



Minnesota Woodlands

MFA: an organization of, by and for Minnesota's private woodland owners and friends.

www.MinnesotaForestry.org

Minnesota Forestry Association (MFA)

Information@

MinnesotaForestry.org

1111 Cloquet Ave.

Suite 7

Cloquet, MN 55720

218-879-5100

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MFA Board Meetings

Cambridge DNR

Office, 10 am - 3 pm

• February 14, 2017

• April 11, 2017

Conference Calls

8 - 9 am

• March 14, 2017

• May 9, 2017

Editor

John O'Reilly

[john.oreilly@](mailto:john.oreilly@minnesotaforestry.org)

minnesotaforestry.org

Design/layout

Peg Churchwell

Lady Dog Design

[PegChurchwell17@](mailto:PegChurchwell17@gmail.com)

gmail.com

The Joy of Producing Maple Syrup

By Mimi Barzen, Minnesota DNR

When it seems like winter will never end, consider making maple syrup. It gets you outdoors and tuned into the daily rhythms of weather.

Any type of maple tree will do but sugar maple is the first choice of many because its sap has the highest sugar content. A minimum of 40 gallons of sap is required to make one gallon of syrup.

Where to begin? First, walk your property, locating as many maple trees as close together as possible. Maple trees have opposite branching pattern. The only other tree species with the same branching pattern is the ash tree, which often grow in wet locations. Maple trees grow best on upland sites, except for silver maple which doesn't mind wet feet. Choose big trees about the size of a dinner plate at four feet.

Equipment needed:

- A tap (or spile) for each tree.
- Drill and bit sized to the spile diameter.
- A container to collect sap from each tree, food grade. (Clean milk jugs work great.)
- A container to consolidate the collected sap, food grade.
- A pot for boiling sap.
- Thermometer.
- Bottles for the final product.

Gather your equipment in early March and then stay tuned to weather patterns. When temperatures climb above freezing during the day and fall back below freezing at night, it is time to tap. When the sap is flowing, it should be collected and either kept cool until enough has been collected to boil or boiled immediately, for sap does not hold long before it sours.

Syrup color and taste partly depend on how long the sap is boiled. Longer boiling produces darker syrup with stronger maple flavor. Boiling one pan-full or batch at a time yields lighter syrup. Continually adding fresh sap to the pan as it concentrates usually yields darker syrup.

Most of the boiling must be done outdoors, for it puts too much moisture in the air to boil indoors. Once the liquid has reached seven degrees above the boiling point of water, it is officially syrup. When the sap is close to the correct temperature, it can be finished on the stove inside where the rate of boiling can be more easily regulated.

It is best to filter finished syrup to remove sediments, which are safe, but when concentrated in the bottom of a jar, appear unappetizing.

Bottle, can, or refrigerate the finished syrup and enjoy it on almost anything!



Minnesota Forestry Association

2017 Board of Directors

Dennis Thompson, *president and treasurer*
130 Southgate Drive
Aitkin, MN 56431
Office 218-927-6565
Treasurer@MinnesotaForestry.org

Dave Roerick, *vice president*
319 NE 8th Street
Grand Rapids, MN 55744
218-326-3774
Droerick@gmail.com

Lyle Keller, *secretary*
28814 Gilbertson Drive
Peterson, MN 55962
507-875-2215/cell 507-272-8883

Stan Grossman,
sergeant-at-arms
P.O. Box 422
Park Rapids, MN 56470
218-252-8572
iws@scta.net

John O'Reilly, *past president*
40361 Grace Lake Road
Hinckley, MN 55037
320-655-4411/cell 612-590-7375

For the following Board members' contact information, see www.MinnesotaForestry.org or call MFA at 218-879-5100.

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MFA Administrative Offices:
1111 Cloquet Ave. Suite 7
Cloquet, MN 55720
218-879-5100, information@minnesotaforestry.org

Away from home for a time? Please contact the MFA office if you'll be away from home for an extended time and let us know when you'll be back. We'll hold onto the newsletter until you return so you won't miss a single issue!
Information@MinnesotaForestry.org
or call 218-879-5100.

Board Election Results

Thanks to all the members who took the time to vote in our recent Board elections.

Re-elected candidates:

John O'Reilly, Hinckley 163
Dave Roerick, Grand Rapids. 161
Stan Grossman, Grand Rapids. 161

Write-in:

Jim Chamberlin, Brainerd 1

Congratulations to newly elected Board members:

Beth Peterson, Duluth 166
Larry Westerberg, Hastings 161



Congratulations to Beth Peterson, Duluth, left, and Larry Westerberg, Hastings, newly elected board members.

Survey Results

The goal of the 2016 survey was to determine how many members are actively managing their woodland. A question about harvesting timber helped us to figure out the percentage. The simple and resounding answer is that almost all MFA members are actively engaged in managing their woodland!

Of 142 MFA members who responded to the survey, 12 (8%) do not own woodland. Of the others, 111 (85%) have harvested timber. Below are some of the survey comments:

After this spring, (2017) we will have reforested all our open fields. Total forest land will be about 140 acres. Land is in Itasca Co. 134 acres enrolled in the 2C program. - John Kranz, Forest Lake.

Good list of candidates! - Roger Nelson, Eveleth.

Woodland stewardship plan 4/1988 American Tree Farm from 1960's my Dad's NRCS conservation plan 2010 CSP contract planted 2,500 trees over 5 years. Land mainly used for firewood, pulp, pine sawlogs and hunting deer and grouse. - John Kannas, Bovey.

"Boots on Your Ground" is a great program. It's the best opportunity to get landowners active with woodlot. - Dave Roerick, Grand Rapids.

MFA has been very helpful over the years. - Lewis Anderson, Mound.

I met Beth Peterson when I picked up seedlings from the South St. Louis Co. SWCD and also attended a program on tree care that she was instrumental in putting together. I am impressed with her enthusiasm. Good choice! - Judith Trolander, Duluth.

Thank you for the continued hard work and quality products. - Mike Carroll, Park Rapids.

Our land, 160 acres, was acquired by Jeff's grandfather in 1917. We know it was logged in the 40's. We had a portion of 2 forties logged maybe 10 years ago. We had 10 acres logged this year on the south forty, which will be replanted in the spring. - Jeff and Autumn Olsen, Roseau.

Keep up the good work. Need one page of the newsletter or a separate sheet for advertising MFA hats, signs, trespass signs and fire extinguishers. Market the organization thru products! - Doug Appelgren, Wirt MN

In the future, it would be valuable to have more young people, landowners and women serve on the board. Editor's note: If you, or anyone, knows of a person who might be interested in serving on the board, contact Bruce ZumBahlen at 651-458-0483 or ZoomerBruce@aol.com.

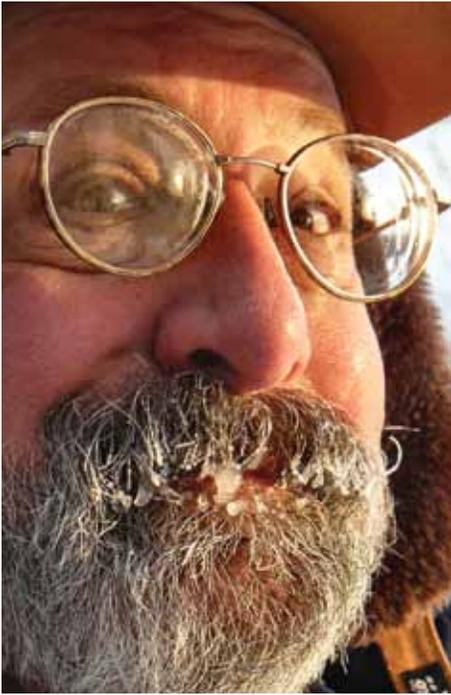
Good work MFA! Member from Minneapolis.

We have been harvesting our own timber since 1999 harvesting as much as 150,000 board feet a year but averaging about 100,000 per year. Before that we had commercial loggers do it a number of times. We vary areas of harvesting clearcutting and selective harvesting. In the selective harvesting areas we try to do harvest approximately every 10 years. - Mary & Bill Bailey, Chatfield, MN

We like your woodland task calendar! Minnesota Woodlands is well done! Thank you! - David & Carol Cartwright, Rush City.

The property has been in our family since 1960. I began buying it from my father in about 1990. My brother and I now own about 400 acres. More cutting (not included in 1500 cords) was done prior to 1990. - Scott Sorensen, Squaw Lake.

Continued on page 3



Bill Cook

Tree Identification

By Bill Cook

Although the leaves have fallen, the dormant season can be the easiest time to identify trees, with a bit of practice.

Minnesota boasts nearly 100 tree species. It's impossible to fully understand a forest without knowing "who" grows there. Trees are not the only life form, of course, but they are the dominant life form and impact everything that occurs in the forest. It's difficult to fully appreciate the amazing natural resources of Minnesota without considering forests.

There are about a dozen characteristics available to help identify trees. Some characteristics are seasonal, such as leaves, fruits, and flowers. Most others are more year-round, such as twig and branching patterns, buds, bud scars, bark, tree form, site and tree associates.

For some trees, paper birch for instance, most people only need to look at the white, peeling bark. Easy. Trees with acorns are one of several oaks. Most of our conifers carry needles year-round.

Many people refer to all conifers as "pines" when most conifers are not pines. Northern white-cedar is a common conifer in northern Minnesota. It's not a pine! Neither are hemlocks, spruces, firs, tamaracks, or larches.

Because there are only about a dozen common conifers (only four are pines!) in the forest, conifer ID is easy. It's a good place to begin in order to build some confidence and skill.

Using seasonal characteristics is a good way to learn to identify trees during the "off" season. Finding remnant cherries go a long way to segregating the cherry species. While doing that, it's a good time to observe other key features, such as bark patterns and buds. Understory trees that still have some brown leaves well into the winter are likely to be either beech or ironwood.

A tree with an opposite branching pattern narrows the choices down to maples, ashes, and dogwoods. Once you know that, it's not too difficult to use a field guide to learn the individual species. However, make sure you have a tree and you're not looking at a shrub. Some of our shrub species also have opposite branching.

Leaves are a popular way to learn tree species, and they're a good technique during the growing season. Naturally, some tree species have variable leaf characteristics, so be cautious. Use multiple samples from the same tree to get an "average" appearance. Using fallen leaves takes special care to make sure the leaves fell from the tree that you're looking at.

Considering where the tree grows can be quite helpful, especially for sites that are particularly dry or wet. A pine on a dry sandy plain will most likely be jack pine. A broad-leafed tree in a swamp will likely be black ash or one of the elms. Black and white spruce can be difficult to distinguish by needle appearance, but if it's in a lowland site, it's probably black spruce. If the site is upland, it's probably white spruce.

The more trees you know, the easier it is to learn more. For tree ID help see DNR's Trees of Minnesota available through Minnesota's Bookstore or, online, Tree ID Cards at <http://z.umn.edu/TreeID>. Happy hunting!

Bill Cook is an Extension Forester-Biologist with Michigan State University. Based in Michigan's Upper Peninsula, Cook has worked with private woodland owners since 1997.

Survey continued from page 2

*A great magazine and very interesting and helpful articles.
- Jim Converse, Madison, WI.*

Much of the information you requested (reverse side) was difficult to determine from old records I have. (in regard to the survey information)

It is great to have such qualified people to vote for to serve us in MFA and to benefit from their knowledge and enthusiasm to help others. - Bob Asproth, Mahtowa.

I really appreciate the attentive actions the association. does on behalf of all woodland owners in Minnesota. We need actual owners seeing to concerns; not outside activists calling the shots unabated. - Michael Foley, Sauk Center.

I am a retired forester, so attend to the needs of my 300-acre woodland. - Mike Beaufeaux, Hinckley.

We just love the Minnesota Forestry Association and what they provide us and others! - John Wallin, Pequot Lakes.

Member Profile: John and Beverly Finnegan

By Linda K. Dinkel

Over the last 45 years, John and Beverly Finnegan might have owned five different farms, but they've operated them under one unifying philosophy: **We don't own the land so much as we own the right to use it and leave it in better shape than when we received it.**

It's a way of life that has served them and their land well, and has led both John and Beverly into a wide variety of conservation and wildlife efforts: legislative involvement to establish the Reinvest in Minnesota (RIM) program; serving on the Minnesota Deer Hunters Association board and helping to establish their Hides for Habitat program; working with the Knobhill Sportsman's Club to restore 680 acres of wetlands, to name a few. Those efforts were recognized in 1995 when they were named the Outstanding Conservationist and Farmer-Sportsman of the Year by the Minnesota Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts.

As a private landowner in the 80's, John was involved in helping create Reinvest in Minnesota (RIM) and steering it through the legislature. It was one of the first programs that worked to protect water quality by working with private land owners. **"On every one of the five farms I've owned, the first thing I did was talk to SWCD for help and direction in making plans to improve the land,"** John said. While the plan for each farm has been unique, the means have been the same: a conservation-minded vision coupled with hard work and perseverance.

After serving in the Army from 1954 to 1961, John attended school on the GI bill and became a livestock feed specialist. He "retired" from Hubbard Milling in 2001 at the age of 66 and began his own business, Professional Dairy Consultants, from which he retired in 2011. The couple has lived near Wadena since 1982 when they purchased a 160-acre farm with gentle, rolling terrain, small open fields, and woodlands of oak, ash, basswood, poplar and birch. In 1993 they purchased another 160 acres, giving them plenty of work to do. As hunting and outdoor enthusiasts, both John and Beverly love working, hunting and relaxing on their property.

Their first project was building roads for better access. Next on the list were wildlife ponds. "There was a swampy, slow-moving waterway that really wasn't good for anything," said John. "After getting our plan approved by the Wadena SWCD, we dug in a series of three terraced ponds with conservation strips along them. It's been a big draw for wildlife and one of my favorite places on our land."

Top right: John Finnegan near his favorite place on the property, the ponds and waterways he had dug in a marshy, poorly drained swamp.

Middle right: One of a series of three terraced ponds.

Bottom right: John has worked hard to eradicate buckthorn from his woods but on 320 acres, a few plants sometimes get missed!



John also leased 40 acres of previously open farm fields to Blandin Paper, who planted them in fast-growing poplar.

“Blandin got out of the lease after 10 years and left the trees behind. We had a timber harvest in 2010 and did really well on that at \$28 per cord. Since then, the poplar has been single-stemmed. That worked well on about half of the acres that are on lower, wetter ground. The other half didn’t do as well so we had 10,000 spruce seedlings hand-planted in 2012.” John has also planted five acres in spruce and Norway pines, and plants another 100 trees – mostly pine – in various places around the property every year. Other, smaller timber harvests have helped increase the deer populations on both farms. **“A well-managed harvest is the best way to improve habitat and attract more deer.”**

Recently, the Finnigans sold 80 acres to their daughter and son-in-law, avid hunters and conservationists, ready to carry on the traditions and knowledge that John and Beverly have accumulated over the years. One might think that, given Beverly’s recent recovery from cancer treatment and John’s troublesome back and passing his 80th birthday, the Finnigans are ready to settle in and quietly enjoy the land they’ve cared for. You’d be underestimating John’s passion for the woods and his battle-ready attitude toward what he sees as the number one threat to Minnesota woodlands.

“If we don’t stop buckthorn now, it will take over every privately-owned woodlot in Minnesota. It will spread and smother out everything growing in the understory, and in a generation, we’ll have lost the trees that should be coming up to replace mature trees,” John said. His first exposure to buckthorn 13 years ago was sobering. “A Wadena SWCD person was touring the property with me and said, ‘You know, you have a moderate infestation of buckthorn that will become a real problem if you don’t stop it now.’ I said, ‘What’s buckthorn?’ Boy, did I get an education fast,” he added. The lines were drawn and the battle began.

That first year, he and Beverly spent four, full days pulling the buckthorn that could be pulled and cutting and

treating everything else. Since then, they’ve held off the invasion with about two days of work every fall when the green foliage makes spotting buckthorn easy. Now, the major focus of the battle has shifted to getting neighbors and others to recognize the problem and do something about it.

“I’ve talked and cajoled and sent letters to raise awareness. It’s really frustrating to be pulling buckthorn on my land and look over the property line to see a huge infestation just a few yards away,” John noted. “We need more articles in local papers, more ways to engage the private landowner. There might have to be an incentive tied to controlling it, like a tax break. Otherwise, buckthorn is going to devastate our forests!”

Given their history of conservation involvement and the fire in John’s eyes when he talks about the buckthorn battle ahead, it’s hard to imagine that he’ll give up the fight any time soon.



Telltale green leaves make buckthorn easy to spot in late fall. Photo by Leslie J. Mehrhoff, University of Connecticut, Bugwood.org.

Welcome Back, Sappi!

In recent years, Sappi, like other mills in Minnesota, de-emphasized procuring timber on private lands, opting instead to concentrate on county, state and federal lands.

This year, Sappi has renewed interest in acquiring wood from private woodland owners. “Of our 10 procurement foresters, one is dedicated solely to private lands and we hope to hire another very soon.” Ross Korpela, procurement manager, said. While their main job is to acquire wood for the plant, which uses one million cords a year, these PFM foresters will also work with private landowners to help and encourage them to manage their land for the long-term health of the forest.

Sappi’s market area for acquiring wood is a 200-mile radius from their Cloquet plant. If your land is within that radius, and you would like to talk with a Sappi forester, call 1-800-633-2083.



Sappi recently mailed a three-panel, colored brochure to 15,000 private woodland owners saying, “We work together to help you and your land.”

Creature Feature

By Jodie Provost, MN DNR Private Land Habitat Specialist

Pileated Woodpecker (*Dryocopus pileatus*) - Dapper Drummer

An increase in woodpecker calls and drumming will soon mark the coming of spring. One of those noise makers will be the pileated woodpecker, one of our largest, most dapper forest birds. A native, year-round resident, this bird is mostly black with white strips, has a triangular flaming red crest, a long chisel-like bill, a body up to 19 inches long with broad wings spanning up to 30 inches. Another distinguishing feature is its strong, slow, undulating flight.

Dead Wood Whacker The “pileated” is widely distributed in wooded areas of the eastern and northwestern U.S. and southern Canada. They inhabit coniferous, deciduous, or mixed forests, young or old. They whack on standing and downed dead wood in search of their main prey, carpenter ants, as well as other insects. The noticeable rectangular holes they create provide feeding sites and cover for other woodpeckers, house wrens swifts, owls, squirrels, wood ducks, bluebirds, great crested flycatchers, bats and pine martens.

Comeback Kid Pileated woodpeckers declined sharply in 18th and 19th centuries due to forest clearing. Since about 1900, however, a gradual comeback has occurred as forests have grown back and matured. They may also be adapting to human proximity and activity. Based on the North American Breeding Bird Survey, the overall population has been steadily increasing since about 1966.

Wuk, Wuk, What? Pileated woodpeckers stay on their large home ranges, which can be up to 100 acres, all year. Deep resonant drumming, a high clear series of piping calls that lasts several seconds, and shorter loud calls that sound like wuk, wuk, wuk, wuk are used to announce themselves or sound an alarm. Courting includes a display of wing spreading to show off white patches, crest raising, head swinging and gliding flight.

Hollowed Home Pairs mate for life and work together to excavate a new nest every year and care for their young. They prefer large trees since their nest can be two feet deep and located 15 to 80 feet high. They lay three to five eggs, incubate them up to 18 days, and then tend the nestlings for up to 31 days. The oldest pileated, identified from a banding operation in Maryland, was at least 12 years old. Known predators include snakes and raptors which focus on nestlings, and fox when feeding on the ground.

Woody Buffet In addition to ants, pileateds eat wood-boring beetle larvae, termites, flies, spruce budworms,



Photo by Terri Smit, Schenectady, NY

caterpillars, grasshoppers, wild fruits and nuts, as well as seeds and suet from backyard feeders. Their long necks, heavy bills, long, barbed tongues and feet are superbly designed to strike, pulled apart and get deep into woody buffets.

Pileated Paradise As woodland owners, here are some things we can do to help ensure the well-being of our pileated woodpecker population: keep our forests as forest, maintain large intact, unfragmented tracts and manage them for a diversity of native trees, shrubs and forbs. Also, when harvesting, retain adequate large, standing, live and dead trees and downed wood. Pileated woodpeckers also like a more closed canopy, relatively open forest floor littered with decaying wood, moist environment that promotes fungal decay and ant, termite, and beetle populations, along with broad riparian forest corridors along rivers, streams and lakes to aid dispersal.

During these late winter months, go outside and enjoy the wuk, wuk, wuk of pileated woodpeckers!



Good News, Bad News.

The bad news is a huge oak tree was blown down right next to John and Mary Peterson's house near Delano. The good news is the tree will supply a year's worth of firewood which Mary is shown splitting. By the way, buckthorn is mentioned elsewhere in this issue. John and Mary Peterson became buckthorn experts as they battled and beat buckthorn on their land. See their story in the October - November issue of our newsletter. Find it on our website, www.MinnesotaForestry.org.



Oh no! Really? An Inspection?

By Bruce ZumBablen

That “Oh no” is a nicer way of what I might have uttered when I was told my old unit in the 148th Fighter Group was going to be inspected. But, for tree farmers recognized under the American Tree Farm System (ATFS) – the news of an inspection is often welcomed. From my experience as a certified ATFS inspector and regional chair of MN’s Tree Farm Southern Region, tree farmers usually welcome the visit.

The inspection, or a re-inspection, is a time when a tree farmer can have their questions answered on some forestry issue, identify a forest pest problem, or hear the latest on programs that benefit management of their woodland. These re-inspections ensure the ATFS brand, identified with its green and white diamond-shaped sign, continues to recognize woodlands being managed in a sustainable manner.

To be recognized by the ATFS, a woodland owner must: (1) have a written forest management plan and (2) agree to manage the land in a sustainable manner. While the ATFS welcomes contributions, the program itself is free. To obtain an application, call or email Tom Witkowski, Minnesota Tree Farm Program Coordinator, at 218-232-3948 or TomForester@charter.net.

When the application is received, a certified forester is assigned to make an initial inspection of the property. After reviewing the management plan, the forester will walk the property, often with the landowner coming along to ask questions or point out projects that have been completed.

Provided the woodland meets the eight ATFS Standards of Sustainability for Forest Certification, woodland owners are given that green and white tree farm sign to display on their property and will receive a certificate from the ATFS welcoming them into the program.

Existing tree farms are randomly selected for re-inspection by either the national office or the Minnesota Tree Farm committee. This past year, of 1,600 tree farms in the state, 66 were re-inspected.



I have had the privilege of re-inspecting tree farms that I worked with over 50 years ago, as a young DNR forester. It’s been interesting to visit with the tree farmer again and see how their farm has fared over the years. Usually, it’s hard to pull away from a visit. Tree farmers, by and large, are some of the nicest people I have ever met.

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For MFA members, the two best online sources of woodland information are the MFA website at www.minnesotaforestry.org, and the University of Minnesota Extension Forestry website at www.myminnesotawoods.umn.edu.

There's Music in Those Trees – Stradivari's Spruces

By Patrick Lanin

Recently there was a public television special featuring Antonio Stradivari, the creator of Stradivarius violins. A portion of the program was devoted to the forest in the Italian Alps where Stradivari obtained the spruce wood for the tops of his violins.

The trees are European red spruce which grow in the foothills of the Italian Alps. The area has a micro climate with relatively short summers and uniform moisture supply that results in trees with growth rings that are just a few millimeters apart.

Selected trees are harvested in winter when their moisture content is lowest. The best logs have straight trunks, no limbs and a symmetrical end profile (i.e. logs with the core at dead center of the log). The logs are cut into bolts about eight inches longer than the instrument for which they will be used. The bolt is sawn into quarters and then sawn or split into wedges. Imagine a pie being sliced into wedge shapes.

The wide edges of two wedges are glued together to form a board that is thicker in the middle and thinner on the edges. It is then planed down to form the top of the instrument. When using wood in this way, the grain is exactly parallel to the strings of the violin which allows for the maximum resonance and amplification of the string vibrations as the bow is drawn over them.

The bottom of the violin is made of hard maple that reflects the vibrations out of the holes on either side of the strings.

The European red spruce trees cover several thousand acres and have been revered by the local people for nearly 400 years. The trees are watched over by the local people and officially protected by the Italian government. The trees are, in effect, a national monument.



Minnesota Forestry Association
1111 Cloquet Ave. Suite 7
Cloquet, MN 55720
www.MinnesotaForestry.org
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