



# Finger Lakes National Forest Forest Happenings!!

Caring for the Land and Serving People

## Fall 2003

It's promising to be a gorgeous fall. The grapes are ripe and the leaves are turning.

Get out and enjoy your National Forest!!



## Visitor Center Fall/Winter Hours

The Visitor Center is open Monday-Friday 8:00 - 4:30 and Saturday 10:00 - 4:30. Starting October 20<sup>th</sup> the hours revert to the winter hours of Monday-Friday 8:00 - 4:30. Stop by to see the interesting collection of donated wildlife, our butterfly collection, and historic artifacts discovered on the Forest. We also have Smokey Bear items and a shelf full of books for sale.

## Forest Happenings

### Caywood Point

The Forest Service issued a demolition contract for buildings that were beyond repair and posed a safety hazard to visitors. These buildings are being removed in September and October. Queen's Castle, the mess hall, and the maintenance building remain intact for possible future use. The property has been closed to public access during this time to ensure your safety. We expect the contract to be

completed by the end of October, at which time the area will again be open to the public.

We are currently working on securing a contract to do some rehabilitation work on the Queen's Castle. This will be done in accordance with National Historic Place regulations and is to ensure the continued integrity of the building. Projects anticipated include re-roofing with new wood shingles and copper sheathing consistent with restoration guidelines and doing some erosion control work to eliminate flooding during heavy rains.



### Habitat Maintenance

We contracted for mowing over 600 acres of grasslands outside of pastures. The Turkey Federation, Catherine Valley Longspur Chapter, donated funds to accomplish 130 acres of that project. *Thank you!!*

The Hector Grazing Association also mowed 1760 acres of pasturelands as well as replaced fencing in several pastures.

The National Forest contracted to have lime spread on some pasturelands to encourage better grass and forb growth. You may

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have noticed several ponds that have a new look. We dredged 4 ponds this past year and have contracted to have 3 more done in the near future.

These activities help to maintain the grassland habitat, which is so important for many wildlife and bird species.

In keeping with habitat maintenance Jenna Casey, Aaron Wightman, Dr. Brent Dugolinski and Mary Beth Deller conducted surveys in our grasslands to determine the extent of knapweed, a noxious weed. Knapweed takes over grasslands, crowding out the grass and good forbs and is not palatable to most birds and animals in our region.

Seneca Schuyler Wildlife Management Inc. has donated, placed and monitored numerous bluebird boxes on the Forest. This is in addition to the other bluebird, kestrel, duck and now bat boxes we have and maintain on the Forest.

### ***Trails***

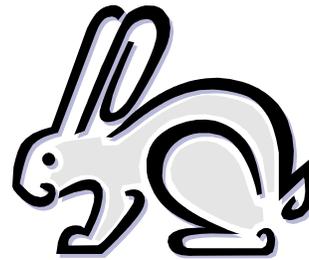
The trails are now in good condition. The late winter, wet spring and summer delayed the maintenance of the trails a bit, but with some cooperation by Mother Nature and lots of sweat equity by many people, the trails are in fine shape. Please help us keep them in first-class condition by reporting any areas that need attention.

The new trail that heads north from Shannon Corners is midway through completion. The trail has been located and the trees cleared. The next step will be a trail design by our engineers in Rutland and a contract to construct the trail. We hope to have the trail up and 'running' by sometime next summer. If you do find the trail this winter please be aware of the high stumps in the cleared path. We prefer you

avoid this trail until the construction is complete.

The Finger Lakes National Forest trails hosted two competitive trail rides this summer. This is where the horses are judged on their time and condition upon completing a designated course. So the fastest horse doesn't necessarily win!

The Finger Lakes Runners also held their annual 50-mile trail run this summer! Whew - hats are off to those folks!



### ***Potomac Group Campground Toilet***

The Potomac Group Campground has a beautiful new toilet (if a toilet can be beautiful). The toilet location has been moved to facilitate the composting action with sunshine and is now wheelchair accessible.

If you are interested in reserving the campground - it's designed for groups of 10 to 40 people and is \$10/night. Advanced reservations are required and can be obtained by contacting the District Office at 607-546-4470.



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## *Public Events*



### *National Public Lands Day*

National Public Lands Day was September 20<sup>th</sup>. We had several enthusiastic volunteers help us:

- Clip weeds in the blueberry patch so those blueberry bushes keep providing us with delicious blueberries every year
- Put up 2 new bat boxes near Potomac and Foster ponds
- Redo the Updike interpretive sign and clip out the vegetation that's growing into the cellar hole and threatening to take down the structure with their roots
- And perform some needed maintenance on the Ravine trail.

After the work was done we gathered at Blueberry Patch Picnic site, had some snacks and listened to presentations on bats and the Updike homestead.

Speaking of historic presentations... Dr. LouAnn Wurst, Assistant Professor of Anthropology at SUNY Brockport gave a wonderful presentation on the archeological findings they have uncovered on the Forest over the past several years. The event was jointly sponsored by the Interlaken Historical Society, Lodi Historical Society, Ovid Historic Society, SUNY Brockport, and the Finger Lakes

National Forest. Over 100 people showed up at the Lodi Historical Society building for that event.

### *Fairs*

We had great fun participating in the Hector Fair this year. There were lots of good folks and food. The weather even cooperated, even though the grounds were a bit soggy. Smokey rode in the parade and waved to hundreds of kids - young and old alike.

Empire Farms days was a busy time. We had a booth with the various other USDA agencies and enjoyed chatting with a variety of people interested in the Forest and our grazing program.

### *Public Appearances*

In addition to the parade Smokey also showed up at Carpenter's Brook Fish Hatchery. He sure is in demand!!

He's in so much demand he even made an appearance at Smith Park where he accompanied Marjorie Tweedale as she gave a presentation on campfire safety.

And next he'll be at Forest Field Days on Sunday October 5<sup>th</sup>.

Mike Dockry spoke to a Cornell class on National Forest management and the revision of our Land and Resource Management Plan.

And Martha Twarkins hosted a hike and presentation for the New York Forest Owners Association on timber harvesting in the National Forest and other land management topics.

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## Forest Plan Revision



We want to thank all of the people who have contributed to Forest Plan revision by attending meetings, sending emails, writing letters, calling on the phone, and stopping by the office. Public involvement is what makes public land management work and is integral to revising the Forest Plan.

Mark your calendars! Forest Plan revision meetings are held monthly on the first Thursday from 7 -9 pm at the Hector/Valois Fire Hall. Please call ahead to ensure there hasn't been a change in time or place.

Over the last quarter we have held public meetings on Vegetation, Timber and Ecosystem Management; and Ecosystem Management and Conservation of Biological Diversity. We have had great discussions, received excellent ideas and encourage anyone who has an interest in the management of the National Forest to participate in future meetings.

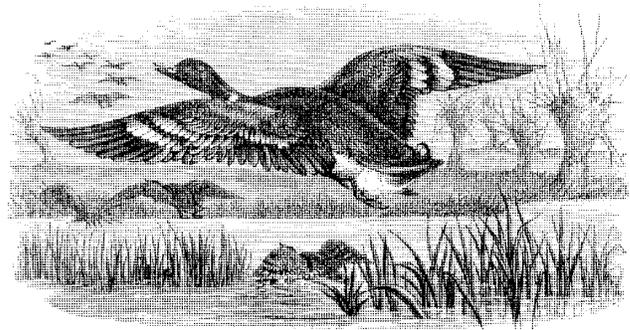
During this quarter we also convened Species Evaluation and Viability panels of local and regional experts to provide information on plants and animals on the Forest. They reviewed the information gathered to date on a variety of plants and animals and used their local knowledge to fill in any gaps.

Many scientific assessments are also being worked on for Forest Plan revision. Soils information has been summarized and is

available on our web site or upon request. Other assessments that are currently being conducted include a summary of information on plant and animal species found on the National Forest, a cultural and historic overview, an ecological overview, and a socioeconomic report. All of these reports will be available to the public and are an important part of Forest Plan revision.

For more information on public meetings, scientific assessments, or Forest Plan revision, please check our web site: [www.fs.fed.us/r9/gmfl/nepa\\_planning/plan\\_revision.htm](http://www.fs.fed.us/r9/gmfl/nepa_planning/plan_revision.htm) or call Mike Dockry at 607-546-4470 ext 316.

## Partners



### *Seneca/Schuyler Wildlife*

*The Seneca/Schuyler Wildlife Management Inc.* is interested in maintaining habitat for various wildlife species, educating folks on wildlife needs, providing opportunities for youth and physically disabled hunters and helping the Forest accomplish habitat goals outlined in the Forest Plan. They are working with the Forest, DEC, and various hunting organizations to accomplish these goals. This spring they installed numerous bluebird boxes in the Satterly Hill and Cat's Elbow areas. This fall, after bird fledging, they will also be doing a variety of habitat maintenance activities on the Forest in

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accordance with our Land and Resource Management Plan goals and objectives.

Call Ted Berrien at 607-532-9561 if you're interested in working on their wildlife projects.

### ***Finger Lakes National Forest Visitor Center Inc.***

*The Finger Lakes National Forest Visitor Center, Inc.* group continues to meet with Town, County, State and Federal officials to move an interpretive center concept along. They have donated many hours meeting with these folks to let them know about the concept. Jim Tantillo can be contacted about the next phase of visitor center planning at 607-387-6231.

### ***Friends of the Finger Lakes National Forest***

The not-for-profit group *Friends of the Finger Lakes National Forest* continues to meet regularly. They are currently working on an environmental education initiative. A meeting is being held in early October to bring together students, educators, and all persons interested in creating an environmental program that coordinates experiential learning in the National Forest for students from kindergarten through high school. They are also creating a map of the Finger Lakes National Forest 'Bioregion' to be used locally for environmental education.

If you are interested in joining this group or would like more information, call 607-546-7827 or 607-546-8566.

### ***Catherine Valley Longspurs- NWTF***

The Catherine Valley Chapter biologist of the Wild Turkey Federation works with the National Forest to provide quality habitat for turkey and other birds dependent on

those areas for nesting, cover and forage. They donated funds to accomplish 130 acres of mowing this year for enhancement of grassland dependant speices. Call Louie Perazzini at 594-4297 if you are interested in learning more about the group's activities.

### ***Upcoming Events***

**10/2/03-** Forest Plan Revision Public Meeting. This is one of our regular monthly meetings held on the 1<sup>st</sup> Thursday of the month. The meeting will start at 7:00pm at the Hector/Valois Fire Hall and will focus on roads within the National Forest. Check our web site for details or contact Mike Dockry at 607-546-4470 ext 316 if you have any questions.

**10/5/03 -** Forest Field Days; 1-4 pm. at Potomac Group Campground. This is a fun day for families to learn about New York forests. We'll have horse drawn rides, woods walks, cider pressing, crafts, a scavenger hunt, Schuyler County Sheriff's dog presentation, animal tracks and much more. Contact Martha Twarkins at 607-546-4470 ext 314 for more information.

**11/6/03 - -** Forest Plan Revision Public Meeting. This is one of our regular monthly meetings held on the 1<sup>st</sup> Thursday of the month. The meeting will start at 7:00pm at the Hector/Valois Fire Hall and will discuss how the Finger Lakes National Forest's Land and Resource Management Plan (Forest Plan) manages for particular resource emphasis in specific areas on the Forest. These areas are called Management Areas and are displayed on maps and by description in the Forest Plan. We will be reviewing these maps and descriptions for understanding, leading to comments to be made at the December meeting. Check our web site for details or contact Mike Dockry

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at 607-546-4470 ext 316 if you have questions.

**12/4/03** – - Forest Plan Revision Public Meeting. This is one of our regular monthly meetings held on the 1<sup>st</sup> Thursday of the month. The meeting will start at 7:00pm at the Hector/Valois Fire Hall. We will be discussing the Management Areas (MAs) described in November’s meeting and mapping any changes the public would like to see to those MAs. This will later be used in the revision of the Forest Plan. Check our web site for details or contact Mike Dockry at 607-546-4470 ext 314 if you have questions.

There will be no Forest Plan Revision Public Meeting in January due to the holidays.