

Policy Area I Open Space and Natural Resource Management

Goal:

Maintain the County's valuable farmland in active agricultural use while creating and promoting land use planning and zoning incentives that counter the conversion of farmland.



FARMLAND PROTECTION AND FORESTRY

Agriculture remains one of the leading economic sectors within the County, historically remaining close or equal to the tourism sector. Sullivan County's agricultural industry includes poultry, dairy, livestock, horticulture and aquaculture producers, the value of product sales descending in that order. The combined output value of agricultural production in the County exceeded \$60,000,000 in 2004. There is, in addition, a forestry industry that represents several million dollars of additional sales.

There are currently 379 active farms in the County. They occupy approximately 63,100.

Most of the County is in forest use, growing the best hardwoods in the world. The best farm land is located in the Western Sullivan County in areas such as the Beechwoods and along the Delaware River. Much of the milk is shipped to plants in New Jersey or Massachusetts for processing. The majority of the eggs and specialty poultry are shipped into New York City markets. The Foie Gras duck farms supply a highly recognized product on a long list of signature livestock and produce items found on the menus of New York City's finest restaurants.

New York City metro area consumers have traditionally been the market for Sullivan County eggs, milk and meats, as well as other products. Milk that once went into the City by rail car now goes by truck. These changing methods of processing and distribution, the advent of refrigeration and various global market influences resulted in the County losing over 150 laying hen operations and 700 small family dairy farms over the past 50 years. Nevertheless, many other farms have prospered by growing larger. Others have ventured into new territory with different products and still others have been created anew in reaction to niche opportunities.

History is repeating itself in this decade as new specialty farm products are again being supplied to the metro area, leading to a revival of the agricultural sector.

The County's recent successes are, to a large extent, attributable to the Sullivan County Legislature's commitment to growing the agricultural sector. It's agricultural initiatives have included:

- Creating the Sullivan County Agriculture & Farmland Protection Board and adopting one of New York State's first Agriculture and Farmland Protection Plans.

- Providing ongoing support for numerous Cornell Cooperative Extension Programs, including the development of several successful Sullivan County Area Farmers Markets.
- Allocating resources within the Division of Planning to establish an Agricultural Economic Development Program.
- Providing financial, political and technical support for agricultural development projects including the establishment of several new ventures and the expansion of others.

Sullivan County is 78% forested, at 507,656 acres, placing it among the more forested counties within New York State. A high percentage of this forested land is also privately owned, 93%. The remaining 7% of forestland is evenly split between county and municipal owned lands and state owned lands.

The role of forests and forestry in Sullivan County is important for a number of reasons. The presence of woodlands is a form of open space that enhances our rural character and quality of life. Sustainable managed forests also benefit the economy and local tax base in a number of ways. For example, the provision of open space costs towns less in the delivery of services than the revenue they generate. And finally, proper forest management also increases habitat diversity and benefits our wildlife.

Sustainable Forest Management

Sustainable forest management alludes to the concept that forestry and timber management is vital to the long-term provision of products and thus requires careful planning and thoughtful decision making. A number of factors are considered in sustainable forest management including social, ethical, ecological and economic considerations. At a basic level, it is up to individual landowners to undertake and utilize sustainable forest management. However, municipalities can play an important role in this issue as well.

In order for sustainable forest management to be a viable option for landowners they must be able to own their property over the long term. Cost-benefit analyses of forest management practices demonstrate that landowners obtain greater gains when utilizing longer term practices. An unreasonable level of regulation on forest practices can actually encourage forest landowners to convert their land to development uses. Thus it is important that Towns take steps to ensure the continuation of timber harvesting. This can be done by supporting programs that reduce the tax burden on landowners and working with professional foresters if and when municipal timber regulations are considered.

In addition, municipalities can support educational efforts aimed at encouraging forest landowners to adopt sustainable management practices. Many landowners are not aware of the responsibility they have as forest landowners and as a consequence make uninformed decisions. These decisions can have negative long-term consequences on the long-term productivity of their land which in turn reduces their ability to maintain the land in a forested state.



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STRATEGY 1.6

Secure priority areas by annually seeking Federal and State program Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) funding for selected parcels

Timeframe

SHORT TERM

INTERMEDIATE

LONG TERM

Steps	Leadership Role (C/M/P)	Status (A/P/C)
Use the Agriculture and Farmland Protection Board to score applications solicited by Cornell Cooperative Extension and select farms for the "Sullivan Farms for the Future" program.	P	A
Prepare and submit application, maps and budgets to the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets PDR grant program.	P	A
Prepare and submit an application (when matching funds are in place) to the Natural Resources Conservation Service PDR Grant program.	P	A



Leadership Role: C – County M – Municipality P – Partners
 Status: A – Active P – Pending C – Complete

Resources

Documents

- ◆ **Fact Sheet 6: Farmland Preservation Techniques**
- ◆ **New York Agricultural Landowner Guide: To Tax, Conservation and Management Programs.** American Farmland Trust
- ◆ **Agricultural Districts: A Tool for Protecting Local Agriculture.** American Farmland Trust, Landworks Volume V, Issue 3, Summer 2002.
- ◆ **Guide to Local Planning for Agriculture in New York.** American Farmland Trust.

Organizations and Programs

- ◆ **Sullivan County Farmland Protection Board, Cornell Cooperative Extension**
845-292-6180
- ◆ **Sullivan County Farm Bureau, CCE**
845-292-6180
- ◆ **Sullivan County Area Farmers Market, CCE Farm Market Manager, CCE**
845-292-6180
- ◆ **NYS Department of Agriculture & Markets** - www.agmkt.state.ny.us
The Agriculture and markets department fosters a competitive food and agriculture industry to benefit producers and consumers alike.
- ◆ **American Farmland Trust** - www.farmland.org
The American Farmland Trust works to protect farmland throughout the United States through conservation, community planning and growth management. They offer consulting services and innovative ways of maintaining farmland.
- ◆ **Farmland Information Center** - www.farmlandinfo.org
The Farmland Information Center provides an online collection of laws, literature and technical resources on farmland protection and stewardship. In addition to this website, information specialists provide reference material and basic technical assistance by phone, fax and e-mail free of charge.

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STRATEGY 1.7

Leverage funding from private organizations to assist in County farmland protection goals.

Timeframe

SHORT TERM

INTERMEDIATE

LONG TERM

Steps	Leadership Role (C/M/P)	Status (A/P/C)
Cooperate with and encourage involvement of preservation organizations and land trusts in the "Sullivan Farms for the Future Program"	C/P	
Market Sullivan County to outside organizations to share its achievements as it relates to landscape protection.	C/P	
Encourage private individuals or philanthropic groups to donate easements on prime or historic farmland.	P	



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- ◆ **Agricultural Districts: A Tool for Protecting Local Agriculture.** American Farmland Trust, Landworks Volume V, Issue 3, Summer 2002.
- ◆ **Guide to Local Planning for Agriculture in New York.** American Farmland Trust.

Organizations and Programs

- ◆ **Trust for Public Land** - www.tpl.org
The Trust for Public Land is a national, nonprofit, land conservation organization that conserves land for people to enjoy as parks, community gardens, historic sites, rural lands, and other natural places, ensuring livable communities for generations to come.
- ◆ **The Open Space Institute** - www.osiny.org
The mission of OSI is to protect scenic, natural and historic landscapes to ensure public enjoyment, conserve habitats and sustain community character. *OSI* achieves its goals through land acquisition, conservation easements, special loan programs, and creative partnerships.
- ◆ **Scenic Hudson Farmland Protection Program** - www.scenichudson.org
Scenic Hudson has helped to protect more than 4,800 acres of working farmland in the Hudson Valley.

Funding Sources

- ◆ **Northeast Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) Sustainable Community Grants** - www.uvm.edu/~nesare/grats_scomm.htm

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STRATEGY 1.8

Develop a local fund for purposes of acquiring agricultural conservation easements on a purchase or lease basis

Timeframe

SHORT TERM
INTERMEDIATE
LONG TERM

Steps	Leadership Role (C/M/P)	Status (A/P/C)
Create an authority to administer funding provided by New York State from any impact mitigation legislation involved with Indian Land Claim settlements.	C	
Use bond financing supported by real estate transfer taxes to create a local fund for purpose of securing agricultural easements.	C	



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Resources

Documents

- ◆ **Fact Sheet 6: Farmland Preservation Techniques**
- ◆ **Dutchess County Agriculture and Farmland Protection Plan:**
www.co.dutchess.ny.us/Business/Agriculture/BUSagfund.pdf
- ◆ **Circular 1500, Article 25AAA—Agriculture and Farmland Protection Programs.** NYS Ag & Markets Law.
- ◆ **Standard Conservation Easement.** NYS Department of Ag & Markets.

Organizations and Programs

- ◆ **The NYS Department of State Division of Local Government** - www.dos.state.ny.us/lgss/
This division provides training and technical assistance to local governments and community organizations throughout the state and helps local officials solve problems involving basic powers and duties, public works, municipal organization, planning, land use and regulatory controls, and community development. One of the goals of the Division is to serve as a "one-stop-shop" for New York local governments. Local officials can request assistance through e-mail on this Web site.
- ◆ **Monroe County Farmland Protection Resource Center** - www.growmonroe.com
In addition to an executive summary of the Monroe County Farmland Protection Plan, the Resource Center offers information on alternative farming, census of agriculture, information on foot and mouth disease, greenhouse report, right to farm laws, and links to other related websites
- ◆ **The NYS Department of Agriculture & Markets** - www.agmkt.state.ny.us/
The Agriculture and markets department fosters a competitive food and agriculture industry to benefit producers and consumers alike.
- ◆ **Sullivan County Farmland Protection Board, Cornell Cooperative Extension** - counties.cce.cornell.edu/sullivan
One of the main duties of the Farmland Protection Board is to carry out the recommendations and strategies that are identified in the Sullivan County Agriculture and Farmland Protection Plan.
- ◆ **Sullivan County Farm Bureau CCE** - counties.cce.cornell.edu/sullivan
The Cornell Cooperative Extension educational system enables people to improve their lives and communities through partnerships that put experience and research knowledge to work.
- ◆ **Sullivan County Area Farmers Market** - sullivancountyfarmersmarkets.org
Local markets located throughout Sullivan County allow farmers to sell directly to their customers. The Sullivan County Area Farmers' Markets (SCAFM) rules assure you that the items for sale are grown, produced, reared, caught, brewed, pickled, baked, smoked, processed or hand-crafted by the vendor. All of the items for sale are local since we require the goods to be produced within a 75-mile radius of Sullivan County. Thus, when you shop the farmers' markets you help to support the local economy.
- ◆ **USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, Farm Bill Conservation Provisions**
www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/farmbill/2002/index.html

Funding Sources

- ◆ **Northeast Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) Sustainable Community Grants** - www.uvm.edu/~nesare/grats_scomm.htm

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STRATEGY 1.9

Structure a simple transfer of development rights (TDR) program and broker it to prospective farmers and developers

Timeframe

SHORT

INTERMEDIATE

LONGTERM

Steps	Leadership Role (C/M/P)	Status (A/P/C)
Develop simple and practical model TDR language for use in Town and Village zoning laws – a model based upon transfer at the time of development approval rather than development rights “banks.”	C	
Inventory farmland warranting use of conservation easements and identify interested landowners for purposes of matching them with developers of other parcels in designated growth areas and maximizing TDR potential	C	



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Resources

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- ◆ **Agricultural Districts: A Tool for Protecting Local Agriculture.** American Farmland Trust, Landworks Volume V, Issue 3, Summer 2002.
- ◆ **Guide to Local Planning for Agriculture in New York.** American Farmland Trust.

Organizations and Programs

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Funding Sources

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STRATEGY 1.10

Develop planning and zoning programs that offer incentives for agricultural conservation

Timeframe

SHORT TERM

INTERMEDIATE

LONG TERM

Steps	Leadership Role (C/M/P)	Status (A/P/C)
Develop a "farm-friendly checklist" for use by towns in evaluating land use regulations for impacts on agriculture.	C/P	
Craft model language, encouraging agricultural development, for use in local land use regulations.	C/P	
Assist land owners with use of conservation subdivision techniques that protect the viable farm unit while developing excess acreage as a source of equity or retirement income.	C/P	



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Resources

Documents

- ◆ **Fact Sheet 7: Local Laws and Agricultural Districts**
- ◆ **NEMO Open Space Fact Sheet T3 - Transfer of Development Rights: An Innovative Preservation Technique**
- ◆ **NEMO Open Space Fact Sheet T2 - Conservation Easements**
- ◆ **NEMO Open Space Fact Sheet T4 - Conservation Compacts: A Practical Approach to Natural Resource Protection**
- ◆ **NEMO Open Space Fact Sheet T5 - Historic Overview: Subdivision Open Space Dedication**
- ◆ **NEMO Open Space Fact Sheet T5a - Open Space Dedication Regulations**

Organizations and Programs

- ◆ **The NYS Department of State Division of Local Government** - www.dos.state.ny.us/lgss/
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- ◆ **The Pace Law School, Land Use Law Center** - www.pace.edu/lawschool/landuse/
The Land Use Law Center is dedicated to fostering the development of sustainable communities in New York State.
- ◆ **The Trust for Public Land** - www.tpl.org
The Trust for Public Land is a national, nonprofit, land conservation organization that conserves land for people to enjoy as parks, community gardens, historic sites, rural lands, and other natural places, ensuring livable communities for generations to come.
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Scenic Hudson has helped to protect more than 4,800 acres of working farmland in the Hudson Valley. Scenic Hudson is an environmental organization and land trust working to protect, preserve and restore the Hudson River and its riverfront as a public and natural resource.

Funding Sources

- ◆ **Northeast Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) Sustainable Community Grants:** www.uvm.edu/~nesare/grats_scomm.htm
- ◆ **New York State Energy Research & Development Authority, Agricultural Incentives**
<http://www.nyserda.org/incentives.asp#Agricultural>

Other

- ◆ **Agriculture and Markets Law.** Article 25AA - Agricultural Districts

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STRATEGY 1.11

Provide educational and technical assistance to farmers in estate and retirement planning as a way to facilitate farm transfers to younger generations.

Timeframe

*SHORT TERM
INTERMEDIATE
LONG TERM*

Steps	Leadership Role (C/M/P)	Status (A/P/C)
Conduct retirement and estate planning seminars in cooperation with Cornell Cooperative Extension	P	
Support farm transfers with business and financial planning programs, using the County for technical assistance	P/C	



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Resources

Documents

- ◆ **Fact Sheet 8: 9 Business-Succession Planning Mistakes to Avoid**
- ◆ **Fact Sheet 9: Estate Planning**
- ◆ **Guide to Local Planning for Agriculture in New York.** American Farmland Trust.
- ◆ **What You Need to Know to Keep Your Farm in the Family**, Alvig, Mark R. & Petracek, Thomas M., CafePress (March 2005.)

Organizations and Programs

- ◆ **Sullivan County Cornell Cooperative Extension Agriculture Program** - counties.cce.cornell.edu/sullivan
The Cornell Cooperative Extension educational system enables people to improve their lives and communities through partnerships that put experience and research knowledge to work.
- ◆ **Sullivan County Soil and Water Conservation District** - sullivanswcd.iaswcd.org
Sullivan County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) is a governmental subdivision of Indiana. It is responsible for carrying out practices and programs that promote the conservation of our soil, water and related natural resources within the county. By working in partnership with Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and the Department of Natural Resources-Division of Soils (DNR), this purpose is carried out by providing technical assistance, cost-share opportunities and educational programs.
- ◆ **Sullivan County Area Farmers Market** - sullivancountyfarmersmarkets.org
Local markets located throughout Sullivan County allow farmers to sell directly to their customers. The Sullivan County Area Farmers' Markets (SCAFM) rules assure you that the items for sale are grown, produced, reared, caught, brewed, pickled, baked, smoked, processed or hand-crafted by the vendor. All of the items for sale are local since we require the goods to be produced within a 75-mile radius of Sullivan County. Thus, when you shop the farmers' markets you help to support the local economy.
- ◆ **The NYS Department of Agriculture & Markets** - www.agmkt.state.ny.us
The Agriculture and Markets department fosters a competitive food and agriculture industry to benefit producers and consumers alike.
- ◆ **Cooperative State Research, Education and Extension Service** - www.csrees.usda.gov (Search Estate Planning)
- ◆ **New York FarmLink** - New York FarmLink is a sister program with NYFarmNet in the [Department of Applied Economics and Management at Cornell University](http://www.nyfarmlink.org) - for more information: www.nyfarmlink.org

Funding Sources

- ◆ **New York State Energy Research & Development Authority, Agricultural Incentives** <http://www.nyserda.org/incentives.asp#Agricultural>

Policy Area I
Open Space and Natural Resource Management

Goal:

Encourage the use of sustainable forest management techniques and practices by forest landowners.

STRATEGY 1.12

Work with forestry professionals and organizations that provide educational programs and activities to educate and support forest landowners in Sullivan County.

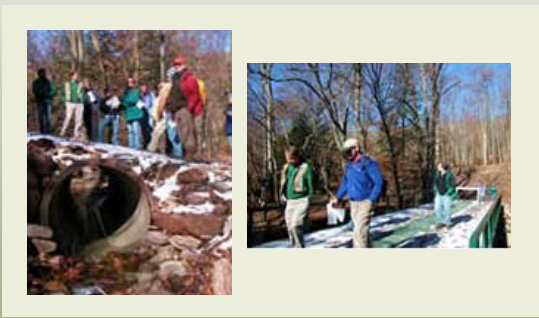
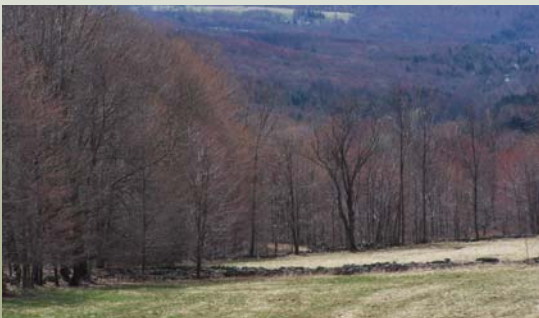
Timeframe

SHORT TERM

INTERMEDIATE

LONG TERM

Steps	Leadership Role (C/M/P)	Status (A/P/C)
Contact and establish relationships with organizations like the Cornell Cooperative Extension, Catskill Forest Association, New York Forest Owners Association, and the Watershed Forestry Program in Sullivan County.	C	
Incorporate forestry professionals into open space planning activities.	C	
Develop educational materials and an outreach program such as classes and seminars with professionals and organizations identified above.	C/P	
Identify and inventory forest landowners to provide targeted educational programs.	C	
Create a county map to reflect municipal priorities.	C	
Distribute educational materials to forest land owners and the general public about the importance of maintaining a viable forest industry for the environmental and economic well-being of Sullivan County.	C/M/P	



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Resources

Documents

- ◆ **“Planning Your Forest’s Future”** Forest Stewardship Circular #6. Natural Resources Extension, Pennsylvania State University.
- ◆ **“Watershed Management”** Forest Stewardship Circular #10. Natural Resources Extension, Pennsylvania State University.
- ◆ **“Earning Income From Your Forestland”** Forest Stewardship Circular #11. Natural Resources Extension, Pennsylvania State University.
- ◆ Sustainable Forestry Demonstration—A Virtual Tour of the Cornell University Arnot Teaching and Research Forest
<http://www.dnr.cornell.edu/ext/forestrypage/sfda/index.htm>

Organizations and Programs

- ◆ **Forestry Extension Program** - www.dnr.cornell.edu/ext/forestrypage/index.htm
This program through Cornell Cooperative Extension provides leadership statewide for educational, research-based programs that address the stewardship and sustainable productions needs associated with the management of private, non-industrial forestland.
- ◆ **NY Master Forest Owner/COVERTS Program** - www.dnr.cornell.edu/ext/mfo/
The COVERTS Program provides forest owners of NY State with the information and encouragement necessary to manage their forest holdings.
- ◆ **Watershed Agricultural Council Forestry Program** - www.nycwatershed.org supports the economic viability of agriculture and forestry through the protection of water quality and the promotion of land conservation in the New York City watershed region.
- ◆ **New York Forest Owners Association (NYFOA)** - www.nyfoa.org consists of members who volunteer their time and resources to promote stewardship of private forests, with the not-for-profit group consisting mainly of landowners.
- ◆ **Forest Stewardship Program** - na.fs.fed.us/stewardship/index.shtm
The USDA Forest Service of the Northeastern Area will provide interested landowners with advice regarding the trees, plants, flowers, wildlife, soil, water and the aesthetic value of their property. The advice may also include information on habitat projects, timber sales, and tree planting.
- ◆ **Catskill Forest Association (CFA)** - www.catskillforest.org
The CFA is a non- profit organization dedicated to enhancing all aspects of the forest in New York's Catskill region.
- ◆ **Pennsylvania Forest Stewardship Program** - paforeststewards.cas.psu.edu/Pubs.html
This program provides free resources online. Publication topics include, but are not limited to: timber markets, invasive species and forest management.

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Goal:

Encourage the use of sustainable forest management techniques and practices by forest landowners.

STRATEGY 1.13

Educate municipal officials about the importance of maintaining a viable forest industry to the well-being of Sullivan County.

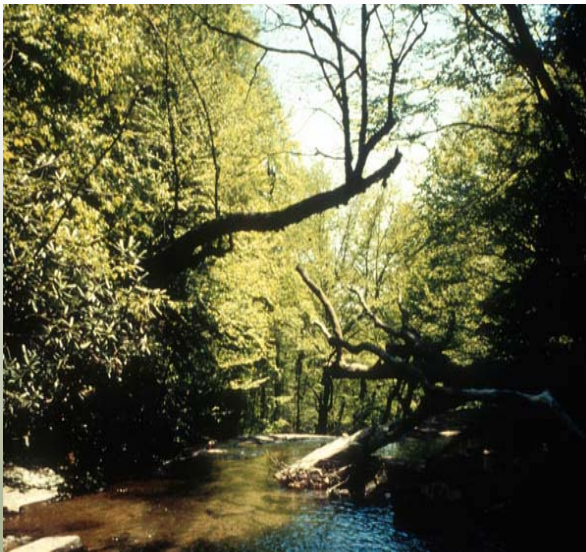
Timeframe

SHORT TERM

INTERMEDIATE

LONG TERM

Steps	Leadership Role (C/M/P)	Status (A/P/C)
Develop a forestry education program targeted to municipal officials.	C/P	
Share model local laws that regulate forest industry practices that are viable and sustainable.	C/P	
Develop a website that serves as a clearinghouse for forestry issues.	C/P	



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Resources

Documents

- ◆ **“Timber Harvesting: An Essential Management Tool”** - Forest Stewardship Circular #7. Natural Resources Extension, Pennsylvania State University.
- ◆ **“Sustainable Forest Harvesting: An Economic Perspective”** - Forest Finance Circular#1. Natural Resources Extension, Pennsylvania State University.
- ◆ **“Understanding and Conserving Biological Wealth in Our Forests”** - Forest Stewardship Circular #9. Natural Resources Extension, Pennsylvania State University.
- ◆ **A Forest Landowner’s Guide to the Internet:** <http://na.fs.fed.us/pubs/misc/flg/>

Organizations and Programs

- ◆ **Forestry Extension Program** - www.dnr.cornell.edu/ext/forestrypage/index.htm
This program through Cornell Cooperative Extension provides leadership statewide for educational, research-based programs that address the stewardship and sustainable productions needs associated with the management of private, non-industrial forestland.
- ◆ **NY Master Forest Owner/COVERTS Program** - www.dnr.cornell.edu/ext/mfo/
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- ◆ **New York Forest Owners Association (NYFOA)** - www.nyfoa.org consists of members who volunteer their time and resources to promote stewardship of private forests, with the not-for-profit group consisting mainly of landowners.
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