

Hedgerows and Habitat Discussion Strikes a Balance

On July 20th over forty people attended York's Conservation Advisory Council roundtable discussion on hedgerows and habitats. Many of the comments and observations made that night seemed to relate back to a concept of balance.

Steve Schiano, of Schiano Logging, began the night's conversation as he described the work his crew had done on the hedgerows along Flats Road between Geneseo and Piffard. He explained that to reclaim the farmland in that area and return it to its original productivity, it was necessary to remove most of the growth that had developed along the road. In his discourse he also described the extensive work he had done in this area planting trees in regions, such as along the Genesee River that, of course, created new hedgerows and habitats. As the discussion continued the notion of a balance continued to emerge.

This concept was further amplified by Larry Smith of Lawnel Farms as he described the challenge today's farmers have to provide the products needed for a growing world population. Large machines need room to maneuver for optimum efficiency and hedgerows can interfere with this productivity. He stressed that Lawnel Farms owns woodlands and there are no plans to eliminate them thus maintaining an important balance between fields and forests.

Dana Hilderbrant, DEC fish and wildlife technician, added to this exchange by describing how landowners can receive help in developing and maintaining important habitats such as grasslands and shrublands. This Habitat Stewardship Series is offered through a collaborative effort of the DEC, Cornell Cooperative Extension and NY Forest Owners Association.

The description above is just a small part of what was discussed as the dialog lasted almost two hours, continuing informally after the event was officially over. A more detailed account of the meeting will be written up and be available to the public on the Town of York's website under the CAC link. It is clear that there is great interest and concern in these topics and plans are underway to follow up on suggestions made as well as expand this discussion in various ways. These plans include the possibility of incorporating the streams and water quality of the town into future roundtables.

Many thanks are in order for those who participated in the discussion. Special thanks goes out to invitees Steve Schiano, Larry Smith, and Dana Hilderbrant for their time and their unmistakable commitment in this discipline. They furnish us with outstanding examples of those who are willing to work for that balance in nature that provides numerous benefits for our entire community.

Dave Nagel