

Maine Tree Farm NEWSLETTER

Spring 2016

A publication of the Maine Tree Farm Committee

Issue No. 9



Forests and Feathers: A Study of Tree Farms and Bird Habitat

This summer 30 lucky Franklin County Tree Farmers will get a chance to participate in a University of Maine – School of Forest Resources study looking at the contributions of their Tree Farms towards providing habitat for forest birds. Landowners will be asked to participate in a short survey and are invited to walk their land with the researcher, Jacob Guettler, as he does a vegetation survey of their Tree Farm property. Jacob is a graduate assistant of Dr. Jessica Leahy doing research for his Master's thesis. Tree Farmers will also be provided with a list of the birds seen and heard on their property. All of the information collected by Jacob will be held confidential and only a summary of results from all forests will be reported.

The way a forest looks is a very important factor in determining what bird species will nest in, or otherwise use a particular forest. Maine has one of the largest stretches of northern forest in the eastern United States, making it a special place for finding many species of northern nesting forest birds. However, many of these species are in decline. One of the best ways to help these species is to provide habitat for them. Habitat loss is one of the biggest factors in the decline of many forest bird species. We are excited to be working with Tree Farmers this summer, discovering together the potential importance that Tree Farms have in providing habitat for these special forest birds, and we appreciate the Franklin County Tree Farmers for helping us with this study. If you have any questions, please contact Dr. Jessica Leahy (E-mail: jessica.leahy@maine.edu, Phone: 207-581-2834, Address: 241 Nutting Hall, Orono, ME 04469) or Jacob Guettler (E-mail: jacob.guettler@maine.edu, Phone: 989-492-4414, Address: 231 Nutting Hall, Orono, ME 04469).

Save The Date! The 2016 Forestry Field Day is Saturday, September 10th!

Save the date and join us for the annual Maine Tree Farm/Small Woodland Owners Association of Maine Forestry Field Day, to be held at the Pine Tree Camp in Rome, ME. The Pine Tree Camp is the 2016 Maine State Outstanding Tree Farmer of the Year, and is also in the running for regional and national OTFY! The Camp, a project of the Pine Tree Society, headquartered in Bath, ME, will host this open to the public event at their 285 acre facility on North Pond, where forest management activity is built around the Camp's mission to provide quality recreation experiences for people with special needs. The creation and placement of harvesting trails - some of which are later converted to nature paths-- open up the woods to many experiences that are completely new for most campers. These include accessing "remote" places to swim, fish, or sleep overnight in a tent. The Field Day will include woods tours covering a variety of topics such as roads and trails, best management practices to protect water quality, managing deer wintering areas and stands of older trees, and rebuilding camper's cabins with the help of local forest products businesses. There will be vendors on site and educational stations hosted by a variety of state agencies and other groups. Lunch will be available for a nominal fee (bring cash). A more detailed agenda will be posted in the next newsletter, so stay tuned! For more information, please contact the Tree Farm Program Coordinator, Gretchen Heldmann, at info@mainetreefarm.org or 207.613.6837



Spruce Budworm and Bruce Spanworm?! Oh My!

Yes, the headline of this article is correct - there are two different worms to be on the lookout for this season:

Eastern Spruce Budworm, *Choristoneura fumiferana* (Clemens)

This pest is a small brownish worm about 2.5 cm long with a dark brown or black head. The worm feeds primarily on balsam fir, which is surprising given the name. It does also feed on spruce. Defoliated trees become apparent from mid-June to late August, and the most noticeable damage is at the top of the crown.



Photo courtesy of www.sprucebudwormmaine.org

The [Budworm Tracker Program](#), a component of the [Healthy Forest Partnership](#), is looking for volunteers to join its Budworm Tracker citizen science program in Northern Maine. If you're interested in volunteering, you can sign up on-line at www.budwormtracker.ca or by calling Emily Owens, Program Coordinator, at 506.452.3507.

For more information on this pest, please visit: <http://na.fs.fed.us/spfo/pubs/flds/sbw/budworm.htm>

Bruce Spanworm, *Operophtera bruceata*

This pest is a small green inchworm about 3/4-inch long, with three narrow yellowish-white stripes on each side of the body, that feeds on maple, beech, and oak and have been found in large numbers in the northern half of Maine. Defoliation of trees occurs not long after bud break and in the past has happened the last two weeks of May.



Photo courtesy of US Forest Service

The Maine Forest Service is studying this worm because of its close relation to the Winter Moth, which is killing trees in southern New England and is expanding into southern Maine. If you think you've seen this worm, please contact Charlene Donahue at charlene.donahue@maine.gov or 207.287.3244

For more information on this pest, please visit: http://www.na.fs.fed.us/spfo/pubs/pest_al/bruce_spanworm/pa.htm

A Closer Look: Required Inspections

One of the yearly requirements of our forest certification program is to conduct a small number of "required" Tree Farm inspections, randomly selected by the American Tree Farm System (ATFS) for a woodland visit. These are essentially the same as any other inspection—it's really an opportunity for Tree Farmers to show how they are caring for their woods, get answers to questions, and receive advice and assistance as requested. From the standpoint of ATFS, these visits help demonstrate how the Maine certification program is being administered and look for opportunities for improvement. There is also some financial support from national ATFS that depends on this. In order to meet the deadlines for reporting to ATFS, these visits must be completed by September 30th each year.

Here is the timeline for getting this done:

January – February

The names of Tree Farms selected for the required inspections are sent by ATFS to the Maine Tree Farm Committee (MTFC) by early February. By the end of February, the MTFC Chair sends a letter to the selected Tree Farmers and to their designated inspectors with detailed information about that year's visits.

April 1st

In the event a selected Tree Farmer is not working with a certified Tree farm Inspector, the local County Chair will help the Tree Farmer find one. Then by April 1st, County Chairs will complete the process of making assignments and providing materials to inspectors. *Article continues on page 3.*

ATFS Standards: Forests of Recognized Importance (FORI)

The recently revised 2015-2020 Tree Farm standards have added an element referred to as Forests of Recognized Importance, or “FORI.” This item, which rarely applies to smaller family Tree Farms, nevertheless has caused a fair amount of confusion and concern. Hopefully this article will help allay those concerns.

Tree Farm Standard 5, which covers “Fish, Wildlife, Biodiversity and Forest Health,” asks that forest management activities contribute to the conservation of biodiversity and maintain or enhance forests of recognized importance, if present. So, what’s a FORI, and how do you know if your Tree Farm is one?



Hermit Thrush



Blue Spotted Salamander



Barred Owl



May Flowers



Red-bellied Snake

FORI represent *globally, regionally and nationally significant large landscape areas of exceptional ecological, social, cultural or biological values*. These forests are evaluated *at the landscape level*, rather than the stand level and are recognized for a *combination of unique values, rather than a single attribute*. FORI may include but are not limited to landscapes with *exceptionally high concentrations* of one or more of the following:

- protected, rare, sensitive or representative forest ecosystems such as riparian areas and wetland biotopes
- areas containing endemic species and critical habitats of *multiple* threatened or endangered plant and animal species, as identified under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) or other recognized listings
- recognized *large - scale* cultural or archeological sites including sites of human habitation, cities, burial grounds and in situ artifacts
- areas containing identified and protected water resources upon which large metropolitan populations are dependent
- areas containing identified unique or geologic features including geysers, waterfalls, lava beds, caves or craters

How do you know if your woodland might be a FORI? Unfortunately, there is no central clearinghouse for information on FORI. **There is also no state or federal government regulation of FORI on private lands.** However, in Maine the best resources are the [Maine Natural Areas Program](#) and the [Maine Historic Preservation Commission](#). Tree Farmers and/or their foresters can send a location map to either of these agencies to get information related to FORI in their area.

There’s another important point to keep in mind. Most FORI in the U.S. that are globally, nationally or regionally significant have already been identified and protected by state or federal government or have been put under a conservation easement by an environmental nonprofit organization. So you’re more likely to be near a FORI than to own one. *All photos in this article courtesy of Pam Wells, 2016.*

Inspections - Continued from page 2:

September 30th

Inspectors complete all inspections by September 30th and send in the “paperwork” to the MTFC. There are electronic options available now to help streamline the process. Completing all required inspections by the end of September allows the MTFC to make any corrections needed and report the results to ATFS in a timely manner. In turn, Maine’s status as a Certified Tree Farm program is assured.

Reminder: Switching to an electronic version will help us save on printing and postage costs, and stretch our limited budget even further. You can access the online version and subscribe today at: www.mainetreefarm.org/newsletter.html

Welcome: New Washington County Chair

We are happy to introduce the new Washington County chair, Mike Heath! Mike originally hails from New Hampshire, where he attended the University of New Hampshire for a short time, then transferred to the University of Idaho, where he earned a Forest Resources degree in 1983. He lived out west from 1989-2011, in the states of Idaho, Oregon, and Washington while working for Plum Creek, Stimson Lumber's landowner assistance program, Yamhill County Soil and Water Conservation District, and the US Forest Service. During this time he volunteered in both Idaho's and Oregon's Tree Farm programs. In 2009 he was given the "Tall Timber" award from the Oregon Small Woodland Association for supporting small woodland owners. In 2010 he was recognized for his involvement in Oregon Tree Farm and awarded the Oregon Tree Farm Inspector Of The Year award, and subsequently in 2011 he received the Western Region Tree Farm Inspector Of The Year award.

In 2011 he moved to Calais, Maine after accepting a job as Refuge Forester at the Moosehorn National Wildlife Refuge. Mike served as the St. Croix Chapter SWOAM representative from 2011-2015. Mike specializes in habitat management, invasive species control, and herbicide applications.

We want to hear from you! Have questions about the management of your woodlot or a story about your Tree Farm that you would like to share? Submit stories, photos, and questions to info@mainetreefarm.org or 207.613.MTFP (6837)

Maine Tree Farm Committee
American Tree Farm System
PO Box 5470
Augusta, ME 04332
The American Tree Farm System is a
program of the American Forest Foundation

