

# The Northeast Timber Contest Heats Up!

DEAN FAKLIS AND PETER SMALLIDGE

Forestry as a contact sport? Aggression in the woods? Maples pitted against oaks? Yes!—and it is proving to be a ton of fun for all involved. This article explores the experiences of four Timber Teams as they set out last spring to create their sample plots for the timber growing contest (*The New York Forest Owner* 51:2, March/April 2013). It's too early to know who is in the lead, since some teams across the northeast are still operating in stealth mode, but some teams we interviewed are already "talking trash."

Dale and Eileen Schaefer in Canadice, NY entered the hardwood basal area category with sample plots in the forest adjacent to their home. Oak, black cherry, and maple grow on good soil there and years of excellent TSI work is paying big dividends to the Schaefer's entry. "The contest rules were easy to follow and implement in the woods," Dale mentioned. He continued, "There was essentially no cost since we used spray paint for marking and it only took a half day to create the plots and perform the measurements. I was skeptical at first, but it really was fun to create the plots and make the tally chart." When asked about their chances of winning,

Dale smiled and offered exuberantly, "100%. We know how to grow trees here!"

Josh, Jeff, and Ed Piestrak in Lindley, NY entered the basal area category in a 40-acre stand of oak, maple, and ash, which has been actively improved over the years. The area had been clear cut some 50 years ago and the regeneration was great. Their team consists of three generations of Piestraks and their forester Bruce Robinson, with 18-year-old Josh in the lead position. "We used a tape measure to lay out the plots and we identified the trees with paint and numbered aluminum tags that my Dad (Jeff) made. My Grandfather and Dad made the tree measurements with a logging tape and I recorded the data. Our three plots had 111, 66, and 62 square feet of basal area per acre, respectively, and there were 67 trees in the 111 sq. ft. plot. I definitely enjoyed it and we had a great time as a family in the woods. I think we have a very good shot at winning." Soon, Bruce will be joining the Piestraks in the woods to make additional measurements so they can enter the board-foot volume category this year. Josh thinks they may also enter the seedling height growth category too. Josh will be

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Josh (L.) and Jeff (R.) Piestrak, armed with measurement tools, show off some fine timber along the NY-PA border.

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## Timber Contest (continued)

attending Penn State next fall and plans to study forestry and surveying.

Kurt and Kristie Edwards in Mayfield, NY along with their foresters Erin O'Neill and Mike Federice entered the hardwood basal area and board-foot volume categories. Kurt and Kristie live in a log home on their 193 acres and they worked with Mike Greason to generate the initial management plan. "It was great to spend time in the woods together with Erin and Mike and we all got to know each other better. We worked as a team marking, measuring and collecting the data. We discussed TSI strategies and forest health. Teams consisting of landowners and foresters with the common goal of growing quality timber in a fun environment is really a good idea. Annual forest measurement takes the guess work out of growing timber." Team Edwards has a great site to work with and also used numbered aluminum tags to identify trees. Their children and grandchildren have shown interest in the contest and one of their sons might participate this coming year in the seedling height growth category.

Team Springwater consists of one of us (Dean), Julie Faklis and NYS DEC Forester Brice June. Six 1/4-acre sample plots were created in two different stands in Springwater, NY; hardwood and softwood. The hardwood stand includes red oak, ash, maple and black cherry in an area heavily high-graded ten years ago. The stems aren't all that pretty, but the site is good and the oaks are taking off. Plot centers were chosen randomly and trees were marked and measured by Brice. In terms of basal area, 133, 120, 134 square feet per acre was measured in the three plots. And yes...there is a lot of TSI work that is needed in there! Brice also measured the number of logs in thirty of the trees so that we could enter the board-foot volume category. Among those trees, volume ranged from 23 to 548 board feet, International scale.

It looks like Team Springwater's softwood entry is headed for last place. Three plots were arranged in a dense plantation of red pine; 240, 212, 177 sq. ft. per acre, basal area. Julie and I (Dean) created the plots, marked the trees and made the measurements. It was fun to get out in the woods as a couple and shoot the breeze while getting something done. Perhaps our trees will grow....or we'll find some use for them to make room for new stock. With paint on her fingers, a clipboard in her hand, and a smile on her face, Julie was overheard to say, "Dean, winning isn't everything, I'll still love you. But...I still want to win!"

The Timber Contest is fun and it's a great activity in the family forest, whether the forest is a few acres or a few hundred. The rules may look a bit complicated at first, but they're easy to understand and implement and we're always here to help the contestants. A tape measure, paint and a clipboard is really all that is needed to start. So grab the family, grab your tools and maybe even grab your favorite forester and get in the woods to start growing high quality timber!

Rules are located at: [http://www2.dnr.cornell.edu/ext/timbercontest/Timber\\_Contest.pdf](http://www2.dnr.cornell.edu/ext/timbercontest/Timber_Contest.pdf)

Send us a note anytime with questions about the contest and we'll be happy to help get you up and running (dfaklis@frontiernet.net). Also, please send us stories about your Timber Contest experiences! 🌲

*Dean Faklis is a tree farmer in Springwater, NY. Peter J Smallidge is NY Extension Forester, CCE.*

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