Woods Wildlife and Warblers project expands to Upper Hudson and Lake Champlain regions of New York State

By Suzanne Treyger, Audubon NY

Did you know that many forest birds, like Wood Thrush and American Woodcock are experiencing population declines? Your woods can provide forest habitat important to the survival of these at-risk bird species.

Woods, Wildlife, and Warblers (WWW) is a collaborative project between Audubon, VT and NY Tree Farm Programs, and VT Woodlands Association that seeks to create and improve forest bird habitat. WWW does this by providing forest owners with the knowledge, tools, and resources they need to enhance and/or protect the health of forests now and into the future. This is accomplished by providing free information, events, and individual site visits by woodland experts. WWW is currently seeking forest owners that have forestland within the Lake Champlain and Upper Hudson watersheds that may be interested in improving or creating bird habitat on their properties. Staff from one of our partner organizations will work to provide you with the resources you need to participate in this habitat project, including on-the-ground technical assistance.

If you would like to learn more about this opportunity, plan to attend one of the upcoming WWW workshops that focus on forest birds and the habitats they need, and how you can become involved in WWW. Two workshops are currently being offered, with additional programs being planned in the future.

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Stegers’ stewardship honored by state Tree Farm Program
By Katie Keyser, Living and Leisure Editor, Reprinted by permission - Cortland Standard

Don Steger was raised on a dairy farm on Steger Road in Preble.

“I didn't like the hours you have to put in on a dairy farm. I started a game farm, and that took more hours!” he said.

Don, 94, and his wife, Connie, 92, of Scott were recognized by the New York State Tree Farm Program, an offshoot of the American Tree Farm Program, for nurturing their almost 1,000 acres of forest for a 58 year period.

“Just a handful in the U.S. get this award, said Walt Friebel, a volunteer inspector in the New York Tree Farm Program.”

People are recognized for 25 years and 50 years of stewardship on private land. The Stegers have been at it for 58 years.

“The 50th anniversary award in like the honor society program at high schools or colleges, but for forest owners,” said Friebel.

Their parcel on Cold Brook Road is one of the bigger forested parcels in the county and is adjacent to the Hewitt State Forest, said Matt Swayze, senior forester with the state Department of Environmental Conservation, in the Cortland office.

“For the 28 years, ivory and a game farm,” Steger said. “And then the next 25 years, I worked in the woods,” he said in an interview August 2nd.

He’s worked with the state DEC to manage his woods in a sustainable way, cutting and growing judiciously, allowing for certified tree farm designation. He has sold timber, firewood and Christmas trees off his land.

“Nobody I know takes more joy in (working) the forest,” said Matt Kantola the, Steger’s son in law. “Don used to cut up to 500 chord of wood a year in firewood. The amount of work and he’s done is astonishing,” Kantola said.

“Between 1980 and 2000, I cut 10,000 cord of firewood,” Steger said. “All day long,” said his wife.

“And his stacks were works of art,” said Kantola.

“They are taking it in stride very well,” said Heidi Steger the, the couple’s daughter, of the honor. “It was news to them that they were getting this. It was not expected.”

The New York Tree Farm Program encourages sustainable land practices, said Friebel, who has been part of the program in the Tug Hill area. His land was denuded for hard scrabble farmwork. He’s worked through the years to create forest.

Participants in the program have a stewardship plan and know what is in the area, as far as trees, soil, water and wildlife. They work to sustain it.

“It’s been his life to be out in the woods,” said Connie Steger, a retired art teacher. “We had a small woods walk once, just church people. One of the people said, ‘How do you grow these trees so straight?’ He said, ‘I cut all the crooked ones,’ she laughed.

When they bought the property, only 60 acres was cultivated. And the rest was going to woods, Don Steger said. “The wood was just swamp,” said Connie Steger.

He joined the New York Tree Farm Program to find out what he could do to get abandoned land back into the forest. Steger said he’s planted around 160,000 trees through the years.

“The trees he planted were pines, spruce – conifers,” said Heidi Steger. “And we did harvest Christmas trees for several

Food from the Forest
By Walt Friebel

The first crop of the year in New York State comes from the forest – pure maple syrup. Early woodland owners learned from the native people how to harvest sap and make maple syrup. In addition to maple syrup, some folks also made birch, black walnut, or cherry syrup after the maple season ended.

Maple Scones
Ingredients:
2 cups flour
½ Teaspoon salt
1 Tablespoon baking powder
¼ cup maple sugar
1 ¼ cups heavy cream

Preheat oven to 425 degrees F. In a bowl, mix all of the ingredients just until combined. Note: if you like, you can add raisins (ideally, plump raisins in water – boil, drain-and add), dried apricots (chopped), dates, or currants.

Turn out on floured board and knead a few times. Roll out ¼-inch thick and cut with biscuit cutter.

Bake on parchment paper lined cookie sheet at 425 degrees for 10 to 12 minutes.

While still warm, frost with maple cream

Photo courtesy NYS Maple Producers Association
2019 NYS Tree Farm Field Day

Saturday June 8, 2019
4-H Camp Shankitunk and Lennox Memorial Forest,
2420 Arbor Hill Rd., Delhi, NY 13753

Who should attend: NY Tree Farm Program participants, forest and farm woodlot owners, wildlife enthusiasts, students and interested individuals.

TENTATIVE AGENDA

8-8:30 am    Arrive, Sign-In, Refreshments and Informational Tables
             (Rice Dining Hall)

8:30-8:50    Opening Introductions
             Overview of the facilities – Rod Jones, Northeast Timber Services, NYTF Treasurer. Thoughts on Upcoming 2020-2025 Tree Farm Stewardship Standards and other topics of interest to Tree Farmers - Chris Prentis, Lower Hudson Forestry Service, NYTF Chair

8:50-9:50    Upper Delaware Harvests for Habitat project - How forest management can meet the habitat needs of many species of birds and balance the types of habitat available in the surrounding land - Suzanne Treyger, NY Audubon

9:50-10:50   Upper Delaware Harvests for Habitat project, continued Forest stewardship opportunities and incentives - Tom Pavlesich, Watershed Ag Council

10:50-11:10  Break, Refreshments, Information Tables

11:10-12:00  Spotted Lantern Fly – what to look for in NYS and what we can learn from Pennsylvania’s on-going battle – Sara Wurzbacher, Penn State University

12-1 pm      Lunch

1-4 pm       Educational Forest Management Tour through model forest featuring some of the 18 blocks of silvicultural treatments

SAF and DEC Pesticide Applicator Credits may be available.

Camping in tents or cabins at the camp on Friday and Saturday night is available for an extra charge. Details available with registration materials.


NYS Tree Farm Program, PO Box 705, Salem, NY 12865
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including tree planting, invasive species identification and control, and more.

I was visiting a potential client who is interested in becoming a Tree Farmer the other day, and came to a creek I needed to cross. There was large beech tree that had fallen across the creek. It made me think of Tree Farm. Just like that big old beech, NY Tree Farm is here to help landowners to bridge the gap between the goals they have for their properties and how the goals can be accomplished. Needless to say, that beech tree helped me meet my goal - to keep from getting wet!

Enjoy this time of year. I certainly do!

Daniel Newman, Newman Forest & Wildlife Management LLC
NY Tree Farm Program Vice Chair

SABE

years. So we spent summers trimming Christmas trees into cones," she said. “Hardwood trees you don't have to plant. Trees produce a gazillion (seeds).”

“One year we had 2,000 Scotch pine ready to cut. We had an early freeze – they all turned brown," she said.

Matt Swayze was humbled to see on a forester at work for over 50 years. “It’s impressive to see someone mid-way in your career, to see someone work it so long.”

And the fact that he’s managed to keep his land together, and not parcel it off and sell it: “That’s the huge thing,” he said. “We want people to think, not only of the economic return, but of the longer impact on the forest and to manage it in a sustainable way,” Swayze said.
Friday, June 14th, 2019:
8:30 am-12:00 pm
Whitehall Town Hall, 57 Skenesborough Drive, Whitehall, NY 12887
Join us for a brief classroom presentation to learn about Woods, Wildlife, and Warblers, followed by a woods walk at The Nature Conservancy’s Helen P. Buckner Preserve in Fair Haven, VT
Register online here: https://sevendaystickets.com/events/forest-and-shrubland-bird-conservation-workshop

Wednesday, June 19th, 2019:
1:30-3:30 pm
Lake Pleasant Library, 2864 NY-8, Lake Pleasant, NY 12108
Join us for a brief classroom presentation to learn about Woods, Wildlife, and Warblers, followed by a woods walk at the Kunjamuk Young Forest Demonstration Project.
Register by June 17th by contacting Suzanne Treyger, Forest Program Manager, Audubon NY: (607) 254-2122 or streyger@audubon.org.