



# Forest Matters

*The stewardship newsletter*

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## More for Your Money

By R. "Fitz" Fitzhenry, U.S. Forest Service, Northeastern Area State and Private Forestry, Durham, NH

I spent a week in and around Missouri's Ozark Mountains recently. That's nice countryside. Lots of farms and forests. Lots of people who work the land, from the families who've worked it for generations.

I was with Missouri State Forester Lisa Allen and her staff as they traveled to a number of local schools to announce Fuels for Schools grants. Fuels for Schools is a U.S. Forest Service program funded through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act that helps convert heating systems from oil, propane, or natural gas to biomass woodchip or wood pellet fuels.

Missouri students attended the ground breakings at a number of stops. Allen asked for a show of hands from the kids in the audience whose parents, friends, or family worked in the woods or made a living in the forest products industry. A strong wave went up each time.

Missouri and Maine are putting Recovery Act grants to great use by helping schools and public buildings convert from fossil fuel heating systems to woody biomass boilers for heat. Both states are reducing dependence on foreign energy while converting to carbon neutral, locally grown fuel. They gain markets for low-value wood from their forests, as well.

Though the exact savings varies from building to building and state to state, it just makes sense. "With wood chips, it costs about \$5 to produce a million BTUs," Allen said. "It's up to 4 times more to make that from oil, and 5 times more to make a million BTUs from propane. Local wood chips are the solution."

For any school, especially the small, rural schools that will benefit from the Recovery Act biomass conversions, a little savings can go a long way. And with heating energy bills in the tens of thousands of dollars at a typical school, potential savings of up to 50 percent means more than a little savings. The schools get more BTUs for less, and can keep or even create jobs in education at the same time.

As seen by the show of hands at the ground breakings, teaching isn't the only vocation or sector benefiting from these Recovery Act grants. Woodland-owning families, hunters, the recreation industry, and those working in forestry are winners as well.

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**More for Your Money** (continued from page 1)

“When there’s demand for local wood, we have jobs in our forests,” said Rob Clark, Forest Management group leader with the U.S. Forest Service, Northeastern Area State and Private Forestry. “Landowners gain more options for their land when we have uses for the wood that isn’t fit for sawing into lumber.”

The typical chip feed for the new biomass plants will come from tree tops and branches following a commercial harvest, as well as the smaller, weaker trees culled out by a thinning designed to let the best trees grow or to bring in wildlife.

“A thinning can help a forest stand grow quicker and stronger toward what the landowner wants from it,” said Clark. “It can bring in deer, turkey, grouse, and other species that need new growth on the forest floor to thrive.”

Allen has similar feelings. “We’ll be gaining jobs and gaining healthier forests,” she said of the Missouri projects. “That’s a win-win for us.”

In many ways, all the partners involved in the Recovery Act biomass-conversion projects are working to get the most for their money, from the jobs and forestry perspectives, as well as the education perspective. One Missouri school, in Gainesville, parlayed its Recovery Act grant and an education grant into an exploration of the critical connection between forest resources and local livelihoods.

“We have a very interesting student project going on in Gainesville that includes our biomass project as an integral component of the learning activity,” said Amy Britt, curriculum coordinator, Gainesville R-V School District. “A grant from the Community Foundation of the Ozarks provided laptops, software, cameras, video cameras, and other technology for our FFA students to interview local residents about the history of agriculture in Ozark County and produce a video about that. The second portion of the project is

that the students will research the biomass project as it is constructed on our site to identify future jobs in agriculture and green energy that can be done from Ozark County.”

And so, in the mountains of the Missouri Ozarks, we see how things work when they’re working well: schools teaching about working woodlands; energy that’s grown, chipped, and delivered locally; sustainable forest management options; and healthier land for woodland owners. That’s more for our money—for years to come—from our Recovery Act investment. What a great way to keep the heritage of woodland stewardship and forestry jobs alive across the country.



Speakers and honored guests break ground at the Mountain View-Birch Tree Liberty High School's Recovery Act-supported biomass facility.



The firebox for Poland Regional High School's new Recovery Act-funded biomass heat system is hoisted into the boiler house, as school Principal Cari Medd (hat) and guests look on.

**Forest Matters: the stewardship newsletter** is published semiannually by the U.S. Forest Service Northeastern Area Forest Stewardship Program. Its goal is to bring the stewardship message to natural resource professionals, consultant foresters, and private forest landowners in the Northeast and Midwest. If you have any questions, or would like to be added to the hard copy or electronic mailing list, please contact Jane McComb U.S. Forest Service, 271 Mast Rd., Durham, NH 03824, phone: 603-868-7693, fax: 603-868-1066, e-mail: [jamccomb@fs.fed.us](mailto:jamccomb@fs.fed.us).

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# Stewardship News

## 2010 Tax Tips for Forest Landowners

This bulletin provides tax tips for woodland owners and their tax advisors when preparing the 2010 individual tax return. It is current as of December 20, 2010, and available at <http://na.fs.fed.us/pubs/taxtips/tax-tips-2010-updated.pdf>. Topics include timber as personal, investment, or business property; timber and installment sales; timber basis and depletion; timber management expenses; reforestation costs; depreciation, bonus depreciation, and first-year expensing; cost-share payments; casualty and theft losses; and filling out Forms T, C, and F. This information is not legal or accounting advice, so consult your legal and tax advisors for more complete information.

## Bur Oak Blight

Bur oak blight (BOB) is a disease caused by an undescribed species of the fungus *Tubakia*. So far, this fungal disease is known from eastern Nebraska to southern Minnesota and southwestern Wisconsin, and it appears to have spread across all of Iowa. It is not clear if the fungus is new to this region or if a shift in climate (earlier season rain events) have made this disease more noticeable over the last two decades.

Tom Harrington at Iowa State University is looking for leaf samples of bur oak blight from across Iowa and in neighboring States. The late-season appearance of necrosis (browning) of the main veins of leaves is the best symptom. Anthracnose may also result in veinal necrosis of bur oak leaves, but anthracnose begins much earlier in the season. Substantial leaf mortality is evident with BOB, and symptoms are usually more severe on the bottom half of affected tree crowns. No other oak species are affected.

If you have potential BOB material, please contact Tom Harrington at [tcharrin@iastate.edu](mailto:tcharrin@iastate.edu) or call 515-294-0582 for instructions or questions or to request an interstate shipping permit for samples. A photograph may help you make a diagnosis. This link will take you to an 18-minute video on the symptoms and other characteristics of BOB: <http://fms.extension.iastate.edu/vod/video/2010BobPresentCIC.html>.

[This article appeared in the *Central States Forest Health Watch* (August 2010). Follow this link to view this or previous editions: <http://na.fs.fed.us/fhp/fhw/csfhw/>.]

## Next Generation of Landowners Exhibits Now Available

More family forest land will be transferred, subdivided, or converted to nonforest use over the next 10 years than at any other time in our Nation's history. As the current generation of forest landowners transfers its wealth to its children, much of this family forest land is poised for development in the absence of proper forest estate planning. The Northeastern Area's Next Generation of Landowners Initiative is dedicated to providing valuable estate planning information to forest landowners so they can plan for, prepare for, and make wise decisions about their family forest legacy.

To support this effort, the Northeastern Area recently purchased two Next Generation of Landowners exhibits for State partners to display at conventions, meetings, and workshops. You may have recently seen these exhibits on display at the National Society of American Foresters Convention in Albuquerque or at the National Land Trust Alliance Rally in Hartford, CT.

For more information about using this exhibit for your meeting, please contact Mike Huneke, Northeastern Area Forest Stewardship Program Coordinator, at [mhuneke@fs.fed.us](mailto:mhuneke@fs.fed.us).



Next Generation of Landowners exhibit.

(continued on page 4)

## Attention CFM Representatives: SAVE THE DATE!

The 2011 Northeastern Area Association of State Foresters' Cooperative Forest Management (CFM) Committee will meet in Newport, RI, May 16-19 at the Newport Harbor Hotel. The meeting will address fragmentation and conversion of forest land to nonforest use. Other important topics include Landscape Stewardship, WebDET 2.0, Stewardship Program Accomplishment Reporting, and other current issues. We will also recognize our 2011 CFM Forester of the Year. CFM Representatives are strongly encouraged to mark their calendars and plan to be in attendance at this important annual meeting. For more information, please contact Mike Huneke, Northeastern Area Forest Stewardship Program Coordinator, at [mhuneke@fs.fed.us](mailto:mhuneke@fs.fed.us).

## U.S. Forest Service Report Spotlights At-Risk Species on Private Lands

The U.S. Forest Service recently published *Threats to At-Risk Species in America's Private Forests*, a report emphasizing how increased housing density near and on private forests is threatening habitat for plants and animals already at risk of decline or extinction.

The report, part of a series entitled "Forests on the Edge," details how several species of at-risk wildlife utilize private forests.

"Over half of America's forests are privately owned and are under pressure from housing development, pests, diseases, and fire," said Forest Service Chief Tom Tidwell. "Future development is likely to result in a decrease of private forest habitat for many at-risk species. This report will be a valuable tool for conservationists to assist in planning future developments and identifying at-risk species."

The report also presents and discusses maps that identify watersheds across the United States where at-risk species habitat is most threatened. The Forest Service is providing this information as a tool that local and State agencies as well as organizations can use for planning purposes. To obtain maps or a copy of *Threats to At-Risk Species in America's Private Forests*, please visit <http://www.fs.fed.us/projects/fote/>.

## Forest Resource Partnership in Ohio Receives Two Chiefs' Award

A collaborative effort to mitigate and manage the effects of invasive plants in southeastern Ohio has been recognized with the Two Chief's Partnership Award. The award-winning *Southeast Ohio Invasive Plant Management Project* is a partnership of the U.S. Forest Service, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, The Nature Conservancy, the Ohio Invasive Plants Council, and the Ohio Division of Forestry. These groups are working in five high-priority, heavily forested watersheds to support conservation and forest stewardship. The project area includes 545,000 acres of public forest land and more than 500,000 acres of private forest land with high stewardship potential, as well as a number of engaged towns and communities.

## Using Best Management Practices in Wisconsin to Limit Invasive Species Impact

By Thomas Boos, WDNR Forestry Invasive Plant Coordinator

In 2006, the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources–Forestry Division partnered with the Wisconsin Council on Forestry to guide development of Best Management Practices (BMPs) for invasive species with funding from the U.S. Forest Service. Industry practitioners, experts, and affected stakeholders collaboratively developed voluntary practices for managing and controlling invasive species in the forests and natural landscape of Wisconsin.

The resulting *Forestry BMPs for Invasive Species Manual* offers voluntary practices that can be integrated with forest management activities. Landowners, land managers, and loggers can use these effective, realistic BMPs to limit the introduction and spread of invasive plants, invertebrates, and diseases. Wisconsin is one of the first States to develop BMPs for invasive species. For more information, go to <http://council.wisconsinforestry.org/invasives/forestry.php>, or contact Thomas Boos by calling 608–266–9276 or sending an e-mail to [Thomas.boos@wi.gov](mailto:Thomas.boos@wi.gov).

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# Research

## Low-Density White Pine Thinning: A Silk Purse from a Sow's Ear

By William Leak and Mariko Yamasaki, U.S. Forest Service, Northern Research Station  
Roger Monthey, U.S. Forest Service, Northeastern Area State and Private Forestry, Durham, NH

In southern Maine and elsewhere in New England, many pine stands are showing signs of decline—trees are dead or have small, sparse crowns. This condition was clearly evident in some of the young stands on the Massabesic Experimental Forest near Alfred, ME, which is operated by the U.S. Forest Service's Northern Research Station. Studies at the University of Maine by Dr. Bill Livingston indicated that some of these decline symptoms might be caused by drought coupled with shallow rooting.

To counteract the problem, the Massabesic Thinning Research Project began as a low-density thinning that was applied in fall 2007 to about 90 acres of pine that averaged about 10 to 12 inches in diameter. Low-density thinning such as this was pioneered by Dr. David Smith of Yale University and more recently by Dr. Robert Seymour at the University of Maine. Hopefully, this low-density treatment would alleviate the effects of moisture stress and concentrate growth on the best trees.

The stand was expertly marked by a crew from the White Mountain National Forest. About half the stand had a final basal area of 60 square feet (low density). The other half had a very low density of 32 square feet. For comparison, the unthinned stand had a basal area of over 140 square feet of live trees.

We installed five plots in each of the three stand density levels in spring 2008; each plot had four sample trees. Diameter growth measurements over the ensuing 2 years showed that the thinned trees grew better than their unthinned counterparts. Figure 1 illustrates the differences in growth between stand density levels expressed as the calculated change in diameter over a 10-year period. However, we fully expect diameter growth rates to increase in thinned stands as their tree crowns develop in size and density.

The appearance of the thinned stands in 2010 in comparison with the unthinned stands is even more impressive (photos 1 and 2, respectively). Tree crowns are already greener and denser. Only an occasional tree died or was broken by the ice, snow, and wind storms that affected the area over the last 2 years.

Regeneration seems to be developing well as of October 2010 (photo 3). Regeneration plots have been

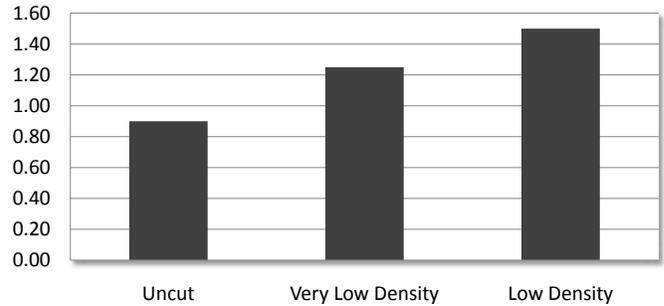


Figure 1. Calculated 10-year diameter growth in inches by stand density.

established and data will be forthcoming. White pine and oak regeneration are commonly seen as well as red maple, gray and yellow birch, and other species (photos 4 and 5). This project has the makings of a success story!



Photo 1. Thinned stand in 2010.



Photo 2. Unthinned stand prior to thinning in 2007.



Photo 3. View of understory development in October 2010 at the Massabesic Thinning Research Project.



Photo 4. Eastern white pine regeneration in October 2010 at the Massabesic Thinning Research Project.



Photo 5. Oak regeneration in October 2010 at the Massabesic Thinning Research Project.

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# Landowner Spotlight

## Stewardship in Action—Hidden Valley Nature Center

Bambi Jones and David Moskovitz own nearly 1,000 acres in the town of Jefferson, located in the heart of mid-coast Maine. Their goals for this land include growing high-quality timber, maintaining the forest's good health, educating visitors about forest management and utilization, maintaining and expanding a network of recreational trails, and improving wildlife habitat where possible. Bambi and David are the inspiration behind the Hidden Valley Nature Center (HVNC), a community supported, membership-based, nonprofit education and recreation organization that uses their land as its foundation (photo 1).



Photo 1. Bambi Jones and David Moskovitz pose beside a yurt at the Hidden Valley Nature Center.

The Hidden Valley Nature Center ([www.hvnc.org](http://www.hvnc.org)) is an inspirational example of sound stewardship of natural resources and provides a unique community outdoor center that encourages people to learn from, exercise in, and interact with their natural environment.

Silvicultural activities at the HVNC are being undertaken to develop uneven-aged forests of pine, oak, hemlock, and red maple, along with smaller populations of yellow birch, sugar maple, and white ash in areas with deeper and richer soils.

Bambi and David have actively managed their forest lands for decades with assistance from several licensed foresters, all of whom are members of the Maine Forest Service's (MFS) Stewardship Forester network. They have a long history of using Federal cost-share assistance dollars when appropriate and available. They have also participated in the MFS WoodsWISE Incentives Program (funded primarily by the Forest Stewardship Program and the now defunct Forest Land Enhancement Program delivered by the U.S. Forest Service) and the Environmental Quality Incentive Program currently administered by the Natural Resources Conservation Service.

Recent timber stand improvement work includes 1) crop tree release (up to 100 trees per acre) of the highest quality white pine trees, and 2) pruning of the best of these released trees (around 50 trees per acre) up to 17 feet to improve bole quality in the future (photo 2). Hidden Valley Nature Center forests have been certified under the Forest Stewardship Council system.

Sustainable nonmotorized recreation is very important to Bambi and David, who enjoy the property as an aesthetic resource. The continually evolving trail system currently boasts over 25 miles and offers opportunities for hiking, cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, and mountain biking. The 100+ acre Little Dyer Pond offers canoeing and fishing for bass, perch, and pickerel. Other small ponds and wetlands offer diverse wildlife and plant habitat.



Photo 2. Crop tree release with pruning of the best white pines.

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Overnight accommodations are available in a yurt (photo 3) or several cozy huts (photo 4) for a modest rental fee. The winter season is especially popular for overnights who enjoy various snow-based trekking opportunities. Trail signs, developed with some assistance from the Stewardship Program, have been posted to help visitors interpret the forest community, including the human management activities previously mentioned (photo 5).

Education is also very important at the Hidden Valley Nature Center. Some of the courses offered include pond ecology and fishing, timber framing and “stump to hut” workshops, chainsaw for beginners, wildflowers, birding, and geology. Classes are taught by local experts in zoology, ecology, botany, and biology who are often affiliated with organizations such as the State of Maine, local school districts, and the Mid-Coast Audubon Society.

Bambi and David have no plans to develop the land. They ultimately will likely transfer the property to others who share their values and interests. The passion and energy they exhibit for their land is a marvelous testimony of what a stewardship ethic can bring to individual landowners and the adjacent community.



Photo 4. HVNC hut



Photo 3. HVNC yurt

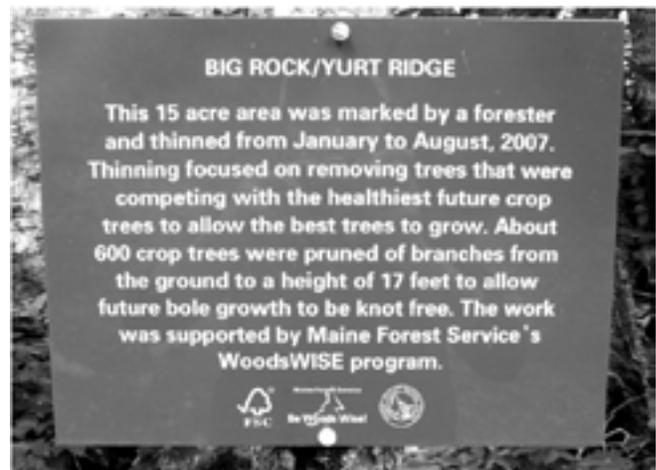


Photo 5. Interpretive trail sign at the HVNC.

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# State Roundup

## New Pennsylvania Stewardship Coordinator

Pennsylvania welcomes Andy Duncan as its new Private Forest Land Stewardship Coordinator. Andy graduated from Penn State University in 1999 with a bachelor's degree in the Forest Science, Forest Management Option.



Andy has worked for both private industry and the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) since graduation. Andy had been serving on the Lackawanna State Forest as a Service Forester for Luzerne County before his new appointment. In his spare time, Andy enjoys hunting, fly fishing and fly tying, mushroom hunting, and spending time with his family and friends.

## New West Virginia Stewardship Coordinator

West Virginia welcomes Bob Radsprinter as its new Assistant State Forester for Stewardship and Forest Management. Bob is a native West Virginian and received his degree in Forestry and Wildlife from Virginia Tech in 1977. Bob worked for Georgia-Pacific and Plum Creek Timber Company for 32 years. He is a certified Environmental Associate Auditor and has participated in third party Sustainable Forestry Initiative and American Tree Farm audits. His wide-ranging experience in the forest products industry in the mid-Atlantic and Lake States regions will benefit the Division of Forestry as well as the Forest Stewardship Program.



## New Illinois Stewardship Coordinator

Illinois welcomes Paul Deizman as its new Stewardship Coordinator. He returns to the Illinois Department of Natural Resources (DNR) after serving 3 years as the State's Emerald Ash Borer Program Manager. Paul



owns and has operated a Tree Farm since 1995. He is also a stewardship forest landowner of 41 acres in northern Illinois that includes a small Choose and Cut Christmas Tree operation that opened for business in 2002. Paul is an avid paddler and fisherman, and enjoys all sports indoors and out (except for running—unless it is from bears). Paul and his family reside in a rural farm community 15 miles west of the DNR headquarters in Springfield, IL.

## New Stewardship Coordinator for New York

New York welcomes Sloane Crawford as its new Forest Stewardship Program Coordinator. Sloane has



more than 20 years of experience working in the fields of forestry, forest land appraisal, and forest utilization in New York State. He holds degrees from SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry in both Forest Resource Management and Natural Resources Economics, as well as a Forest Technology degree from Paul Smith's College. He is currently Program Leader of the Forest Utilization Program at the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation's Division of Lands and Forests.

## Steve Westin Moves On—Sort Of

Steve Westin, Forest Stewardship Program Coordinator for Missouri, will be leaving "some" of his Forest Stewardship Program duties behind as he assumes a new position within the Missouri Department of Conservation as Program Supervisor for Planning and Emerging Issues. This new position was created as the staff was reorganized to better achieve healthy and sustainable forests statewide. In his new job, Steve will maintain his involvement with the Stewardship Project and will continue to be the State's Forest Legacy Coordinator. Steve will also be in charge of implementing Missouri's Forest Resource Assessment and Strategy, and will serve as the representative to the NA Planner's group. Congratulations to Steve on his new position!

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## New Stewardship Coordinator for Missouri

Missouri welcomes Brian Schweiss as its new Forestry Field Program Supervisor over Private Lands, a position previously held by Steve Westin. He began January 1 of this year, and works with Department staff and other agencies and organizations on forestry private land issues. This includes coordinating the Forest Stewardship Program, assisting with Forest Releaf efforts, serving as the contact for Call Before You Cut, and representing Missouri in the Cooperative Forest Management group. He also looks forward to coordinating the Department's involvement with the Tree Farm Program and the Forest and Woodland Association of Missouri.



He is excited to be a part of private land forestry programs to advance conservation of Missouri's forest lands. Welcome, Brian!

## Debra Huff from Michigan Retires

Debra Huff, longtime stewardship coordinator for the State of Michigan, retired January 1, 2011, exactly 7 years after taking over the position in 2004. Deb's devotion to forest stewardship is well known among her colleges both within the State and beyond its borders. Deb has nearly 25 years of service with the Michigan Forest Management Division. Over the years she has worked as a field forester, served as a training officer, and most recently held the forest stewardship position. As of this writing, no successor has been identified to replace Deb. While she may be leaving State employment, she is not leaving forestry behind her. In fact, Deb will be going right back to work as the Assistant Executive Director of the Michigan Forest Association. You can contact Deb at 517-651-5401 or [huff.debra@gmail.com](mailto:huff.debra@gmail.com).

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## Stewardship News (continued from page 4)

### Seeing the People Behind the Trees

By Joe Rankin, Forests for Maine's Future

[This is an excerpt of an article published in *Fresh from the Woods*.]

Forty foresters, land trust representatives, logging company employees, watershed managers, State forest service officials, and University of Maine forestry students turned out in Auburn, ME, to hear a trio of preeminent forest researchers and educators talk about how they can do a better job of connecting with family forest landowners.

The workshop was organized by the Maine Forest Working Group (FWG) and Threshold to Maine RC&D Area. The Maine FWG includes the Durham Field Office of the Forest Service's Northeastern Area State and Private Forestry; Maine Forest Service; Maine RC&Ds; the University of Maine and its Cooperative Extension; and the Natural Resources Conservation Service.

The presenters' message was one almost any successful car salesman or insurance agent takes to heart within a few days on the job—listen to people before you try to sell them something, target your message to their concerns and needs, and figure out how to reach out to them where they are.

It's an important message for the forestry and natural resources crowd, who are often trying to get landowners interested in cutting timber, developing a forestry plan, signing a conservation easement, joining a land trust, or allowing public recreation trails on their property. Making those connections is key because when it comes to forests and other important aspects of life, informed decisions are generally better ones, especially given all that forests do for humanity—slowing climate change; cleaning the air; harboring wildlife; slowing erosion; and providing fuel, furniture, and paper.

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## Seeing the People Behind the Trees

Giving natural resource professionals the tools to help them communicate with forest landowners is particularly important in the United States because of who owns America's forests. You might think that it's the Federal government, or big private companies. You would be wrong, said Brett Butler, a research forester for the U.S. Forest Service and the author of "Family Forest Owners of the U.S."

Nationally, family forest landowners hold 35 percent of the timberland, two percentage points more than the Federal government. In Maine they own 33 percent, with the Feds a mere 1 percent and large private timber companies another 61 percent.

Sixty percent of family forest landowners have less than 10 acres. But most of the acreage is held by people who own between 50 and 500 acres, said Butler. "If we're interested in forests we need to be interested in family forest owners. They rule the day," said Butler.

And, why do those people own forest land? If you said timber production you would again be wrong. In Maine, a 2006 survey found that timber production is way down on their priority list, with aesthetics, privacy, a camp, family legacy, and nature protection at the top of the list (figure 1).

Since people own forest land for a wide variety of reasons "there's no way that one message is going to work for all of them," said Mary Tyrrell of the Yale Program on Private Forests. "Targeted marketing in forest outreach is your first priority." For instance, surveys show that of the people who own between 10 and 1,000 acres of forest land, the biggest chunk—44 percent

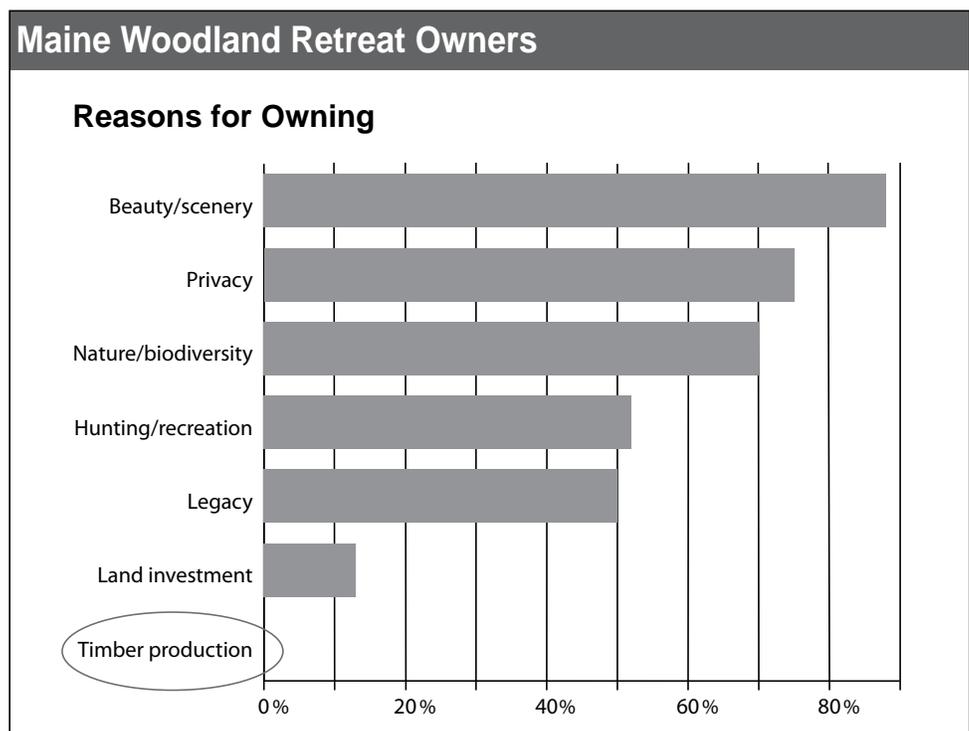
Figure 1. Reasons for owning woodland retreats in Maine. (Graphic from Sustaining Family Forests Initiative)

nationally, 50 percent in Maine—could be classified as being of the "woodland retreat" variety.

Many don't even think of themselves as forest landowners. They value their land for its beauty, nature, and wildlife and recreation far more than its timber production potential. Trying to sell those people on cutting trees for cash alone would be a non-starter, said Tyrrell. Instead, an emphasis on making the forest healthier, improving wildlife habitat—and, by the way, you'll make a little money—would be a better bet.

For the 29 percent of Mainers who see themselves as active managers of their forest land, the message could be one of healthy woods and financial benefits. For the 10 percent who say they own their land for supplemental income, the pitch could be income. "You have to talk about what's going to appeal to them. Once you get people engaged then you can get them to talk about things like management plans and stewardship plans," Tyrrell said.

*Fresh from the Woods is produced by Forests for Maine's Future, a collaboration of the University of Maine, Maine TREE Foundation, the Small Woodland Owners Association of Maine, and the Maine Forest Service.*



# Naturalist's Corner

## Mushrooms in Your Backyard

By Roger Monthey, U.S. Forest Service, Northeastern Area State and Private Forestry, Durham, NH

I live with my family on a small 1/3-acre lot in a heavily wooded subdivision. It sits within a few hundred yards of a fairly large woodland reserve located a few miles from downtown Portland, ME. In a recent article in *Forest Matters*, I discussed a few of the native plants that have graced our tiny lot, most likely distributed by wind and animals to our yard. Several large trees, including an Eastern white pine (40 in d.b.h.), northern red oak (42 in d.b.h.), and red maple (16 in d.b.h.), dominate our lawn, so there is plenty of shade and moisture retention. Mushrooms grow from time to time in the grass beneath these large trees. A few of these are described below.

1) ***Clitocybe* sp.**—This mushroom grows under conifers in mixed hardwoods or swamp edges. The cap is 1 1/8 to 5 1/8 inches wide. The cap is white when young aging to buff and pinkish buff. The gills are whitish when young and pale pinkish buff with age. The spore print color of this mushroom is pale pinkish buff.

2) **Chicken Fat *Suillus* (*Suillus americanus*)**—This mushroom grows on the ground under white pine. The cap is 1 1/8 to 4 in wide and bright yellow with reddish patches or streaks. The flesh is yellow, staining purplish-brown when cut. This mushroom has pores rather than gills; the pore surface, which is on the underside of the cap, is yellow. The spore print color is brown.

3) ***Russulas***—*Russulas* are mushrooms with brittle flesh. If you break the stalk in two, it normally “snaps.” Spore prints range in color from white to cream, yellow, or ochre. The stalk lacks a ring. The species shown is *Russula pulchra*. Its cap is 1 1/2 to 4 in wide and is reddish orange when fresh, becoming pale peach in age. The spore print color is cream. It grows under hardwoods.

4) **Chestnut Bolete (*Gyroporus castaneus*)**—The cap of this pored mushroom is 1 1/8 to 4 in wide and smooth to finely velvety. Its surface is chestnut-

brown to yellow-brown or orange-brown; the flesh is brittle and white. The pore surface is whitish to buff or yellowish. The flesh does not blue when bruised or cut. The spore print color is pale yellow to buff. This mushroom grows under mixed conifers and hardwoods. The majority of boletes are mycorrhizal with tree rootlets. This means that the mushroom grows in a symbiotic association with tree rootlets in which the mushroom's vegetative parts form a closely woven mass around the rootlets or penetrate the cells of the rootlet. Both the mushrooms and trees benefit from this association.

5) **Purple-gilled *Laccaria* (*Laccaria ochropurpurea*)**—The cap of this beautiful mushroom is 2 to 5 in wide, and varies in color from purplish, light violet-brown, or pinkish buff. The gills are attached to somewhat decurrent. The spores are white to pale violet. This mushroom grows under conifers or in mixed woods, especially with oaks and pines.

There are many good references for identifying mushrooms. One that I use frequently to identify mushrooms is “Mushrooms of Northeastern North America” by Alan E. Bessette, Arleen R. Bessette, and David W. Fisher.



Photo 1. *Clitocybe* sp.



Photo 2. Chicken Fat mushroom (*Suillus americanus*)



Photo 3. *Russula pulchra*



Photo 4. Chestnut Bolete (*Gyroporus castaneus*)



Photo 5. Purple-gilled *Laccaria* (*Laccaria ochropurpurea*)



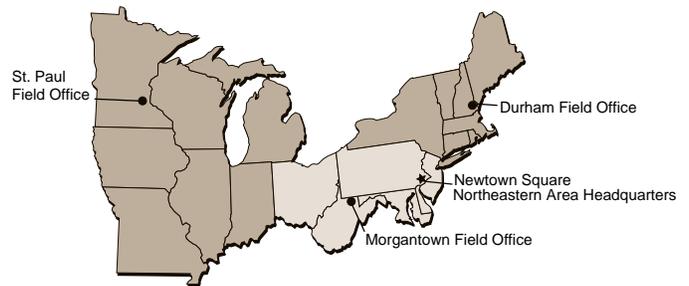
***Mushrooms add to the beauty and diversity of your yard's ecosystem. Some mushrooms are edible but I do not recommend collecting them for the table unless you have had extensive training in the field, and you are absolutely sure you know what you are picking.***



USDA Forest Service  
271 Mast Road  
Durham, NH 03824



Northeastern Area  
State and Private Forestry



The USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.