

Woodland Advisor
Program's Vision:

To be
Minnesota's
leading resource
for citizens
participating in
forestry learning.

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Property Tax Changes on Forest Land in 2008

by Mel Baughman

Several tax bills affecting private forest lands were passed by the Minnesota Legislature and signed by the Governor in 2008. Here are key provisions.

1. Forest owners with stewardship plans now have the chance to markedly reduce their property taxes by applying to their County Assessor to have their land classified as "2c managed forest land." Such land would be assessed at a rate of 0.65% rather than 1%. The new subclass includes unplatted real estate, rural in character, including land used for growing trees for timber, lumber, and wood products but not used for agricultural products. To qualify for the reduced tax rate, you must have at least 20 acres but no more than 1,920 acres of forest. The owner must have a forest management plan that meets Sustainable Forest Incentive Act standards, but the forest land cannot be enrolled in the SFIA. Once the land is approved for this classification, annual applications are not required and such lands are exempt from being classified as to their highest and best use. The presence of a minor, ancillary nonresidential structure (e.g., hunting shack) does not disqualify a property from the (2c) classification. Any parcel of 20 acres or more improved with a structure that is not a minor, ancillary nonresidential structure must be split-classified, with 10 acres assigned to the split portion that includes the structure. If the land is adjacent to water, it is not disqualified if it meets the other requirements. The MN Department of Revenue will guide county assessors on how to implement the new law, but give them a little time before approaching your county assessor to take advantage of the new law.

2. For those enrolled in the Sustainable Forestry Incentive Act, the minimum annual payment has been raised from \$1.50 per acre to \$7.00 per acre.

The following organizations partnered in support of the legislation: MN Forestry Association, Audubon Society, Avon Hills Initiative, MN Center for Environmental Advocacy, MN Deer Hunters Association, MN Forest Industries, MN Seasonal Recreation Property Owners Coalition, MN State Tree Farm Committee, MN SWCD Forestry Association, Ruffed Grouse Society, and The Nature Conservancy.



4-H Nature Comes First Club

Katie Dudley on Wildlife



Woodland Advisors have been working with 4-H in a new pilot project the kids named Nature Comes First. This afterschool 4-H club at Riverside Central Elementary School in Rochester focused on forestry and natural resources. Katie Dudley, a Woodland Advisor, and the club leader led both the fall and spring semester with two different groups of students. Each group did a variety of activities including tree identification, tree planting and care, animal tracking, and working with GPS units. Ken Nichols, another Woodland Advisor, taught the kids about birding and using binoculars. About 25 students, some returning from the fall semester to "mentor" new kids in the spring semester, participated in the two groups, with each group meeting six times a semester.

By Angela Gupta



Student molding animal tracks in the snow

Minnesota's Sesquicentennial Forest

Keith Matson-Itasca Woodlands
Planting the Sesquicentennial Forest



Woodland Advisors took to the woods on Sunday, June 1, 2008 to establish the Minnesota Sesquicentennial Forest at the Forest History Center in Grand Rapids, MN. The event, organized by Keith Matson-Itasca Woodlands, planted 300 White Pine seedlings. Matson was joined by Jim Columbus, Bill Gothard, Floyd Hovarter, and Ralph Olson to teach over 350 individuals and families how to properly plant a tree. GPS coordinates were recorded and individuals were provided with name tags allowing people to revisit their tree in years to come. Families were very excited and enthusiasm was in the air. It was an excellent event! Thanks to everyone!

By Julie Miedtke

In the Eye of the Storm—Amplified Climate Variation



Photo by rickabbo

Mark Seeley, U of MN climatologist, teaches about Amplified Climate Variation. As the days of easy, all-day rains disappear in Minnesota, big downpours of excessive rainfall in one area are on the rise. The result is more winners and losers in the rainfall game—or sometimes just losers and losers. Seeley has gathered statistics on Amplified Climate Variation for years, but the summer of 2007 provided a real-time model. “I wrote the book on Minnesota’s weather history and I know we’re never had a month like August 2007,” he says. That month, the federal government declared 24 Minnesota counties drought-disaster areas after cities like Pipestone reported their third-driest July in history. On the flip side of the rainfall equation, the federal government also declared seven southeastern Minnesota counties flood-disaster areas after record rainfalls, including 15 inches in Hokah in 24 hours. “Our vulnerability to severe weather is higher today than ever before,” he says.

The dramatic nature of storms makes it easy to assume Extension’s climatology program is disaster-focused. However, drive down a state highway in the dead of winter to see another visible legacy of Seeley’s Extension work: living snow fences. Research conducted by Seeley, MDOT, USDA, and other U scientists showed that using standing corn or a mix of trees and bushes to make a living snow fence was an investment that paid back \$15-\$20 for every dollar invested. Highway engineers seized the savings opportunity and have been deploying snow fences along Highways 14 and 71 and Interstate 94, among other places since 1996.



Photo by cjohnson7

This article adapted from the University of Minnesota Extension Source magazine, Spring/Summer 2008.

Garlic Mustard in Your Neighborhood?

By Angela Gupta



First Year

Photo by Jacob.Enos

Garlic mustard, an invasive weed, is becoming easier and easier to find. This biennial herbaceous plant spreads to high quality woods as well as disturbed and flood plain sites. After garlic mustard becomes established there’s a noticeable decline in native herbaceous plants within 10 years. This “prohibited noxious weed” as classified by the MDA has become more prevalent in southeastern Minnesota in part because of the flood last August and this spring. The flood waters move around the seeds, which remain viable for 5 years, and create prime habitat for new garlic mustard to thrive. First year growth looks more like creeping charlie than the second year single stemmed 12-36” tall plant commonly pictured. Garlic mustard at all stages smells like garlic and onions when crushed. If you can spot garlic mustard and start

getting rid of it BEFORE it flowers and seeds you will have a better chance of controlling it.



Second Year

Photo by Kerry Wixted

Purple Trap Near You?

By Angela Gupta



Photo from www.ca.uky.edu/caps/images/purple_trap.jpg

Have you been out in the woods or at a local campground recently and noticed these interesting looking purple things in or near ash trees? If so you’ve seen some of the first Emerald Ash Borer purple traps in Minnesota. This is the first year the MN Department of Agriculture has used purple traps throughout the state to trap, and hopefully detect early, Emerald Ash Borer (EAB), an exotic pest with an almost 100% mortality rate on Minnesota’s native ash trees. There are currently no known cases of EAB in Minnesota but these traps are a new tool used in EAB’s early detection. Purple traps may be in trees or on poles, please leave them alone but do engage others in conversation about this exotic pest and why we do not want it here. The more folks that know about EAB and the firewood restrictions - a Minnesota law that restricts the type of firewood allowed into state parks, forests, or recreation areas - the better (for more information see www.dnr.state.mn.us/firewood/index.html). Do your part

Volunteer Opportunities

Angela Gupta is the Woodland Advisor Volunteer coordinator. To contact her call (888) 241-4536 . To follow up on the opportunities below please contact the person listed. For more detail and additional opportunities please check our website: <http://cfc.cfans.umn.edu/walvolunteer.htm>

“Vision without action is a daydream. Action without vision is a nightmare.”

- Japanese proverb

- For summer volunteer activities check out the Minnesota Department of Nature Resources volunteering website www.dnr.state.mn.us/volunteering/ There are many volunteer opportunities available and posted by geographic region. You can also sign-up for quarterly volunteer announcement if you choose.
- I would also like to encourage Woodland Advisors to be actively engaged in the Minnesota Forestry Association (MFA). A membership card is enclosed in this newsletter. Remember: MFA is a volunteer run organization and active participation on both the MFA board and the local woodland council chapters is vital to the success of this organization. There are 16 woodland councils scattered throughout the state. A list of councils and contact information can be found on the MFA website www.mnforest.com. If you are not already an MFA member and are actively involved with your local woodland council, join MFA and give your local council a call to see what they’re up to and if you can help.

Upcoming Events

Activities: Woodland Advisor Program Classes are underlined. For more information please see the web-site cfc.cfans.umn.edu/wal

As is common this time of year there will be fewer Woodland Advisor classes this summer as folks enjoy their properties and work on projects inspired by Woodland Advisor classes taken throughout the rest of the year. There will be an increase in classes again this fall. Be sure to check the website above for more updated information.

July 2008

- Thurs, July 10, Tree & Shrub ID, 6:00-9:00pm, Hovland Town Hall, Hovland, for info & registration contact Rick Schubert (218) 475-2778 or Mike Reichenbach or Denise Volk 888-241-0724
- Fri, July 18, Intro & Intermediate GPS, 8:00am-4:00pm, International Falls, call for location & info 218-283-1175
- Wed, July 30, Intro to Watersheds, 6:00-9:00pm, Cook County Community Center, Grand Marais, info & registration Diane Booth (218) 387-3015 or Mike Reichenbach or Denise Volk 888-241-0724
- Thurs, July 31, Controlling Runoff and Erosion around Your Property, 6:00-9:00pm, Hovland Town Hall, Hovland, info & registration Rick Schubert (218) 475-2778 or Mike Reichenbach or Denise Volk 888-241-0724

August 2008

- Sat, Aug 16, Light on the Land: Small-Scale Logging Demonstration and Field Day, 8:00am-5:00pm, Bradford Ripple River Acres, Aitkin, info & registration Dennis Thompson, dennis.thompson@mn.nacdn.net, Aitkin County PWC

September 2008

- Fri, Sept 19, 2008 Woodland Owners and Users Conference - Up North & Living Green, time TBD, Wendigo Lodge, Grand Rapids, info & registration Julie Miedtke (218) 327-7365

Biomass Guidelines

by Dr. David Zumeta

Interest in biomass energy in Minnesota has increased because of increasing energy prices, state-supported incentives to produce renewable energy, and an aggressive new renewable energy standard, and an aggressive new renewable energy standard. Although wood-fired energy facilities have been operating in Minnesota for years, recent expansion of the energy industry has raised concerns about the impacts of increased removal of biomass from the state's forests, brushlands, and open lands on long-term site productivity, biodiversity, and wildlife populations.

In 2005 the Minnesota legislature required the Minnesota Forest Resources Council (MFRC) and the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to develop guidelines or best management practices for "sustainably managed woody biomass" on forestland and brushland and open land, respectively. The legislation mandated that the forest guidelines "must be adopted...for logging slash, using the most recent available scientific information regarding the removal of woody biomass from forest lands, to sustain the management of forest resources..., with particular attention to soil productivity, biological diversity..., and wildlife habitat."

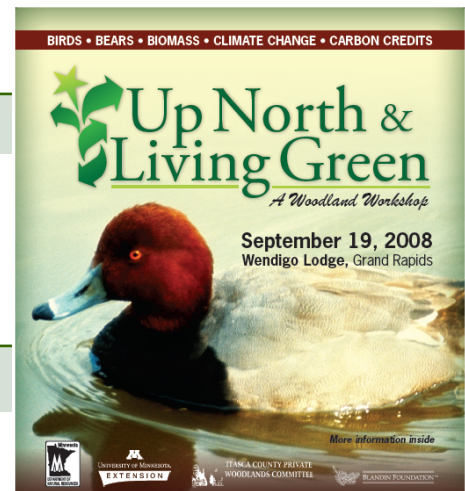
For the purposes of the forest guidelines, biomass harvesting includes the process of collecting and removing woody biomass from forested sites. In addition to the use of tops and limbs from trees harvested in a roundwood operation, biomass harvest can include the use of small diameter trees, or stems which have historically been "non-merchantable", dead trees, down and dead woody material, and brush. Biomass harvest removes more woody material from a site than would be removed in a typical roundwood harvest. Often biomass harvesting is conducted in addition to roundwood harvesting on the same site, either in conjunction with the roundwood harvest or soon after. Biomass harvest also occurs on sites where a roundwood harvest is not occurring.

Between the fall of 2006 and the May of 2007 MFRC appointed a 12-member interdisciplinary technical committee to develop both the forestland and brushland guidelines for use by equipment operators, contractors, biomass procurement agents, loggers, natural resource managers, and landowners. The guidelines were developed in part based on a worldwide literature review conducted by researchers from the U of MN. A draft was completed in January 2007 and sent to five outside peer reviewers. In April 2007, the guidelines were revised based on peer review comments and distributed for public review and comment. Ten sets of comments were received, resulting in further revisions. The guidelines were formally approved by the MFRC on May 16, 2007.

Specific guidelines address biomass harvest on sensitive sites, managing water quality and riparian management zones, managing soil productivity, managing/retaining wildlife habitat and structural diversity, biomass harvest for fuel reduction, and other topics.

The forest and brushland/open land biomass harvesting guidelines were developed as additional chapters in "Sustaining Minnesota Forest Resources; Voluntary Site-Level Forest Management Guidelines." (These guidelines are used on about 95 percent of the timber harvests on all ownerships in Minnesota). These guidelines, the first state-level guidelines for sustainable removal of woody biomass for energy in the US, are now available on the Minnesota Forest Resources Council website at www.frc.state.mn.us.

To date woody biomass harvesting guideline training has been provided to 300 loggers. Additional trainings are scheduled for this fall for loggers, foresters, and natural resource professionals. For more information visit www.mlep.org or sfec.cfans.umn.edu.



Woodland Advisor Program



UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
EXTENSION

Extension Regional Center, Rochester
863 30th Avenue SE
Rochester, MN 55904-4915

Phone: (888) 241-4536
Fax: (507) 280-2872
E-mail: agupta@umn.edu

Return Service Requested

We're on the web!
<http://www.cnr.umn.edu/cfc/wa/>

Suggested Reading

Ever wonder if there's research on the benefits of urban and yard trees? There is! This month check out the 6-part series from the University of Illinois about how urban and yard trees reduce crime, increase self-discipline in girls, reduce the symptoms of ADHD in kids, and have other social benefits.

Visit: www.lhhl.uiuc.edu



*Woodland
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Greg Cuomo New Associate Dean



Greg Cuomo has been recently named Associate Dean for Extension leading the Food, Agricultural and Natural Resource Sciences (EFANS) group. In this role, he will lead U of MN

Extension programs related to food, agriculture and natural resource sciences, assuring that interdisciplinary programs are targeted to the public's critical issues. He'll also provide leadership to internationalize Extension programs, faculty and educators.

"Agriculture and natural resource issues are at the core of the food supply, energy, and environmental challenges facing society today," Cuomo says. "Extension plays a critical role in providing dependable, unbiased information so that people can make informed choices about their future. I am excited about getting started and working with citizens toward a better future."

What is the Woodland Advisor Program?

The Woodland Advisor Program is your opportunity to learn about forests and forestry. Classes are generally 3 hours in length. Participants who complete 45 hours of woodland ecology and management classes receive a certificate of completion. Classes also provide foresters and Stewardship Plan preparers with continuing education credit. Participants who are interested in ongoing educational opportunities after completing 45 hours of classes and want to participate as a volunteer can become a Woodland Advisor Volunteer. Woodland Advisor Volunteers are leaders in their communities. They help their neighbors learn more about the options and opportunities that exist for their forestland. This helps all Minnesota's citizens by helping to maintain the health, beauty, and productivity of Minnesota's forest land.

Classes are open to anyone on a pay-as-you-go basis. Costs may vary, but most 3-hour sessions cost \$20. A discount may be available for Minnesota Forestry Association Members on classes where registration is handled through the University of Minnesota Extension. Inquire when you register about a discount.

For class times and locations, registration information, or more about the Woodland Advisor program, contact the Cloquet Forestry Center at 888-241-0724 or visit cfc.cfans.umn.edu/wal/.