

What's Up and Coming from the Department of Natural Resources Extension Team

Heads - Up!

Fall 2007

Our Department's extension program has been growing and strengthening this past year. This HEADS UP newsletter highlights some of the activities, workshops, and research efforts that are underway for the next several months. Two new faces have joined our team this fall, and we are currently searching for a senior extension associate to help direct our new Invasives Species Center later this year. Peter Smallidge has been taking a lead on piloting "podcasting" and "webcasting". These two new communication technologies allow us to expand the size and distribution of our stakeholder audiences. A new NRAES guidebook on pond management, co-authored by two of our faculty, is now available. Enjoy reading about these and other up and coming events in Heads - Up.

Rebecca Schneider, DEL, Assoc. Prof.

What to Look For

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New Faces on our Team



Dr. Shorna Broussard, Assist. Professor

Conservation of water and forest resources in the United States is heavily dependent upon the voluntary actions of individuals, and behavior change is at the center of many natural resource management dilemmas such as non-point source water pollution and the threatened sustainability of forestlands. Dr. Broussard's program focuses on attitudes and behaviors that relate to natural resources. She is interested in building the capacity of watershed groups, family forest owners, and related organizations to achieve both social and environmental outcomes for natural resources. Look for Shorna at the November CALS Cooperative Extension Inservice Training!

Mark Whitmore, Extension Associate

Mark's program will be focused on strengthening connections between DNR and the broad suite of non-profit organizations who provide partnership and collaboration for on-the-ground management of natural resources in New York.

Forestry

Forestry to Optimize Ecosystem Services and Income

ForestConnect Program - Dr. Peter Smallidge

website: www.ForestConnect.info

ForestConnect will continue to focus on extension and applied research related to the sustainable production of New York's private forests. Private forest land dominates NY. These lands provide opportunities for a variety of ecosystem services, but are also challenged by landowner awareness, access to efficient management options, and ecological constraints that limit productivity and forest sustainability. Forest invasive species (insect and plant) and forest biomass production will join the recent program topics as foci in the current programming year.

Game of Logging for Landowners continues to be popular and important as a tool to keep forest owners safe and productive with a chain saw. Articles developed by county educators will be distributed to all weekly newspapers through a partnership agreement with NYFOA.

Fact sheets developed through CUCE educators are being distributed statewide through association offices. The six set package covers a range of topics from firewood to forest health. The Regional Forestry Initiative will fund 3 clusters of county associations to market the value of CUCE forestry education and serve the needs of interested forest owners. A column in the NY Forest Owner magazine alternates between "Ask the Professional" and "Forest Science Becomes Forest Practice". These columns offer science-based suggestions to NY forest owners to broaden their management options. The ForestConnect Letter Series, in partnership with NY Forest Owners Association will conclude, successfully in 2007 with three regional woodswalks. The Letter Series may be repeated in 2008. The ForestConnect Internet Forestry Seminar Series has hosted 5 webcasts since May. This series on the third Wednesday of each month covers topics of interest to forest owners, foresters, and forest practitioners.

The Forest Connect Webcasting is a growing success. Almost 300 people subscribe with approximately 50 participating each month, from across the US. Participants have submitted ideas for presentations in 2008 and the opportunity to increase the frequency of webcasts.

The ForestConnect fact sheets have formed the basis of a venture with NYForest Owners Association to develop podcasts that forest owners can download to their iPod or MP3 players. NYFOA is working with DNR to develop these materials and post them to the Internet. The podcasts, with webcasts, serve a heretofore under-served sector of the forest owner audience that looks to digital media as a source of information.

4-H Forestry - Gary Goff

Partnering with Rebecca Hargrave, CCE Chenango County, I am developing a 4-H Forestry Program: (1) to increase youth awareness of forestry as a future career, the impacts forest have in their lives, how to be better future land stewards; (2) to create easy to use curriculum and materials to facilitate the instruction of forestry by 4-H volunteers and leaders, and school educators; and ultimately (3) to field a team of New York youth for the National 4-H Forestry Invitational.



NY Master Forest Owner Volunteer Program - Gary Goff

The goal of the MFO Volunteer Program is to provide the private forest owners of NY State with the information and encouragement necessary to manage their forest holdings wisely. Over 150 experienced and highly motivated volunteers are available statewide, ready to assist neighbor forest owners with achieving their forest stewardship objectives. DNR has recently secured Smith-Lever funding to conduct a survey of forest owners who have been visited by MFO volunteers to determine the impact of that program on the ability of forest owners to make wise forest stewardship decisions.



Alternative, Integrated Deer Management at the Arnot - Gary Goff

White-tailed deer have the potential of seriously impacting forest regeneration that is necessary to maintain natural biodiversity of the forest ecosystem and sustainable sawtimber production. The Arnot Forest Teaching and Research Forest is managed by the Dept. of Natural Resources with the mission of embracing a conservation ethic through support of research and education that balances sustainable production and the maintenance of ecological function. At the Arnot Forest, we have implemented “Earn-a-Buck”, a progressive deer management program that simultaneously controls the deer population while providing financial revenue, recreational opportunities for the public, and research and teaching opportunities for Cornell faculty and students.

Forestry Research

Several applied research projects complement extension program activities.

- o The forest harvesting and slash project, a team effort with Dr. Steve Morreale, Dr. Peter Smallidge, Gary Goff, and Dr. Paul Curtis, is closing out its third year with striking results demonstrating the ecological value of slash as habitat for amphibians and protection for tree seedlings.
- o DNR’s Human Dimensions Research Unit has completed a statewide survey of urban and rural forest owners to identify how they use education before they make decisions that affect their woodlot. Owners were profiled into three typologies ranging from unengaged with education to passive to active. Most forest owners were supportive of management in their woods.
- o A new project will assess the use of herbicides and flame weeding technology to control undesirable woody plants.

Agroforestry - Dr. Louise Buck

I am principally involved in building an online ‘Landscape Measures Resource Center’ (LMRC) with Paul Treadwell and Ecoagriculture Partners (International NGO based in Washington, DC) and developing a 2-year program to assess its functionality, value and impact with various partners around the world. CCE and CIIFAD are campus-based collaborators. As part of the effort this Fall I will be participating in a US-based Landcare Workshop at Virginia Tech, meeting with collaborators in Wash., DC and traveling to E. Africa to work on field testing landscape performance measures with community-based partners.

I am participating in the CCE Conference in Oct with Paul and Ken Mudge, in a session on developing forest farming learning communities through online methods, and am conducting a tour of the McDaniel’s Nut Grove for participants at an international conference on knowledge systems in agriculture that Mann library is hosting. I am working on a proposal with Ken Mudge to expand our work with forest mushrooms.

Sugar Maple Program

The Cornell Maple Program has the overall objective of increasing the viability of New York maple sugar production. Our strategies are to increase the number of producers, the profitability of maple-based businesses, and the knowledge and skills of producers in all areas critical to running successful businesses. Twelve workshops on basic confections, advanced maple products (Confections 2), and forest management are planned for the fall and spring.

Statewide Maple Program Activities - Stephen Childs

The 2007 New York State Maple Tour is being hosted by Otsego County with over 100 registered. This will take place September 23-25 in Cooperstown. The Cornell Maple Program provides planning assistance and educational sessions during the tour. Ten fall maple workshops are being conducted around New York and two out of state. The New York State Maple Conference education programs are planned and coordinated by the Cornell Maple Program. This is the largest gathering of maple producers in the United States with over 500 attending. This conference is scheduled for January 4-5, 2008. Five other maple schools are scheduled around New York in January and February. Research in the area of maple value added products is continuing in cooperation with the Cornell Food Venture Center in Geneva. Research to improve maple stands by thinning, maple sap collection systems and sap sanitation will resume with the 2008 maple syrup season. Fact sheets on marketing maple products, making specific value added products and a DVD for beginning maple producers are all recent products available from the Cornell Maple Program along with the New York State Maple Confection Notebook and the New York State Maple Grading Notebook.

Been hearing more about how unhealthy high fructose corn syrup is in your soft drinks? Try some all natural maple soft drink, good for you, good for the woods.

Northern New York - Michael Farrell

I am testing out a new concept for Fall Maple weekend, Explore, NY grant to do fall promotion during peak foliage, and this involves sugarbush tours as part of a larger festival Columbus Day weekend. There is a sugarbush management workshop scheduled for October in Jefferson County. I'll also be expanding my interactions with the North Country School in the Lake Placid area to help develop a maple sugaring operation with the students.

New Resources on Sugar Maple

- o We are increasing the number of posters dealing with specific topics important to producers. These displays are specifically educational in purpose. Three posters were completed this summer and three more are in production to be completed this fall.
- o During the summer, we re-wrote and revised the confections manual. We turned chapters into separate CMP publications. We also began a new series of articles dealing with aspects of running a business. The business series will be used in new workshops aimed to start in 2008.
- o A DVD for beginning maple producers was recently produced.

Maple Research - Dr. Peter Smallidge, Dr. Brian Chabot

Applied research in the area of sugarbush management through thinning is entering its 5th year. Initial thinning plots at Arnot Forest were replicated statewide with 15 maple producer collaborators. Thinning workshops are teaching maple producers how to make tree selection decisions in their woods.

Wildlife

Nuisance Wildlife Management

Dr. Paul Curtis

Cornell Campus Deer Project

I will be implementing a deer hunting program and deer fertility control research on about 5 square miles of campus and adjacent lands. I'm currently searching for a program coordinator. This will involve extension efforts with local communities and Tompkins Co. EMC. Vet College faculty will collaborate with the research.

LI Deer-Tick Study

This project will start this fall in the communities of Shelter Island, Fire Island, and North Haven. I will be examining 4-poster devices to reduce tick abundance on deer and associated Lyme disease incidence. Michael Seagraves from the LI Hort Research and Ext Center is co-PI. We will hire a post-doc and research tech. The project is funded by the communities, Suffolk Co., and the Lyme Disease Foundation.



Suburban Coyote Research

The third year of a 5-year study is underway in Westchester County. I hired a research tech (Gerianne Albers) to help with field work. The field research station is at Pound Ridge, and I collaborate with NYSDEC, West. Co. Parks, and CCE of Westchester Co. This project has high visibility and includes both ecology and Human Dimensions research.

SEAD Wildlife Study and Biofuels Development

I will be working with Bruce Lauber from HDRU to develop and evaluate an advisory committee for wildlife management at Seneca Army Depot. In winter 2008, I will start a 4-year ecology study of the impacts of biofuel development on deer and bird abundance. The work will be funded by Seneca Co. IDA, Cilion, and NYSDEC. This project includes a proposed visitor center, which I will help design.

Deer Assessment Program - Gary Goff, Dr. Paul Curtis, Tommy Brown, Nancy Connelly

White-tailed deer impact the economic, health and safety and ecologic well-being of citizens and communities throughout much of NY State. As such, DNR has undertaken a 3-year research and Extension project, in collaboration with NYSDEC Region 7 and Tompkins and Cayuga County CCE staff, to assess the damage caused by deer and actions undertaken by residents in two townships in Cayuga and Tompkins County. The results will allow DNR to develop Extension programming to help residents and NYS DEC better control deer populations.



Enhancing Biodiversity through Education

Fall Workshops - Arnot Conservation Education Program - Kristi Sullivan, Dr. Steve Morreale, Dr. Peter Smallidge, Brett Chedzoy, Gary Goff

Through the Arnot Conservation Education Program, we continue to provide educational opportunities and trainings for landowners, natural resource professionals, youth, and families. We have nine programs planned for fall that include topics such as wildlife habitat enhancement, invasive species management, growing mushrooms, pond management, tree planting, and drawing nature. The Environmental Career Skills program, in its fifth year, offers pre-freshmen an understanding of the field of natural resources, a good background in modern field techniques, a strong network of peers with similar interests, and connections to faculty.

Biodiversity Program Work Team, focus on vernal pools - Kristi Sullivan, Gary Goff, Marilyn Wyman

In 2007, the Biodiversity Program Work Team initiated a program to conserve vernal pools on private lands. We used a 2-pronged approach to encourage private landowners and land managers to recognize and protect these valuable habitats. We targeted NYSDEC service foresters, private consultant foresters, and loggers, focusing on forestry best management practices for vernal pool habitats. We also reached out to private landowners, land trust personnel, and land managers with a workshop that underscored the benefits and values of vernal pools, how to recognize vernal pools and their organisms, and actions landowners can take to safeguard vernal pools. We will continue this effort into 2008, with a slightly different focus. We will conduct two additional vernal pool workshops in the upcoming year, one targeting landowners, and the other targeting environmental consulting firms, municipalities, and developers. In an effort to continue gathering data on vernal pool locations, characteristics, and organisms in the Hudson Valley, we will hold a “vernal pool blitz” as part of the existing Woodland Pool Steward Program.



We are also working on a project entitled “Biodiversity Outreach Squared – Training the Trainers”. Our focus is on developing and delivering Regional Biodiversity programming to CCE Educators, Master Forest Owners, and others. This effort includes a plan to pilot a Master Naturalist Program this year.

Conservation Enhancements for a Living Landscape - Kristi Sullivan, Dr. Steve Morreale

We are continuing our long-term partnership with the E.L. Rose Conservancy of Susquehanna County, Pennsylvania. Our goal is to conduct biodiversity inventory, research, and outreach to serve as a foundation for protecting the land and water resources in the region. We have collaborated with the Conservancy and its volunteers to map and bridge important seep areas along the trail system at Highpoint Preserve, and develop four wildlife habitat demonstration areas - a deer enclosure, a salamander coverboard trail, two created vernal pools, and a butterfly meadow. We have worked with Conservancy to provide technical training and educational workshops for their members, volunteers, and the community at large. Most recently, we; nvolved Conservancy members and volunteers in a frog call survey to inventory rare and common species in the area.

Invasive Plant Management

Linking Research to Management for Controlling Invasives - Dr. Bernd Blossey

My extension program maintains a focus on impacts and biological control of invasive plants in the Northeast, but nearly all plants I work with have importance across much of North America. My program aims to raise awareness about ecosystem impacts of invasive species and encourages active participation in the study of spread and impact of plant invasions. I use results obtained by my research group immediately in my many interactions with private, local, state, and federal land management agencies and individuals to illustrate my talks. I have started a workshop series focusing on individual invasive species (the second with a focus on *Phragmites australis* will be held at Cornell 15-16 October, 2007) to bring scientists and land managers together in a common forum to review the status of the science and management. Through my webpage (invasiveplants.net), I disseminate my own and other relevant findings on biological control. I also maintain a free Diagnostic Service to help separate invasive *Phragmites australis* from the morphologically similar native subspecies. Land managers use this information to either control the invasive or protect native stands.

Sustainable Aquatic Resources

Watershed Management

Roadside Ditch Management for Healthier Streams - Dr. Rebecca Schneider

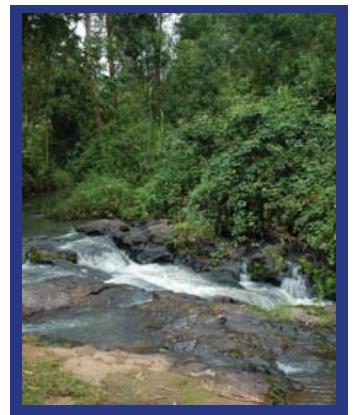
The roadside ditch management program is completing its third year of integrated research and extension. Our research indicated that ditch networks are a significant contributor to flooding, suspended sediment, and other contaminants in associated streams, several issues of current relevance to the global warming discussion. This fall, I will be giving six invited workshops on improving ditch management, including the annual conferences of the NYS Floodplain Managers, NYS Planning Federation, and the Delaware River Basin Commission. We will continue our partnership with the Cayuga Lake Watershed Network to develop a comprehensive flooding and ditches website that is linked to the Cornell Local Roads Program, and an associated set of fact sheets. Working collaboratively with Drs. Todd Walter and Dan Buckley, we have obtained funding for 2 additional years to evaluate the role of ditches as conduits of pathogens from agricultural lands to drinking water reservoirs.

“A Diet for a Small Lake and its Watershed” - Dr. Rebecca Schneider

We are finalizing the expansion and update of a comprehensive lake management manual for New York State lakes, a collaborative effort between NYSDEC and the NYS Federation of Lake Associations that will be available in spring 2008.

Stakeholder Participation - Dr. Shorna Broussard

I am working to increase the capacity of watershed groups to achieve outcomes related to improvements in water quality. My research measures attitudes, awareness, capacity, and behavior related to watershed group activities for purposes of program targeting, delivery, and improvement. I have a new Interactive Video Series (available on-line in 2008), entitled “Stakeholder Involvement for Watershed Groups Conducting a Watershed Inventory.



Fisheries

Dr. Clifford Kraft

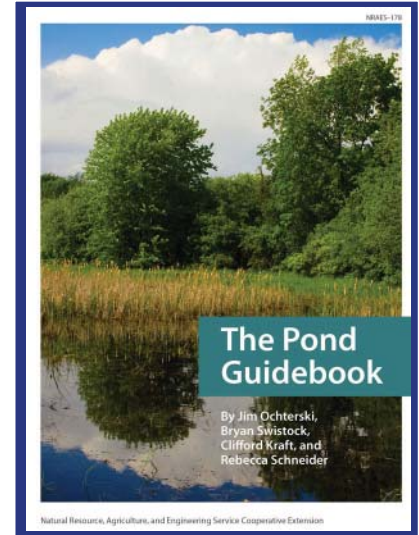
During Fall 2007, I will be leading two meetings regarding fisheries management in Adirondack lakes with regional stakeholders and fishery managers. I am maintaining several long-term evaluations of the influence of changing temperature and physical habitat (e.g. climate change) on fish survival, growth and reproduction in the Adirondacks – and results from that work have prompted interest from the New York State Office of the Attorney General, whose staff will be involved in these meetings. I recently wrote a non-technical summary of the potential impacts of climate change on freshwater fisheries in the northeastern U.S. that was included in a comprehensive overview of climate change impacts in the Northeast that was organized under the auspices of the Union of Concerned Scientists. Throughout the fall, I will continue to be a member of the team communicating with media and stakeholders about results presented in this report.

I will also continue to be involved throughout the fall in a series of workshops initiated in Spring 2007 regarding development of a Cornell/community partnership to monitor and manage the aquatic resources of Cayuga Lake. I participated in four Spring 2007 workshops, and a subsequent workshop is currently planned for late September – organized under the auspices of the Water Resources Council. This is a volatile topic, given Cornell’s operation of the Lake Source Cooling facility.

Ponds

Management for Private Landowners - Dr. Rebecca Schneider, Dr. Clifford Kraft , Jim Ochterski

This topic continues to be very popular with landowners throughout New York state. A new workshop featuring hands-on activities about pond health and ecology was just piloted with great success. Rebecca Schneider, Clifford Kraft, along with Jim Ochterski have recently produced a new guidebook on pond management, available through NRAES this fall.



Human Dimensions



Working with the Professionals, Wildlife Managers - Dr. Dan Decker

Main efforts this fall are targeting the empowerment of wildlife management professionals. The series of 3 Practitioners' Guides over the last few years are examples, as is the book "Thinking Like a Manager." During my sabbatical leave I developed a workshop and accompanying materials (written guide and several Powerpoint presentations) as support materials for a "Thinking Like a Manager" workshop, piloted the first week of September (with Bill Siemer, Kirsten Leong and Dr. Shawn Riley). The workshop was aimed at training agency leaders to be effective "coaches" in the application of "impacts management" in their agencies. It also trained them in helping management teams to develop discipline in management-context articulation through use of manager's models (mental models/concept maps) of the management system in which they work. This process is geared toward facilitating impacts management (which has a human dimensions focus) and effective communication of program internally and externally. The pilot workshop was supported financially by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Commission. The September workshop has been critiqued by the first cohort of trainees and we are working on revision of materials, workshop format, and organization this fall. I hope to implement another workshop for a second cohort of Florida FWC staff in late winter. If the second workshop proves successful, I will be seeking ways to carry this to other groups of wildlife professionals over the next several years.



Economic Value and Public Perception of Natural Resources - Tommy Brown

Oneida Lake: As follow-up to a presentation to the Oneida Lake Association on the economic importance of the lake, I am working with the Association and federal agencies they have contacted on the economic impacts of cormorants on Oneida Lake. This involves providing them a broad understanding of the several factors that affect fishing participation so that the negative effect of cormorants can be placed in proper context.

Old field management: I am working with the Ruffed Grouse Society to plan a workshop on implications of current public attitudes toward early successional forest management in Northern New York and other regions of the northern forest. An HDRU research study provides the backdrop for this workshop.

Connecting with forest owners: I am completing a project with Peter Smallidge that investigates how Extension can better connect with owners of forest lands in New York who are doing minimal management activities on their lands.

Fisheries: I have been working with Sea Grant agent David MacNeill on a study to estimate the effects of increased regulations due to Viral Hemorrhagic Septicemia (VHS) on the baitfish industry in New York.

Involvement of the Public - Adults and Youth

Citizen Science at the Laboratory of Ornithology - Dr. Janis Dickinson

I continue to direct the citizen science program at Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology. My staff has grown to 12 people, including 6 extension staff, a program aide, a research associate, a web designer, two application developers, and an administrative assistant. We continue to develop citizen science/education partners nationwide through our internet-based projects, NestWatch (in year 2 of development with NSF funding), FeederWatch (self-sustaining), Celebrate Urban Birds! (CCE education funding), PigeonWatch, Urban Bird Studies, and My Yard Counts. We held a Celebrate Urban Birds! event in Central Park at the Harlem Meer in May in collaboration with Cornell Cooperative Extension New York City and The Central Park Conservancy. Our partnerships approach to delivering citizen science has grown both within the state and nationally with new partnerships in development with federal agencies. In addition, we held an NSF-funded workshop with 50 professionals delivering citizen science projects all over the country in June, the final product of which will be a Citizen Science Toolkit (www.citizenscience.org).

Connecting Youth with Natural Resources - Dr. Nancy Trautmann

My work focuses on helping middle and high school students conduct research using authentic protocols and addressing relevant environmental issues. I currently am working on two NSF-funded projects. In collaboration with the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology, I am designing, conducting, and evaluating online conferences for teachers interested in helping students design and conduct research on birds. The second project focuses on helping secondary teachers incorporate GIS, GPS, Google Earth and other geospatial analysis tools into their science teaching. These teachers are enthusiastically using stormwater runoff analysis procedures developed with Rebecca Schneider and invasive species analysis procedures based on Bernd Blossey's work. I would be happy to work with other scientists interested in making their research ideas assessable to secondary students.

A New Program in Civic Ecology - Dr. Marianne Krasny

Currently, I am building a new integrated extension/research program building on my 20 years of experience in youth environmental sciences outreach. The new program, Civic Ecology. Education, begins with a Civic Ecology practice, i.e., adults engage in volunteer actions to enhance natural and social capital. Example Civic Ecology practices include volunteers from Ducks Unlimited engaged in restoring wetlands for wildlife habitat, or community members planting trees in cities. A youth Civic Ecology Education program is integrated into these adult volunteer practices, and incorporates learning from science resources and from the adult "civic ecologists," and community action to further enhance the environment, all the while building positive relationships among the youth and adults. Extension Associate Keith Tidball and I provide leadership for the Initiative for Civic Ecology, with Keith focusing more on the adult practices and their implications for socio-ecosystem resilience, and me focusing more on the youth education aspects, which also have implications for resilience and sustainability.



Civic Ecology - Related Efforts - Keith Tidball

Funded project to work in NYC to further understand value conflicts among community greeners and policy makers.

Integrated extension and research project exploring the role of urban community forestry and urban community greening as a community resilience strategy, in both New York City and in New Orleans.

Using Fort Drum army facility as a pilot system to integrate civic ecology/community greening urban extension into soldier/family support programming.

National and International Youth Education Efforts - Dr. Marianne Krasny

Other extension efforts include a leadership role in the North American Association for Environmental Education, where I have been a co-organizer for the Research Symposium for two years in a row, and my graduate student Alexey Kudryavtsev and I are an active part of a team writing a Handbook of Environmental Education Research. Alexey and my other graduate students, including Olivia Aguilar, Jennifer Shirk, and Kendra Liddicoat, integrate their research and environmental sciences outreach to audiences ranging from the NYC Council on Environmental Education, to after-school Spanish and Science Clubs in southeast TX, outdoor residential programs for disabled adults in Indiana, and citizen science at the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology. I also work with two South African graduate students, Nikki Kohly and Soul Shava, on projects focusing on school-community linkages and traditional knowledge in education in Africa and the US.

Forests and Public Attitudes - Program Goals - Dr. Shorna Broussard

My goals for the forestry program are four-fold:

1. Increase the targeting of forestry outreach to family forest owners by utilizing research based communication strategies.
2. Help family forest owners initiate management practices that satisfy their personal goals and are consistent with sustainable resource management.
3. Apply social science research to better reach and communicate with private woodland owners regarding the means and benefits of sustainable forestry practices.
4. Aid organizations working with family forest owners so that they can be more strategic in meeting education, outreach, and service goals.



I recently gave a presentation, entitled “ Forest Owners of New York: Facts, Stats, and Peer Counseling” at the Master Forest Owners Training, Arnot Forest, Van Etten, NY, September 20, 2007.

Upcoming:

- 1) Presentation at the November CALS Cornell Cooperative Extension November In-Service (Nov. 15th)
- 2) Attending the Northeast Forest Resource Extension Committee Meeting, Milford, PA, Dec. 4-6.

Extension Program Directory

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Rebecca L. Schneider 607-255-2110

Biological Control of Non-Indigenous Plants

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Fish and Wildlife Biology and Management

Fisheries management

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Nuisance wildlife management

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