dips, water bars and other techniques for preventing erosion and protecting water.

#### **Enhancements**

There are bird nesting boxes, pollinator houses, American chestnut restoration planting, habitat thinnings and plenty of tree identification markers to keep you learning!

# Siuslaw: "Land of the Far Away River"

The land that is now Siuslaw Model Forest was once part of a resort hotel located across NYS Route 23. The resort started as a boarding house on the Stone family farm in 1890. The family built the property into Stone's Groveside, a thriving Catskill resort that was purchased by the Lange family in 1946. The old farm was used as an attraction for visitors, providing 150 acres for guests to use for hunting, nature study and relaxation.

In 1956, Eric Rasmussen, a forester educated at the College of Forestry in Syracuse, embarked on a career as the owner of Lange's Grove Side Resort. For the next 50 years, Eric also pursued his avocation of forestry through the sustainable management of the land owned by the resort. Eric created a forest management plan for the Siuslaw Tree Farm. He planted saplings, thinned dense stands of trees and conducted periodic harvests. He enrolled his woodlands in the American Tree Farm system and was named the 1999 NYS Tree Farmer of the Year.



Eric working on a bog bridge, Fall 2020

Eric named this property the Siuslaw Tree Farm as a tribute to the Siuslaw National Forest in Oregon, where he worked as a forester after graduating from college. Siuslaw is a Native American word meaning "land of the far away river," referring to the Columbia River in Oregon. In naming the property Siuslaw, Eric was referring to the Hudson River.

Eric built a series of trails on the Siuslaw Tree Farm and introduced resort guests to forestry and nature study. In 1970, he joined Cornell Cooperative Extension of Greene County to host "Environmental Awareness Days" field trips for 5-6th grade students from around the county. This event familiarized over 10,000 students with forestry and conservation, and is still hosted today at the Siuslaw Model Forest.

In 2006, Eric and his family donated the Siuslaw Tree Farm to Cornell Cooperative Extension of Greene County so that Siuslaw may provide research and educational opportunities into the future. Eric's efforts and generosity were valued so widely that he was presented with the 'Forester of the Year" award from the NY Society of American Foresters that same year. Eric still acts as a guide, resource and fellow steward to this day.

## What You Need To Know

As a beginning forestland owner.

By Peter J. Smallidge. State Extension Forester, CCE Department of Natural Resources, Cornell University.

#### Introduction

Whether your forest or woodlot is mixed among agricultural fields, part of a larger tract of forest, or on the edge of a suburban area, you share something similar with other forest owners who are inte ested in forestry -- you all had to start someplace. However, getting started can be a barrier for many people to fulling enjoy their forest.

People own forests and woodlots for many different reasons and have an equal number of benefits they want to receive from their property. Knowing your reasons and desired benefits are your forest management objectives, a critical first step in getting started. Your objectives are the starting point in forestry because you can't know what you should do until you know what you want to do. Many people think of forest land as a place to produce timber, but many more benefits are also possible. Actually, most forest owners have objectives that focus more on wildlife, recreation, and aesthetics than selling timber. If you jointly own your property, with your spouse or business partner, discuss your objectives so everyone has the same vision. If you aren't quite sure what your objectives are, then ask yourself some questions: Why do you own the land? What do you like about your land? What do you dislike? What are your needs in 5, 10 or 20 years? Not all of your forest land will necessarily have the

same primary objective. One area may be a sugar bush while another area is devoted to wildlife or recreation. The answers to these questions and discussions with some of the people mentioned below will help you clarify your objectives. Having a clear sense, and ideally a written statement, of your objectives is important because your objectives should be the basis for all future activities on your property.

A good activity once you have started thinking about your objectives is to make a list of the people who are available to help you. These people can be divided into two groups, non-technical and

technical. Non-technical assistance is provided through volunteers such as the Master Forest Owners who are trained by Cornell Cooperative Extension. Master Forest Owners, or MFOs, are forest owners like you who have an interest and commitment to helping other forest owners get started. They have a wealth of experience from their property and those of other forest owners they have met, and can help give you some ideas. They are also familiar with the people and publications that can help you make a final decision. Additional non-technical assistance is available through groups such as the New York Forest Owners or the Catskill Forest Association. These are groups of forest owners who are interested in issues related to owning forest land in New York. Both groups have regular publications and other activities where you can pursue forestry issues important to your woodlot. Your local office of Cornell Cooperative Extension can help you find a MFO in your neighborhood and they or the Department of Environmental Conservation can help you find the forest owner associations.



Photo by Hans Isaacson. National Association of State Foresters.

Technical assistance is also readily available throughout New York. For general information of forest and woodlot management contact your local office of Cornell Cooperative Extension. They have publications and bulletins with information on a variety of subjects such as tree identification, wildlife habitat, and forest owner planning. Cornell Cooperative Extension will also know of upcoming forest owner workshops that may be of interest to you. If you are interested in aerial photographs, topographic maps, or soils information you should check with you local Soil and Water Conservation District. Finally, for professional forestry advice you should contact your local New York Department of Environmental Conservation office. The DEC has professional foresters who will visit with you on your property for free to discuss your forest management options. An earlier visit from a MFO may help give you some ideas and guestions for the DEC forester. The DEC foresters will have information on cost-share programs and the New York Forest Tax Law. Finally, if you decide to contact a private forester, the DEC forester has a list for your county.

The next thing you will likely want to do, if you haven't already, is to become familiar with your property. Look over the maps and photos you received from your Soil and Water Conservation District. Walk through the woods on some of the old trails and woods roads that may exist. Walk the boundary lines and make sure they are evident so others don't mistake some of your trees for their own. Spend some time talking with those who own the adjacent property. Your neighbors may know something of the history of the area, the history of your forest, and perhaps the previous owner.

Ideally you would mutually agree to inform each other of logging activities so there are no surprises.

Once you have started getting more familiar with your property you should work with your DEC forester or a private forester to write a forest management plan. Plan writing is a team effort with your forester, but as the owner you are the final decision maker for what happens on your forest. A written management plan will offer many benefits, including a statement of your objectives, a description of your property, the condition of the

forest, the potential benefits you can expect from your forest, streams and soils, unique features, and the types of wildlife habitat that exist. The plan will

also let you decide a schedule of activities that are consistent with your objectives. A plan isn't necessarily a complex document, and there may be cost-share money available to offset the cost so check with your DEC forester.

These ideas will hopefully help you get started in the right direction with the management of your forest or woodlot. There are many benefits you can enjoy from your woodlot, and getting started correctly will ensure you can realize all those benefits. If you would like additional information you can go to the ForestConnect website at: www. ForestConnect.info or contact your local office of Cornell Cooperative Extension office. Participating in forestry is the fun part, so enjoy the process.



Photo by Hans Isaacson. National Association of State Foresters.

## **Starting Pointers**

- There are many reasons why you might want to manage your forest or woodlot. Deliberate planning will help ensure you reach your personal goals.
- There are numerous people, agencies, and publications available to help you begin the management process. There are several free options. Start with a Master Forest Owner Volunteer and then likely a visit from a DEC professional forester.
- The first step in planning for forest management is to know what you and your spouse or partner(s) want from your property. Your objectives are the basis for all future activities on your property. No one can tell you what you should do until they know what you want to accomplish.
- You can start to understand your objectives by asking yourself questions about your property. How did you obtain your property? Why do you own it? What do you like and dislike?
- Trying to think about all your objectives and whether they are compatible can seem like an over-whelming task. Computer software called NED (for NorthEastDecision model) is available through the USFS. You can download a copy at their web page (http://www.nrs.fs.fed.us/tools/ned/) or call (802) 951 6771. The free software is Windows compatible.
- A good starting point is to begin knowing your property. Work with the DEC, NRCS, and Soil and Water Districts to get aerial photographs, topographic maps, and soils maps of your region. Make sure your property lines are marked using blazes, markers, or posted signs.
- Become involved with people in organizations that share your same interests. A Master Forest Owner Volunteer can help and is available through your local office of Cornell Cooperative Extension; also, you can contact the New York Forest Owners Association or Catskill Forest Association.
- Before you work with a forester or a logger check their credentials and references. A professional
  forester is someone having a degree from a professional forestry program at a university. Many loggers are demonstrating their professionalism by participating in the "Trained Logger Certification"
  program. Both foresters and loggers have many opportunities for continuing education classes.
  Remember, there are good and bad foresters and loggers.
- A written management plan offers many benefits. Your management plan should start with a clear statement that you help develop with your forester, about your management objectives.
- Spend time in the woods, learning about your property, and with others. Read material about forest management and become active with other forest owners. This is the fun part...make sure you enjoy yourself.

# Free Maps to Learn and Plan

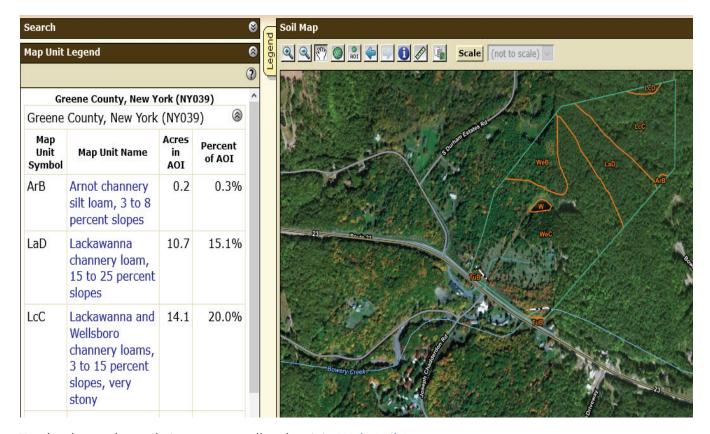
Maps can broaden our perspective and help us see what's beyond immediate view. These tools can help us navigate a new property, reveal interesting things about woods we know well, and in some cases, offer information otherwise unavailable in the field.

Free mapping tools can be used to identify property boundaries, historic imagery, significant natural communities and rare habitat, government funded program eligibility and even regulatory considerations related to wetlands or hunting zones. This is far from an exhaustive list, but all contribute to a deepr understanding of the woods around us.

# Web Soil Survey

Web Soil Survey (WSS) provides soil data and information produced by the National Cooperative Soil Survey. It is operated by the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and provides access to the largest natural resource information system in the world.

Accessing soil data can be a useful tool if you're re-establishing woodlands through planting. You can determine what soil conditions are present and compare those with the needs of certain tree species. Many agroforestry practices, especially forest farming, can be aided by soil data. In combination with other indicators (slope, aspect, species presence), soils can be a determining factor for understory crop success. There are plenty of other uses such as planning forest roads or timber harvests.



To check out the soils in your woodlands, visit: Web Soil Survey

# **Native Lands Digital**

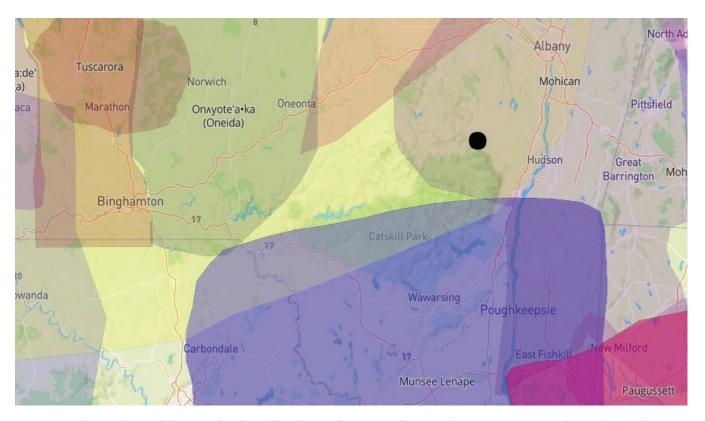
This tool is a very easy-to-use visual aide for cultural context and indigienous history. See contemporary infrastructure markers alongside the approximate territories, treaties and languages of indigenous populations of the region. This map is made available by Native Lands Digital, a Canadian non-profit.

Follow this link to locate your woods: Native Lands Digital Map

CCE Columbia & Greene Land Acknolwedgement

Cornell Cooperative Extension's Agroforestry Resource Center is located on Indigenous Lands of the Mohicans. We recognize their sovereignty and long-standing presence on this land, which precedes the establishment of Cornell, New York State, and the United States of America. Cornell also benefited from the profits created from the dispossession of indigenous lands far beyond New York State (1862 Morrill Act), mostly belonging to the Anishinaabeg Ojibwe people. Today, the descendants of the Mohicans live primarily on the Stockbridge Mohican Reservation in Wisconsin. Our team is grateful for the opportunity to work on this land and work in support of their sovereignty as independent nations.

To lean more about land acknowledgments, visit: Honor Native Land: A Guide and Call to Acknowledgement



Native Lands Digital map of the Central and Catskill/Hudson Valley region of New York State, Western MA and CT as they are known today. The black icon marks Siuslaw Model Forest and the Agroforestry Resource Center.

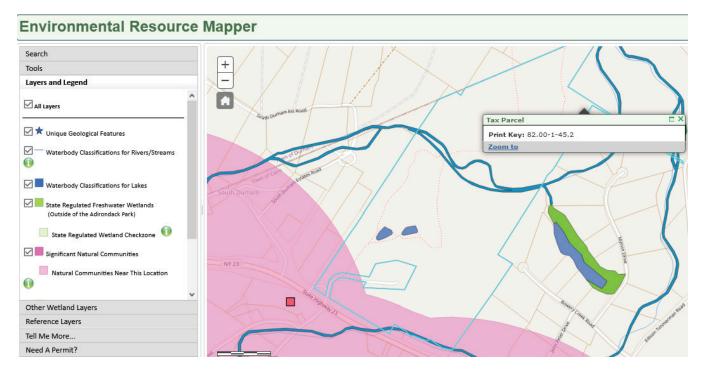
# NYS DEC Environmental Resource Mapper

The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation hosts this free mapping tool that includes over 70 "layers". Layers are digital representations of information. They often highlight specific areas of interest or features that you can add or take off your map to see the resources you want.

The Environmental Resource Mapper has specific locations for some features and generalized locations for others, such as endangered and threatened species. Here are some of the features you can explore:

- Tax parcel data, roads and municipalities (also available on county tax maps)
- Freshwater wetlands regulated by the State of New York
- Federally regulated wetlands from the National Wetlands Inventory.
- Streams, rivers, lakes, and ponds; water quality classifications are also displayed.
- Rare Animals and plants in New York, including those listed as Endangered or Threatened
- Significant natural communities, such as rare or high-quality forests, wetlands, and other habitat.

Below is an example of the map in use. The light blue boundary line is the Siuslaw Model Forest tax parcel. You can see the Sawmill Creek (blue) running through and the Bowery Creek along Rt. 23, a near-by significant natural community (pink), and a neighboring water body and wetland buffer (green).



To find and use this map, visit:

NYS DEC Environmental Resource Mapper

# Google Earth - Aerial Images

Google maps is a familiar tool available on your smart phone or computer. Google Earth is a more interactive version that can provide more advanced aerial imaging and planning tools. Users can add polygons, flags and various infrastructure and land surface layers to their map.

In many cases, there are aerial photos dating back decades. This can shed light on past activities vs. current conditions, near-by changes to the landscape or any significant tree health issues such large-scale defoliation or species specific losses.



# MyWoodlot

MyWoodlot is an interactive website for all those who own, steward, or enjoy woodlands. It is a great collection of resources often referenced throughout In These Woods. It is a project of the Watershed Agricultural Council's (WAC) Forestry Program. WAC works with farm and forest landowners and professionals in the New York City Watershed to protect water quality.

MyWoodlot also has a great mapping tool to learn about the watershed and its resources.

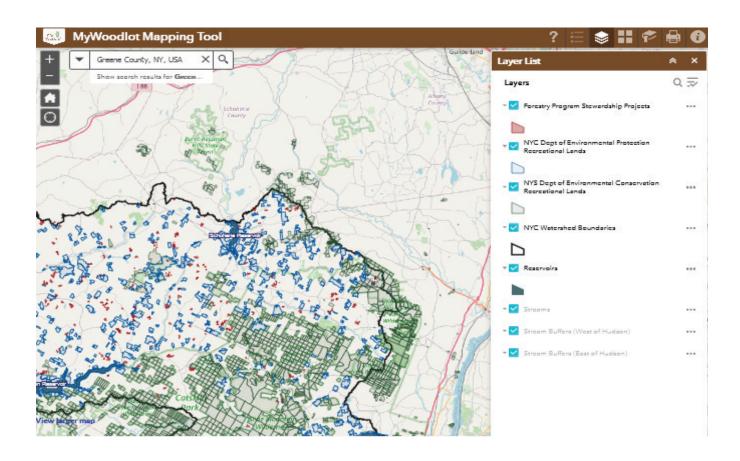
A unique feature is the WAC Forest Stewardship Projects layer. WAC's Forestry Program has a Management Assistance Program (MAP) that provides financial assistance and technical support to landowners who wish to conduct certain stewardship activities on their forestland. This layer shows WAC's current stewardship activity portfolio. Funding is only available to landowners in the NYC watershed region. Eligible stewardship projects include:

- WAC Forester site visits
- Tree planting
- Riparian improvement (streams)
- Invasive plant control
- Timber Stand Improvement (TSI)
- Wildlife improvement

To use this map, visit: MyWoodlot Mapping Tool

To learn more about funding opportunities, visit:

<u>Management Assistance Program</u>





# Did you Know?

#### New York's Forests at a Glance

- New York Land Area: 30.2 million acres. State Population: 19.4 million
- New York State forest area: 18.6 million acres, 61% of land area, about one acre per resident
- Publicly-owned forest land: at least 3.7 million acres
- Privately-owned forest land area: 14.4 million acres; 76% of forest land; owned by 687,000 landowners
- Number of tree species: more than 100 commercial and non-commercial
- Most common forest type: maple/beech/birch (53% of forest land area)

## Economic Importance of New York's Forests and Harvest Information

- \$300 million in annual payments to private landowners
- 488 million board feet of logs
- 2.1 million green tons pulpwood and wood chips
- 25% of New York timber harvest is exported for processing
- Economic contribution of forest products-related manufacturing and services: \$14 billion (US Census)
- Forest-related tourism: \$1.9 billion

## Why Forests are Important

- Forests cover 31% of total global land area.
- Forests are home to 300 million people around the world.
- Forests house 80% of our terrestrial biodiversity.
- The livelihood of over 1.6 billion people depends on forests.
- Approximately 60 million people, mainly members of indigenous and local communities, reside in forests.
- Forests store more than 1 trillion tons of carbon.
- Over 40% of the world's oxygen is produced by rainforests.
- More than 1/4 of modern medicines originate from tropical forest plants.
- 32.5 million acres (roughly the size of NY State) of forest continue to be lost worldwide per year.
- Deforestation accounts for 12 to 20% of the global greenhouse gas emissions that contribute to climate change.
- The five most forest-rich countries (Russia, Brazil, Canada, United States of America, and China) account for more than half of the total forest area in the world.
- More than 60 million people are employed by forest-based industries. The annual value of wood removed from forests is estimated to be more than \$100 billion.

# **Activity: Distance Pacing**

Pacing a distance with reasonable accuracy is useful for a variety of woodland management practices and is easy to master. A tape measure should be used when exact distances are required, but pacing is a great way to find boundaries and other features. Follow these steps to determine the length of your pace. This is a great activity after you've reviewed a map and want to see how that translates on the ground!

- **A.** Starting with one foot, count a pace every time that foot is put down. With a measuring tape or length of rope, mark off 100 feet in a moderately dense forest stand.
- **C.** Divide the sum of the total number of paces by the number of times you paced the distance. This figure represents the average number of paces it took to walk the 100 feet.
- **B.** Using a normal stride, pace the 100 feet about 4 times, noting each time the number of paces it takes to cover the distance.
- **D.** The length of your pace will be each to 100 feet divided by the average number of paces it took to travel the 100 feet (calculated in step 3).

## Example:

A person with an average pace of 5 feet wishes to find a boundary marker 138 yards away. Home many paces will it take to cover this distance?

- 1. First convert yards to feet: 138 yd. x 3 ft. = 414 feet
- 2. Then divide the distance (in feet) by the pace length: 414 ft. divided by 5 ft. = 83 paces (rounded to the nearest whole pace)

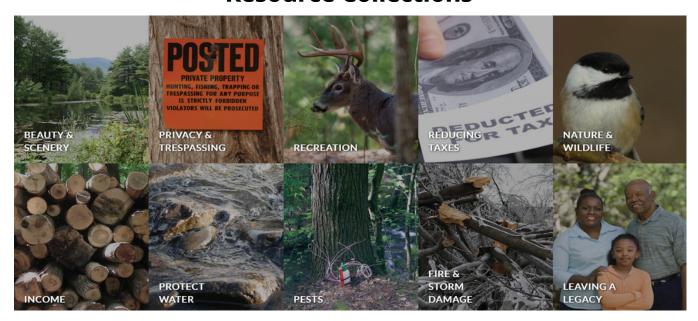


Model Forest Coordinator, Dr. Rene Germain of SUNY ESF paces a monitoring plot in Siuslaw Model Forest.



Any forest road or open trail are great to practice and measure paces. Photo of Siuslaw Model Forest road.

## **Resource Collections**



## **MyWoodlot**

As highlighted above, MyWoodlot offers a wide selection of resources on woodlands. There are activities and blogs from professionals and other landowners that highlight projects and ideas that you can actually implement. The activities broadly include beauty and scenery, privacy and trespassing, recreation, reducing taxes, nature and wildlife, income, protecting water, pest, fire and storm damage, and leaving a legacy.

Create your MyWoodlot profile for free to save and organize activities and resources that match your goals. Follow the link below to begin exploring all these resources and keep up to date with new activities that are added weekly!

Visit MyWoodlot

#### **ForestConnect**

A Cornell University resource to connect woodland users to the knowledge and resource needed to ensure sustainable production and ecological function on private woodlands. The site houses information for woodland stewards, educational resources and offers countless webinars on a wide variety of woodland topics.

Visit ForestConnect

#### **CCE Columbia & Greene**

Visit our site to find resources and more information on upcoming events. Our Natural Resources Team is also ready to support you in all your woodland stewardship goals. Please reach out if you're looking for specific information, have questions about your woods, or need assistance in determing next steps.

## **Woodland Owner Networks**

#### **Women Owning Woods**

We are a group of women landowners and natural resource professionals from the Catskills and the Hudson Valley region of New York. We've organized this group of professionals and landowners as a way to foster learning experiences and discussions about forest property. Details about gatherings will be sent out via email in our eNewsletter. To subscribe to that list you can email wow@nycwatershed.org to join.

Follow us on Facebook to stay connected, share your stories, and learn from your peers.

#### Find WOW on Facebook

#### **Master Forest Owner Volunteers**

The Master Forest Owner (MFO) program provides private woodland owners of New York State with the information and encouragement necessary to manage their forest holdings wisely. Since its inception in 1991, MFOs of Cornell Cooperative Extension have helped over 1,000 landowners. The term "Master" Forest Owner implies education as in "School-Master". Experienced and highly motivated volunteer MFOs are available statewide, ready to assist neighbor woodland owners with the information needed to start managing their woodlands, through free site visits to landowners properties. The training volunteers receive complements their experience as forest owners.

#### Learn more about the MFO Program

#### **Catskill Forest Association**

The Association was formed for the purpose of promoting knowledge and understanding of forest ecology and economics; to promote long-term forest management; to educate the public and enhance the economy of the Catskill region; to demonstrate economically feasible and environmentally sound forest practices: to serve as a source of information about forest management; to serve private landowner rights; and to identify and manage private forest lands dedicated to the demonstration and practices of high standards of forestry.

Learn more about the CFA

#### **New York Forest Owners Association (NYFOA)**

The mission of the New York Forest Owners Association (NYFOA) is to promote sustainable forestry practices and stewardship on privately owned woodlands in New York State.

Learn more or join NYFOA

## **Cornell Cooperative Extension**

Columbia and Greene Counties

Agroforestry Resource Center 6055 Route 23 Acra, New York 12405

**Postage** 

## Connect

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# Mission

Cornell Cooperative Extension Columbia and Greene Counties puts knowledge to work in pursuit of economic vitality, ecological sustainability, and social well-being. We bring local experience and research-based solutions together, helping Columbia and Greene County families and communities thrive in our rapidly changing world.

CCE Columbia and Greene Counties is a registered 501(c)(3) nonprofit.

Cornell Cooperative Extension is an employer and educator recognized for valuing AA/EEO, Protected Veterans, and Individuals with Disabilities and provides equal program and employment opportunities.

