

## **2009 NYS Maple Tour - September 27-29**

### **Tour locations**

#### **South Meadow Farm Maple Sugarworks**

The historic ice storm that hit Lake Placid in 1998 is significant for Tony and Nancy Corwin - that's when they started their sugaring operation. They now have 9,000 taps in three locations and plan to add another 3,000 this fall. South Meadow Farm Maple Sugarworks' remote locations are at North Country School, just across the road, and 10 miles away in Keene. They boil with a 4 by 14 oil-fired evaporator and use reverse osmosis. All taps use high vacuum. The sugarhouse is a 2,500 square-foot modified post and beam building. The post and beams were created in a timber framing seminar by eight students and two instructors. After one week, the frame was raised. They are planning an 1,800 square-foot addition to the sugarhouse for storage, a new reverse osmosis room and a warm canning room. South Meadow sells its syrup through its sugarhouse, which is self-serve, at farmers' markets, on the Internet and by wholesale. South Meadow welcomes visitors to a seven-room lodge, where a full breakfast is served family-style to guests. In the winter, free cross-country skiing is offered on 50 kilometers of Olympic trails.

#### **The North Country School**

Since it was first established in the mid-1930s, North Country School has been engaging middle school-aged students in outdoor education and outdoor work. For almost as long, the school's students have made their own maple syrup. Recently, the school partnered with long-term neighbor and professional syrup maker, Tony Corwin of South Meadow Farm Maple Sugarworks, to make better use of its maple resources. Today, the school maintains two operations. The first, managed by students and teachers, includes approximately 500 bucket taps with a wood-fired boiler. The second includes a modern, automated operation in which sap from approximately 4,000 trees is collected and transported across Rt. 73 for processing in Tony's sugarhouse. The school is currently thinning a newly acquired forest for Tony to begin tapping. Participants will be able to see these developments in action.

#### **The Uihlein Forest**

Cornell University has conducted research and extension for the maple industry at the Uihlein Forest for more than 40 years. Situated on 200 acres just outside the village of Lake Placid, there are 5,000 taps on vacuum and 20 "sweet trees" that are tested each year with buckets. A new visitors center was built in 2008 and includes taphole maple lumber that came from trees harvested on the property in 2006. The sugarbush has been intensively managed for more than 40 years and contains several research projects, as well as ginseng, mushroom and beech-herbicide research/demonstration trials. Cornell also owns a seven-acre field in Lake Placid that was planted to sweet trees in 1982 by Lew Staats. This orchard was used to test the offspring of the original 53 sweet trees identified by the U.S. Forest Service in the 1960s. Recently, a community garden was also established on the site, and contains 27 16-foot by 16-foot garden plots for residents of Lake Placid to grow fruits and vegetables.

#### **Heaven Hill Farm**

Heaven Hill Farm is located adjacent to the Uihlein Forest and is the original home of Henry Uihlein. It is now under the careful stewardship of the Henry II and Mildred A. Uihlein Foundation, which has taken great strides over the past several years to turn the property into a community asset. Its efforts have included working with Lake Placid Mayor Jamie Rogers, Cornell University and students from Northwood School to renovate the old sugarhouse and make it operable once again. The old open-top evaporator was removed and a new 2.5 x 8 wood-

fired arch was installed in March 2008. They now operate approximately 100 buckets and 300 taps on gravity-based tubing. The students have also collaborated on several research projects, with Heaven Hill serving as the test site for sugarbush thinning trials, timing of tapping research and correlating taphole closure rates with sap production. Heaven Hill Farms also lives up to its name and offers the best views in the Adirondacks, so be sure to bring your camera.

### **The Parker Family Maple Farm**

The Parker Family Maple Farm is a sugaring and dairy farm established in 1889 by Earl Parker's grandparents. Earl, his wife, Patricia, and their son Michael operate the business today. Michael and his uncle, Loren Parker, a retired forester, are the sugarbush managers. Michael's wife, Jennifer, makes all of the maple sugar, cream and granulated sugar, with plans to expand her array of maple confections this summer. She and Michael are the parents of the fifth-generation generation on the Parker Family Maple Farm. The sugarhouse is a modern wood structure, with an attached candy kitchen, bottling room and bathroom facilities. Most of the marketing is done through the gift shop, on the Internet and by mail order. The family also participates in two weekly farmers markets and wholesales to several orchards. Their busy Maple Weekends feature pancake breakfasts, horse-drawn wagon rides, cotton candy, tours and syrup and candy making demos. Currently, the Parkers have around 18,000 to 20,000 taps, some rented from Miner Institute, which borders the Parker property. It is all on a vacuum release system, which is transported with a tank and pumps to the sugarhouse by a flatbed truck. The sap is run through two reverse osmosis machines and is stored in an insulated bulk tank until it is boiled in a air-injected 6 X 16 oil-fired Leader Evaporator. The finished product is filtered using a 10-inch filter press, and syrup is stored in stainless steel barrels until it is canned in either plastic or glass containers.

### **Blake's Maple Syrup**

For 10 years, Brent and Lisa Blake have been tapping the trees of West Chazy. Today, they operate some 1,000 taps, including on trees that they lease. They use partial vacuum tubing. With other family members, Blakes Maple Syrup is a business that believes in the value of word-of-mouth advertising. Located at 306B Recore Road, the business sells upwards of 200 gallons of syrup a year, both retail and wholesale. The family uses a 2 X 8 wood evaporator and reverse osmosis, and are planning improvements as their business expands.

### **Homestead Maple**

Founded in 1994, Homestead Maple is a small sugarbush that has been a hobby business for the past 15 years, with 225 taps and 25 display buckets. Owner David Swan has begun upgrading this year to accommodate his plans to retire soon from the Border Patrol and make maple sugaring a more full-time venture. Upgrades this year have included replacing the original oil-fired evaporator with a Champion model Dominion and Grimm stainless steel unit and the addition of a vacuum pump, which doubled production this season. Homestead Maple sells most of its syrup directly out of the sugarhouse, but also uses independent representatives in Missouri and Maryland to sell the syrup out of the home. The sugarhouse features a dental light for expert grading of the syrup and Health Department-approved kitchen for future candy making. David's mother designed the business logo, which features pioneers gathering sap using an oxen-drawn wagon in the sugarbush. The hand-cut maple leaf windows on the doors were created by Swan's brother and attract late-night visitors with their steamy golden glow on cold spring nights.

### **The William H. Miner Agricultural Research Institute**

The William H. Miner Agricultural Research Institute operates a demonstration dairy and equine farm and offers educational programs in dairy and equine management and environmental science. The Institute is operated under the philosophy and principles of William H. Miner, who grew up in Chazy and became a wealthy inventor of rail mechanisms in Chicago. Miner built Heart's Delight Farm on his family's Chazy homestead as a farm where scientific principles were researched and applied. Research at Miner Institute includes the animal-crop interface, animal comfort and behavior and equine reproduction. The demonstration farms, which include the on-site Holstein dairy farm and Morgan horse herd, serve as models for other farms and research facilities. The Heart's Delight Farm Heritage Exhibit is a permanent tribute to William and Alice Miner and the beautiful farm they developed on the Miner family homestead. The building of Heart's Delight Farm began in 1903 and grew from a farmhouse and a couple of barns on 144 acres into a model farm of 300 structures situated on 15,000 acres. The farm utilized a scientific approach to agriculture on a vast scale, embracing hydroelectric power and technological advances to run an enterprise that employed 800 workers in its heyday. The Exhibit not only portrays the development of Heart's Delight Farm but also chronicles William Miner's youth and his career in the railroad industry. It shows innovations such as hydroelectric power production for farm use and fields brought under cultivation by extensive use of drain tiles.

**Special Invitation:** In late September, the American Maple Museum is open Friday, Saturday, and Monday (11am to 4pm). If you want to come on Sunday, September 27<sup>th</sup>, on your way to Lake Placid, or for other special appointments, please call the Museum (315-346-1107) and a volunteer will assist you.