



THE EDWARD L. ROSE CONSERVANCY



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Demise of the Northern Forests

American forests are under attack. Elm trees are nearly extinct due to the elm bark beetle; butternut canker disease has infected the white walnut; beeches are falling ill with beech bark and beech leaf disease; an iridescent green beetle called the emerald ash borer has laid waste to ash trees, such as the stand in the picture to the right. Sudden oak death, a pathogen, is coming for oak trees.

Not immune to this frontal assault are the hemlocks. The hemlock wooly adelgid (HWA) first appeared on our continent in the early years of the 20th century, hitching rides on plants imported from Japan. They quickly found a niche, feeding on starches stored in the hemlock's tissue, not the tree's sap. You can easily spot a HWA infestation by the cluster of white eggs arrayed on the needle underside of low hanging branches.



Natural predators in Asia kept the HWA in check. But in North America our native fauna has not evolved to treat HWA as food, and that evolution can take longer than the trees we care about today can withstand.

The infestation is being fought with pesticides, and in 1992 a beetle (*Sasajiscymnus tsugae* - see below) was discovered in Japan whose diet is exclusively HWA. Those beetles have been brought to the U.S. by the thousands and have been introduced as a non-chemical, biological attack dog.



This all comes at a time when planting trees as a panacea for climate change is an important strategy, so keeping them flourishing is of paramount importance. The nation's forests absorb about 9% of emitted carbon dioxide. When stricken trees die, they begin to reverse that process, slowly giving up their stored carbon back into the atmosphere. One key reason for the upsurge in the war on trees is the warming of the planet. Cold winters are

difficult for some pathogens to survive, but with increasingly moderate temperatures, the attackers are now getting a new lease on life.

Properties under the supervision of the E.L. Rose Conservancy have not escaped the threat. As the accompanying picture attest, if you have walked the property recently at the Highpoint Preserve, Longford Lake, or the Greenwood Sanctuary you will have noticed the evidence. Below are hemlocks under stress.

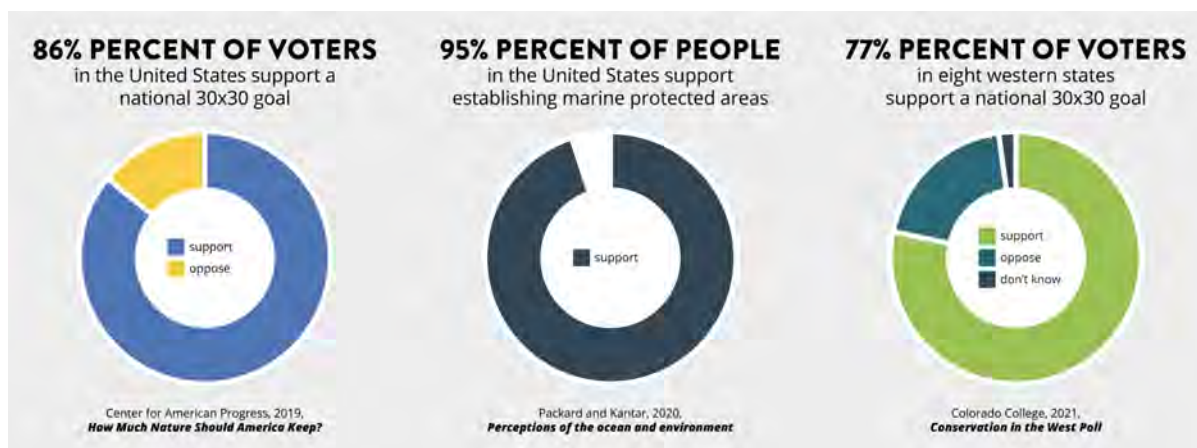


Not only does this broad die-off impact the entire ecosystem, it also can be a danger to anything below. Part of our mission as stewards includes removing dead trees, which we continue to do at significant expense—typically \$100 per tree. Your help in this regard is always appreciated.

30 x 30

If recent efforts at E.L. Rose to add to our stable of protected properties and easements is a barometer of how interest is growing across the nation to increase the focus on protecting private lands, it is not a movement that is necessarily universally supported.

On January 27, 2021, President Joseph R. Biden, Jr. signed an executive order “Tackling the Climate Crisis at Home and Abroad.” The order laid out a goal to conserve “at least 30 percent of our lands and waters by 2030.” A fact sheet from the Department of Interior stated that the amount of land under permanent protection at that moment was 12%.



The Biden order to protect 30% was not just an arbitrary metric. It followed a dictum from the U.N. Convention on Biological Diversity, which first suggested such a goal to be achieved worldwide by 2030. Some have gone even farther: the Center for American Progress, in 2019, argued that 50% should be the goal, by 2050.

The so-called “30x30” campaign relies primarily on private landowners and groups like E.L Rose to voluntarily add acreage into the forever-protected category. But the initiative has come under fire from many quarters. Already, more than half of Nebraska’s counties passed legislation opposing the measure and Governor Pete Ricketts signed his own Executive Order meant to halt the efforts. The Order focuses on the negative tax impact of protecting more land, and places an 18-month hold on expanding definitions of endangered species. It makes no reference to the underlying reason for Biden’s order—to address climate change as a pre-eminent challenge facing humanity.

The conservative-leaning lobbying group, American Stewards of Liberty, is at the forefront of the opposition to this so-called “land grab.” Although 30x30 is a voluntary effort, the opposition is anticipating that the goal will be impossible to reach without national legislation to force the issue.



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U.S. Senator Kevin Cramer



Heritage - Becky Norton-Dunlop



NE Governor Pete Ricketts



Frm. Sec. DOI, David Bernhardt



U. S. Rep. Lauren Boeert



ASL - Margaret Byfield

The 2022 National Conference brought together national leaders, State and local elected officials, and landowners from 22 States to learn more about how to protect America and our property rights from the 30x30 radical environmental agenda.

Despite such forces arrayed against the protection of private land to help mitigate the impact of development on further climate change, the “market” seems to be moving inexorably to accepting the notion that we don’t have all the time in the world to reverse the trend. In recent months, our organization has seen a significant uptick in opportunities to protect land in northern Pennsylvania and the Southern Tier of New York. In the near future, we hope to close some of those opportunities and report back to our membership about the expansion. In our small way, we are pitching in to make 30x30 a reality.

How E.L. Rose Makes a Difference

Early this fall, a group of volunteers partnered with the Susquehanna County Conservation District and the Susquehanna County Watershed Stewardship program sponsored by Penn State Extension to improve a section of Silver Lake. Member Tim Matthews wrote up a summary, which he sent to the Silver Lake Group. With permission, we share it here with all E.L. Rose membership who receive these Newsletters, to let you know how our organization can make an impact.

On Saturday September 24, a team of volunteers tackled a challenging site #3 at two inlets at the north end of Silver Lake. Approximately 75 plants were given a new home to help stabilize soil, reduce erosion and capture nutrients. Translucent tubes are installed, and kept in place for a couple years to help protect the plants from damage from deer browsing and other critters.



Special thanks to Steve, Claire, Terry, Andy, Keith, Jeremy and Scott for their work, good spirit, and teamwork. Thank you to Claire LaBonte for sharing the inlet stream on her property for part of this project.

We plan to revisit this Riparian Buffer project on a long-term basis with annual check-up on the plants and site maintenance. We are starting a list of volunteers to return to the sites in 50 years and remember the volunteers who worked this project and have a celebration under the shade of beautiful tall trees that will be protecting our watershed.

Thank you to all the volunteers who have supported this project which involved a partnership between The Silver Lake Association, Edward L Rose Land Conservancy, Susquehanna County Conservation District, Susquehanna County Watershed Stewards Program, and the Chesapeake Bay Watershed Initiative.

<https://www.elrose.org>

<https://www.suscondistrict.org>

<https://extension.psu.edu/programs/watershed-stewards/counties/susquehanna-county>

https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/detail/national/programs/?cid=nrcs144p2_027068

See you on future projects;

Thank you,

Tim Matthews

4 NYS Land Trusts Get a Financial Injection

Were you aware that most of the forestland in New York State is in private hands? According to the 2020 Forest Action Plan, 61% of New York State land is forested. Of those 18.6 million acres, 13.62 million (or 73%) are held privately. There are more than 100 commercial and non-commercial species of trees in the State, but the majority (53% of the total by acreage) are comprised of maple, beech, and birch. Because of where these trees grow, protection and preservation much of what forestland we now have will be the responsibility of its owners.



Map of NY State showing forested areas of 5 acres and larger

Last month (October 7, 2022) the NYS Department of Conservation (DEC) made serious financial commitments to four land trusts for the express purpose of supporting conservation easements on private lands. DEC awarded nearly \$1.35 million in what is expected to be just the first of several rounds of grants to increase forested land conservation. The awards were made to:

\$350,000 to the Lake George Land Conservancy to purchase a conservation easement on a 47-acre forested property on the southeastern side of Lake George, which features more than 1,500 feet of tributary stream and five acres of forested wetland.

\$350,000 to the Scenic Hudson Land Trust in Columbia County enabling the purchase of a conservation easement on a 200-acre property consisting of mixed northern hardwood forest, wetlands, and open meadows, and the historic home of Edna St. Vincent Millay, who featured the property in her works.

\$294,640 to the Agricultural Stewardship Association in Washington County for an easement on a 262-acre property that will enable the connection of two state forests.

\$348,025 to the Genesee Valley Conservancy in Livingston County for an easement on 375 acres of primarily forested land that will create a valuable buffer between public and private lands.

DEC Commissioner Basil Segos made clear in his announcement of the awards that easements play many important roles in protecting the planet, including helping to preserve biodiversity, enhance stormwater mitigation, carbon sequestration, and climate resiliency. He stated, "Protecting New York's publicly and privately held forests is critical in combatting climate change because of the valuable roles trees play in absorbing and storing carbon, maintaining wildlife habitats, and reducing air pollution."

Funds for these awards were made available through the Forest Conservation Easements for Land Trusts (FCELT) Grant Program, which helps increase the pace of forest land conservation to keep forests as forests and continue to help combat climate change.

Funding for this grant program was provided by the State's Environmental Protection Fund (EPF), whose funding in the 2022-2023 state budget was pegged at \$400 million, a 33% increase. Applicant land trusts were expected to provide a 25% match to qualify for the FCELT grant Program. This is one reason why the awards went to some of the largest conservation groups in the state.

EPF funds may be utilized for land acquisition, farmland protection, invasive species prevention and eradication, recreation access, water quality improvement, and environmental justice projects.