

THE SHADE TREE

A BI-MONTHLY BULLETIN DEVOTED TO NEW JERSEY'S SHADE TREES

Volume 96 – November - December 2023 – Issue 11 & 12

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BULLETIN OF THE NEW JERSEY SHADE TREE FEDERATION

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DIRECTOR'S DISCOURSE

By Richard Wolowicz

As I look back at 2023, I cannot imagine as to how quickly it zoomed by. I was just getting used to writing 2023 on documents. Personally, the year brought many changes...some good and some not so good. However, we persevere...just like the many trees we see. Some are in great shape; others are not so great and others make us scratch our heads and ask how and why they survive. Resiliency is wonderful.

It has been just a few shorts weeks since our 98th Annual Conference. From what I have heard and seen, it was a wonderful event with great speakers and great attendance. Yes, there were some hiccups and we continue to strive to address those issues to put together an even better event that keeps improving in quality and content. There were many, many people who helped organize, put together and 'work the meeting' to keep things rolling along. This is another example of resiliency and to produce a successful meeting. I would like to thank the speakers, the program committee, the executive board, the Rutgers students, our Partners, Sponsors and Exhibitors in addition to the many volunteers who rolled up their sleeves and pitched in. Needless to say, the diligent and well-organized talents that Emily Farschon possesses made the administrative issues minimal.

I invite you to complete a conference feedback survey at: <https://forms.gle/hg9oAdrvS2DGxWfp7>

My wish to you and your families is to have a great Holiday Season and best wishes for a wonderful New Year!

CONGRATULATIONS DELRAN!

The Township of Delran was selected as the 2023 William J. Porter Community Tree Project Award Winner. NJ Shade Tree Federation President Pam Zipse presented the award to Al Carp of Delran on October 26, 2023, at the NJ Shade Tree Federation's 98th Annual Conference.

The William J. Porter Community Tree Project Award is intended to provide up-front funding for a small project to benefit the tree resource in your community. The Federation review committee noted that this year's applicant response was exceptional. Thank you to all the NJ towns & organizations who applied.

The Federation recognizes Delran as the 2023 winner and is pleased to share the following details of the application written by Debra Hammond / Al Carp on behalf of the Township of Delran:

This project consists of planting Kindergarten Groves with the classes of 2036 & 2037. Kindergarteners and families participate in spring plantings. The kids learn about trees and get to return for their annual photos.



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CONGRATULATIONS DELRAN!

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We will select the trees from Fernbrook Nursery with assistance from our community forester, Barry Emmens. We have a group of dedicated volunteers that will assist with the tree planting, and of course a teacher that is great with kids.

The goal of this project is for the kids to be involved and vested in the trees. We started in April 2023 and the kids named their trees. This is a tradition we'd like to continue in other various parks.

Funds requested for 2 years of: tree materials, signage, watering devices, tree tag manufacturing materials.

The tree tags are made at the High School fabrication lab. Tags include the species, common name, and year planted.

The review committee noted that Delran's project demonstrated a devotion to providing trees for the next generation and fostering an appreciation of trees in their community's children and families. In addition to being a stellar example of community engagement, The Delran project is, as multiple board members agreed, "adorable." NJ Shade Tree Federation is proud to support Delran's efforts.

FRANK GALLAGHER NAMED AS RECIPIENT OF THE WILLIAM J PORTER AWARD OF APPRECIATION

Every year, the NJ Shade Tree Federation has the privilege of acknowledging someone who has made great contributions to tree management, arboriculture, ecology, tree care, and/or urban forestry. This distinctive honor is made by the presentation of the William J. Porter Award of Appreciation. It is fitting to acknowledge our new honoree with the namesake of another person who has made countless achievements in the environment which specifically supports the tree industry.

This year, our awardee is Frank Gallagher, an Associate Professor at Rutgers University and former member of the NJ Shade Tree Federation's Board of Directors.

Frank Gallagher has long been a force for quality education and perspective to the benefit of students, teachers and volunteers in conservation and land management. His efforts have had impacts at the international, national and state levels. He has worked for years with the Project Learning Tree Program which gets environmental education plans and tools into teachers classrooms and he also has been involved with the Sustainable Forestry Initiative for years.

He has long deep ties to the conservation communities in New Jersey, not least of which is the NJ Shade Tree Federation, where he served as a board member



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FRANK GALLAGHER NAMED AS RECIPIENT OF THE WILLIAM J PORTER AWARD OF APPRECIATION

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for several years. His work, his support and his mentorship have etched a deep imprint for the betterment of environmentalists of all ages and all levels of engagement for decades.

Congratulations Frank!

CALL FOR PAPERS: NJ SHADE TREE FEDERATION 99TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE

The Federation's mission is to assist individuals and agencies entrusted with the selection, planting, and care of trees. We are continuously seeking quality educators who hold the latest and greatest information, ideas, and techniques regarding tree care, maintenance, management, analytics, community forestry, and more.

If you are a scientific or industry professional, professor, tree expert, or leader in commercial/municipal/utility arboriculture, please submit a proposal for consideration as a speaker at the NJ Shade Tree Federation's 99th Annual Conference.

TO ANSWER THE CALL:

Email: TREES@NJSTF.ORG

- At a minimum, provide a brief write-up of your proposed topic(s), supporting research and/or information, qualifications & experience in public speaking. If your presentation is a duplication, kindly note the conference/course, dates, and hosting agency at which your talk was previously presented.
- Conference sessions are standardly 1 hour in length.
- Talks formatted as 10-15 "mini-presentations," or workshop-style sessions may be considered.



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STORMWATER REMOVAL/REPLACEMENT ORDINANCE

The DEP Municipal Stormwater Program has extended the due date for municipalities to adopt a tree removal/replacement ordinance to May 1, 2024.

On 12/9/22, the NJ Department of Environmental Protection's (DEP) Municipal Stormwater Permitting Program revised the Tier A Municipal Stormwater General Permit. This permit authorizes the discharge of stormwater from small municipal separate storm sewers.

The revised permit required municipalities to adopt and enforce a community-wide ordinance covering tree removal/ replacement if they did not already have an ordinance that met the requirements.

To assist municipalities in adopting an ordinance, the DEP Municipal Stormwater Program planned to develop a model tree removal/replacement ordinance. The model tree removal/replacement ordinance has been drafted and was recently finalized.

Direct link to Model Tree Removal-Replacement Ordinance pdf: [model-tree-removalreplacement-final-2023.pdf](#) (nj.gov)

Municipal Stormwater Regulation Program webpage: <https://dep.nj.gov/njdesstormwater/municipal-stormwater-regulation-program/>

Editors' note: Many communities in our state may already have a tree removal/replacement ordinance and or a tree removal permit system in place. Thus, this project may have entailed a review and revision instead of an original ordinance adoption.

Knowledge of existing ordinances, collaborative efforts, and communication between shade tree commissions and municipal engineering/planning/public works departments is always important for long-standing, sustainable shade tree programs.

Communicating through designated liaisons is an efficient, effective, and respectful way to foster supportive relationships between volunteers and municipal departments. Communities working under a "Community Forestry Management Plan" may have existing shade tree workflow chart.

What's a Community Forestry Management Plan? Read about the NJ Urban & Community Forestry Program online here:

<https://www.nj.gov/dep/parksandforests/forest/urbanandcommunity/>



THE PHYSICIAN FOR THE FOREST

Interview by Timothy A. Schuler
Nature Conservancy, Winter 2023

In the Blue Ridge Mountains of North Carolina, Greg Cooper pilots an experimental treatment regimen to restore the health of the oak and hickory ecosystem.

What was your path to forestry?

I grew up in upstate New York, in a small town outside of Albany. I was really interested in reptiles and amphibians. My dad [and I] would do frog-calling surveys. We'd listen to get a sense of how many frogs were in an area, and a huge decline in amphibian populations was observable even in that time.

After undergrad, I served in Paraguay for two years as an environmental action volunteer working with small landholder farmers, implementing sustainable ag projects. Working in an agricultural economy and seeing how land was being converted in a pretty major way was also superformative.

The pairing of those two things—the biodiversity crisis and the conversion of a forest and the impacts that had on biodiversity — was a natural lead-in to forestry.

You're now a forest ecologists with The Nature Conservancy in western North Carolina. What makes the forest there unique and important to preserve?

From a historical perspective, this is the cradle of forestry in America. The first foresters were trained right in our backyard, not even half a from where I live right now. Ecologically and biologically, this is an incredible biodiverse region. It has the highest salamander biodiversity in the world. There's a high amount of diversity of aquatic species. The number of tree species is overwhelming; I still don't know them all. The most interesting ecotype that we work with, and the biggest, is our oak/hickory forest, [which] is incredibly important for biodiversity because of the food that oaks and hickories provide for wildlife. We need oaks to keep the forest fed.

What are the biggest threats facing the region?

The biggest threat is the decline of oaks. Period. In our forests right now mature oak trees are the dominant tree species—if you're looking up [at the canopy]. If you're looking down, you don't see any of those oaks regenerating to become the next oak forest. [There is an overgrown midstory of maples and poplars that are overcrowding the forest.] Oaks have become less competitive because of the history of fire suppression. Before Europeans arrived in this landscape, Indigenous populations burned the woods. They burned it for safety, for hunting, for gathering chestnuts. When we started putting more value on timber, we sought to suppress fire. We wanted to protect timber value. But by doing that, we sort of flipped the forest to favor a whole other suite of trees.



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THE PHYSICIAN FOR THE FOREST

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Why this is really concerning is that we are facing a transition from an oak-hickory forest to one that's probably going to be comminated by maple and poplar. That's really concerning from a biodiversity standpoint but also from a climate-change perspective. A poplar or a maple will use up to four times the amount of water as an oak. We have a lot of aquatic biodiversity in our steams; we have people who depend on that water for drinking water. Having a forest that uses more water means less water for everything else.

Tell me about the work you're doing to combat this trend.

Most of my work is happening at the Silver Run Preserve. It's a 1,400-acre property that was donated to TNC in 2004. What we're doing right now is treating mid-story trees. These are the trees that have been able to compete because there hasn't been fire in the landscape. We go out with hatchets and little spray bottles of herbicide and we direct inject it into specific tree species to knock them down, to allow more light into the forest and allow oak seedlings to recruit. Then we're combining [those] silviculture treatments with controlled fire. We currently have 700 acres of controlled-] burn plots, some of which have been burned twice, some of which have been burned once, [and already] we're getting more light and an immediate flush of herbaceous diversity. We're getting a lot more berry species, more wildflowers.

These methods have been described as experimental. How new is the approach?

For us in this area, it's very new. There hasn't been a clear answer to the issue of oak regeneration, so in that way it is experimental. There aren't very many people doing it, and definitely not at the scale that we are. We're aiming for 900 acres over three years.

Over time, just using controlled fire will likely be able to [produce] the same effects. It's expensive to go out there acre by acre and treat these trees, but in theory, it should be a onetime thing. It's kind of like a surgery that corrects the problem. The fire will be the annual checkup.

With controlled burns, you need a workforce that's flexible because conditions completely dictate whether you're going to burn that day or not. How have you built that workforce?

We've been using fire in the mountains for about 20 years now. It's a relatively new thing. And TNC has played a big role in that through the Fire Learning Network. We have a 23-person, on-call fire crew. We hire them every year. They're people who retired from agency work; sometimes they're new people looking to get into the fire profession. That fire crew will [perform] 10 to 20 controlled fires a year, which is a ton. We work on TNC properties, but we also go out to federal properties, state properties and across state lines as well. It's a really innovative model that is being replicated across the country.

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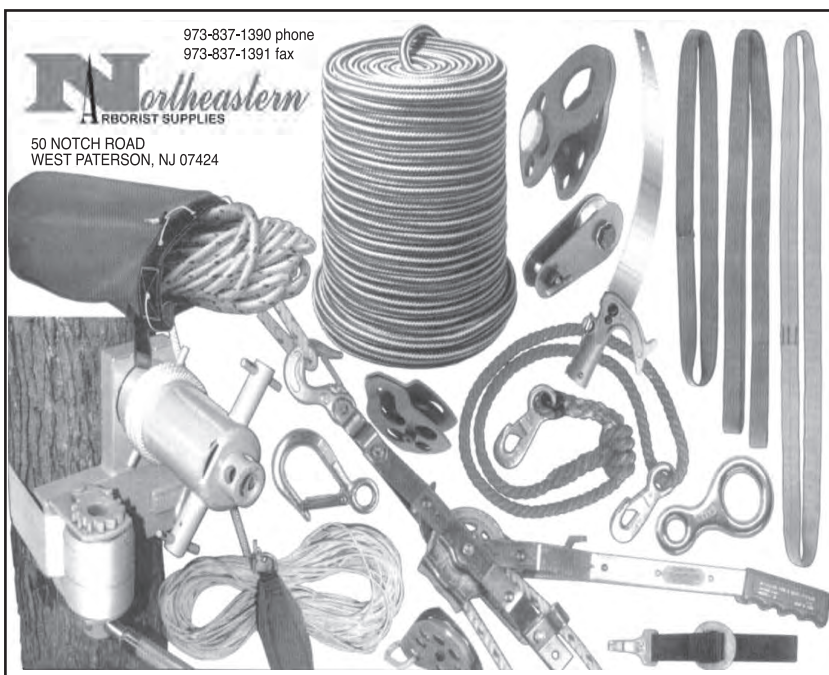
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THE PHYSICIAN FOR THE FOREST

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What are you learning as you carry out these treatments?

We have plots at Silver Run [where] we're doing forest management treatments, and some that have been burned along, and some that haven't been burned at all. What we're able to do with these monitoring plots is to see: Are we changing the forest density? Are we changing the forest's fuel characteristic in regards to wildfire danger: Are we achieving what we're hoping to achieve? We will be able to answer those questions withing five to 10 years.

People working climate issues sometimes talk about the weight of the work on their shoulders. How do you handle that burden?

It's incredibly stressful. Like, I talk about the extirpation of the American chestnut, and I see the next thing coming our way. Our forests have changed irreparably. But for me, getting down on the ground and doing the work is therapeutic. If I can have an impact on this onetenth-of-an-acre area, that's something.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS 2023

December 6, 2023: NJSTF Tree Talk – 7:00-8:30 pm, Zoom link to be sent to member email list in December.

October 17-18, 2024: NJ Shade Tree Federation 99th Annual Conference, Harrah's in Atlantic City, NJ

SEASON'S GREETINGS!

The Executive Board and Directors of the New Jersey Shade Tree Federation wish to thank everyone for their support over the past year. Best Wishes are being extended for a Happy Holiday Season. May the New Year be healthy, happy and prosperous to each and every one of you!



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