

Station 1 - Objectives

Every landowner has one or more objective for their land. They may wish to favor a certain type of wildlife they like. They may want the cleanest water possible for a lake or fishing spot. They may want to grow crops or raise livestock. They may desire recreation through camping, hiking, fishing, or hunting. They may wish to provide habitat for the largest diversity of flora (plants) and fauna (animals). They may wish to harvest timber for sale or for their own needs.

Many forest landowners are interested in timber production. Foresters help by managing the forest to meet the objectives of the landowner, often to produce the best quality products in the shortest period of time. This goal is similar to many other professions, but with forestry the time frame is measured in decades. Forty to one hundred years is commonly required to produce a marketable product. During that time, the forest needs to be kept free of disease, pests, competing vegetation, and fire. Also, the markets for wood products change, reflecting changing technology. Forestry is a business, a science, and an art, requiring experience, forethought, and a sense of social responsibility.

Station 2 – Soils and Forest types

Soils, geology, and topography play a tremendous role in shaping the environment of a given site. Generally, low-nutrient sand and gravel soils which are the result of glacial outwash will become dominated by evergreen trees such as pine, spruce, and fir. This is because those trees can tolerate the low-nutrient conditions. On slopes, which are generally composed of glacial till, the forest usually is dominated by hardwoods including maple, beech, and birch. However, some trees are more adaptable than others. For example, yellow birch can survive and grow well on most sites, whether it is dry or wet, fertile or infertile, flat or steep.

In this area of the reservation, rich glacial till is the primary type of soil. What you see in this area is a typical Northern hardwood forest, composed of species including sugar maple, red maple, beech, yellow birch, and black cherry. Some softwoods such as hemlock and spruce are also present. This forest type covers nearly 60% of the land in the Adirondacks. Knowledge of soils is critical in making decisions. For example, knowing about the soils in an area can help a forester understand what species of trees can grow best in an area. Also, on easily erodible soils, a forester must take care to prevent erosion from starting. Foresters also limit use of logging equipment on soils prone to wetness or compaction.

Station 3 – Closed canopy forest & stocking

Look around you and then look straight up. Many, many trees are growing very closely. When this forest began growing, there may have been thousands of seedlings and saplings all competing for the same limited amount of sunlight. Over time, many or most of them lost the race for sunlight and have since died or are dying. And the competition continues. In this section of forest there are an average of 160 trees per acre, however there are probably even more trees per acre where you stand.

In fact, there are so many trees per acre and the competition is so fierce that the growth of the trees has actually slowed dramatically. Foresters call this condition “overstocked.” Put simply, there are too many trees on the site. Were less trees located on this site, their upper branches could spread out and capture more sunlight. As the upper branches grow outwards, more leaves are added. More leaves means more energy for the tree from photosynthesis. More photosynthesis means more root growth, more growth of wood, and greater health of the individual tree.

*For further information, please visit
www.njbsa-conservation.org*

Station 4 – Forest pests and tree growth rings

The forest is sometimes attacked by various insects, fungus, and bacterial diseases. Tent caterpillars will eat many or all of the leaves of cherry (nearby), aspen, sugar maple, and other trees. By eating the leaves, the tree cannot make the sugars and other chemicals it needs from photosynthesis. After three straight years of attack by tent caterpillars, the tree may lose vigor and become unable to defend itself from pests it would normally be able to fight off, and could die.

If a tree's growth and health are reduced, one can see this best by looking at the growth rings of a tree. When a tree has been weakened, less wood is produced and the growth rings are closer together. A severe drought may cause a temporary slowing of growth. Greater threats such as major tree diseases and overstocking will show up as many years of slow tree growth.

Station 5 – White pine: cover and wood quality

Take notice of the large, stately white pine trees growing in this area. These evergreen trees provide cover (shelter) for many types of birds during the winter, especially on cold, windy days. In dense branches, the bitter winter winds are held back. For other birds, these needles hide them from predators.

Also, take note of the dead branches and the remnants of dead branches in the middle and lower part of the tree trunk. These branches died years and years ago, leaving the dead wood. The tree trunk has been forced to grow around instead of over the dead branches. Were this tree to be cut for lumber, much of the wood will be almost worthless because of the knot-holes left behind. By properly pruning young pines, a forester can improve the value of a tree in the future.

Station 6 – Fish, fishing, and erosion control

As you admire the pond, remember that a few miles away are some of the most heavily recreated waters in this part of New York. Each spring, kayakers and canoeists arrive from nearby areas and surrounding states. Forest shade is important for reducing stream water temperature as much as 10-15 degrees during the summer. Warmer, nutrient-rich water would be susceptible to algae blooms, harming the scenic and recreational and scenic value of the resource. Local businesses and residents depend on the visitors and the money they spend in the local economy.

Therefore, activities such as driving of machinery near streams must be closely monitored by foresters. Forest roads are designed to avoid the steepest and most erodible areas. Water diversion devices such as waterbars are put on forest roads to keep water from flowing down the roads and causing erosion. If machinery must cross a waterway, it is done at a stable point, and hay bales are placed just downstream to filter out any mud from the water. Clean water is a forester's responsibility.

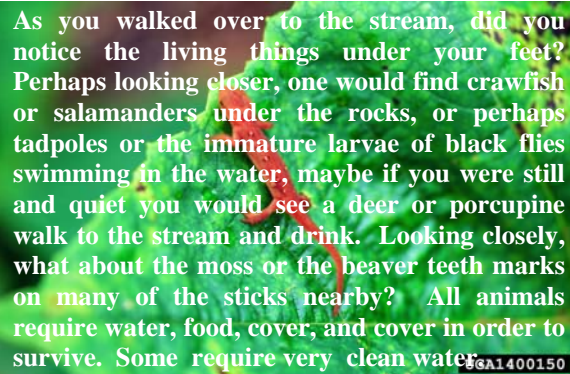
Station 7 – Group selection and uneven aged management

Different species of trees have different requirements for establishing after a disturbance. At the reservation, this starts with seeds from many different species of trees falling on good soils underneath a forest. Some seed will sprout underneath the shade of the forest and grow, given just enough light. These trees are described as “shade tolerant.” Other seeds will not sprout until large amounts of light reach the forest floor. Once this occurs, they grow very fast toward the available sunlight. These trees are described as “shade intolerant.”

By varying the size of disturbances, foresters can try to control the species of trees that will come to dominate an area. The small openings

created within the forest canopy are called “group selections.” Depending on the size of the opening, foresters can control which species will come to dominate an area. Small openings will favor shade-tolerant species such as sugar maple and beech, while much larger openings will favor shade-intolerant species such as black cherry and paper birch.

Station 8 – Riparian forests and water protection



As you walked over to the stream, did you notice the living things under your feet? Perhaps looking closer, one would find crawfish or salamanders under the rocks, or perhaps tadpoles or the immature larvae of black flies swimming in the water, maybe if you were still and quiet you would see a deer or porcupine walk to the stream and drink. Looking closely, what about the moss or the beaver teeth marks on many of the sticks nearby? All animals require water, food, cover, and cover in order to survive. Some require very clean water.

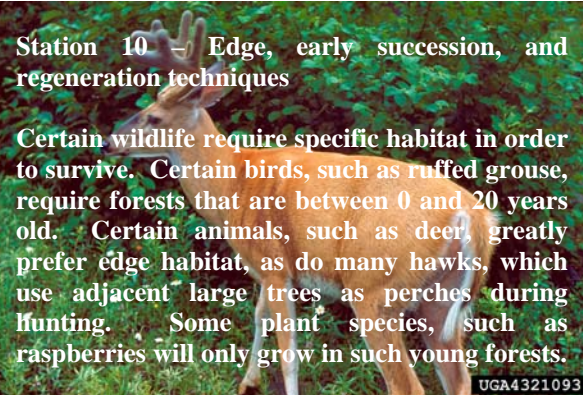
In the decade of the 1900’s, this area, the adjacent 30,000 acres, and perhaps hundreds of thousands of acres throughout the Adirondacks was likely completely clearcut for sawtimber and wood for pulp mills. No regard for water quality was made. As a result, dramatic erosion took place, and public outcry over the changes to the landscape led to the establishment of the Adirondack Forest Preserve. As a result of the Clean Water Act, foresters comply with guidelines called “Best Management Practices” in order to prevent any major adverse impact to water quality.

Station 9 – Hard mast, wildlife and forest stand improvement

The beech and black cherry in this area produce very important food for wildlife. Beech produce beech nuts as seed. This type of food is known as “hard mast.” A wide variety of animals depend on nuts and acorns, including deer, chipmunks, and black bear. Black cherry produces fruit (very small

cherries). This is called “soft mast.” Many animals, including small birds depend on soft mast.

Suppose a forest landowner wanted to improve the deer in his forest. In an overstocked area dominated by beech, hickory, and red maple trees, he might cut some of the red maple. In this way, the remaining beech and hickory would grow wood faster, healthier, and produce more nuts, resulting in more deer. The careful and selective cutting of undesirable trees is what we would call “forest stand improvement.”



Station 10 – Edge, early succession, and regeneration techniques

Certain wildlife require specific habitat in order to survive. Certain birds, such as ruffed grouse, require forests that are between 0 and 20 years old. Certain animals, such as deer, greatly prefer edge habitat, as do many hawks, which use adjacent large trees as perches during hunting. Some plant species, such as raspberries will only grow in such young forests.

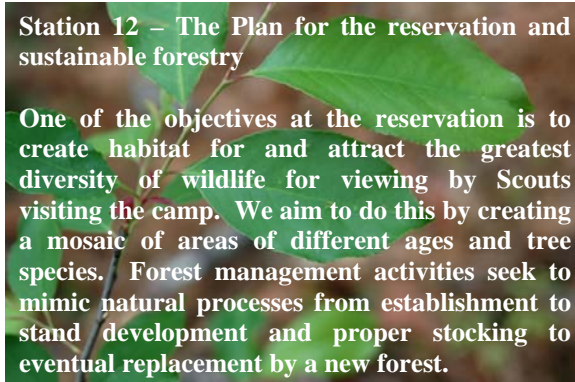
Clearcuts and shelterwood cuts are common methods to regenerate new forests. Both resemble natural events that create new forests. Shelterwood harvests resemble ice storms, major tree disease infestations, and other events that leave some large trees behind to “shelter” the developing seedlings and saplings. At a later point, the large trees can also be removed. Clearcuts resemble tornadoes, catastrophic fires, and other events that result in the removal of all previous trees. In this part of New York, clearcuts are limited to small areas, to resemble these natural events. Such disturbances are neither good nor bad, but merely inevitable.

Station 11 – Wood and the global environment

We know that the trees in the forest originate from seeds, such as acorns, nuts, and fruits, but where does their wood come from? The primary building blocks of their wood do not come from the soil, but rather from the thin air. The carbon dioxide that

the trees absorb during photosynthesis is converted and often stored as wood fiber. Since wood is formed from air, built within a natural factory called a tree, and can be regrown or replaced within 40 to 100 years, it is thought of as the most environmentally-responsible raw material. This is particularly true compared to crude oil, which stored carbon deep within the earth, and takes millions of years to form.

Some believe that increasing levels of carbon dioxide in the air is responsible for “global warming.” Rapidly growing trees remove more carbon dioxide from the air than mature and overmature trees. By harvesting overmature trees for durable wood products such as lumber, carbon dioxide is prevented from returning to the air. In addition, the young, fast-growing trees that replaced those harvested are removing even more carbon dioxide.



Station 12 – The Plan for the reservation and sustainable forestry

One of the objectives at the reservation is to create habitat for and attract the greatest diversity of wildlife for viewing by Scouts visiting the camp. We aim to do this by creating a mosaic of areas of different ages and tree species. Forest management activities seek to mimic natural processes from establishment to stand development and proper stocking to eventual replacement by a new forest.

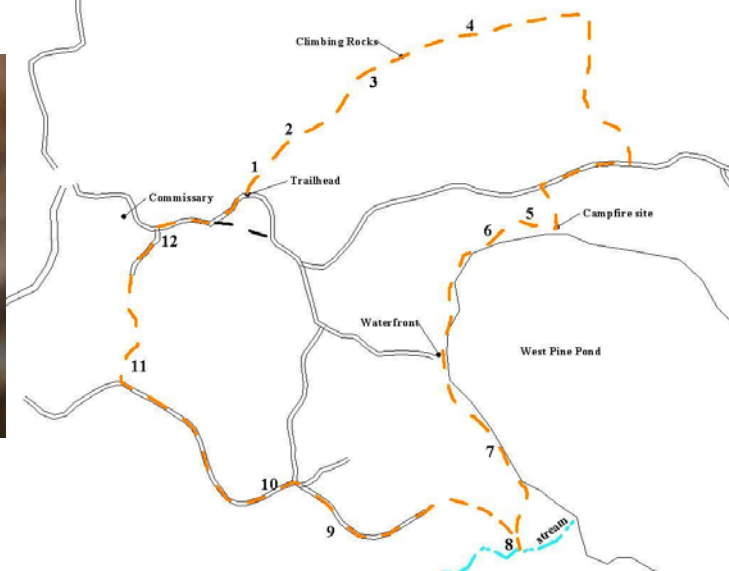
By only harvesting wood at the rate that the forest can produce the wood, and by constantly ensuring that new trees are growing in harvest sites, this forest is sustainable -- it will never “run out” of wood or suitable wildlife habitat. Left in its original state, the forest was almost all one age, with little regeneration. As black cherry and paper birch died, they were being replaced by less valuable red maple and beech. The challenge of forestry is to develop a plan that simultaneously provides diverse wildlife, sustainable wood production, and clean water.

Floodwood Mtn. Reservation

West Pine Pond

Ecology and Forestry Interpretive Trail

Distance: ~1.4 miles. The trail is blazed orange.



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Written and edited by Northern NJ Council, BSA Conservation Committee (Last revised February 2007)

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