

The Northeast Timber Growing Contest

DEAN FAKLIS AND PETER SMALLIDGE

Engaging in friendly competition can be a fun way to focus the mind on an important challenge. Improving the long-term productivity and health of small private woodlands in the northeastern forest is vitally important to our ecosystem and economy. As a result, we have developed a set of guidelines for a friendly contest to help woodland owners grow high-quality trees.

The Timber Contest has been designed to foster strong relationships between landowners and forestry professionals in a process that includes mutual education, research, technology transfer, and fun for the entire family. Some of the objectives for the contest are:

- To educate and motivate landowners to improve the productivity and quality of their woodlands
- To develop and implement new technologies for growing and managing timber, which are appropriate for small woodlots
- To create a perpetual focal point for landowners that envisions involvement from multiple generations within their families, highlighting youth involvement
- To provide a new mechanism to strengthen peer-to-peer relationships between landowners
- To bring together forestry organizations and stakeholders, across the entire northeastern US, for a common purpose

in all four seasons is rewarding, and increasing the volume and quality of timber in your woodlands increases the value of your asset. Your forest is part of your legacy and you'll want to leave your heirs or future owners with healthy and productive timberland. In the bigger picture, private landowners play a crucial role in the overall health of the northeastern forest, since they dominate forest ownership.

Following the contest guidelines published at www.TimberContest.com, forest owners may team-up with forestry professionals to take an active role in growing timber and wood volume. Timber stand improvement, site enhancement, and the providing of water and nutrients are some of the tools that might be used to increase productivity and timber quality. Area

and volume measurements are taken at the beginning and at regular time intervals. Seedling counts are also taken for those interested in advanced forest regeneration. The contest has many winners over time consistent with the rules and has no end date; it is expected to continue in perpetuity.

There is no minimum acreage other than the acreage needed to install measurement plots. There are categories for hardwoods and conifers. For those that want to participate but do not own forest land, such as 4-H or school groups, they may join a team with an eligible landowner. It's important to remember, that in the big scheme of things, we're all amateurs with the same goals and love of the forest. There is assistance at every step and we'll all try to help each other produce great results.



Measurements are made periodically to gauge timber growth. Please see the contest rules at <http://www.timbercontest.com/> for more details on measurement methods.

Being in your woods with your family



Teamwork is an important component of the contest and strong relationships enhance learning opportunities. A forester and landowner can work together to grow timber and knowledge.

But what do the winners win? There will be awards, written articles, news stories, and numerous other forms of "bragging rights" conferred. Most importantly, all participants will "win" the fun and enjoyment of being with their families and friends in the outdoors doing something special for their woodlands. And increasing the quality and size of your timber will flow to the bottom line when your plans call for a timber harvest!

We would like to thank NYFOA and its Restore NY Woodlands

initiative and the Cornell University Department of Natural Resources for their kind support. Please visit www.TimberContest.com for more details. Initial measurements are needed by April 15, 2013 so get the team together, grab the snowshoes, and head into the woods! 🏔️

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