

Free Help Now Available to Local Forest Owners

Just as a mind is a terrible thing to waste, a forest is a terrible thing to squander! Over 13 million acres of woodland in NY State are privately owned by approximately 500,000 families. Just a fraction of those lands are purposefully managed despite the variety of educational programs and technical services available. The NY Master Forest Owner/COVERTS volunteer program provides free, on-site visits to private forest owners.

In an effort to help forest owners develop their forest ownership objectives and find the assistance needed, the NY Master Forest Owner/COVERTS Program was established in 1991. Since then, over 300 volunteers have been trained through Cornell Cooperative Extension. These volunteers have collectively visited over 1,200 neighbors throughout the state. Currently, there are over 180 active volunteers across the state ready to provide encouragement and information to their forest owning neighbors.

Charles and Sarah Stackhouse are two such volunteers who are available for a free, no-obligation visit to your woodlot to discuss whatever management concerns you have. Charles and Sarah are not professional foresters, but they help manage the family-owned ~100 acre woodlot. Their experience, complemented by the 4-day training provided by Cornell Cooperative Extension, makes them valuable members of this community.

Recently, Charles and Sarah attended the new volunteer training workshop where they participated in classroom and field exercises on topics such as timber and wildlife management, forest economics, forest ecology, communication techniques and a visit to a logging job and sawmill. In addition to the topics listed above, Master Forest Owners learn how forest-owner needs can be met with the assistance of public and private agencies and organizations, as well as the services of professional resource managers, such as foresters.

The NY Master Forest Owner/COVERTS Program is sponsored by: New York Forest Owner Association, NY Woodland Stewards, Inc., Robert H. Wentorf Foundation, Inc., USDA Renewable Resources Extension Act, and Cornell Cooperative Extension with cooperation from NYS DEC's Division of Land and Forest.

For more information about the program's benefits and opportunities, contact Gary Goff, Cornell Cooperative Extension Dept. of Natural Resources, Fernow Hall, Ithaca, NY 14853-3001, ph. 607-255-2824.

If you have forest ownership questions in Yates County or want to schedule a visit with Charles and Sarah, write them at Charles and Sarah Stackhouse, 3010 Esperanza Rd., Bluff Point, NY 14478 or give them a call at 315-536-9482. You may also contact Cornell Cooperative Extension at 315-536-5123 for more information.