



Minnesota forests

October/November 2008

www.mnforest.com

The MFA works on behalf of family forest owners, through education and advocacy, to promote stewardship of woodlands.

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MFA Meetings

Regular Board Meetings

DNR Office
Cambridge
10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

•October 22

MN Invasive Species Conference,

October 26-29 in Duluth at DECC. Go to www.minnesotaswcs.org for more information.

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MFA Member Profile: More Than Rocket Science

David Lindroth's family is pleasantly surprised that he hasn't gotten lost in the 80 acres of forests, plantations, and wetlands he acquired in Ottertail County a few years back. Yet as a retired rocket scientist, there's small chance of Lindroth losing his way. He uses his left brain and good spatial orientation to explore without a map or compass. It's all part of his plan to make time for outdoor play in retirement.

And what a playground! Lindroth loves to tick off the daily wonders that reveal themselves in his northern woods. Strawberries invade open ground. Turkeys and pheasant routinely hunt and peck their way across fields. Sandhill cranes fly overhead, announcing their presence with a rolling bugle.

Lindroth's biggest challenge is coaxing growth and good form from the hundreds of red pine, white spruce, and mixed hardwoods that were planted to reclaim a field in 1999. While many of the trees show good growth on the sandy/loam site, some struggle to survive amidst an onslaught of creatures.

Gophers nibble at the roots until the tree dies, burrowing through the "nice, soft soil" left by the planting machine, according to Lindroth. Deer browse the tops of trees until they either kill or destroy a tree's form (by removing the terminal leader that helps the tree grow straight). Red clover and timothy were planted between rows to lure the animals away from trees, but this hasn't seemed to stop the problem. Lindroth budcaps the trees, uses bloodmeal, and has even placed dryer sheets on individual trees, with mixed results.

But no matter. The small trees are growing and stand in beautiful contrast to the surrounding mature woods. Lindroth knows his "constant adventure" has just begun.



Top: David Lindroth in his pine plantation. When not working on his land, Lindroth visits the University of Minnesota Forestry Library to read the Hardwood Review Weekly and learn more about markets for wood products.

Bottom: At home on the range. Ducks, great blue herons, and lots of frogs find refuge on Lindroth's land.



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Northwoods Forestry Cooperative Field Day

By Dennis Thompson

On August 16, the Northwoods Forestry Cooperative and the Aitkin County Private Woodlands Committee, with support from the MFA, held a "Light on the Land" Small-Scale Logging Demonstration and Field Day. The event took place at Gary and Janet Bradford's Ripple River Acres, located near Aitkin.

The main theme of the event was "from tree to finished product," with a focus on the private landowner. The day started early as participants browsed through informational booths on lumber drying, growing mushrooms, and buckthorn removal. Also on display were wood carvings, crafts, and furniture.

The crowd soon gathered around the registration tent as Alex Bildeaux gave the first part of his featured presentation on chainsaw safety and directional tree felling. Before lunch was served by an eager 4-H group, Twister Industries showed off their firewood processor and wrapping system. The Mulch-R' Down brush clearing equipment also was on display, and Peter Bundy from Masconomo Forestry gave a presentation on aspen thinning.

After lunch, Alex finished his presentation and showed us how to safely fell a tree. The rest of the afternoon featured three different kinds of portable sawmills, all in action and sawing logs into boards. Pat Lanin from Pine Center Farm and Forest demonstrated the Farmi Winch, a tractor attachment that pulls logs out of the woods. Pat also showed the group how ATV logging arches can easily transport large logs out of the woods without disturbing the site. More than 150 people attended the event, making it a huge success!



Top: Gary Guida from Crosby sands the inside of a bowl he turned on his lathe.

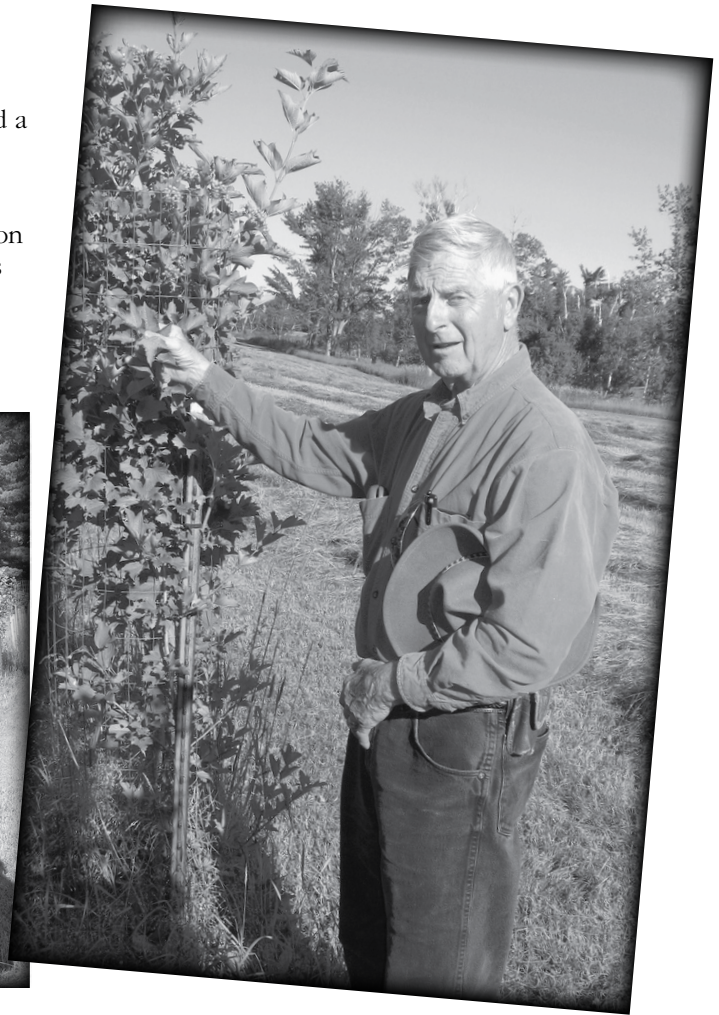
Middle: Alex Bildeaux from Bildeaux Services gives the featured presentation on chainsaw safety. Alex has been teaching people this important topic for more than 20 years.

Bottom: Roger Goeschel shows off some fish that he has carved.

John Murray Tree Farm Tour

Kelly Smith, forester with the Carlton County SWCD, and the Kettle River Woodland Council, along with Rick Klevorn, DNR Forestry, held a walking tour on the John Murray tree farm on Tuesday, July 22.

On this warm sunny evening the Woodland Advisor class participants discussed John Murray's experiences in working to establish a forest on old pasture land. Weeds, deer, and disease were among the problems he has addressed. In addition to planting forest trees, the project included establishing shrubs and grass/legume food plots for wildlife.



Dean Rosera, Kettle River, examines a hardy tree.



Top: John Murray shows Bob Asproth and Ernie Mattson some newer plantings.

Bottom: Kelly Smith, Carlton County SWCD, talks conifers.

FYI For Minnesota Forest Landowners:

Payments under SFIA for 2009 are set to go to \$ 8.61 per acre, the sixth consecutive year they have gone up. Now, with the new Class 2c Managed Forest Land law, landowners have two good choices for reducing taxes and minimizing costs related to being good land stewards. MFA played a lead role in getting both of these laws through the legislature. Your dues pay BIG dividends!

Carbon Credits: Another Source of Income for Woodland Owners?

By John O'Reilly

Dale Enerson, Director of the National Farmers Union Carbon Credit Program, explained the complicated and abstract concept of carbon credits to woodland owners during a seminar at the 2008 MFA Spring Field Days.

Enerson noted, "Regardless of your political view on global warming, carbon credits are here for the foreseeable future and a potential source of supplementary income for farmers and woodland owners." Last year, the National Farmers Union's Carbon Credit Program sold more than \$2.6 million worth of carbon credits for farmers. While the carbon credit picture is clear for certain farm practices, it's just beginning for forestry.

For purposes of selling carbon credits, forestry is divided into two categories: newly planted forests and established forests. Contracts are currently available for newly planted forests, but for established forests, contracts are still being developed.

While the price of carbon credits is climbing, Enerson noted that the amount a woodland owner can earn is still modest—about \$5 to \$15 per acre. He also cautioned that contracts are for 15 years and, if a landowner falls out of compliance under the contract by developing the land or doing an unapproved harvest, he would be required to buy back all the carbon credits he sold.

For more information, go to the National Farmers Union website at www.NDFU.org.



Photo by Eli Sagor



Photo by Eli Sagor

Top: Trees store carbon—a valuable resource?

Bottom: Converting agricultural fields to forests might meet carbon credit criteria.

More Q & A with Dale Enerson:

- **What is the practical minimum number of acres one needs to enroll?** *Since the enrollment is online, they can handle parcels as small as 20 acres (although this size may not be worth the paperwork and other considerations).*
- **Is your organization doing any forestry contracts?** *YES. The first contracts were brought to market this summer.*
- **Would your organization do contracts for MN woodland owners?** *YES, although NDFU is not the only place to enroll MN forested acres. We are only offering a forestry contract for afforestation (newly planted forests) at this time.*
- **Is this really for major landowners who are converting open ground to forest?** *So far, most of the land we they have enrolled is CRP acres that are being planted to trees rather than grasses.*



Emerald Ash Borer Headed Our Way

It was probably just a matter of time, but Wisconsin is now among several states that has confirmed the presence of the pest emerald ash borer. This little metallic-green bug tunnels into crevices of green (*Fraxinus pennsylvanica*), white (*F. Americana*), and black ash (*F. nigra*) to lay eggs. As the larvae hatch, they chew up a tree's tissue, cutting off the flow of water and nutrients.

According to the Wisconsin EAB Program, the beetle is native to Asia and is believed to have arrived in North America in the 1990s via shipping containers. The bug can now be found in Ontario and in several eastern U.S. states, including Wisconsin. It's a slow-moving pest, spread mostly when it hitchhikes on firewood and nursery stock.

Although the emerald ash borer has not been found yet in Minnesota, it makes sense to stay alert. If you have green, white, or black ash in your forest, the pest may eventually make its way into your woods and kill trees. In a mixed-hardwood stand, this means you might lose a small part of your forest cover.

In lowland forests, black ash may be a significant component. In worst-case scenarios, landowners may lose significant parts of these forests if emerald ash borers appear in Minnesota and become established in forests.

For the time being, the emerald ash borer is a greater threat to urban areas. Many communities planted green and white ash as boulevard trees to replace elms lost to Dutch elm disease. These same towns may be struggling to replace dead ash in a few years.

According to *Minnesota's Forests* from the Northern Research Station, USDA Forest Service, ash trees make up about 7 percent of all live volume on Minnesota's forest lands. If emerald ash borer were to kill all the ash trees across Minnesota, 23 percent of Minnesota's forests would be affected.

To help prevent the spread of the emerald ash borer, you can follow these simple rules, recommended by the Wisconsin EAB program:

- Follow all quarantine guidelines in infected areas. Don't move firewood out of quarantined areas.
- Learn about the signs and symptoms of EAB infestation, including the characteristics of an infested tree. This information can be found at the Wisconsin EAB Program Web site at www.emeraldashborer.wi.gov.



Photo by Eli Sagor

Minnesota has the third-highest volume of ash species in the nation, behind Michigan and New York, according to Keith Jacobson, MN DNR. Much of the ash is black ash, found in the lowland forest type.



Pest and Diseases Image Library, Bugwood.org

Above: Emerald ash borer. A tree infested with the bug will have thin foliage and/or dieback in the upper crown, epicormic sprouts on the stem and at the base, and small D-shaped exit holes in the bark.

Right: The bug tunnels into the wood and creates "S" shaped galleries.



Art Wagner, USDA APHIS PPQ, Bugwood.org

Report from the Field: Ontario's Dilemma

By Bruce ZumBahlen

As a representative for the MFA participating in the Blandin Foundation's Vital Forest/Vital Community project this past summer, I had a unique chance to tour Ontario's forests and look at the forestry economy of our neighbors to the north. Minnesota landowners are part of a global economy, and happenings in other countries can affect local markets for forest products.

According to Bill Towill, Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources, Ontario's forest products economy has seen "breathtaking change" over recent years. By one Ministry estimate, more than half of those directly employed by the sector in 2001 no longer have their jobs.

The Ontario forest economy is facing a "fundamental transformation" according to Bill Thornton, Assistant Deputy Minister of Natural Resources. The forest products sector accounts for 70 percent of manufacturing GDP in the province. With the sector in such poor shape, there are more unemployed people than ever, struggling to pay their bills and fill their tanks with \$5.00-(Canadian!) per-gallon gas.

The provincial government has committed \$1 billion for research to develop value-added forest products and to assist in converting pulp and paper mills into bio-refineries. The government is also looking at producing energy as part of the logging process, thus eliminating the need to move woody biomass to a central processing location.

Deeply concerned about global climatic change, the Ontario provincial government has mandated that no electrical energy will be produced by burning coal by 2014. Harvesting timber is being touted as one way to mitigate the effects of global warming, since some studies show that harvesting and subsequent reforestation results in more carbon being stored than no harvest.

Check out the Vital Forests/Vital Communities section of the Foundation's website for more information about the Productivity Tour, and stay tuned for news of our Scandinavia forestry tour scheduled for Fall 2008.



Top: Ontario's forest products economy is in a deep downturn. Newsprint mills have closed due to lower demand, and the housing industry is weak. The strong Canadian dollar also has made paper and other products more expensive to foreign markets.

Bottom: Block cuts in the boreal forest in Ontario.

For MFA members, www.MyMinnesotaWoods.org is the best online source of woodland information. Here's what's new this month.



- "Life's Priorities": A visit with Stan Maleska
- Research report: The benefit of early stand improvement in aspen-birch
- Speak up for forestry: Heads up on NRCS Local Working Group meetings
- A visit to the Baudette School Forest
- Plus a Poem of the month, News stories and Upcoming events

Have a question about your woodland? Post it on the Discussion Board. You may be surprised at how many good answers you get!

For the live version, with much more info on each topic, visit MyMinnesotaWoods.org

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(Flickr: esagor).*