

OHIO SAF Newsletter

The Hetuch

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Managing Forests in a Changing Climate

Tom Rooney

A few months ago, I was asked to update a forest management plan for an out-of-state client I've worked with for the past 25 years. They are a great client. They listen to advice, are motivated primarily by forest health, and want to do the right thing for the forest. Their forest is also in great shape. It makes management a lot less challenging.

Their current plan is about 15 years old, and due for a refresh. I am thinking more about climate change these days than I was when I wrote their first plan. But would I know climate change if I saw it? And if so, how would it affect plan writing?

One place climate change is showing up is in winter logging conditions. The client owns forests further north, and all timber harvests are conducted in winter when soil is frozen. Over the past several years, there have been mid-winter thaw periods requiring a shutdown of logging operations. It has not been too disruptive so far, but it does call into question whether a frozen ground restriction on logging will remain viable in the future. It also appears in some years that sawtimber-sized red pines appear stressed, but I just don't know if that reflects climate stress or something else.

The standard framework for managing forests for climate adaptation is called the resistance-resilience-transition model. The approach embraces uncertainty during forest management planning, mainly by making explicit different adaptation strategies, approaches and tactics. Resistance refers to actions and activities that improve the defenses of the forest against anticipated change, effectively defending the forest against disturbance to maintain relatively unchanged conditions. Resilience emphasizes actions and activities that accommodate some degree of change, but encourage a return to a prior condition or desired reference conditions after disturbance. Lastly, transition embraces actions and activities that intentionally accommodate change and enable ecosystems to adaptively respond to changing and new conditions. Treating small groves of hemlock with imidacloprid to protect it against hemlock wooly adelgid?

That's a resistance strategy. Including southern red oak seedlings as part of the species mix during reforestation efforts? That's a transition strategy.

The primary driver of rapid change in our forests today is not climate, but invasive species. For the past two years, we have been selectively harvesting white ash trees, a head of emerald ash borer. This has produced a really interesting structure in the forest. Because white ash occurs sometimes as individual trees, and sometimes in clumps, the post-harvest pattern reflects what you might get with the ICO method. ICO stands for individuals, clumps, and openings, and is primarily used for reducing wildfire risk and restoring dry forests in the western US. The primary effect is an increase in the amount of horizontal structure in the stand. Researchers believe that structural complexity contributes to the adaptive capacity of forests. I'm sure it does, in some contexts, in some places. But lots of unknowns remain.

I'm thinking a lot about using the ICO method as an alternative to traditional thinning from below to increase forest health. I think of ICO having a dial. In western forests, you can dial up the ICO intensity and remove more trees to reduce fire risk. In eastern hardwoods, you can dial down ICO intensity and remove fewer trees, since catastrophic wildfire risk is lower. I'm not suggesting we abandon traditional thinning activities and replace them with ICO. This is just another tool in our toolbox that could help meet landowner objectives. I'll be watching these ICO-managed stands over the coming years to see what lessons they might hold.

As I start to draft a plan revision, I'm thinking about what kinds of changes to expect over the next 15 years or so, and how that might affect identifying reasonable desired future conditions. My client would like nothing better than a plan deeply rooted in resistance strategies, but they realize that no amount of management was going to prevent the loss of white and black ash from their forest. I'm thinking more along the lines of resilience strategies. I find myself trying to lean on complexity in the hopes that it provides some of the adaptive capacity that will be needed in a changing climate. Prescriptions will involve retaining stand legacy trees and dead wood, while using

thinning and small openings across stands. These activities are designed to increase complexity and promote desirable species that respond well to disturbance. In this shift from resistance to resilience, we will focus less on maintaining existing species composition and structure, and more on withstanding and responding adaptively to disturbances that can or will occur outside of the management window.

The key professional challenge of climate change, at least in my mind, is that a novel future environment undermines the reliability of our past experience. Things that worked well in the past might not continue to do so in the future, and we won't know that until attempts fail. Now, more than ever, I'm looking at each timber harvest as an experimental intervention that will produce expected and unexpected results. My college professors may be far behind in my rear-view mirror, but these days I'm still in the classroom, learning directly from the forest.

Camp Canopy—Sharing Forestry and Wildlife with Ohio Youth

Jim Harding

For nearly three-quarters of a century, young Ohioans have been learning about and developing an appreciation for the forests and wildlife of our state. Camp Canopy (previously known as the Ohio Forestry & Wildlife Conservation Camp) began in 1950 and has welcomed more than 10,000 high school aged students. It is a testament to the impact that this camp has had on young people when you hear camp stories from many professionals throughout Ohio today. For one week in mid-June, The FFA Camp on the shores of Lake Muskingum becomes a home for dozens of young Ohioans eager to learn more about forestry, wildlife, and the state's natural resources.

This year Camp Canopy took place from Sunday, June 9th to Friday, June 14th. Attendance at the Camp continues to increase following the summer of 2020 when the on-site camp was cancelled due to COVID. There were 93 campers from 37 different counties. Of the 93, over two-thirds (65) were first-time campers. What often goes unseen in making this camp such a success year in and year out is the generous sponsorships that allow families to send their sons and daughters to camp at reduced rates. This year we had nearly 50 different sponsors including county Soil and Water Districts, FFA and 4-H Chapters, Loggers Chapters, County Extension Offices, and Conservation Groups such as National Wild Turkey Federation and Muskies, Inc.

Some young people arrive at camp having spent many hours and days exploring woodlands and wildlands. Yet, every year it seems that more and more campers arrive at Camp Canopy with relatively little experience in the great outdoors. Regardless of their level of experience, the camp always has new and exciting ways to get young people engaged in their natural world. Campers experience what it takes to be a professional forester by practicing tree identification, forest measurements, and learning about silviculture and forest products. The camp also prepares students to be wildlife managers through learning about and identifying different species of amphibians, birds, mammals, and even insects. Additional important topics covered at Camp include

contemporary natural resource management issues and challenges, an introduction to chainsaws, and electrofishing. Time spent outside of the formal instruction includes hikes, swimming, firearms training on the gun range, and tree climbing.

The Camp has a rich legacy of participation—over the years, many one-time campers have found their way back to Lake Muskingum, often first as camp counselors and then continuing as volunteer instructors. In addition to several long-time instructors who were once campers: Brad Perkins, Jeremy Scherf, Jake Peer, and Alyx Flott, there were two new professional volunteers from ODN Law Enforcement: Taylor Combs and Lucas Wildman—both of whom attended camp during their high school days. Volunteer instructors come from a wide range of professions. There are several foresters from the ODN Division of Forestry and wildlife professionals from ONDR Division of Wildlife. In addition, this year we had instructors from OSU Extension, Ohio Forestry Association, TTG Forestry, Pheasants Forever, and multiple consulting foresters.

Camp Canopy continues to spawn particular interest in careers in forestry and natural resources. Last year, a first-time camper named Maeve Killroy, arrived at camp not really knowing anything about forestry. Before she left, she changed her college plans and is now half-way through her Associate's degree in Forest Management at Hocking College. This year, Marissa Funk, Camper of the Year, likewise found her passion for forestry at camp and has since done a job shadow with a professional forester. Seeing young people discover a passion that leads to a career in forestry or natural resources is undoubtedly the greatest achievement of the camp and seeing the number of these students increase every year is great news for our profession. In order to further encourage young people to pursue their passions in forestry and natural resources, multiple scholarships are awarded to the campers with the highest exam scores. This year there were seven scholarship awards totaling \$6,250 to attend natural resource-based programs at the Ohio State University, Hocking College and Zanesville State University.

The importance of Camp Canopy in the personal growth and development of campers is well known. What may be easy to overlook is the lasting impression that attending this camp has had on countless natural resource professionals throughout Ohio and

beyond. That so many of today's leaders in forestry, wildlife, and conservation are Camp Canopy alumni is testament to the long-lasting value that this camp has provided to the wise and thoughtful management of the state of Ohio's natural resources for well over 50 years.

Ohio Society of American Foresters Interactions with the Ohio Legislature

Philip Perry, OSAF Historian

Many laws passed by the Ohio legislature can affect forest management either positively or negatively. Concerned that Ohio state legislators had an inadequate understanding of forestry and forest management the Ohio Society of American Foresters decided to be proactive by providing them with accurate professional information about forestry. It was determined that a legislative breakfast would be a suitable method. To make it convenient for the legislators it was held at the Hyatt on Capital Square near to the Ohio state Capitol in Columbus.

This was a major undertaking by OSAF, especially the first event. A lot of hard work was required of OSAF members to plan and carry out the event. At the breakfast foresters were paired up with state senators or representatives from their district. The turnout was very good with informative interactions and discussions.

The following is a list of the legislative breakfasts that OSAF has held. Many of them had a theme with a speaker chosen by OSAF that provided a starting point for discussions. At the first and at most of the other breakfasts a Legislative Handbook and a tree seedling were provided to each legislator. After the breakfast, OSAF members took the handbook and tree seedlings to each legislator's office that did not attend. After the first year the staff of these offices looked forward to receiving their seedling from the "tree people."

To reinforce the information provided at the breakfast OSAF also held two field tours where legislators could view forest management situations in person. Although attendance was less than the breakfasts because of the time and distance involved the respond was positive.

The last two years the Ohio Forestry Association has sponsored an Ohio Forestry Legislative Reception to serve a similar purpose. Ohio SAF and several other forestry and conservation organizations have participated with them.

Legislative Breakfasts

Held at Hyatt on Capital Square, Columbus, OH

Year	Month/Day	Theme	Speaker
1992	Feb. 5	The Need for Professional Resource Managers	Joe Sommer
1993	Feb. 17	Forests Present, Forests Future	Ron Abraham
1994	Feb. 16	Public Land Management	Bill Banzhaf
1995	Feb. 14-15	Forest Management in the Private Sector	Keith Argow
1996	Feb. 13-14	Ohio's Urban Forest Resource	Bill Ticknor
1997	Feb. 5	American Tree Farm System. With Winter Meeting.	None
1999	Feb. 10	No topic. With Winter Meeting.	None
2001	Feb. 14	No topic. With Winter Meeting.	None

Legislative Field Tours

Year	Month/Day	Theme	Location
1993	Mar. 19	Mined Land Reclamation Tour	Ohio Power Co., Cumberland
1994	May 23	The Role of Forestry in Public Land Management	Zaleski State Forest

Legislative Receptions

Sponsored by the Ohio Forestry Association. Held in Columbus

Year	Month/Day	Location
2023	May 23	Ohio Statehouse Atrium
2024	May 14	Ohio Statehouse Museum Gallery

Summer Meeting Session Notes

Thomas Christopher, Hetuch Editor

Below are a collection of notes I made from the technical sessions of our summer meeting for those who were unable to attend.

Recreational Leasing-Dr. Gabe Karns, OSU

- The number of hunters leasing private land and the amount of private land being leased are both on the rise. Leasing is increasing in profitability.
- Traditional written permission is covered by the Ohio Recreational Statute (ORC 1533.181). This statute is negated by taking entry fees to a property, and the landowner assumes liability unless entrants sign a waiver.
- While a lease does involve a fee, it also has all the desired stipulations a landowner would want for using their land, which a simple fee and waiver does not cover in legally binding language.
- Homeowners insurance does not cover recreational leasing, but hunting lease insurance is very affordable.
- Alternatives:
 - Ohio Landowner/Hunter Access Partnership (OLHAP): lease your land to the public via ODNR, payment is on a sliding scale of habitat quality.
 - Sharing the Land-Online network that pairs landowners with hunters willing to do habitat management work.

Non-Forest Products Outreach-Jake Nicholson, OSU Extension

- Maple syrup production in Ohio is on the rise.
- Landowner resources include:
 - OSU Maple Toolbox Website, woodlandstewards.osu.edu,
 - North American Maple Syrup Producer Manual, mapleresearch.org
 - Cornell Maple Notebooks.
- OSU Extension has also begun a Christmas tree demonstration farm in Wooster in addition to their seed orchard.
- Red maples perform well enough to be worth tapping for sugarbush operations (reiterated in the tour).

Managing Ginseng & Other Forest Botanicals -Tanner Filyaw, United Plant Savers

- 3 forest farming styles:
 - Wild Simulated: Mimic natural growth areas in high quality sites

- Wood Cultivated: Raised beds in flatter, medium quality sites with good access
- Wild Stewarded: Protecting and enhancing wild populations
- Common Crops:
 - American Ginseng-takes long growth time but commands high price.
 - Goldenseal-shorter growth time, medium price.
 - Ramps- 2 years to grow, spread easily.
 - Black Cohosh- medicinal usage, low price but cheap to invest in.

Engaging Landowners About Non-Timber Forest Products-Andrea Miller, Rural Action

- Rural Action operates out of Athens, but their services are available to citizens in all Appalachian counties in Ohio.
- Resources offered include:
 - Access to commercial kitchen space for the processing of forest farming products.
 - Forest farming mentor-mentee program.
 - Riparian tree planting.
 - Access to NRCS technical services,
 - Liaisons for landowners and state government for the ODNR Orphan Well capping program.

Member Photos



This group selection harvest at Holden Arboretum's Working Woods demonstration site illustrates sustainable forestry in action. Credit to Tom Rooney.



Spring at Fort Hill Earthworks and Nature Preserve. In addition to spectacular forests, Fort Hill is known for its 2,000 year old walled enclosure on the ridgetop. Credit to Tom Rooney.

Are you going to the SAF National Convention in Loveland, CO?
Post about it on the Chapter's Facebook Chapter's Facebook page
to help organize a meetup!