

DRAFT

Forest Home Improvement Association

Annual Meeting

Tuesday, October 22, 2019, 7:30 PM

Forest Home Chapel

Present: Todd Bittner (Director of Natural Areas at Cornell Botanic Gardens, guest speaker), Caroline Arms (president), Connie Stirling-Engman (secretary), Heather Beasley (treasurer), Bill Arms, Michael Bend, Valerie Hans, Bruce Brittain, Doug Brittain, Jonathan Miller, Pete Loucks, Jeff Holden, Lars Washburn, David Kuckuk, Tom Campanella, John Foote, Kyllikki Inman

The meeting started promptly at 7:30 PM with guest speaker Todd Bittner giving a presentation. His talk included topics of local forest conservation threats and actions, including local efforts to manage the urban deer population, as well as other emerging forest issues, such as the emerald ash borer, hemlock woolly adelgid and Japanese knotweed. First, Todd offered suggestions about what homeowners can do on their own property to control tree diseases. To summarize, Todd explained that each homeowner should make their own calculation about how they want to respond to the impending threats of the emerald ash borer and hemlock woolly adelgid.

Todd said that all ash trees in our area are vulnerable to the emerald ash borer. He talked about treatment and said some homeowners will choose this option, which needs to be repeated every couple of years, while others may choose to remove ash trees while they are still safe for arborists to climb. Todd provided resources that can be accessed with the links listed below. He mentioned that ash trees are wind-pollinated, so pesticide treatment may not impact pollinators significantly. Todd went on to talk about another threat to our trees, the hemlock woolly adelgid. He said the outlook on this tree disease is more hopeful; natural biocontrols (other bugs) are available and being tested for efficacy. He said this disease is easier to treat and he again said that more information is available at

the links below. Todd emphasized that treating and protecting hemlocks is a priority because hemlocks provide ecosystem support for many other plants and animals. His department is taking particular care of the hemlocks on the bank between Fall Creek and the Observatory, near Sackett Bridge.

Todd moved on to give an update on deer control in the area. He said that the Conservation Board is overseeing a program for the Town of Ithaca, part of a regional approach with Lansing, Cayuga Heights Village, and Cornell. In response to a question, he indicated that the fencing surrounding the Mundy Wildflower Garden had been very successful in protecting the vegetation.

Next, Todd discussed knotweed control and elimination. The plant is propagated by rhizomes, which is why it cannot be killed simply by cutting it down. Knotweed is established in new areas primarily by improper disposal of plants or soil from existing patches or via water if growing on banks of rivers. He said the rhizomatous roots can be killed by injecting a systemic herbicide such as glyphosate (Roundup or Rodeo) into each cane. He said that residents can make injection tools for use on their own property. He said this treatment will result in 95-98% dead canes within three weeks and that once the canes are dead, it isn't necessary to move them or transport them to Tompkins County Solid Waste. Finally, he recommended re-planting the area where the knotweed is eliminated with native species from either the Plantsmen in Groton or Ernst Seed Nursery in PA. He said that native species will thrive in the areas where knotweed is eliminated.

Todd provided the following links:

- Emerald Ash Borer Information Network

<http://www.emeraldashborer.info>

- New York State Hemlock Initiative

<https://blogs.cornell.edu/nyshemlockinitiative/>

Todd's presentation ended at about 8:20.

Next, Caroline Arms presented her President's Report, available at https://fhia.org/wp-content/uploads/Minutes/2019/FHIA_2018-19_PresidentAnnualReport_2019-10-22.pdf.

Topics included social events and other community activities and the major issues that had occupied FHIA attention in the last year. These included: Forest Home Drive (FHD) between Judd Falls Road and McIntyre Place; the Forest Home Walkway; and Cornell's North Campus Residential Expansion (NCRE)

As well as talking briefly about the topics from the detailed written report, Caroline pointed out that:

- Thanks are due to the other members of the board and all the residents who helped with events and activities and provided advice.
- Amita Verma (Vice President) had updated the list of street captains [see <https://fhia.org/officers/>] and taken other steps towards preparing a new directory before moving away in July.
- The 2019 Holiday party will be held on Saturday December 14.

Next, Treasurer Heather Beasley presented her Treasurer's Report, available at https://fhia.org/wp-content/uploads/Minutes/2019/FHIA_2018-2019_TreasurerAnnualReport_2019-10-22.pdf.

Finally, Michael Bend, chair of the Nominating Committee, presented the slate of officers. Michael announced that Caroline Arms (President), Connie Stirling-Engman (Secretary), and Heather Beasley (Treasurer) were standing again. Jeff Holden was nominated for Vice President.

Jeff Holden moved to Forest Home at 11 The Byway in 2017 with his wife Maggie Gardner. Together they have two children Augie (5.5) and Willa (1.5). Jeff works for Agilent Technologies as a product manager and enjoys DIY projects and cooking. He played a major role in selecting and implementing the technical aspects of the new FHIA website.

The slate of officers was approved unanimously by a show of hands.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:55 PM.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Secretary Connie Stirling-Engman