

TURKEY TALES

A NEW YORK STATE CHAPTER PUBLICATION

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Spring 2020 Turkey season has officially opened; be sure to share your hunting adventures with both your fellow hunters and future hunters that may have their interest peaked. What better place to socially distance than the woods!!

Thank you to the chapters that were able to host banquets prior to the pandemic. These banquets assist the NWTF to carry out their mission. Please visit the NWTF media sites for raffles and contests that the Regional Directors are holding to continue the fundraising effort that is so important. Thank you to those of you who have supported the raffles and please continue to do so in the future.

We all look forward to the upcoming months when restrictions lift and we are able to host banquets again.

I hope this message finds all of you and your families healthy and doing well in the current circumstances. Stay safe.

Norm Ridley
President, NYS Chapter

RD'S MESSAGE

We would like to thank all our volunteers and banquet attendees for being patient and supportive as we work together through the Covid-19 pandemic.

We understand there are a lot of questions about upcoming banquets and outreach events.

We currently are unable to host any events but as the summer begins, we should be able to start to return.

Contact your local chapters or regional directors with questions.

We look forward to seeing you when we are able to resume events and we wish you and your family's safety and good health.

Sean Langevin
Regional Director, Eastern New York

Brian Gottfried
Regional Director, Western New York

NWTF SEED SUBSIDY PROGRAM

There is still time to order your seed through the Spring Subsidy Program. Proceeds from your local chapter fundraising events are used to subsidize 50% cost of seed offered through the program.

Visit www.nwtf.org/subsidy to place your order today. This is a first-come, first-served program so order soon! If you do not receive an email confirmation, please check your SPAM folder.

NOTE: To access the online ordering page, the cookies on your computer must be enabled. You must either enter your membership number or type your name and address exactly as it appears on the address of Turkey Country magazine.

Conservation Seed Corn Program

We anticipate corn seed being made available by mid-May for those that requested it. Your local chapter President will be notified when the seed arrival date is known. Please be patient through these unprecedented times.

A common question asked is weight of the bags. We will not know until they arrive. Bag weights for corn we receive has varied, though the actual seed count is relatively consistent. So you generally have the same acreage impact with heavier bags as lighter bags based on similar seed counts.

COVID-19

In an attempt to be fiscally responsible due to the effects of the virus and quarantines, The NWTF-NYS Chapter Board of Directors has decided to go with a smaller newsletter that can be posted on Social Media and sent via email to our valuable state volunteers and members. We will be sending these mini newsletters out to keep our members up to date on NWTF-NYS Chapter activities. We anticipate releasing our next paper newsletter in November.

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“FAILING TO PLAN IS PLANNING TO FAIL!”

I was in the woods recently on the property of a good friend of mine doing a little scouting for the upcoming turkey season. My other purpose for being in the woods was to get away from the deafening thunder related to the corona virus and all the worries that are associated with it.

As I paused to look around and catch my breath, I thought about what I was looking at. A property that was gradually becoming a shining example of good stewardship. A property that had many examples of the hard work and dedication the owner put into practices that not only improved the health of the property but practices that fit his goals.

He didn't start out that way. Thirty years ago, when he obtained the property his only goal back then was to “get a piece of land to hunt on”. He thought the land would “take care of itself”, he “saved it from whatever mis-management had occurred in the past”.

The hunting was good for the first couple of years. Abundant deer, decent turkey, some grouse and rabbits. But over time the hunting changed. Less grouse, turkey, rabbits and even deer! He often sat in his blind and wondered why the change? Usually these thoughts occur while sitting for hours waiting for a deer or a turkey or a squirrel to pass by! The composition of the land had changed. Perhaps the landscape is maturing. Maybe there is less cover or food for the critters. Perhaps some insect or disease problem or invasive plants have moved in that he hadn't recognized. Maybe those trees or bushes that he planted didn't amount to much. Maybe the neighbors have changed their landscape and that has affected his property in some way.

Sound familiar!? Has this happened to you? Question is- what have or are you doing about it!? My friend decided to get some advice. Fortunately for him he got in touch with Cornell Cooperative Extension who sent him to a DEC Forester who spent a day in the woods with him. The DEC Forester wrote him a simple management plan. The plan gave a rough overview of the forest stands and non-forested areas that occurred on the property. It briefly discussed the condition of the forest stands. It also mentioned insect and disease and invasive species problems that are on the property. It made recommendations on addressing these problems. The recommendations reflected the goals of the landowner, incorporating the capability of the landscape in realizing the goals.

The service from DEC is free however statewide staffing is stretched thin. You may have to wait awhile for them

to visit. Fortunately, there is a wealth of advice out there. Cornell Cooperative Extension has the Master Forest Owner program. If you live in the Catskills, there is the Catskill Forest Association. The New York Forest Owners Association (NYFOA) is a group of forest owners that are interested in issues related to owning land in New York State. The Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) is the federal agency that offers land management advice and administers cost sharing practices. The NRCS will help pay for on the ground projects that improve wildlife habitat, water quality, soil health, erosion remediation, forest health and many more agricultural and environmental projects.

The NWTf has a wealth of information on-line and the New York Chapter has me-a Forester and two Wildlife Biologists available to assist you.

There are many instances where hiring a private Consulting Forester is your best option. The private consultant will be able to give an individual personal attention and be readily available. The DEC has a list of Private Consultant Foresters.

All of the above-mentioned groups have websites. Of course, there is a wealth of more information on-line.

While you are mulling this over, I suggest you take a moment to think about your goals. Establishing goals helps to begin to organize your thoughts and develop priorities. From there you can begin to form a plan. Ask yourself some questions. Among them are:

-Why do you and your partners own the land? Hunting, recreation, investment, wildlife habitat beyond game, forest products, other uses?

-What do you and your partners like/dislike about the property?

-What are you and your partners needs in the next 5, 10, 20 years?

-Are you going to seek some advice on how to achieve some of your goals?

I hope I have nudged some of you to think about doing some planning for your property. I hope a large part of you have been doing this all along. Just leaving it to take care of itself over time doesn't always turn out the way you thought! After all it has been said-” Failing to Plan is Planning to Fail”!

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