

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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BRISTOL HILLS WILDLIFE THROUGH THE CENTURIES: D.E.C. EXPERT WILL GIVE TALK ON HISTORICAL TRENDS

Over the past century, as the forests of the Bristol Hills regrew following the extensive land clearing and logging of the 1800s, some of the region's more uncommon wildlife – bear, bobcat and fisher – have made a noticeable comeback. These and other changes in the populations of both wild game and their predators will be the subject of a free lecture at 11 a.m. on Saturday, Feb. 18, at United Church of Bristol.

The talk, sponsored by the Bristol Hills Historical Society, features Michael Palermo, a certified wildlife biologist with the Division of Fish and Wildlife at the New York Department of Environmental Conservation.

“Most of New York was forested 200 years ago and by the 1880s it dropped to just 25%. This dramatic change combined with unregulated hunting and trapping caused significant declines for several wildlife species,” Palermo said. “But today approximately 63% of New York is forested and game regulations have been enacted, leading to the rebound of many of these species.”

Palermo's talk will trace the effects in the Bristol Hills of changes in forest cover, hunting and the absence or presence of predators like wolves, cougars and coyotes. He will also discuss threats to the future of Bristol Hills forests, such as overpopulated deer and invasive plants.

“How humans have interacted with their environment – cutting down lots of trees, or not, and the changes in hunting and trapping – has changed the composition of our landscape and the wildlife that inhabit it,” Palermo said.

Palermo's lecture, followed by a Q&A session, is open to the public. It will be held in United Church of Bristol's “Center on the Hill.” The church is at 7177 County Road 2, Bloomfield.

Palermo has been at the DEC Avon office since 2014. He has also worked as a wildlife biologist for the Yurok Tribe in California and as a biological science technician for the U.S. Forest Service in California and Oregon. He holds bachelor's and master's degrees from the State University of New York College of Environmental Science and Forestry.

The Bristol Hills Historical Society is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization that was formed in 2020 through the merger of the historical societies of Bristol and South Bristol, N.Y. It cares for two of the region's most distinctive historic buildings, the 1923 Grange Hall in Bristol Springs, which is on the National Register of Historic Places, and the 1846 Methodist Episcopal Church in Bristol Center. The society's website at bristolhillhistory.org and Facebook page at facebook.com/bhhistorical provide calendars of

upcoming history presentations and other events, articles on local history, and a convenient way to become an annual donor at levels starting at \$15 for individuals and \$30 for families.

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ATTACHED: DEC trail camera photos, all from DEC's Region 8, showing black bear, fisher and bobcat

For more information:

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