Research on Forest Recreation in New England Forests

*News Quarterly* Science Theme - Dr. Anthony D’Amato, Theme Editor

Forest-based recreation is a key element of New England culture, serving as a cornerstone of many rural economies and acting as a critical connection point for much of our region’s population to the forests we are fortunate to steward. Although interest in forest recreation has steadily grown over recent decades, the COVID-19 pandemic served to dramatically increase the number of people connecting with the outdoors. This increase in recreation has generated both a heightened appreciation for the value of safe and equitable access to forested areas for recreational activities, as well as the strains increased levels of recreation can place on resources and managers.

This theme highlights research on forest recreation in New England being led by scientists at the University of New Hampshire and University of Vermont. Key goals of this work include improving how we communicate about the forests being recreated within, as well as understanding how visitors adapt their recreation activities to the increased recreation pressures being placed on public forests. This research comes at a critical juncture as we navigate the complexities of growing recreation-based economies in New England, while also sustaining the cultural, ecological, and social values provided by the forests that serve as the natural backdrop for so many of our recreational pursuits.
Our mission as foresters is to be responsible stewards of the earth’s forests while meeting society’s vital needs. The challenge of our mission lies in keeping forest ecosystems healthy and intact while concurrently drawing on their resources. We will meet this challenge by carefully monitoring and managing the effects of natural and human forces on the forest. Our decisions will be guided by our professional knowledge, our compassion for all living things, our respect and concern for the entire forest ecosystem. By advancing forestry science, education, technology, and the practice of forestry, NESAF will provide the leadership to achieve its mission.

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Greetings from Martha’s Vineyard- Adam Moore

it was dawn on the winter solstice. Rather, it was still night, as the sun was in no rush to rise on this longest of nights. A slender, waxing crescent moon hung low in the southeastern sky. The moon glowed yellow. Backlit by the rising solstice sun, still well below the horizon, there was just enough light to see the rest of the sphere of the moon, with its shadowy “seas,” and not only the bright crescent. The moon hovered over the canopy of one of the southernmost forests in New England: a woods of gnarled oaks, twisted sassafras, and ramrod-straight hickories in a place called Quansoo, on the island of Martha’s Vineyard.

From this seaside forest it is my honor to introduce myself to you as the 2022 Chair of the New England Society of American Foresters. I work for the local land trust for the island of Martha’s Vineyard, Sheriff’s Meadow Foundation, where I am its president. I am a Massachusetts-licensed forester (and the only one on this island). Before coming to work for Sheriff’s Meadow Foundation in, I was the secretary-forester and executive director of the Connecticut Forest & Park Association. Prior to that, I was the land superintendent for the Martha’s Vineyard Land Bank Commission. I began my forestry career at Connwood and as an apprentice forester at the Yale Forest in northeastern Connecticut. I live with my family at Quansoo Farm, a Sheriff’s Meadow Foundation property, and last year we planted an American chestnut germplasm conservation orchard there.

I have been a member of SAF and NESAF since my days as a forestry student at Yale, and for decades now I have enjoyed attending the NESAF Winter Meeting. After our 2020 pandemic hiatus and our 2021 virtual winter meeting, it was such a joy to gather in Maine in March of 2022, in-person. I enjoyed seeing so many of you at this meeting, and, as always, I learned a great deal from all of the excellent presentations and discussions. I took note of the sheer energy and enthusiasm that emanated from this gathering. While some of that energy derived from the bonhomie of renewed in-person gatherings, some of that also derived from the excitement around new subjects such as carbon, LiDAR, and eDNA. I found similar joy in joining other NESAF members in attending the national SAF convention that took place in September in Baltimore, Maryland.

I thank Diana Frederick for her dedicated service to NESAF as our Past Chair, and thank her for her guidance to me as I begin this new position. I also offer my grateful appreciation for the service of our outgoing NESAF Executive Committee members, Bill Hill, Past Chair, Tony D’Amato, Forest Science Coordinator from 2015 through 2022, Karl Honkonen, Maine Representative, Susan Romano, New Hampshire Representative, and Jas Smith, Vermont Representative. I am delighted to welcome new NESAF leaders Mark Ashton, Chair-Elect, Susan Romano, Policy Chair, Ali Kosiba, Forest Science and Technology Chair, Carol Redelsheimer, Maine Representative, Ted Howard, New Hampshire Representative and Jessica Wikle, Vermont Representative.

Our winter meeting takes place in Nashua from March 14 through March 16, 2023, and I look forward to seeing you all there. NESAF has given me a great deal over the course of my career, from what I have learned at our meetings to the camaraderie that I have long enjoyed with fellow foresters. It is my honor to be able to serve NESAF as the Chair for 2023. Please do contact me if you wish to share a thought with me; you can reach me at moore@sheriffsmeadow.org.

From the pitch pines and oaks of this Atlantic island, I extend my best wishes to all of the foresters of New England, wherever you may be: in spruce and fir, in sugar maple and beech, in tulip and sweet gum. I wish all a happy 2023 - see you in Nashua.

2022 Election Results ~ Paul Dolan

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Submitted by Teller’s Committee 11.18.22
Tis the season to be thinking national SAF awards. Go to eforester.org to the community tab to see all the possibilities for recognizing your peers. Look particularly at the Presidential Field Forester Award which recognizes foresters dedicated to the application of forestry on the ground. Criteria and how to nominate someone can be found on the website. One forester per district receives this prestigious award. Last year, Bernie Braun from New York was our district’s honoree. The year before it was Barrie Brusila from Maine. As your district rep, I have the distinct honor of picking the forester to forward along to the SAF president for consideration. We have many outstanding and deserving foresters in New England and I hope to see them nominated.

The December 9 - 10 Board meeting in DC started with an orientation for new (and old) Board members and ended with a group of us taking an evening hike up to the West Lawn of the US Capitol building to see “the people’s tree.” Every year a Christmas tree is harvested from a national forest and trucked to the nation’s capitol stopping for outreach activities in communities along the way. SAF supports this project to showcase the importance of scientific, sustainable management of our nation’s forests.

Our newish program, #forest proud, targets 18- to 34-year-olds who aren’t in the forestry sector with messages about forestry as a natural climate solution. I’m impressed with this program which is staffed with communications experts. Currently, I access #forestproud through email and the SAF website, but it may convince me to step more boldly into the social media arena.

There has been a lot of activity nationally on the policy front. The Board approved three position statements 1) Forest Inventory and Analysis Program, 2) Regenerating America’s Forests, and 3) Invasive Species and Forests. We also approved the development of a new one—Carbon in the Built Environment. Working Forests & Wildlife Habitat is in the works, authored by Phil Bryce who is looking for input. Hopefully you’ve seen the 2-pager Addressing Proforestation on Public Lands. SAF also weighed-in on Mature and Old-Growth Forest Management.

I attended the Women’s Forest Congress (WFC) remotely in October. About 500 professionals attended. I understand that our CEO Terry Baker and Chris Maisch, our President where the only two men who attended—even though everyone was welcome. I’m pleased they attended to lend support and to learn more about the issues of women in forestry. The WFC developed resolutions that are unique and interesting. Jess Wikle, tish carr, and Amanda Mahaffey among other NESAFers attended. I’m not sure where the WFC will go from here. Something to follow.

I hope you find my columns informative. I know at least one person read at least part of my last column. Charlie Niebling correctly answered the trivia question I posed. He knew there are 154 national forests in the US. Does anybody know what national forest this year’s “people’s tree” was harvested from?

As I end my first year as your District Representative, I look forward to next year and remind you to reach out to me if you have questions, concerns, ideas, or an answer to my trivia question at karen.bennett@unh.edu.
There are a total of 16 potential National Awards available for nomination starting in mid-January to a submission deadline of March 15, 2023. Several of these have a nearly identical recognition as the annual NESAF Awards.

- **Award in Forest Science** - recognizes distinguished individual research in any branch of the quantitative, managerial, and/or social sciences that has resulted in substantial advances in forestry.
- **Barrington Moore Memorial Award in Biological Science** - recognizes outstanding achievement in biological research leading to the advancement of forestry.
- **Technology Transfer Award** - recognizes outstanding performance in the areas of technology transfer, implementation, and extension.
- **Outstanding Forestry Journalism Award** - recognizes high quality journalistic coverage of topics that increase the American public's understanding of forestry and natural resources.
- **W. D. Hagenstein Communicator Award** - recognizes an SAF member who leads innovative and exemplary communication initiatives and programs that increase the general public's understanding of forestry and natural resources.
- **Diversity Leadership Award** - recognizes outstanding individual achievement leading to innovative and exemplary diversity and inclusion efforts.
- **Outstanding Local unit Achievement Award** - recognizes the outstanding achievement of a local unit for sustained leadership or a special project benefiting SAF, the forestry profession, and the practice of forestry.
- **Employer Leadership Award** - recognized an employer that demonstrates leadership through consistent support of employee participation in SAF and broad engagement in the profession.
- **Student Leadership Award** - Recognizes individual student achievement and leadership at the local, regional, or national level.
- **Carl Alwin Schenck Award** - recognizes devotion and demonstrated outstanding performance in the field of forestry education.
- **Gifford Pinchot Medal** - recognizes outstanding contributions by a forestry professional in the administration, practice, and professional development of North American Forestry.
- **John A. Beale Memorial Award** - recognizes outstanding efforts over a sustained period of time by a SAF member in the promotion of forestry through voluntary service to the Society.
- **Sir William Schlich Memorial Award** - recognizes broad and outstanding contributions to the field of forestry with emphasis on, but not limited to, policy and national or international activities.
- **Young Forester Award** - recognizes outstanding leadership by a young forestry professional in the development and promotion of an individual program or project, or for a sustained leadership role benefitting the practice of forestry and the Society.
- **Presidential Field Forester Award** - recognizes foresters who have dedicated their professional careers to the application of forestry on the ground using sound, scientific methods, and adaptive management strategies. The award is presented to individuals who have displayed uncommon talent, skill, and innovative methods to achieve a record of excellence in the application of forest management.
- **Outstanding SAF Student Chapter Award** - recognizes the outstanding SAF student chapter in the nation and its faculty representative during an academic year. Three student chapters are recognized annually during the SAF National Convention.

The **Fellow Award** is a prestigious award that recognizes an SAF member for long-standing service to forestry at the local, state, and national levels. An SAF Fellow is recognized as an ambassador for the advancement of forestry.

As the NESAF Awards Chair, I am willing to assist a member in compiling the necessary forms, endorsements, and a biographical sketch that constitute a complete nomination package.
Recreation Research in Forest and Park Settings: Studies in Language, Symbolism, and Discourse

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If you ask a social scientist interested in people and natural environments to discuss forest recreation, you’ll likely hear about how often people visit forest and wildland areas, the outdoor activities they enjoy on-site, whether their experiences are satisfying, how attached they feel to specific landscapes, how much money they spend, and whether their visits contribute positively to local economies. You’ll get a good idea of what individuals do in the outdoors, but you may not learn much about communication issues - a central focus of my research group at the University of Vermont. Our research about communication in natural resource settings focuses less on the psychology of individuals than on social and cultural theories and contexts. We’re especially interested in a topic that’s often taken for granted: the ways that language, symbolism, and discourses construct social interactions, relationships, and behaviors in outdoor settings.

Our research is qualitative in nature; we primarily collect interview and textual data, subjecting these to various forms of language-based analysis (thematic, narrative, rhetorical, and discourse analyses). This research prioritizes deep engagement with data, interpretation of how people make meaning, and the language and discourse patterns they use to understand others, places, and experiences. It emphasizes detailed analyses of language and symbolism to identify communicative patterns and develop theory. Our study settings extend across natural, cultural, and historic resources, and include forests, parks, communities, tourism destinations, landscapes, and others. Below, I describe several studies undertaken by our research group, and discuss the merits of this work for forest and resource-based recreation.

School Forests: Shared Meanings within Institutional Contexts

School forests are tracts of land owned by universities and used for outdoor classes, academic research, recreation, community activities, and sometimes economic gain. Though these functions are important for universities, we became interested in school forests for their aesthetic and emotional values. We wondered about the experiences of people who had been involved in activities on school forests: were these places meaningful to them; how did they describe their experiences on those lands; and what values did they attribute to those places and their experiences (Jakobic, 2020).

Our study focused on UVM’s Jericho Research Forest; we interviewed 28 former faculty members, graduate students, professional foresters, and others who had prior experience with this forest. Qualitative analysis showed that positive benefits of educational experiences on school forest lands accrued to both students and faculty members. As students gained knowledge and skills, they developed a professional identity based on friendships with colleagues and professors and built networks that facilitated job and future opportunities. Faculty members described the mental health benefits of their work away from the office and out in nature.

Along with those benefits, experiences on school forest lands were associated with the idea of ownership. Professors and students who became professional foresters expressed the strongest levels of ownership. These individuals exhibited high levels of use and visitation over time; repetitive experiences on-site (maintaining research plots; teaching, learning, or outreach); strong positive emotions associated with the place; and caring for the forest. The concept of place ownership identified in this study aligns with prior research about high levels of place attachment seen in other contexts among specialized recreationists, outdoor professionals and committed environmentalists. Our research shows that functional uses of school forest lands are, for certain groups, only one aspect of the broader social and cultural meanings of these places.

Forests as Destinations: Environmental Interpretation and Communication

In traditional environmental interpretation, resource managers use a variety of methods (brochures, signage, guided tours, museum exhibits, demonstrations, and others) to inform and entertain people who visit their sites. These communication approaches typically focus on engaging visitors and enhancing their appreciation of sites, protecting valued resources, and increasing public understanding of the agency itself. Researchers often ask whether visitors remember information, or feel more positive about recreation places, or comply with manager directives after exposure to interpretive materials – but an equally important question relates to how managers communicate, using interpretation to tell the story of a recreation place and thus implicitly directing visitors to see the world in specific ways.

Forests have played an important role in Vermont’s history, culture, ecology, and economy – and forests owned and managed by agencies, organizations, and businesses are frequently depicted and discussed in environmental interpretation materials. We wondered how managers associated with forest recreation and tourism sites constructed the stories and meanings of those places (Derrien and Stokowski, 2017). So, we collected 150 brochures from resource-based recreation and tourism places in central Vermont, evaluated the content, forms, and meanings of texts print-
ed on those brochures, and examined how directive language (verb commands) were used in brochure texts to encourage specific kinds of visitor experiences. We then examined the discursive qualities of the texts relating to Vermont forests generally.

Our analysis revealed four forest-related discourses: the natural forest, the recreational forest, the productive forest, and the dependent forest. Examining relationships across texts, a fifth discourse emerged: forests are symbols of Vermont as a distinctive, special place. The results of this study raise questions about what is measured in interpretation research, whether visitors are aware of how their impressions are constructed via managerial discourses, and the ways that language plays an active role in creating the world we take as given. Whether these texts are intentionally created remains a question for future research.

Resource Places and Social Media

Beyond resource managers’ uses of traditional methods of environmental interpretation, our research group is also interested in contemporary approaches to agency communication using websites and social media. These topics are of interest across the contexts of parks, outdoor recreation, tourism, and natural resource management generally, and our approach is to focus on comparative research about resource places using a qualitative discourse analytic perspective.

One of our early studies was a comparative analysis of how ski areas and nearby towns represented tourism destination images and place meanings on their websites (Reckard and Stokowski, 2021). Using a sample of 12 rural Vermont communities and their adjacent ski areas, we collected 800 screenshots across one year. Then, we applied rhetorical discourse analysis methods to examine patterns in content, form, and style of presentation across written and visual data. Three unique discourses—of affiliation (prominent among small ski areas and towns), of aspiration (common to medium ski areas and towns), and of appropriation (visible across large ski areas and towns), and one overarching discourse of imagined places—were identified in the analysis. One important result from this research was the variation in photographic uses of the natural landscape across the three discourses. Small towns emphasized iconic nature images (usually autumn trees and leaves) on their websites, while their nearby ski areas tended to ignore nature in favor of photos of families and children skiing. Mid-sized ski areas posted texts and images of “perfect snow” but otherwise mostly ignored nature, while their adjacent towns showed four-season nature images incorporating agricultural, forested, and cultural landscapes. Large-sized ski areas and towns both published wide-lens views of mountains, forests, and cultural landscapes, referencing activities in the outdoors, not nature itself. This research raises questions about representations of nature on websites more generally, and the intentionality of website producers in creating language and image associations.

Our social media studies have focused on Facebook, a platform widely used by resource management agencies, and one that accommodates a variety of content (texts, images, videos, comments). Our first study considered how agencies persuasively communicate their special qualities of place on social media (Marcotte and Stokowski, 2021), and focused on three national resource-based national parks (Acadia, Great Smokey Mountains, and Rocky Mountain). We conducted a rhetorical discourse analysis of written texts (n=676) posted by the agency across a year, finding that the contents of text posts and the types of rhetorical claims varied by park. Nevertheless, claims based on emotion were far more prevalent than other types.

A second study focused on visual qualities of photographs (n=747) posted on the Facebook pages of the same three national parks over the same time period (Cummings, 2022). In this work, we asked: how might NPS photo postings on Facebook convey the “personality” of a park? Though the three study parks have quite different landscape features, they posted similar types of photographs on agency Facebook pages: images of flora and fauna, landscapes, and people together accounted for about 65% of the posted photographs. Drawing from prior research about tourist destination personality, we evaluated each photograph for its connotations of place personality, comparing these across parks. For example, while most of the forest-related photographs appeared in the landscape category, individual photographs of trees and forests reflected various personality qualities (ruggedness; timelessness; sacredness). The conclusion from this semiotic analysis is that each park could be identified by unique combinations of personality traits, which may attract different kinds of virtual or actual visitors.

Two other discourse analysis studies of Facebook postings involving natural resource places are now underway. The first considers how emotions are presented in the written texts and follower comments of agency Facebook postings, drawing from a more diverse set of national park units (natural, cultural, and historic sites) in the Northeastern US. The second project attempts to understand whether and how discourses of “imaginaries” (collectively imagined events, places, and people) are represented in social media texts and comments. This study compares Facebook postings and comments from a sample of national and state agencies (parks, forests, wildlife refuges) in the Northeastern US. Results will be forthcoming in Spring 2023.

Discussion

Over the past several decades in natural resource management, “communication” has typically referred to practical tools and skills. Managers and agency staff were trained to speak effectively with the news media, produce public relations and marketing materials, and develop programs in environmental interpretation. But there is more to communication than just practical applications. Notably, the evolution of social and cultural
Forest Recreation Matters: A Review of Forest-Based Outdoor Recreation Visitor Use Management Research Across New England

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Introduction

Outdoor recreation is fundamental to American culture and identity. It serves as a primary conduit between humans and nature and provides a multitude of physical and mental health benefits (e.g., stress reduction, lowering blood-pressure, increased self-esteem) (Bedimo-Rung et al., 2005), human services benefits (e.g., increased quality of life, therapeutic activities, community wellness) (Budruk & Phillips, 2010), cultural benefits (e.g., sense of place, pride, history/equity) (Arment et al., 2017), economic benefits (e.g., job creation, tax revenue, property values) (Lerner & Poole, 1999), and environmental benefits (e.g., water and air quality, flora and fauna) (Sherner, 2006). The United States (U.S.) is home to one of the most expansive public lands systems in the world. Outdoor recreation visitation within U.S. public lands and waters has increased substantially over the past several decades and has skyrocketed within the past few years (Ferguson et al., 2021; Landry et al., 2021; McIntosh & Wilmot, 2011). In 2021, more than 297 million recreationists visited National Park Service sites (NPS, 2022) and more than 168 million recreationists visited USDA Forest Service lands (USDAFS, 2022). The outdoor recreation industry is now the fourth largest economic sector in the U.S., generating $887 billion in annual consumer spending and directly supporting more than 215,000 jobs in New England alone (OIA, 2017). Accordingly, proper outdoor recreation visitor use management has recently become a central conversation amongst resource managers, elected officials, and researchers. Visitor use management refers to the long-term management of outdoor recreation visitation to provide and maintain high-quality visitor experiences, natural resources conditions, and economic vitality (Manning, 2011).

A majority of visitation and subsequent discussions, research, and press often revolve around park lands (e.g., local parks, state parks, national parks), which operate under the umbrella of a preservation land ethic. A growing volume of outdoor recreation visitation in the U.S., however, takes place on forest lands (e.g., local forests, state forests, national forests), which operate under the umbrella of a conservation land ethic. Broadly, preservation refers to maintaining resources in their most natural condition while conservation refers to the sustainable multiple use and management of resources like wildlife, water, air, and wood products (Manning, 2011). The key factor which differentiates conservation from preservation is the concept of multiple use. For instance, on forest lands timber, grazing, water, wildfire, and recreation are each of equal importance. This critical distinction places forest-based recreation in a league of its own, providing unique freedoms and opportunities (e.g., hunting, fishing, off-highway vehicles, dogs) that often cannot be found within park lands managed under a strict preservation ethic. In short, it is often noted that parks are made to be seen while forests are made to be used.

In many ways, forest-based resource management has benefited from consistently lower levels of outdoor recreation visitation over the past several decades. This paradigm is beginning to shift given the recent and dramatic increase in outdoor recreation visitation within the U.S. public lands system, particularly as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic (Ferguson et al., 2021). For better or for worse, many outdoor recreationists have discovered or re-discovered forest lands during the recent outdoor recreation renaissance. There is now growing concern regarding the influence of exponential visitation growth upon the forest-based visitor experience, the protection of natural resources, and the strength of rural recreation economies and workforces. Stakeholders require empirical research to inform policies and strategies which sustainably manage rapidly increasing visitation within these invaluable natural resources. The following article provides a summary of

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Social Impacts (crowding, conflict, etc.)

Situational Impacts (energy development, access, parking, traffic, litter, recreationists, pets, etc.)

Ecological Impacts (resource & trail degradation, water quality, weathet, ticks, ectoparasite, invasive plant species, etc.)

Visitor Behaviors & Decision-Making (displacement, avoidance substitution, resource, temporal, activity, etc.)

Visitor Experiences (satisfaction, health and human services outcomes, loyalty intentions or return, support/appreciation, etc.)

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Figure 1. Visitor Use Management Model of Visitor Decision-Making and Behaviors
three recent peer-reviewed case studies examining the influence of outdoor recreation visitation and associated impacts upon visitor behaviors, decision-making, and experiences within forest settings in New England (Figure 1).

Case Study #1: The outdoor renaissance: Assessing the impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic upon outdoor recreation visitation and behaviors in New England’s National Forests (Ferguson et al., 2022a).

Summary: This was one of the first studies to examine the influence of the COVID-19 pandemic upon recreation visitation across an entire forest-based public lands system in New England, utilizing both spatial and temporal scales. A unique combination of primary, secondary, and geospatial data was used to explore recreation visitors’ decision-making, behaviors, and visitation trends during the pandemic (Figure 1). For the purposes of this study, the New England National Forest (NENF) system consists of the White Mountain National Forest of New Hampshire and the Green Mountain National Forest of Vermont. All study data were part of the larger federally prescribed USDA Forest Service National Visitor Use Monitoring (NVUM) program. Recreation visitation was estimated through a combination of exiting traffic counts and on-site intercept exit-use surveys of visitors leaving the NENF. From May to September of 2020, exiting traffic counts were conducted at a total of 320 non-proxy NVUM sites throughout the NENF system. Comparable data (e.g., May-September, non-proxy, exiting traffic count data) were gathered from three previous rounds of summer NVUM data collection on the NENF system: 2005 (n=209), 2010 (n=232), and 2015 (n=222). In total, NENF NVUM existing traffic count data from May to September of 2005, 2010, 2015, and 2020 (n=983) were collectively used for subsequent analyses. Inferential and regression analyses suggest overall recreation visitation increased by 61% (2+ million additional site visits) during the summer of 2020 at the height of the pandemic. Moreover, significant changes in visitation, site, and geo-spatial characteristics were observed for both in-state and out-of-state visitors during the pandemic. This research validates the influence of the pandemic upon forest-based public lands in the United States.

Management implication: This study found that the pandemic increased visitation by 61% (2+ million additional site visits) at non-proxy sites across the NENF system during the summer of 2020. Results suggest visitors flocked to dispersed recreation settings rather than developed recreation settings during the pandemic. Wilderness sites incurred the largest visitation increase (341%), followed by general forested area sites (65%), and overnight use developed sites (62%). These profound and dramatic alterations to visitor behaviors and site preferences within the NENF, particularly the dramatic increase in wilderness visitation, have significant implications for resource managers as solitude is an inherent component of congressionally designated wilderness. The pandemic and associated local, state, and federal lockdown restrictions also significantly altered recreation visitation on NENF system. Not only did in-state visitors recreate earlier in the summer, but out-of-state visitors flooded the NENF system, especially on the WMNF. Resource managers might consider implementing policies related to Limits of Acceptable Change and a desired conditions approach to further manage increasing visitation and specifically combat the potential social and ecological impacts associated with dispersed recreation settings (Stankey, 2020).

Case Study #2: Seeing the forest for the trees: A social-ecological systems approach to managing outdoor recreation visitation in parks and protected areas (Ferguson et al., 2021).

Summary: The expansion in forest-based recreation visitation raises concerns regarding the influence of social, situational, and ecological factors upon visitor behaviors, decision-making, and overall experiences (Figure 1). This study investigated the relationship between three types of impacts and visitors’ coping behaviors and overall satisfaction on the White Mountain National Forest (WMNF) of New Hampshire. A mail-back and online survey method was used to collect data from WMNF visitors from June to September of 2020 (n=642). Structural equation modeling and binary logistic regression analyses suggest social impacts (e.g., crowding and conflict), situational impacts (e.g., litter and access), and ecological impacts (e.g., weather and seasonality) were significant predictors of visitor decision-making and overall satisfaction on the WMNF. Moreover, a majority of the sample consistently employed behavioral adaptations such as resource and temporal substitution, and in some instances, permanently abandoned their recreation experiences altogether, all to maintain their trip satisfaction. This study demonstrates that in addition to social impacts, situational and ecological impacts should also be integrated when assessing the broader human-nature relationship. This research advances the social-ecological systems framework and suggests the importance of considering the interconnectivity between recreation visitor experiences and natural resources when sustainably managing forest-based public lands.

Management implications: This study found that social, situational, and ecological impacts are driving the need for visitor substitution behaviors on the WMNF. Resource substitution (e.g., visiting a different location on the forest) and temporal substitution (e.g., visiting the forest during a different time of day or season) were most common, with an approximate 95% probability of visitor engagement. Results indicate visitors can effectively cope or deal with situational and ecological impacts, partially cope or deal with crowding impacts, but are unable to cope or deal with conflict related impacts. Specially, findings suggest visitor conflicts led to approximately 9% of visitors (~369,000 visitors) being permanently displaced from the WMNF on an annual basis. These findings indicate visitor conflict, followed by crowding, should be prioritized by resource managers. Additionally, resource managers should work with adjacent communities and stakeholders on communication and engagement strategies espe-
cally in areas proximate to recreation sites prone to crowding and conflict.

Case Study #3: Expanding the viewshed: Insights and implications for examining visitor use management across scales and modalities in an iconic National Forest (Ferguson et al., 2022b).

Summary: Outdoor recreation research and management practices often employ single survey modalities to assess a recreation issue at a specific location and time. This research approach has historically met the challenge of helping to alleviate strains associated with social and ecological impacts on public lands. Recent research in the areas of social-ecological systems and hierarchy theory, however, suggests an adaptive systems approach, spanning various scales (e.g., spatial, temporal, topical) and modalities (e.g., on-site, off-site, big data), may be the most comprehensive approach to recreation research and management. This study examined visitor perceptions of crowding, use-levels, encounter rates, management preferences, and overall experience quality within spatial and temporal scales and on-site and off-site survey modalities at the White Mountain National Forest (WMNF) of New Hampshire. Specifically, this study compared data within two distinct WMNF studies: 1) a 2016 on-site study (n=855) and 2) a 2020 off-site study (n=642). Respondents within these separate, yet complementary studies, were segmented by both frequency of visitation and distance traveled to the WMNF. Descriptive and inferential statistics determined that while there are indeed commonalities between the two samples, respondent profiles and overall perceptions of crowding, encounter rates, and management preferences have different trend patterns between samples, with significant differences within samples. Respondents in the on-site study sample were predominantly non-locals who visited the WMNF infrequently, perceived moderate levels of overall crowding, preferred higher-use site strataums, and had a very high threshold for maximum visitor encounters per day. Respondents in the off-site study sample, however, trended toward the opposite. Results indicate different modalities of data collection provide substantially different results within the same geographic region and, together, may provide a more precise understanding of the area and related recreation impacts. Study findings suggest recreation researchers and resource managers should consider applying multiple scales and modalities to comprehensively assess and understand complex visitor use management relationships.

Conclusion
As outdoor recreation visitation continues to grow across the U.S. public land system, forest-based resource managers are increasingly challenged to deliver their dual-mandate of providing high-quality visitor experiences while simultaneously protecting and sustaining natural resources. There is growing evidence that both visitor experiences and natural resources should be managed under a broader social-ecological systems (SES) framework that comprehensively and simultaneously considers the complex interactions and outcomes between a multitude of both social and ecological systems and sub-systems (Morse, 2020). Recent research suggests the SES framework lends itself well to public land management and specifically visitor use management frameworks (Ferguson et al., 2020; Z 2021a; Morse, 2020). For instance, recent studies suggest the integration of the SES framework in forest-based settings provides for a more holistic, realistic, and accurate assessment of overall outdoor recreation visitor use management (Ferguson et al., 2020; 2021b).

The central premise of the SES framework is to more broadly understand the outdoor recreation visitor decision-making process and the impacts of those decisions downstream (Figure 1). SES recognizes that visitor behaviors do not exist in isolation. Rather, there are a series of interlinked interactions between visitor decision-making and natural resources (Morse, 2020). Application of SES in forest-based settings often suggests the presence of a positive feedback loop which may serve to increase the magnitude of impacts and further destabilize the overall system (Figure 2) (Ferguson et al., 2021; Miller et al., 2012). For example, visitors may encounter impacts which force them to employ coping strategies to preserve their overall recreation experience (Figure 1). As
a result of coping strategies, visitors may choose to recreate within lower-use areas (e.g., resource substitution) or during different days of the week, month, or season (e.g., temporal substitution); both of which increase the potential for significant social, situational, ecological, and often times economic impacts (Cole, 1992; Starbuck et al., 2006).

In other words, as outdoor recreation visitors change their behaviors in response to various impacts, they are not simply maintaining their own experience. Rather, recreation behavioral adaptations also significantly influence social systems (e.g., other visitors and stakeholders), situational systems (e.g., traffic, parking, access), ecological systems (e.g., site biodiversity and resource quality), and economic systems (e.g., rural economies and workforces) (Cole, 1992; Ferguson et al., 2020; 2021a; 2021b; Morse, 2020; Starbuck et al., 2006). These impacts may serve to further intensify impacts, with the cycle repeating itself with increased intensity each time. Thus, the applications of a SES framework in forest-based public land management provides a broad and interconnected understanding of human-nature relationships. Moreover, SES provides resource managers, communities, and stakeholders the opportunity to reduce impacts, stabilize the cycle, and facilitate long-term proactive planning. This paradigm shift and new way of viewing outdoor recreation visitation management will be critical for both forest-based resource manager and researchers to ensure that current and future generations continue to benefit from the multitude of benefits provided by forest lands in the U.S.

References


theory over the past several decades has introduced important new perspectives on language, symbolism, and discourse - perspectives that can help to enlarge our understandings of meaning, representation, and memory as these arise in the contexts of forests, parks, and other natural resource places. The theoretical advances that emerge will also have benefits in improving the practice of communication in our fields. The studies discussed here show that the languages, symbols, and discourses of forest, park and recreation resource places are socially and culturally embedded. How we use this knowledge to enhance both on-site and mediated experiences is the challenge for the future.

References


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Call the COPs: Should Public Lands be Carbon Farms?

Lloyd C. Irland,
The Irland Group

In between political news this fall, we have seen intense coverage of two COP’s. One was COP 27, held at Sharm el Sheikh in Egypt, to seek binding national agreements that the globe’s carbon emitters will go cold turkey in 30 years. The other, COP 15, at Montreal, was a gathering to assemble commitments to protect biodiversity. Yet another recent COP, at Glasgow (2021) pledged to end tropical deforestation by 2030.

What is a COP? An abbreviation for Conference of the Parties - the countries who originally signed up for the Protocols or Declarations involved. So, you’ll see COPs on many different issues. It is an event attempting to establish binding agreements among nations to solve problems like these that cannot be handled by individual nations because of their global reach. A cynic might say a COP is where nations being punished by, say, climate change, try persuade the big emitters to change their ways. Leaders of the big emitters go to make flowery speeches about commitments they know they won’t keep. All sign Protocols in lofty UN - speak that are carefully polished to keep everybody happy and omit troublesome details.

The news coverage, though, can be valuable in educating the public about the seriousness of the problem. And a lot of mutual learning goes on among participants, officials, journalists, scientists, and activists who set up side events.

Forests have figured prominently in all of these COP’s. Obviously the role of forests in the globe’s carbon balance is extremely important. The question is what to do about it. Some scientists and activists have seized upon carbon as the latest in a long string of single-use narratives for forests. In their view, carbon storage must be the only objective for forest lands. National Forests and Forever Wild lands had their origins in desires to protect scenery, tourism, natural forests, and water supplies. Protecting timber supplies was an additional goal. In most state, county, and local lands, goals included simply helping land recover from abuse, and providing for hunting and recreation. Local municipal watersheds are often devoted to the single use of source protection. There are research forests. So single uses are not uncommon.

The campaigners’ target is public land, as political action can readily be brought to bear. The issues at stake are obscure and technical. “Science” can be cited on opposite sides of many details. Much of what emerges from the forestry and research community is aimed at each other and not a general interested public, so it is often a jumble of jargon, assumptions, scenarios, and complicated maps and tables. Great hunting grounds for cherry picking factoids for one or another side of a debate.

Some Stylized Facts:

1. Public Lands account for 19% of the 45 million acres of forest in the 4 northern Forest states. State county and municipal lands in turn, account for 80% of the public lands, the National Forests only 15%.
2. These lands are typically managed for a range of uses, but they include roughly 3.5 million acres of dedicated wilderness - most of it New York’s “Forever Wild”.
3. Public lands in the Northeastern states are already carbon storage machines. These gain carbon every year. Inventory data show this for many examples. On most public land systems in the region, active management is confined to only portions of these areas, and is highly conservative, with minimal clearcutting. How much difference could future sequestration on 8.7 million acres of public forests make to the nation’s carbon budget?
4. Many of these land systems are understaffed, but in no case are they managed on a “timber only” basis.
5. Some of the wood harvested, perhaps 20 to 30%, ends in buildings and long lived structures, thereby storing carbon.
6. The US imports about 30% of the lumber to build its houses, and an even higher share of the furniture we fill them with. “The Illusion of Preservation” is relevant.
7. Many public land systems rely on income from resource uses to help with costs of managing for custodial purposes and supporting recreation and other activities.
8. If timber harvests are halted on these lands, the users of that wood will buy the wood elsewhere. Net effect on the global carbon balance: zero. And management practices on that other land may not be pretty. This is termed “leakage” in the carbon policy trade.

I have long argued that we need more dedicated wilderness and recreation land, but not where it all is now. It should be closer to the people - much closer. But I have never been comfortable with claims for devoting vast forest landscapes to single uses, whether carbon, water, or timber.

Research is emerging that argues persuasively, to me at least, that the best path forward for storing carbon in forests is to keep them as forests and manage them better, not turn them into single-use carbon farms. See list below. Fortify yourself with a cup of coffee—this is not writing intended for the casual reader.

Next time: “Tempest in Telephone Gap”: a deeper dive into our region’s two National Forests.
Further Reading:
Alexa Dugan (adugan@fs.fed.us), Maria Janowiak (mjanowiak02@fs.fed.us) and Duncan McKinley (dcmckinley@fs.fed.us) Forest Carbon Assessment for the Green Mountain National Forest Updated April 22, 2019 18 pp. https://docslib.org/doc/1467337/forest-carbon-assessment-for-the-green-mountain-national-forest-1-0

Disclosure: Lloyd Irland served as Associate Economist with the USDA Forest Service, as well as doing consulting and short assignments in Washington, Oregon, Alaska, and the Southwest. He also served as Director, Maine Bureau of Public lands in the 1980s. He attended COP 15 and 16 for side events and to pretend to chaperone graduate students.
Assessing the Influence of Climate and Pollution on the Growth of Northern Hardwood Trees

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Rebecca L. Stern, ERM, Malvern, PA; Rebecca.Stern@erm.com
Christopher F. Hansen and Gary J. Hawley, The University of Vermont, Burlington, VT
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As a result of climate change, temperature and precipitation levels in the northeastern United States have increased in recent decades, and they are projected to continue to do so in the decades ahead (Janowiak et al. 2018). Projected changes include increases in maximum, minimum and average temperatures, with the greatest increases forecast for winter (Janowiak et al. 2018). Precipitation inputs are also expected to generally increase, though inputs may be more intense (leading to greater runoff and less soil infiltration) and episodic - creating intermittent droughts (Janowiak et al. 2018). Combined changes in temperature and precipitation may converge to cause more precipitation to fall as rain versus snow, resulting in reduced depths and durations of snowpack in regional forests (Janowiak et al. 2018). Although for some species there have been reports of improved tree growth with greater moisture availability (Stern et al. 2020, Stern et al. 2021) and reduced growth with shrinking snowpacks (Comerford et al. 2013), analyses of how changing climate may influence the productivity of trees more generally in the northern hardwood forest have been limited.

In addition to changes in climate, atmospheric inputs of sulfur and nitrogen pollution that cause acid precipitation have decreased following reductions mandated by the 1990 Amendments to the Clean Air Act (Kosiba et al. 2018). These reductions have led to rebounds in the growth of some sensitive tree species like red spruce (Picea rubens Sarg.) (Kosiba et al. 2018). However, the influence of reduced pollutant loading on tree growth more broadly is unresolved.

To better understand how climate and pollution inputs influence wood production within the northern forest, we evaluated the radial growth of three tree species characteristic of the northern hardwood forest - sugar maple (Acer saccharum Marsh), American beech (Fagus grandifolia Ehrh.), and yellow birch (Betula alleghaniensis Britton), and a fourth species, red maple (Acer rubrum L.), whose abundance has increased in the region. In particular, we analyzed the association of growth with climate (temperature, precipitation and snow) and pollution data for 690 trees: 203 sugar maple, 137 American beech, 172 yellow birch, and 178 red maple. Trees were distributed among 45 unmanaged northern hardwood forest plots across a broad range of locations within Vermont (Figure 1; Stern et al. 2022). We sampled only dominant and codominant trees in order to limit the influence of competition and suppression that can mask the influence of climate and other environmental factors on growth.

Growth was assessed using xylem increment cores that were collected, processed and measured using standard dendrochronological methods (see Stern et al. 2020, 2021, 2022). Radial growth was standardized to produce basal area increment (BAI) measures for general growth comparisons, and by calculating a Ring Width Index (RWI) used for correlation analyses of growth with climate and pollution data (Stern et al. 2020, 2021, 2022). Patterns of significant (p ≤ 0.05) correlations were used to identify environmental parameters most associated with greater or lesser growth.

Over the course of the common time period (1945 to 2014) all four species showed a general increase in BAI growth during stand maturation with more plateaued growth during the second half of this timespan (Stern et al. 2022). Recent growth was somewhat higher for red maple (an average of 15.7 cm² for the second half of the chronology) as compared to sugar maple (14.2 cm²) and yellow birch (13.2 cm²) for the same time period. Year-to-year variations in growth were the greatest for sugar maple - a species that has experienced sporadic declines in health and productivity in the region (Schaberg et al. 2001). In general, growth was more modest (12.7 cm² for the second half of the chronology) and less variable for American beech, a species for which beech bark disease (BBD) has been known to constrain growth (Gavin and Peart 1993). We cored trees with little visible BBD in order to limit the effect of this and better isolate the influence of climate and pollution inputs on growth (Stern et al. 2022).

The greatest number of significant correlations with growth involved moisture availability (Table 1). For sugar maple, yellow birch and red maple, this was most evident as positive correlations with summer precipitation (Stern et al. 2022). This suggests that despite growing during a period of generally higher precipitation (Pederson et al. 2013), these hardwoods benefitted from ample water availability during the growing season. However, for the three species most associated with the northern hardwood forest (sugar maple, yellow birch and American beech) positive correlations between winter precipitation and growth were also evident. To assess if positive associations with winter precipitation were related to the presence of snow, we also correlated growth to monthly snowfall and snow duration data. For all four species as-
sessed, winter or early spring (March) snow metrics were positively associated with growth. Winter snowpacks can insulate soils from low air temperatures and prevent them from freezing (Hennon et al. 2012). This can protect roots from freezing damage that can later result in reduced aboveground growth (Comerford et al. 2013). The importance of snowpacks in protecting tree roots and promoting radial growth has been well documented for sugar maple trees (Reinmann et al. 2019), but indications of its broader relevance to the growth of many species is novel and warrants further analysis.

Significant correlations with temperature were less common and were generally limited to negative associations with summer temperature for the three quintessential northern hardwood species (Table 1). In contrast, red maple showed a positive association with temperatures in October and a negative correlation with March temperatures before eventual ring formation. These patterns may suggest that a warmer fall, that allowed for an extended growing season, contributed to growth the following year and that colder March temperatures reduced growth—especially if snow was lacking (Table 1).

Pollution data was negatively associated with growth for sugar maple, yellow birch and red maple (Table 1). We expected that pollution data would be associated with reduced growth for sugar maple—a species known to be sensitive to decline associated with exposure to acid deposition (Schaberg et al. 2001). Furthermore, the lack of sensitivity of American beech to pollution inputs was not surprising and has been shown elsewhere (Halman et al. 2014). However, indications that yellow birch can be negatively impacted by pollution is uncommon (though see Halman et al. 2014), and we are unaware of previous reports of red maple growth being constrained by pollution exposure. Although sensitivities to pollution inputs were sometimes evident, any negative influence on growth should decrease over time as pollution levels decline further.

When associations of growth with climate and pollution data were assessed at finer temporal scales (e.g., monthly temperature and precipitation data), of the four species assessed, red maple had the fewest associations with environmental variables (Stern et al. 2022). This could suggest that red maple is less susceptible to growth reductions as the climate changes. This possibility is consistent with results from the online Climate Change Tree Atlas—a tool that projects a less dramatic change in future habitat suitability for red maple relative to the other species we evaluated (Prasad et al. 2007-ongoing).

Considering the overwhelmingly positive associations of summer precipitation and winter snow on radial growth, changes in the amount, form (rain versus snow), intensity (increased runoff versus greater soil penetration), and periodicity (regular inputs versus intermittent exposures) of precipitation beyond current norms could threaten optimal growth of trees within the northern hardwood forest.

Fig. 1. Locations of the study sites throughout Vermont. SM=sugar maple, YB=yellow birch, AB=American beech, RM=red maple. Figure was created using ArcGIS 10. Base map courtesy of Esri, USGS, and NOAA.
Table 1. Significant correlations (p<0.05) of growth versus climate and pollution data for each season. Tmax= maximum temperature, Tmin= minimum temperature, CDD= cooling degree days, HDD= heating degree days, SPEI= Standardized Precipitation-Evapotranspiration Index, ca/an= cation to anion ratio, SO$_4$= sulfate deposition, NO$_3$= nitrogen deposition. Snow duration is number of days in a month that snow depth is at least 2.54 cm. Seasons/species with no significant correlations are indicated by ns.

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References:


In Memoriam

Editor’s Note: Please forward any NESAF member obituaries to Nesafng@gmail.com.

Gary Frank Salmon, 75, of Shrewsbury, VT died January 1, 2023 at his home. He was born June 8, 1947, in Utica, NY, and was a graduate of Watertown High School in New York. He earned a BS degree in Resources Management from State University College of Forestry at Syracuse University, and served in the US Marine Corps during the during the Vietnam era.

Gary worked as a forester for the Vermont Department of Forest, Parks and Recreation for 36 years. Over his career he fought forest fires in MT, MN, ID, CA, OR and VT. One of his many joys was working with the Vermont Youth Conservation Corps building and maintaining trails and bridges on state land and providing environmental education to the crews. Throughout his long career Gary wore many hats including Arbor Day Coordinator and Educator where he supplied tree seedlings to school kids. He administered Accepted Management Practices protecting Vermont’s water quality, served as a Private Lands Forester, Trails Coordinator, State Lands Forester and Envirothon Coordinator. Gary was champion of “Vermont Big Tree” project, a district Urban and Community Forester, Municipal Forest Manager, UCF Council member, and a D & H Rail Trail advocate. Throughout his career in forestry, just as the Lorax said, Gary spoke for the trees.

Gary authored educational and entertaining monthly tree articles for the Shrewsbury Times and the Mountain Times for many years adding pictures from his trove of photographs. A longtime member of the Society of American Foresters, he served as the editor of the News Quarterly for fifteen years. Other interests included acting as Tree Warden for the Town of Shrewsbury, science fair judging at local high schools, participating in local adult baseball and soccer games, setting up displays and sharing his knowledge with fairgoers at the Vermont State Fair Forestry Building and always carrying his camera for that unique photo opportunity. A 44-year member of Grace Congregational United Church of Christ, he sang in the Sanctuary Choir and was a longtime member of the Music Committee. His love of singing included membership in the Vermont Symphony Orchestra Chorus and the Rutland Area Chorus.

The memorial service will be held Saturday, January 14, 2023 at 2 PM in Grace Congregational United Church of Christ, with the Rev. Terry Hanley, pastor, officiating. Memorial contributions may be made to the Music Program of Grace Congregational Church in Rutland, VT www.gracechurchvt.org. Arrangements are with Tossing Funeral Home.

Corrections

In the Women Foresters Collaborative article in the October 2022 issue of the NESAF News Quarterly, Patty Cormier was misidentified as the first female director of the Maine Forest Service, a title that actually belongs to Susan Bell. Additionally, tish carr was identified as a national leader in women’s chainsaw trainings but is also the Executive Director of Wabanaki Youth in Science (WaYS). Please accept the author’s apology for the errors.
2023 NESAF Annual Winter Meeting Planning and Program Committees

Many hands make light work! If you have the opportunity to chat with any of these folks in the near future, please be sure to thank them for all their help in planning the 2023 NESAF Annual Winter Meeting.

If you would like to help plan future Annual Winter Meetings, please reach out to the NESAF members listed on page 2 of this newsletter. Your help is always appreciated!

Winter Meeting Planning Committee:
- Steven Roberge (chair)
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Soliciting Sponsors, Vendors, and Raffle Donations

The Granite State Division Society of American Foresters has the distinction of hosting the 2023 NESAF Winter Meeting. In March, foresters, natural resource professionals, and students from all over the Northeast will gather to connect, develop professionally, and learn from each other. NESAF Winter Meeting participants represent the current and future forest stewards of New England and beyond. If you would like to connect with these individuals and share your services and business, please consider registering as a Vendor for the Winter meeting. We are offering vendor space for $300 per 10 ft x 10 ft space. Vendor registration includes lunch for Tuesday and Wednesday during the Meeting.

If you or your business would like to sponsor the Winter Meeting, we offer sponsorship levels:
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Questions regarding Vendor or Sponsorship benefit packages or needs can be directed to:
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Finally, please consider a donation to the annual NESAF Winter Meeting Raffle. Raffle items can be brought to the meeting, arranged for drop off ahead of time, or shipped in advanced to:
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PO Box 228
West Ossipee NH 03890

Payments are to be made out to “Granite State Division Society of American Foresters” and mailed to:
GSD SAF Treasurer
54 Portsmouth St
Concord, NH 03301

4th Northeast/Mid-Atlantic SAF Leadership Academy~ Ken Laustsen

NESAF is hosting the 4th edition of a regional leadership academy with attendance from the state societies of NESAF, NYSAF, and Allegheny SAF. The academy is scheduled for two full days, meeting on March 16-17, 2022 and is being held at the end of NESAF Annual Meeting. The academy will be held at the same venue, the Nashua Sheraton Hotel, 11 Tara Blvd., Nashua, NH.

The academy focuses on 3 goals: 1) improving the ability of future SAF members to lead or work in teams, which are often separated by distance, to reach common goals; 2) reinvigorating local SAF units by training future leaders; and 3) teaching proven effective collaboration methods in organization management.

Total attendance is limited to 25 from the 3 state societies. If you are interested in attending, please contact your local unit (chapter, division, or state society) chairperson. There will be 1 seat reserved for each of the six New England states and then a waiting list maintained for other interested participants from within NESAF. Anticipated registration fee for the Academy is $400.

For additional information or questions, please contact Kenneth M. Laustsen (KALaustsen@twc.com or 207-873-2642).
# Registration Form

New England Society of American Foresters Winter Meeting  
**March 14 - 16, 2023**  
Sheraton Hotel - 11 Tara Blvd, Nashua NH 03062

## Registration Options

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<tr>
<th>Registration Options</th>
<th>Early Bird by February 10</th>
<th>Standard Rate by February 26</th>
<th>Late or Walk-in rate after February 26</th>
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<td>Includes Lunch on 3/14 and Awards Lunch Banquet on 3/15</td>
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Please indicate field trip you plan to attend:

| 1 Day Tuesday 3/14 | SAF Member | $100.00 | $115.00 | $150.00 |
|                    | Non-Member | $115.00 | $125.00 | $160.00 |
|                    | Student    | $60.00  | $60.00  | $75.00  |

| 1 Day Wednesday 3/15 | SAF Member | $100.00 | $115.00 | $150.00 |
|                      | Non-Member | $115.00 | $125.00 | $160.00 |
|                      | Student    | $60.00  | $60.00  | $75.00  |

**Please Note:** Lunches/refreshments will not be provided on field trips

| Field Trip Thursday 3/16 | SAF Member | $30.00 | $30.00 | $30.00 |
|                         | Non-Member | $35.00 | $35.00 | $35.00 |
|                         | Student    | $10.00 | $10.00 | $10.00 |

Please indicate field trip you plan to attend:

| Other | 3/15 Awards Banquet Only | $40.00 | $40.00 | N/A |
|       | Sponsor a student        | $20.00  |        |      |

## Sponsor and Vendor Options

### Vendor Booth (10' x 10' Space)

- **Vendor Booth (10' x 10' Space)**: $300.00  
  Includes lunch on 3/14 and 3/15

### Sponsor Options

- **Sponsor: Paper Birch**: $250.00  
  Includes 1 full registration
- **Sponsor: Red Oak**: $500.00  
  Includes 2 full registrations
- **Sponsor: White Pine**: $1,000.00  
  Includes 3 full registrations
- **Sponsor: Sugar Maple**: $1000+  
  Options depend on sponsorship level
- **Sponsor: Other**: Options depend on sponsorship level

For more details regarding vendor options or sponsorships, please contact: Steven Roberge at (603) 674-7095 or steven.roberge@unh.edu

Questions about registration?  
Contact Wendy Weisiger at wweisiger@forestsociety.org or (603) 224-9945
Mail registration form and payment to:
GSD SAF Treasurer
54 Portsmouth St
Concord, NH 03301

Make checks payable to:
Granite State Division
Society of American Foresters

Note: Check must be received prior to the “Early Bird” or “Late” dates to qualify for registration rates.

Walk-ins cannot be guaranteed meals.

Questions about registration? Contact Wendy Weisiger at wweisiger@forestsociety.org or (603) 224-9945

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Attending 3/14 Alumni Social or Trivia? Yes / No

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Additional registrations:

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Address                                    State       Zip Code       Phone
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Executive Committee Election Results
The votes are counted and results are in. Please welcome our new and returning elected officers:

- Katie Manende Hall - Chair,
- Samantha Anderson - Chair-Elect,
- Carol Redelsheimer - Maine Representative to NESAF,
- Kris Hoffman - Secretary,
- Jake Metzler - Treasurer,
- Cullen Utermark - Member-at-Large,
- Brandon Learnard - Member-at-Large,
- Jason McClellan - Member-at-Large.

Thank you to those members for your service and support of our organization!

Student Engagement
The University of Maine student SAF chapter is busy culturing the next cohort of resource professionals. In the fourth quarter of 2022, they met with the local chapter of the Association of Consulting Foresters to learn the ins and outs of forestry consulting.

They’ve had several planning meetings and are lining up some exciting experiences for early 2023. Their annual career networking event will occur in February, and planning a chainsaw use and safety training, as well as a field visit with the Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association low-impact forestry division.

Restoring Timberdoodle Habitat
An ongoing UMaine SAF partnership with the Woodcock habitat restoration project continued with an opportunity for students this past fall. UMaine SAF began working with the Orono Land Trust (OLT) on this project in the fall of 2020 with this fall marking the third workday at the site. The habitat restoration work involves using brushsaws and chainsaws to clear saplings and pole-sized trees to create and enhance the woodcock habitat at the site. Each fall, a weekend day is selected that works best for OLT and UMaine SAF, and a safety training day is held in the UMaine Demeritt Forest for all students involved. OLT recently acquired the Caribou Bog Central section of their wetland conservation project which is a corridor from Essex Woods in Bangor to the north end of Pushaw Lake. On this new acquisition are two old log landings used for the most recent timber harvest by the previous owner. The landings have grown over with saplings to pole-sized trees. This is an important area for the American woodcock, a game bird species that are in decline. This project will improve woodcock habitat by opening these landings as singing grounds and courtship areas. You can learn more about woodcock habitat BMPs for our region by following this link.

Annual Meeting Debrief
The MESAF annual meeting, Urban and Community Forestry, took place this fall on the University of Maine at Augusta campus. Maine Forest Service Director, Patty Cormier, gave the keynote address to kick off the meeting. For those unable to attend, the following is a summary of the superb content and speakers who shared their knowledge, projects, and experiences with us.
A community forestry panel, comprised of consulting foresters from Land Trusts, Water Districts, and County Soil and Water Conservation Districts discussed challenges and opportunities in managing forest specifically for community benefit.

Dr. Diane Rowland, Dean of the University of Maine College of Natural Sciences, Forestry, and Agriculture (NSFA) and Director of Maine Agricultural and Forest Experiment Stations, joined us to discuss the college’s structure, functions, services, and mission - responding to and delivering powerful solutions in support of the Maine forest industry. The NSFA college has an extensive disciplinary reach, not to mention serves 30% of all UMaine students! The college footprint is a source of pride as well, with more than 14,000 acres and 51 properties encompassing forest, farm, service, and marine sites.

We also learned about Project Canopy Maine. Project Canopy helps develop and maintain long-term community forestry programs and educates people about the benefits trees provide and how these benefits enrich our lives. We talk about wood, water, and wildlife often (and now carbon too), but what about all the other reasons we love trees; like their beneficial impact to heating and cooling energy costs, supporting physical and mental health, improving property values, and the incredible storm impact mitigation they provide, just to name a few additional reasons to celebrate trees and forests! A recently published economic analysis of urban forestry by the Northeast-Midwest State Foresters Alliance (NMSFA) revealed that Maine’s urban and community forestry industry contributes an estimated $410 million to the economy annually and directly supports nearly 4,000 jobs. Further conclusions show that trees cover 45% of Maine’s most populous communities and save more than $83 million annually by removing air pollutants, reducing stormwater, and providing carbon sequestration. See the Maine Urban Forestry Fact-sheet for summarized statistics.

A panel of utilities foresters and managers closed out the meeting discussing right-of-way maintenance and the task of finding balance between two elements of our landscape - electricity wires and trees.

Beech coup-de-grâce?
The Maine Forest Service (MFS) released a map of area impacted by the relatively new-to-Maine Beech Leaf Disease. Follow this link to view the map and find a comprehensive collection of information about the disease. No new detections have been made since July 2022 but that doesn’t mean it’s not around the corner from your forest. Speaking for myself, I need these resources to learn more about Beech Leaf Disease in order to be more mindful when observing trees I’ve already come to accept as chronically ill. The MFS is working to secure funding to continue Beech Leaf Disease long-term monitoring plots and surveys in 2023.

Northern Long-Eared Bat Endangered Listing
The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) announced a final rule, appearing in the November 30, 2022 Federal Register, to reclassify the northern long-eared bat as endangered under the Endangered Species Act. The rule becomes effective 60 days after publication, on January 30, 2023. The Endangered status eliminates the 4(d) rule and landowner protection from incidental take, which means in the absence of an approved Habitat Conservation Plan, landowners assume risk of take from harvest operations. Follow this link for more information and updates regarding the final rule.

We Want You!
University of Maine researchers at the BioEnergy lab of the School of Forest Resources has formulated a plan to recruit more women into the forest industry, particularly the bioenergy sector. They key, according to the study, is offering interdisciplinary research opportunities in higher education, having employers provide ample support and outreach, and promoting relatable success stories. We’ve all come to learn that increasing diversity the workforce benefits companies since more gender-diverse teams tend to produce more innovative products, services, and problem-solving outcomes. Increasing diversity within SAF ranks continues to be a goal as well. To learn more about the study and its suggestions, please follow the link.
**Legislative Breakfast**

The Green Mountain Division will be sponsoring a Legislative Breakfast on Feb. 9, 2023 from 7:00 to 10:00 AM at the Capital Plaza in Montpelier. Invites include various Forestry Professionals, State House and Senate Committee members, and GMD members and Executive Committee.

**Michael Snyder to leave as Commissioner**

January 1st is a big day for our Forest, Parks and Recreation Commissioner Michael Snyder. In addition to being his 60th birthday, he will be stepping down as Commissioner. This follows a lengthy career in Vermont forestry and includes 14 years as the county forester for Chittenden County prior to becoming commissioner in 2011.

Governor Scott offered these comments: “I want to extend my sincere appreciation for Commissioner Snyder’s twelve years of service as Commissioner of the Department of Forests, Parks, and Recreation. Michael has been a strong advocate for our forest economy, outdoor recreation, and so much of what makes Vermont special. I’m grateful for his efforts and wish him all the best.”

The Commissioner has managed the department during a period of significant changes to both the forested and social landscape. Climate change was never a serious issue under prior commissioners. And in recent years VT has experienced a large increase in invasive species concerns, in addition to those who would like to ban harvesting of timber altogether. We are fortunate to have had the many insights and strengths of this exemplary forester!

A new Commissioner is yet to be named.

**Climate**

I walked outside the other day and was greeted with torrential rain and near-50 degree temperatures. This on Dec. 23, 2022. Nothing completely out of the ordinary for fickle VT weather. On closer inspection, this snow-lovers version of a Grinch event (coined by Josh Fox of the Single Chair Weather Blog) is becoming more common and is introducing a shifting dynamic to our forest ecosystem. The Boston Globe brought such events to the forefront in a December article, referencing statistics developed by the non-profit organization Climate Central. Their research of 238 locations in the U.S. shows that Burlington VT stands out with the greatest increase in average winter temperatures since 1970. Of course, Burlington has differing variables and averages from other Vermont locations. Nevertheless, we’re an outlier in terms of higher average temperatures with a whopping increase of 7.1 degrees F. All the more reason to manage your woodland with a keen eye to species response to such shifts, and to stay current with recent news on climate-focused forestry research.

**Survey on the Future of Vermont’s Forest Economy**

In 2022, Governor Scott signed into law a project to develop a 10 year plan forward for our forest economy. This strategic roadmap will be greatly strengthened by public participation in a survey found here: [https://www.research.net/r/VFFSurvey1](https://www.research.net/r/VFFSurvey1). Allocate up to 30 minutes to take the survey.

“This outreach effort is an initial step to hear from a wide cross-section of Vermont, so we have confidence that the ten-year roadmap will include the opinions of all Vermonters,” said Danielle Fitzko, FPR Director of Forests and Forest Future Roadmap project lead. From January through June 2023, there will be additional opportunities to get involved. For more details on the Vermont Forest Future Strategic Roadmap project and to be part of the process, visit [https://lab2.future-iq.com/vermont-forest-future/](https://lab2.future-iq.com/vermont-forest-future/).

**Vermont Woodland Association Events: Tracks and Trees: A Workshop with Lynn Levine**

Saturday, January 14th, 1-3:30 PM in Dummerston, VT

Join Lynn for an afternoon in the woods looking at track and learning to think like an animal. Along the way, Lynn will give tips on identifying trees in the winter. Participants should dress appropriately for the outdoors and bring snowshoes. All workshop participants will be provided with their own copy of Lynn’s book, *Mammal Tracks and Scat: Life-Size Pocket Guide*.

Pre-registration, with payment of $20, is required. This workshop is limited to a maximum of 15 people. Participants must be fully vaccinated. Masks required for the indoor portion of the workshop. [Sign Up Today!](#)
Society of American Foresters - Save the Dates

The Granite State Division Society of American Foresters winter meeting will be held February 10, 2023, at the Grand Summit Hotel at Attitash in Bartlett NH.

The New England Society of American Foresters winter meeting will be held March 14-16, 2023, at the Sheraton hotel in Nashua NH. If you are willing to give your time to the event, a sponsorship or items for the raffle, contact Steve Roberge, steven.roberge@unh.edu.

More details and registrations will be available in January.

From our Chair, Ethan Belair

The Granite State Division of the Society of American Foresters will soon be welcoming three new members to the Executive Committee. Connor Breton was recently elected as the GSD Vice Chair for 2023 and will be joining GSD for a three year term. Connor was recently hired as a forester with the Southeast Land Trust in NH, having previously worked for the US Fish and Wildlife Service at the Umbagog Wildlife Refuge in northern NH. Dr. Ted Howard will also be joining the Executive Committee as the NESAF representative for NH. Dr. Howard retired in 2021, having worked at the University of New Hampshire for many years as a forest economist and associate dean (more below). Finally Dr. Ranjit Bawa will be joining the Executive Committee as the Science and Technology Chair. Dr. Bawa is a forest economist at the University of New Hampshire and formerly worked at the University of Georgia.

The GSD-SAF Subcommittee on the Timber Yield Tax is continuing to work on a report titled Analytical Review of the New Hampshire Timber Yield Tax. This report reviews the history and utility of the Timber Yield Tax in New Hampshire and is scheduled to report to the Executive Committee in December. After review by the EC, this report will be circulated to all GSD members and presented at the annual GSD meeting in February.

Notable Retirements

Bill Leak retired as the longest-serving employee in both the Forest Service and the Department of Agriculture with 68 years and 5+ months of employment at the Northern Research Station. Bill’s knowledge of and related research and publications on Northern Hardwoods silviculture, are widely accepted as go-to resources for all of us. Among other awards and recognitions, Bill received the National Silviculture Excellence Award in 2019.

From the Forest Service Chief: “You have demonstrated a tireless and quiet commitment to public service; set a high standard of performance for delivering practical guidelines and understanding to a wide variety of audiences; and humbly delivered the principles of shared forest stewardship across the New England landscape to the many lives you have touched.”

And a note from Mariko Yamasaki, long-time colleague, and friend:

“I have had the distinct privilege of working with Bill for over 38 years in Durham on the many topics where issues of silviculture, forest practices, site potential, and forest habitat management intersect. As practitioners in the art of forest and wildlife science, it’s been a remarkable opportunity to identify: 1) the considerable common management ground we share; 2) what more we needed to learn about integrating silviculture and habitat management; and 3) provide that understanding to the array of managers, university investigators, and landowners interested in keeping New England forested landscapes working and providing multiple resource benefits into the future. I am grateful that Carl Tubbs offered us the chance to work together in this endeavor; and that we did what we could. I wish all the best to Bill and his family.”

Ted Howard retired in 2021 from his position as Associate Dean for Faculty at the University of New Hampshire. During his nearly 40 year career here he was a Professor of Forestry Economics and Director for the Center of International Education, and he was named a Fulbright Fellow to Japan.

During his tenure as professor his research focused primarily on the economics of forest management in New England. He mentored 30 graduate and hundreds of bachelors degree students, a fact that he lists as among his greatest accomplishments. Many of his students have served in SAF leadership roles.

Ted has been a member of SAF for 50 years. His most recent service to SAF will be as the Granite State Division Rep for NESAF in 2023.
Massachusetts Chapter News ~ Joelle Vautour

DCR Service Foresters - Joelle Vautour

Two new DCR Service Foresters have been hired. Colin Metty previously worked as a consulting forester and will now oversee District 11. Chris Pryor previously worked with the New England Forestry Foundation as their Director of Forest Stewardship and will be overseeing District 3.

Forestry and Natural Resources Career Mentorship Program - Jennifer Fish

With aid from the USFS allocation of the USFS Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act Funding to State and Private Forestry, the MA DCR is in the process of designing a mentorship program for young people in their last years of high school or beginning of their college career. The Massachusetts Forest Action Plan is based on the recognition of the many benefits that are provided by the forests and trees of Massachusetts.

With an aging workforce of natural resource professionals, developing reliable sources of diverse, critical thinking natural resource professionals is a pressing need. The goal of the Massachusetts Forestry and Natural Resources Career Mentorship Program is to meet this need by introducing a wide range of young people from across the state to natural resource professional opportunities and developing their interests with high quality internship experiences.

The objectives are twofold. First, to work with existing organizations to introduce urban youth and youth of color to the natural world and potential careers opportunities in natural resources. This may include larger group job fairs or field trips, for those who have an innate interest we will provide job shadow opportunities and internships. Second, to develop a student’s interest or skills through work with technical high schools, 2-year and 4-year colleges to introduce the career of forestry or foster learning in those already in forestry. Basic and advanced internships based on interest and skills will be offered, and for further information or questions, contact Jennifer Fish, DCR Service Forestry Program Supervisor, Jennifer.fish@mass.gov.

News from the Massachusetts Forest Alliance - Chris Egan, Executive Director

Bartlett Wins Mason Award

Forester Michael Bartlett of Woodstock, CT has been named the 2022 recipient of the Howard F. Mason Forester of the Year Award by the Massachusetts Forest Alliance.

The Mason Award is named after pioneering forester Howard Mason who helped establish better forestry practices in Massachusetts. It is presented each year to a forester who exemplifies Mason’s legacy of mentoring, leadership, and excellence in forestry. A native of Potsdam, NY, Bartlett graduated from Paul Smiths College and worked initially at a sawmill in upstate New York before joining Hull Forest Products in Pomfret Center, CT in 1978, initially as a lumber grader and sawyer, then as a procurement forester working with landowners in Connecticut & Massachusetts.

Bartlett is now Chief Forester for Hull Forest Products overseeing thousands of acres of Hull woodlands in central Massachusetts and Connecticut. Over the years he has developed a large clientele of landowners who grow timber that Hull harvests, helping them realize their goals to produce income, improve wildlife habitat, and conserve their woods.

Bartlett is a licensed forester in both Connecticut and Massachusetts, and has been involved in working to promote better forest management in both states. He has been a Tree Farm inspector in both states and has put on many programs at local schools explaining what foresters do and how forests are managed.

He has worked with the Last Green Valley to put on Walktober tours of Hull woodlands in both states and helped the Massachusetts Division of Fisheries & Wildlife put on the Massachusetts Outdoor Expo in Sturbridge each fall. Mike also helps to host an annual summer seminar series at Hull for Yale Forest School graduate students.

Moratorium on Forest Management on State Lands

Governor-Elect Maura Healey promised in her climate plan (https://maurabealey.com/issues/climate/) to enact a temporary moratorium on forest management on state-owned lands while a scientific study takes place to examine the practice. Aligned with proforestation, this plan rejects climate science and the latest reports on the subject, including Massachusetts’ own climate change research. MFA is attempting to educate the new administration and is working with major environmental organizations to do so, in the hopes of avoiding a moratorium.

In the meantime, the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) enacted a version of the moratorium in advance of the Healey administration, by pulling back 2022 forest management projects in state forests from bidding. MFA continues to push back on this effort.

Proforestation

MFA joined SAF in pushing back on proforestation with written pieces. MFA adapted comments sent to the Boston Globe about their coverage into an article about proforestation, which can be downloaded here: https://drive.google.com/file/d/15rT7Xl-cFkxmLhLjTsqoTHmnbqa5uIu/view
Save The Date!
The CT SAF Chapter will hold its annual meeting on February 14, 2023 at the McLean Retirement Community and McLean Game Refuge in Simsbury, CT. Attendees will learn how to take better and more meaningful forestry photos and improve their stand delineation skills. David Beers, CT’s Western District Service Forester will present on forest photography and stand delineation. We will apply this classroom knowledge to the field and do a forest-based stand delineation exercise and photography scavenger hunt. Two CEUs will be offered by CT DEEP Forestry. The CT SAF business meeting will take place during lunch. Attendance is free for SAF members and $10 for non-members. While this is a CT SAF event, anyone is welcome to attend and it is within a half hour drive of the MA border. If interested, please email CT SAF Chair, Andrea Urbano at aurbano89@gmail.com.

Congratulations to Mike Bartlett!
The Chief Forester with Hull Forest Products of Pomfret Center, CT, was named recipient of the 2022 Howard F. Mason Forester of the Year Award by the Massachusetts Forest Alliance! An SAF member for over 39 years, and an active participant in many forestry organizations, Mike has worked tirelessly to promote forest management through science, education, outreach, and training, and is more than deserving of this award for mentoring, leadership, and improving the practice of forestry in the region!

Yale Forest Forum Webinars
Register for webinars at yff.yale.edu. You can also catch up on past webinars on the website.

Smallholder Planted Forests and Trees for Climate, Restored Landscapes, and Livelihoods - every Tues. Jan. 17 - April 25, 12:00-1:00pm US ET (except Mar. 14 & 21)
A series focused on harnessing the potential of smallholder planted forests and trees to contribute to the provision of environmental services, addressing climate change, and livelihoods. Guest lectures from a range of perspectives, disciplines, and geographies explore topics including key success factors in the establishment and management of planted forests and trees by smallholders; promising models and practices; management objectives for smallholders; operational & financial risks & vulnerabilities; carbon-neutrality & ecosystem restoration; how to support smallholders. This series is hosted in collaboration with the FAO of the United Nations.

This series will feature a wide range of expert perspectives from tropical country governments, indigenous peoples, buyers, standard setters, & project developers. The series explores the following questions focused on issues facing tropical forest carbon crediting: Why are tropical forest carbon credits different? Why is a distinction made between “project” and “jurisdictional” credits? How do the different parties see risks and opportunities? How does experience in the voluntary carbon market relate to international or domestic compliance markets?
Rhode Island Chapter News ~ Chris Modisette

Hans T. Bergey - RIFCO Lifetime Achievement Award

The Rhode Island Forest Conservators Organization (RIFCO) presented Hans Bergey with a Lifetime Achievement Award recognized at the RI Conservation Partners Annual Dinner meeting on November 18, 2022.

Below is an excerpt from that presentation:

Hans Bergey is the retired Watershed Manager for the Providence Water Supply Board and a consulting forester. He graduated from Penn State in 1956 and earned his MF at the Yale School of Forestry in 1959. He served in the US Army from 1956-58.

Hans has been involved with forestry in Rhode Island for almost 63 years beginning soon after he graduated from Yale University in 1959. Hans spent 31 years developing the watershed management program for the Providence Water Supply Board (PWSB) and authored numerous articles and presentations on the status of watershed management programs and recreational uses of public drinking water supplies. During his tenure with the PWSB Hans served in the capacity of Watershed Manager, Assistant Director of Operations and Acting General Manager.

As a member of the Society of American Foresters (SAF) since 1956, Hans has been active in SAF affairs at the National, Regional and State levels to include:

- Past Chair of the New England Society of American Foresters (NESAF),
- Past Member of the NESAF Executive Committee,
- Past Chair and Executive Committee Member for the Yankee Division,
- Past Chair of the RI Chapter,
- Member of the Program Committee for the SAF National Convention,
- Member of the SAF National Membership Committee representing District VI,
- Member of the SAF Taskforce on ORV’s,
- Member of the Yankee Division Policy Committee.

His peers within SAF have recognized his commitment to both SAF and the forestry profession through the following awards:

- Yankee Division Outstanding Forester Award, 1990
- New England Society of American Foresters Distinguished Service Award, 2004
- National SAF Presidential Field Forester Award for District 6, 2014

During his career Hans has held leadership positions in a variety of local and regional forestry organizations to include:

- Chairman of the Rhode Island Tree Farm Program (10 years)
- Member and Director for the Rhode Island Forest Conservator’s Organization
- Board member for the Southern New England Forest Consortium, Inc.
- Chair and co-founder of the Rhode Island Woods Operator’s Association
- Member of the Northeast Forest Pest Council
- Member of the New England Water Works Associations Source Water Protection Committee
- Member of the RI Water Works Association
- Board Member and Chair of the Property Sub-committee for the Hope Associates

Since his retirement from Providence Water in 1990, Hans has been active as a forestry consultant with some of Rhode Island’s largest landowners. In addition, Hans continues to be actively involved on the boards of a variety of forestry and conservation organizations and advisory committees to include the Rhode Island Forest Conservators Organization, the RI Tree Farm Program, the RI Forest Stewardship Coordinating Committee, the RI Forest Legacy Committee, the RI Farm, Forest and Open Space Valuation Committee, the RI Woodland Partnership and USDA NRCS’s Forestry Subcommittee.

Over the years Hans has been the model for his commitment to forest management and conservation and his presence in the Rhode Island forestry and natural resource community. He has introduced forestry and foresters to a wide variety of groups and processes. One way or another he has been involved in most major forest resource conservation initiatives within Rhode Island over the past 63 years. Through his years of service in the Rhode Island forestry community, Hans has demonstrated his ongoing commitment to professional forestry and the conservation of Rhode Island’s forests. With Hans it was not enough to be a competent field forester if you could not carry the forestry message to others.

Hans resides in Hope, Rhode Island with his wife Hilja and where he is a past member of the Scituate Zoning Board, a member of the Scituate Preservation Society, Scituate Art Festival Committee and the Hope Associates.
RI Forest Conservation Act
The Commission held its first meeting of the Commission since the enacted of the legislation on June 1, 2022.
Organization discussion included:
1) Overview of the Forest Conservation Act
2) Appointment of Commission leadership roles
3) Setting Year 1 Goals which included creating more definitions on:
   - Urban and Community Forestry
   - Old Growth Forests
   - Forests
   - Natural Heritage Forest Types
   - Core Forests
1) Sending a Joint Letter from the Commission to the RI State Legislation informing them that the Commission has begun meeting and that the Commission plans on working to define RI Old Growth Forests, as it is within the charge of the Commission to do so.

RI SAF Chapter members serving on the Commission include Marc Tremblay and Christopher Riely.

Rhode Island Forest Health Works Project
The U.S. Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is announcing that the RI Forest Health Works Project is accepting applications for funding for fiscal year 2023. The RI Forest Health Works Project is a Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) agreement between NRCS, the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management (DEM) Division of Forest Environment and ten partners. This partnership will leverage over $3.9 million in 5 years to protect critical forests across the state of Rhode Island. Applications can be submitted through the February 17, 2023, ranking cut-off.

Program options
The RI Forest Health Works Project provides financial and technical assistance to help conserve forest lands and their related benefits through two distinct paths for land protection:

- **Entity-Held Easements** help private and tribal landowners, in partnership with land trusts or other entities like state and local governments, to protect forestlands by placing conservation easements.
- **U.S.-Held Easements** allow eligible landowners to enter into producer contracts to place conservation easements on their land to protect critical forestlands.

Applications will be ranked according to their contribution to the RCPP project goals of protecting forest land, water quality, and wildlife habitat.

For help applying for the RI Forest Health Works Project RCPP project announcement, contact Joanne Riccitelli at joanne.riccitelli@gmail.com for entity-held easements or Marina Capraro, Conservation Planner, at Marina.Capraro@usda.gov for U.S.-held easements.
I would like to begin 2023 thanking the executive committee for appointing me for another term. This will be my eighth year serving as editor of the NESAF News Quarterly. It is a pleasure to serve NESAF in this role; I try to make each issue better than the previous one. It has been said that perfection is an asymptote—something that will never be reached, but with every issue I feel I get a little bit closer.

NESAF has a new Forest Science Coordinator, Ali Kosiba, and we look forward to the new ideas she will bring for our science theme. She will be replacing Tony D’Amato, who served NESAF for many years in that role. Tony was a great help to both me and to NESAF, and I thank him for his efforts!

One of the fun aspects of being the editor are the conversations with former editors of the NESAF News Quarterly. The wisdom and stories they shared helped me when I was starting out. The longest serving editor is Gary Salmon, who recently passed away. He and I would correspond over ideas about the NESAF News Quarterly; it saddens me to hear of his passing. I’d really like to begin mentoring my replacement, so that his record will remain untouched. Please let me know if you have any interest in becoming the next editor of this publication.

Lastly, I brought my bicycle to Portland last year for an early season group ride during the NESAF Annual Meeting. It turned out to be a solo breakaway. If any of you are interested, I will be bringing my bike to Nashua this Spring. Please feel free to join me on a leisurely early season ride!