The Spruce Moose

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A Time for Science in the Adirondacks

by William Porter
AEC Director


Dr. William Porter

Success depends on more than the right people with the right plan. It relies on the right timing. Well, the time is now. The long-expressed passions of adversarial debate in the Adirondacks appear to be calming. There is new interest in collaborating, in focusing on common ground, and in understanding what science has to offer. As an institution whose mission is research and promoting the use of good science, we could not be more pleased.

We have spent the past few years anticipating this opportunity and are now moving forward. We are expanding our research programs throughout the Adirondacks.

Three programs illustrate our commitment to both private and public lands, and to the public. We are working closely with the forest industry to understand increasing problems associated with regeneration of the hardwood forest. We are also leading a consortium of state agencies, universities and environmental organizations to create a comprehensive system of spatial data relating to natural resources for all public lands.

More broadly, we are partnering with the Wildlife Pathology Unit of the Department of Environmental Conservation to establish a Wildlife and Human Health Laboratory at Huntington.

To get our message out, we are building strategic partnerships with state agencies, private industry, non-profit organizations and public school systems. We want students and policy makers to be able to come to Huntington whenever possible because of the resources we can bring to bear. We also want to be able to take our message to people who are at a distance. Educational programs built on our Adirondack research will soon be reaching school children throughout the region. Just over the horizon is the technology that will allow us to develop an Internet-based Conference and Distance Learning Center.

The time is perfect for an important step forward.

Love at First Sight

by Dr. Donald Behrend

Editor's Note: Don Behrend was director of the station from 1968-1973. He left to take an administrative positions at the college, and retired as Chancellor of the University of Alaska at Anchorage. He and his wife reside in Anchorage.

Articles in the *Spruce Moose* by Earl Patric and Dick Sage stirred my memories of the Adirondacks and the Huntington Forest. My love affair with Huntington has lasted nearly half a century, including the past 18 years from far off Alaska. The following relates the beginnings of the affair as best I recall . Other than my family, names have been omitted to protect the innocent and not-so-innocent alike.

My love affair with the Huntington Forest began innocently enough and my wife of seven months didn't seem to mind a bit. It was June of 1958, before the Cuban missile crisis, the assassination of President Kennedy, the Berkshire spur of the N.Y.S. Thruway, the Adirondack Northway, the move of Tahawus to Newcomb, the Adirondack Park Agency, the publication of *Silent Spring*, the National Environmental Protection Act, and the Endangered Species Act. It was 14 years before the SUNY College of Forestry became the SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry and the Adirondack Ecological Center was born.

In 1958 the Canada goose and the white-tailed deer were not widely viewed as nuisance species, much less as threats to public health and safety. Wild turkeys did not frequent the suburbs then and apparently had not yet crossed the blue line. Coyotes had, but were still scarce. It was even before we had quit battling black flies with DDT, and long before acid rain, atmospheric deposition, and global warming were common parts of the lexicon. And, it was almost 20 years before some of the Adirondack high peaks lent their names to some of the Huntington cabins.

To say that my enduring affair with the Huntington Forest sprang from love at first sight would be stretching it as those of you who first arrived in June will surely understand.

The entire summer crew that year lived together. All were males in their 20s, I think, and all were students at the College of Forestry or the University of Connecticut. Most were New Yorkers, three from Connecticut and one from Israel. Four had seen military service. One, having served in Japan, had acquired a taste for sake. Finding none in nearby outlets and despite some disagreement among the crew, he thus proceeded to produce his own. This sake, if it really was sake, smelled and tasted like none I've had since, either in this country or in Japan. What it lacked in pleasing bouquet and flavor, it more than achieved in strength. One drink was enough for anyone. I recalled this some years later in a conversation with an old Adirondack physician who remembered a professor in medical school had summed up a lecture on strong drink thus; The first drink is medicine, the second a waste, and the third is poison.

The building that housed us was erected near the current director's residence in 1950 and razed in 1992. It was still called the Research Center in 1958. Ray Masters (1993) describes it as consisting"of two metal, war-surplus buildings joined together" which "while never a showpiece, provided much needed office and crude laboratory space, as well as living quarters for summer field crews." (See Masters, R.D. 1993-A Social History Of The Huntington Wildlife Forest, 98p. North Country Books Inc., 18 Irving Place Utica, N.Y. for additional details on this and other buildings.) By 1958, the Research Center seemed to have a bit of a reputation. Perhaps this was largely due to the poor start when snow collapsed the roof during its first winter.

On workdays we occupied this building mostly from evening to morning sharing the cooking, dishwashing and cleaning, as well as a single large bathroom and a common bunkroom. The latter originally was built for storage, but had later been equipped with plenty of GI racks and lockers to accommodate summer crews. Seasonally, it nightly held more punkies and mosquitoes than any other indoor space in the Adirondacks.

Most striking was the quality of the air in the bunkroom where the normal proportions of oxygen and nitrogen were nightly supplemented with unmeasured quantities of *Off* sprayed onto the skin and directly into the air. To this day I've marveled that, as best I can tell, all who suffered through those awful nights are still alive. Hearty constitutions probably got some over it, shallow breathing others, and the sake may have done it for a few. All that seems certain is the summer crew of '58 fared better than the old research center.

Huntington Forest Research Center circa 1952.

Such matters failed to dampen my enthusiasm for fieldwork or my growing attraction to Huntington Forest. Who could resist being paid to work in such wonderful woods among such beautiful lakes and mountains in the presence of such an abundance of wildlife? Snap-trapping and processing hundreds of small mammals during a rainy week in July wasn't what everyone considered fun. But where could you come by a better short course on small mammals? Or, learn more about the power of peanut butter? Walking census lines was more to the liking of most. Who could ask for more than running a census line on a high summer's day to record observations of deer, bears, red squirrels, chipmunks, hares, grouse and raptors in such spectacular country? A favorite line of mine was along the steepest part of Panther Mountain. Tallying vegetation inside and outside of deer enclosures was less exciting but introduced me to deer ecology and management, which I pursued for many years.

While my first summer at Huntington lasted into September, my stay at the Research Center ended in August when my wife Joan joined me. We lived in a tiny cabin in Long Lake behind what is now known as Hoss's Country Corner. The friendly owners of these cabins liked to take their guests bear watching at the Long Lake dump. Some tourists were duly impressed but I knew it could not compete with the Newcomb dump.

Having missed the black flies of June, Joan really did fall in love with Huntington Forest at first sight. The sunsets over Arbutus, Catlin and Rich lakes; the mists along Fishing Brook; deer bounding out of Military Meadow; and, the view from Goodnow that hinted you might reach out and touch Arbutus and Rich lakes, were all becoming part of us.

The Spruce Moose is a semi-annual publication of the Adirondack Ecological Center. Submissions regarding news, research or events associated with the AEC or Huntington Wildlife Forest are welcome. Due to space limitations, *The Spruce Moose* reserves the right to edit, omit or postpone submissions at our discretion. Submissions, comments, and questions can be directed to Ray Masters or Marianne Patinelli-Dubay at *aechwf@esf.edu*.

Then, suddenly it seemed, we were saying goodbye and heading back to Connecticut without any tangible hope of returning. But just two years later word came to us in Ohio that a biologist position had opened at the forest and I was off to Syracuse for interviews. By early December 1960, we headed for Huntington with visions of a white Christmas in our heads and our 18-month old son, Andy, in the back seat of our car. We arrived at our new home, my old haunt, the research center, that afternoon where Joan, Andy and I were about to become the first humans to over-winter. Undaunted, we entered without hesitation or the slightest concern for mosquitoes and punkies.

One's view of life there was shaped by several factors including prior experience, physical height, and state of mind and body. While I had lived two summer months there, none of us were prepared for the noisy complaints of an old metal building's winter contractions and expansions. But height was more significant. At 5'11" I could see out of the small, high windows unassisted, taking in ground to sky. Joan, at 5'1" was limited to viewing the treetops and sky unless she stood on a chair seat. Andy was strictly limited to what he could see from my shoulders. The concrete floor was partially relieved by a modest braided rug in the "living room", but overall was unyielding. Andy didn't seem to mind, and having spent four years in the U.S. Navy, I was accustomed to "hard ships." Joan, from four to eight months pregnant during our stay, found the concrete very hard indeed.

Outside, the road and parking area were kept plowed, the paths shoveled and the snow load on the roof kept under control. Before long the snow was over Andy's head and we were well into the coldest weather we had experienced. Joan was surprised one day when she misread the window thermometer by a bit and the 25 degrees F she first read turned out to be minus 25 degrees.

Inside the old place was always warm enough. Our first hi-fi was producing wonderful music amid the best acoustics imaginable. Holiday decorations helped make the research center a cheery home. And, we had the delights of watching Andy enjoying his second Christmas and heading for his second birthday celebration.

Fall Is For The Fungi

by Jan Houseknecht

To some fall means cooling temperatures and brightly colored leaves, but to me it means fungi, lots and lots of fungi. I am a mycologist, or mycologist-in-training since I'm still working on my master's degree at ESF.

An example of fungi in the Adirondacks.

I am studying the diversity of saprophytic (decomposing) fungi in the Adirondack Mountains. My main objective is to create a list of the fungal species present within the Adirondacks; this list will be an approximation at best of the total diversity due to the extremely unbalanced ratio of fungi to mycologists. Within this study I am comparing fungal diversity in three different forest management categories: old growth, maturing, and partially cut.

I have a total of 12 plots located throughout the Adirondacks, from Speculator to Lake Placid. Two of these plots are located in the Huntington Forest, at Catlin Lake and Gooseberry Mountain. I am currently in the process of finishing my second field season and have a full winter's worth of lab work in front of me because although I have not yet analyzed the data I can say with some confidence that this fall's rain has had an explosive effect on the fungi. But don't take my word for it, go out there and take a look for yourself. Fungi are some of the most fascinating creatures on the planet; I'm sure that once you start to look at them you'll be hooked, just like I am.

The Webb Apprenticeship: A Truly Unique Opportunity

by Jason Isabelle

Editor's Note: Through a gift from Helen and William Webb, an endowment now provides for an apprentice on the staff at the Adirondack Ecological Center. Jason Isabelle was the Webb Apprentice during the summer, 2003.

Jason Isabelle

As I read the job description for the Webb Apprenticeship, I grew increasingly excited about the opportunities I would have if selected. It was not until I began working at the AEC I realized how much experience I could gain in a single summer.

I could tell right away I was in for a great season when, on my first day, I assisted with live-trapping beaver. I spent the morning near a small brook, handling, and tagging beaver captured in Hancock beaver traps. Already, I gained experience doing something I had never done before. As the weeks passed, it seemed like I was involved in every research project underway on the property. When the deer crew needed an extra hand to process a deer caught in one of their live traps, I was there. When researchers studying amphibians needed help constructing pitfall traps and drift-fence arrays or checking cover boards, I was there. Through the course of the summer, I conducted nest box searches, live-trapped small mammals, and sampled vegetation throughout the HWF property. A highlight of my summer was conducting white-tailed deer spotlight surveys in late August

The summer of 2003 was one I will not soon forget. The Webb Apprenticeship is a unique opportunity and I consider myself fortunate in having been the first person selected.

The family of Dick Sage gathered to dedicate the R.W. Sage Memorial Trail.

Dick Sage Honored

Friends, family, colleagues, and neighbors gathered for a celebration of the life of Dick Sage, filling the Newcomb Visitor Interpretive Center May 3. Speakers reflected on how their lives were impacted by knowing Dick. Several awards were presented to the family including ESF's College Foundation Award and a Certificate of Recognition from the Northeast Section of The Wildlife Society. Dr. Bernie Patten explained a white-tailed deer model on which he and Dick had worked for nearly eight years. Dedication of the site for the R.W. Sage Jr. wildlife trail on the Visitor Interpretive Center completed the day. Dick was a special person in the hearts of all of us on Huntington Forest, and we were so pleased to see the outpouring of recognition for all he did for the Adirondacks.

Annual Rings

by Bruce Breitmeyer

The age-old question is,"If a tree falls in the woods, and no one is there to hear it, does it make a sound?" The other question many have at Huntington Wildlife Forest is who are these people running around wearing hardhats, orange vests, and quite often orange or blue paint? The Adirondack Forest Properties Management staff can usually answer the first question and they *are* the answer to the second question.

For the past 20 years, forest management activities for the college's Adirondack properties have been centralized out of Huntington Forest. Currently, permanent staff members Bruce Breitmeyer, forest properties manager, and Mike Gooden, properties forester, are based at the Newcomb Campus and are responsible for forest management activities at Dubuar Forest, Wanakena (2,700 acres); Cranberry Lake Biological Station, Cranberry Lake (1,000 acres); Huntington Wildlife Forest, Newcomb (15,000 acres); and Pack Demonstration Forest, Warrensburg (2,600 acres). Seasonal technicians and work study students are also based at Huntington Forest to assist with forest management on the Adirondack properties. Richard Schwab, director of forest properties, is based on the Syracuse campus.

The forest management staff is responsible for forest stand inventories, developing stand prescriptions, marking and administrating timber sales, maintaining forest stand records and maps, boundary line and other ground control maintenance, and numerous other forest management tasks.

Almost 500 permanent sample plots that make up the Continuous Forest Inventory (CFI) system on all the Adirondack properties are measured every 10 years and maintained by forest management staff. The third remeasurement of 95 CFI plots was completed this past summer at Pack Demonstration Forest. Data from these plot measurements is used to track trends in growth, mortality and other biological changes occurring over time in the college's forests.

Developing forest management plans for each property is an ongoing task for the forest management staff, with a new forest management plan in the final stages of completion for Dubuar Forest. A significant amount of time is also spent answering questions and supplying information to researchers, faculty, students, agencies conducting research or programs on the properties, and the general public.

Forest management staff is responsible for coordinating all activities (i.e. facility maintenance, forest management, education programs, public service, and research support) on the Warrensburg Campus.

Now, as for that other age-old question,"What does a bear do in the woods?" we will let others answer.

Homeward Bound

by Paul B. Hai

Editor's Note: Paul Hai ('00) has been working for the Roosevelt Wild Life Station for four years. He was based in Syracuse until June 2003 when he was transferred to Newcomb. The change in work location reflects the next phase of the RWLS' statewide conservation education efforts.

Thomas Wolfe proposes you can't go home again, but that didn't stop me from trying. After six years at the Syracuse campus, two spent earning a masters and four working for the Roosevelt Wild Life Station (RWLS,) I have returned home to the Adirondacks.

Giving Wolfe his due, working at the AEC couldn't be further from my previous Adirondack "home," a career as a restaurant manager and sommelier at a country inn southeast of Newcomb. That career was the culmination of a bachelor's degree in restaurant management and 10 years of hard work.

Despite loving that job and a second teaching in the hospitality program at Adirondack Community College, I was not content. While I was passionate about the Adirondacks, the local youths working in the restaurant and attending ACC neither showed nor seemed to share this passion. This made me realize it was more important to me to teach my passion for natural history, my avocation, than to teach my passion for food and wine, my vocation.

I left the Adirondacks to earn the credentials necessary to make that switch. ESF's EFB program offered the ideal preparatory experience before pursuing a position teaching biology back in the Adirondacks. However, as I was finishing in Syracuse, along came an opportunity to develop education materials for the RWLS.


Paul Hai

The RWLS was created as a living memorial to Theodore Roosevelt. It was established and housed at ESF in 1919 by act of the New York State legislature. After experiencing a period of quiescence for several decades, a revitalization effort launched by ESF and the EFB faculty received support from the governor and funding from the state legislature in 1999. The mission of RWLS's education program, Stalking Science Education, directed by D. Andrew Saunders, is to bring conservation education programs to a statewide audience, and to accomplish this by perpetuating natural history as the fundamental tool in teaching sound science.

Having recently completed two significant projects in Central New York, one under the auspices of an EPA program and the other with the Syracuse City School District, the RWLS is turning its attention to other regions of New York. The AEC is the ideal location from which to coordinate this next phase of our continuing statewide efforts. It also represents the perfect opportunity for me to return home and bring my passion for the Adirondacks to bear on education programs that will directly benefit those who live within the Park. The RWLS' Adirondack project will create three middle school units tied to the New York State teaching standards that will introduce students to water quality issues. The units are being created in cooperation with five central Adirondack school districts, each of which will be implementing the completed units in their science classrooms.

Perhaps Mr. Wolfe is right, I haven't come home again. Instead, I've come home at last.

Transitions at the Stone Garage

Bob Kentile retired in 2002 after more than 20 years as the maintenance supervisor at Huntington Forest. Bob joined the staff at Huntington in 1977 and was appointed supervisor in 1981. He contributed much to Huntington Forest and among his many accomplishments was upgrading the road system. Bob and his wife, Helen, continue to reside in Long Lake and we wish them many years of happiness.

Peter DeMola, maintenance supervisor on the Syracuse campus, accepted a transfer to Huntington in May. Peter confessed he has always loved the Huntington property and asked to be considered for the position when he learned Bob was retiring. He brings a wealth of skills and experience in building construction, maintenance and landscaping to the station. As the new supervisor, he has already begun to make significant changes. Would you believe there are flower boxes and a welcome sign at the Stone Garage? We are pleased to welcome Peter to the Huntington staff.


Peter DeMola

New Front Office Occupant


Marianne Patinelli-Dubay

Our new administrative assistant is Marianne Patinelli-Dubay. Along with her principal mission of keeping us organized, she is responsible for housing and accommodations, budgeting and account maintenance, and co-editing the Spruce Moose. Marianne, a native of Long Island and two-year resident of Newcomb, has small business and newspaper editorial experience, in addition to bachelor's and master's degrees in philosophy. She matches her skills with a great sense of humor, and we are delighted to welcome her aboard.

From Editor to Entomologist

Spruce Moose editor and wildlife ecologist Scott Haulton left us in late summer to accept a position at the University of Vermont's Entomology Research Laboratory. There he assists in studying the affects of forest management on invertebrate biodiversity.

Scott began his employment at the Adirondack Ecological Center (AEC) in 2000. During his time on the staff at the AEC Scott worked on projects ranging from the effects of deer herbivory on managed forests to the effects of patch-selection cutting methods on small mammal, salamander, bird and plant communities. We'll miss his dedication, talents and wry humor, and wish him much success and happiness in Vermont.

AEC Leads Consortium to Assist Unit Management Planning

Under the auspices of the Adirondack Research Consortium, and with the help of a five-year, $500,000 contract, the AEC will lead a collaborative project to bring the best available natural resource data into planning for Adirondack Forest Preserve lands. The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) is mandated by the State Land Master Plan to develop Unit Management Plans for all state-owned land in the Adirondacks. The process has been underway in earnest for the past several years, but the large land areas and diversity of natural

resources have made planning challenging. The consortium's goals are to assemble data into a Geographic Information System (GIS) and to provide technical expertise and training. The GIS database will enhance the quality of the plans and accelerate the planning process. DEC planners will be able to focus on resource protection and stewardship of state lands.

The consortium includes such organizations as the Adirondack Council, Adirondack Nature Conservancy, Adirondack Park Agency, Association for the Protection of the Adirondacks, Audubon New York, Cornell University, DEC, ESF, New York Natural Heritage Program, and Wildlife Conservation Society. Stacy McNulty will supervise the project with the help of PhD student Ben Zuckerberg and a post-doctoral associate who is soon to be hired.

Huntington Visitors

Among many of the visitors that stopped by this year were John and Gina Damberg from Eveleth, Minn. Gina is the niece of former HWF director Bill Webb. Gina spent many happy days with the Webbs when they lived here and was happy to briefly visit some of the places they once lived and played.

Predator or Pestilence

by Marianne Patinelli-Dubay

I am well equipped to consider questions of whether the soul exists independent of the body in the permeable way that music exists outside the chamber of a flute, though I'm most likely not the first philosopher to find herself searching for jammed paper in the printer instead of for God in the void. I offer the following true exchange as my humble introduction and to all a forewarning to speak slowly, enunciate well and, with all due respect to my intelligence, assume I haven't the slightest idea to what you are referring.

A call from the Newcomb Visitor's Interpretive Center brought fear and alarm as the caller, oddly calm, posed her question. With a clear sense of my mission, I put the caller on hold, spun around to Ray Masters and, in a tone (the kind of hyper embellishment that makes scientists cringe) worthy of any significant incident response, I demanded to know whether there had been any reports of Willy A. Delgid attacking leaves and otherwise committing widespread destruction of the forest. As my mind flew through wild scenarios and as I began to be impatient with Ray's questioning stare, I saw understanding dawn on him. He realized the true nature of the call. He calmly talked me down from my near-hysteria, and torrent of laughter exploded from wildlife ecologist Stacy McNulty's office. Naturally, Ray couldn't keep it together much after that and I was left to sort out the joke. It seems that the "Wooly Adelgid," an *insect* with a voracious taste for hemlock, has not been reported in the area. As I started laughing, Stacy yelled out, "Are you laughing? Because there's no crying in science!"

Recent Publications Related To AEC/HWF:

Driscoll, C.T., Driscoll, K.M., Roy, K.M., Mitchell, J.J. 2003. Chemical Response of Lakes in the Adirondack Region of New York to Declines in Acidic Deposition. Environmental Science & Technology, 6pp.

Patten, B.C., R.W. Sage, Jr., and **P.A. Salmon.** 2003. Flying the North American Adirondack deer on instruments: a multi-parameter modeling approach to ecosystem-based wildlife management. Journal of Nature Conservation.

Sage, R.W. Jr., W.F. Porter and **H.B. Underwood.** 2003. Windows of opportunity: white-tailed deer and the dynamics of northern hardwood forests in the northeastern US. Journal of Nature Conservation.

Stager, C.J. and **Sanger, T.** 2003. An Adirondack "Heritage Lake". Adirondack Journal of Environmental Studies, 5pp.

Avalanche Lake by ESF graduate student Nate Peters was the winning photograph of the AEC 2003 photo contest.