

DNR Newsletter 2002 (~ 650 words)

Arnot Teaching and Research Forest (v.5/1/03)

Red maple have broken bud, the Hepatica have come and gone, sugar season is past, spotted salamanders and wood frogs have laid their eggs, and early turkey hunters have given their best - the signs of spring that while common now, seemed quite distant during the lengthy winter. The seasons bring excitement and opportunity, with plenty of each at the Arnot this past year. Summer of 2002 was the third year for the research and extension intern program. This program, significantly supported through the Connecticut Hill and Robert Boehlecke Funds, involved 6 Cornell undergraduates working as interns on integrated aspects of research and extension. Projects included: the effects of deer on hardwood reproduction; salamander migration to constructed vernal pools; amphibian response to vernal pool structure; effects of tapping on sugar maple volume growth, woodland cultivation of ginseng and gourmet mushrooms; and the use of meat goats to control woodland interfering plants. The interns culminated their experience with a fall semester of data analyses and participation in the department's field station symposium. Additional summer strides were taken with the design and establishment of the Amphibian and Reptile Conservation Trail near the lodge. Bridges and boardwalks remain for construction this summer, but the trail weaves through the second-growth forest among full-scale and experimental woodland ponds. Several field campus groups, from Girl Scouts to forest owners, have experienced the wonders of herps only minutes from the lodge. Fall season is Earn-a-Buck at the Arnot. This program assesses the potential for hunters to control deer population size through increased doe harvests. The fall season brought another near-record harvest and some buck-eligible hunters had successes not typically found at the Arnot in previous years. Winter? Well, what can I say? Other than ice and snow that disrupted electrical power for 6 days and damaged most of the pine near the south entrance, the months of long nights focused on expanding the marketing program for the field campus and preparing for spring. Spring brings the maple syrup season and heightened activity back to the field campus. This year, the Arnot joined other NY maple producers on Maple Weekend for tours, tasting, and educational demonstrations. Several hundred visitors explored learning stations throughout the sugar bush and field campus. Also this spring, the Sustainable Forestry Demonstration Area, adjacent to the Amphibian and Reptile Conservation Trail, was established with harvesting scheduled for June. Several student, landowner, forester, and logger groups have toured the site and learned the do's and don'ts of sustainable forestry. These two new and interconnected demonstration areas - forestry and herps - share a new parking lot south of the fire pond. The fire pond incidentally served as a backdrop to the largest extension crowds of the year who joined faculty and Cooperative Extension staff for workshops on pond construction, maintenance, and ecology. The new parking lot also serves as a trail head for two trails that stretch north along the east boundary to the Recknagel Pavilion and the northern reaches of Aspen Road. Timber management continues



to shape the Arnot as a working forest useful to education and research relevant to the private forests that dominate the Northeast. Many of the small conifer research plantations established in the 30's and 40's were replaced with hardwoods, and other more mature stands were tended for production of high quality and diverse forests. I can't cover all the events and programs, but know the Arnot was well-utilized through many additional extension, teaching and research endeavors. We enjoy the activity!

Curious about the next horizon? Amongst other events, look for a new 3-day undergraduate workshop this August called "Environmental Career Skills". This program will help undergrads get a leg-up with direct experience in time-tested research methods, new technologies, and traditional woodland skills. Stop by the Arnot if you're visiting Ithaca, or visit us through the virtual tours at www.dnr.cornell.edu/arnot