



THE
EDWARD L. ROSE CONSERVANCY

Conservancy Currents



Winter is on its way!

November 2014

Dear Friend,

As Thanksgiving approaches, I start to think about what I will say when we are sitting around the dinner table it is my turn to give thanks. What am I thankful for? It is an easy question, really. I am thankful for a wonderful family and good health. I am also very thankful for the place I live. This area is so beautiful. We enjoy clean air and water and beautiful open space. This is where people come to "get away from it all".

We hope that you have a wonderful Thanksgiving holiday filled with family and friends. We also hope that you will continue to support our work of protecting this wonderful place.

My best,
Kris Ely

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Living With A Conservation Easement

Last month, we talked about harvesting timber on lands protected by a conservation easement. This month, I'd like to discuss quarrying. This area is well known for Bluestone. It is a beautiful stone in high demand.



Thus, there are quarries all over the region in all sizes. So what happens to those quarries when an easement is placed on a property?

When quarries already exist on a property at the time an easement is donated, those quarries may still be allowed to exist and operate. They may be limited to the current size and may require reclamation once they are finished producing. That is, the easement may require the landowner to backfill some of the quarry to reduce steep slopes and/or plant trees to minimize erosion.

In other instances, a landowner may not have an active quarry but may know of a stone deposit they would like to quarry. While the Conservancy would like to discourage extraction, we are willing to work with the landowner. In those cases, the landowner and Conservancy may decide to exclude the area from the easement acreage. In other cases, the landowner may be allowed to quarry gravel or other stone from an area covered by the easement only if that stone or gravel is used on the property.

As with most issues on an easement-protected property, quarrying or other extraction must be analyzed on a case-by-case basis. The bottom line is that large scale quarrying would not be allowed under a conservation easement, as it is counter productive to the conservation values of the property. However, in limited cases, some extraction may be allowed.

Next month, the “Living with a Conservation Easement” topic is up to you. Email me your questions (kristinaely@gmail.com). I will address the most popular topic from our readers.

Wild Things In Your Woodlands

Black bear (*Ursus americanus*)

Most New York and Pennsylvania black bears are black, although they are occasionally a cinnamon color. The muzzle is tinged with tan, and often bears will have a white blaze on the chest. The fur is thick, long, and soft, and males and females are similar in color. Males, called boars, are larger and heavier than

females (sows). In New York, adult males average about 300 pounds and adult female weigh about 170 pounds. Impressively, Pennsylvania has some of the largest black bears in North America, with males averaging 500 pounds and females averaging 250 pounds. The largest bear reported from New York weighed about 750 pounds, and the heaviest black bear ever harvested in Pennsylvania weighed over 860 pounds! When standing on all four feet, black bears are less than 39 inches in height at the shoulder, and are seldom more than 78 inches long from tip of nose to the tip of the tail. Black bears are surprisingly agile; they can run up to 35 mph, climb trees and swim well. In the wild, black bears may live for 21-33 years, though the average age of harvested bears is much younger.

Black bears occur throughout New York State, though they are most abundant in the Adirondacks, the Catskills, and the southern tier along the border with Pennsylvania. In Pennsylvania, black bears occupy all but the southeastern corner and western border of the state, where urban and agricultural lands dominate. They commonly inhabit large, extensive blocks of forest. However, they are adaptable and use open and developed areas where thick cover and abundant food can be found nearby. Black bear habitat in both states has improved and significantly increased in area during the last 100 years because of reforestation following abandonment of agricultural lands.

As fall borders on winter, New York’s 8,000 black bears and Pennsylvania’s 18,000 black bears are finishing their fall feast, after eating heartily for months in preparation for dormancy. Though typically most active at dusk and dawn, during the fall they may feed for up to 20 hours a

day, ingesting up to 20,000 calories! Bears are omnivores, eating almost anything, from berries, corn, acorns, beechnuts and even grass, to table scraps, dead animals, honey and insects. In a recent study of fawn survival in Pennsylvania, bears surprisingly were a major predator of fawns, second only to coyotes.

As cold weather arrives, black bears end the feast and seek out den sites. Though black bears are not true hibernators, they usually undergo a dormant period during the winter. Typically, female bears enter a den during October or November, and males enter their dens in November or December. The winter den may be a hollow tree or log, a crevice in a rock ledge, a cavity under a large rock or beneath the roots of a tree, or a "nest" on top of the ground or under fallen trees or brush. Bears will also den in drainage culverts or a depression dug in the ground. Some bears line their dens with bark, grasses or leaves. Females often select more sheltered sites than males. Males den alone, as do pregnant females (they give birth in the den), and females with cubs born the previous winter den with their young. A dormant bear's heart rate and breathing slow, and its body temperature drops slightly. During this time, they do not eat, drink, or pass body waste, and may lose a quarter of their body weight. A dormant bear relies on stored fat to make it through the winter; however, they may emerge if they are disturbed. Males leave their dens in March or April. Females and their cubs leave their dens later than males, sometimes as late as May.

Female black bears generally become sexually mature between two and five years of age, and males become sexually mature at four to six years of age. Bears are polygamous and breeding occurs from late May until perhaps as late as September. Cubs are born at the end of January or early February. Litter size varies from one to five, with two or three being most common in New York and Pennsylvania. Cubs den with their mothers during their second winter and disperse as yearlings during the second spring or summer.

The black bear is a wide-ranging animal (adult females have a home range of 1 -15 square miles and adult males have a home range of 8-60 square miles), and few properties are large enough alone to provide all the black bears needs. However, private landowners can take steps to manage their woodlands to provide food and cover for this magnificent animal. Encouraging a diversity of mast-producing trees like oaks and beech, and berry-producing shrubs, like blueberries and blackberries, can provide food for bears living in the area or just passing through. Providing cover in addition to food can also benefit bears. Retaining trees with large cavities, specifically those at the base of trees, can provide good denning habitat. Leaving tree tops following a timber harvest, or fallen trees in un-harvested forests, can also supply denning cover.

Besides enhancing habitat in areas that bears might use, the best way to provide a safe environment for these animals is to avoid purposely feeding bears and remove access to garbage, bird feeders, pet food, livestock feed, and other attractants. Once bears find an easily meal they will return as long as food is available. The best way to stop a bear from coming into inhabited areas is to remove the food source for a month or

more, but even then, there are no guarantees. A persistent bear may damage property, increase the risk of human injury, or become an unwanted visitor in other parts of the neighborhood. Bears that associate people with food are more likely to be killed by vehicles, and may be killed to alleviate safety or nuisance concerns. Unfortunately, the old saying “a fed bear is a dead bear” does have much truth to it. By not feeding bears, landowners can do a great deal to guarantee their survival.

Additional information on about the black bear and wildlife damage issues can be found at

<http://wildlifecontrol.info/pubs/Documents/Bears/BlackBear.pdf> or

http://www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/black_bear/14343

Kristi Sullivan is wildlife biologist, Co-Director of the Conservation Education and Research Program, and Director of the New York Master Naturalist Program at Cornell University in the Department of Natural Resources.

Meet A Board Member

James Haley

James F. Haley, Jr. is an attorney practicing in New York State for 27 years and Pennsylvania for the past 18 years. Jim’s practice is quite broad and features real estate law, business law, corporate law, banking law, health care law and several other areas. Jim has practiced with Aswad & Ingraham in Binghamton since law school, and has been a partner there for about 20 years. He graduated from LeMoyne College and Georgetown University Law Center.



Jim has been married to his wonderful wife Denise for over twenty-four years and together they have three children, one each in grad school, college and high school. When not paying tuition, Jim likes a variety of outdoor activities including fly fishing, bow hunting and general nature study. He has enjoyed fishing at Silver Lake and Quaker Lake his whole life, progressing from worms and sunnies to home- made flies for rainbow trout. Jim also likes woodworking and is currently working on a blanket box made out of cherry for a high school graduation present for his daughter, who is a junior in college.

Upcoming Class

Check out this class offered by our Cornell partners:

Webinar: Join us for a webinar entitled “Your Woodland as Wildlife Habitat and a Source of Biodiversity”, presented by Kristi Sullivan on Wednesday, December 17th (live at noon and again at 7:00 pm). Participate from the comfort of your own home or office, on your own computer (high-speed internet access required).

Registration: Register by emailing Kristi Sullivan at kls20@cornell.edu. There is no fee to participate, however you must email by Sunday, December 14th to receive connection details.

Description:

Your Woodland as Wildlife Habitat and a Source of Biodiversity

They say ‘beauty is in the eye of the beholder’, and that certainly is the case when it comes to wildlife habitat. Animals, unlike people, tend to prefer ‘messy’ surroundings that provide good places to hide and abundant food items. Learn about the steps you can take to create better wildlife habitat and increase biodiversity, and how looking at your woodland as part of the surrounding landscape can help you make important management decisions.

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