

Harvard Forest Field Trip
submitted by Mel Harder, CTSAF

On a fine Saturday, August 24 2013, twenty NESAF foresters from ME, NH, VT, MA, CT & RI met for a field day at the Harvard Forest in Petersham, MA. The field day was arranged by Peter Hannah of NESAF's silvicultural working group. Harvard Forest researcher Audrey Barker Plotkin hosted the group and led a very informative tour of several ongoing research projects and plots.

In the morning the group visited a simulated hurricane experiment and detritus input/removal treatment plots. In the simulated hurricane experiment, 80% of the canopy trees were pulled down, root ball and all, using a cable and skidder, in 1990. The follow-up research has shown that the survivors, not invaders, determined forest development following the simulated hurricane.

The detritus input & removal treatment (DIRT) plots are being studied to determine effects on soil development of several detrital regimes.



Harvard Forest researcher Audrey Barker Plotkin leads a group of 20 NESAF foresters from ME, NH, VT, MA, CT & RI on a visit of several research plots

The afternoon field session was a walking tour of the Prospect Hill Research Area. The first stop was mature hemlock stand where forest history, paleoecology and hemlock adelgid are being studied. At a 35 hectare mapped forest plot, over 10,000 trees down to one centimeter dbh have been mapped and tagged. Another project is measuring regeneration development, after a clear cut of a red pine plantation, with several regimes of deer and moose exclusion using fencing. The afternoon session wrapped up with a visit to a very high tech eddy-flux tower monitoring project, measuring forest-atmosphere carbon.

The NESAF foresters also visited the Harvard Forest archive, where thousands of research reports, data sets and maps are cataloged and stored. Log onto <http://harvardforest.fas.harvard.edu> and explore.