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Another thing Wayne had was the vision and the patience to follow through with a project whose rewards were not instantaneous.

“The forest was a giant, overgrown garden that needed weeding,” said Wayne. In consultation with forester Dale Covey, he arranged for two commercial harvests.

“Have patience,” Wayne, offering advice to anyone interested in forest management. “Harvesting is like heart surgery. It’s ugly when you’re done, but it does get better down the road. After both commercial harvests I immediately thought, what have I done? But a year later, after the forest had time to green up and I cleaned up a little, I was glad I had the harvest done. The forest is more healthy because of both commercial harvests.”

Coleman Tree Farm now houses healthy, sustainable stands of trees, including not only red oak, spruce, white pine, and birch for sawlogs, but also fruit trees for food. With firewood cut from their lot, the

Colemans supply wood to heat their house, garage, and even their local church.

As for family time, that part of Wayne’s dream lived up to expectations. “It was financially better down there (in New Jersey), but it was worth it.” Leaving animal care behind helped a lot.

“One good thing about farming for trees - they don’t get out, and they don’t have to be fed at a particular time,” said Wayne. That allowed him more flexible time to be with his children. Wayne is proud to say that all four of his kids were well-educated, and one got a degree in forestry. Now he and Peggy have eleven grandchildren, four of them local. With his farm growing at a sustainable rate, the work of the tree farm is more manageable now, and he has plenty of time to walk his land and “enjoy God’s beauty.”

This life amongst the trees has been a good one for Wayne, and Wayne has been a good steward for the trees.



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