

Woodland Advisor  
Program's Vision:

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

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## Challenging Times for the Woodland Advisor Program

The Woodland Advisor (WA) program has been around for more than 25 years and has undergone changes throughout that time. However, recent funding reductions have created substantial challenges. The WA program is designed like a three legged stool to diversify risk and leverage opportunities. Extension's support of salary time and University resources is the wood that holds the legs together, the three financial legs are partnerships, grants, and participant fees.

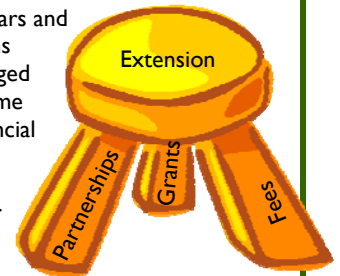
The WA program has many successful partnerships including the MN Department of Natural Resources (DNR), the MN Forestry Association, Boulder Lake Environmental Learning Center, MN Logger Education Program, and The North Shore Interpretive Association. These partnerships support the program through planning, organization and delivery of classes, recordkeeping, facility use, financial support of classes, and content development. These relationships remain vibrant: this leg of the stool is strong.

WA program organizers have been working hard to compete for grants to strengthen the program. Some examples include: MN DNR Forest Stewardship grants, Renewable Resource Extension Act - funding from the Federal Government, and U of MN Regional Sustainability Partnerships. These grants have helped us offer classes throughout the state, develop new curriculum, focus on issues like Property Taxes and Intergenerational Land Transfer, and expand our learning opportunities online. Now, less grant funding is available. Without grants many of these activities could not have happened, and if they had happened it's certain they would have cost more. This leg of our stool is very weak.

The third leg, participant fees, has remained steady at about \$20/class/participant for about 10 years. By leveraging grants and partnerships we have been able to keep this fee low, too low to cover costs, and continue to offer about 50 classes state-wide each year. These fees must increase. Starting in 2012 you will notice several changes. For most classes, fees will go up to ~\$30/class/participant. The minimum number of participants needed to hold a class will increase from 8 to 12, making preregistration essential. We hope this leg will remain steady.

We're likely to offer fewer classes and focus classes on historically well attended topics. We'll explore other ways to offer content. You may see more online learning opportunities as they're substantially less expensive to offer. This will be the last full color newsletter for awhile (future issues will be black and white) and there will be no separate holiday greeting card this year. We are also considering an all electronic - and much cheaper - newsletter.

However, there is support for the Woodland Advisor program within Extension and its partners; creative and talented individuals are committed to its success. There are also ways you can help. Please send us your ideas to increase revenue and/or reduce costs. Please let us know what you care about so we can do our best to focus on these areas. Please keep reading so you can learn about the many moving parts, possible changes, and even ways you can get involved - the world of forestry education and family forest landowner assistance is changing. Please send comments or feedback to Angela Gupta [agupta@umn.edu](mailto:agupta@umn.edu) or 1-888-241-4536.



## How You Can Help

By Angela Gupta



The preamble of the U.S. Constitution starts, "We the People of the United States..." but sometimes it's hard to remember that We the People can make a difference in government. This newsletter touches on many programs and policy decisions that impact you, the family forest landowner. Private forest land management reflects your individual goals and priorities but is often influenced by both local and federal government policies and regulations like property tax programs, cost share subsidies, educational opportunities supported by government monies, and tree seedling purchases (remember the MN DNR nurseries can no longer sell to private citizens). The U.S. Farm Bill has long reaching arms that can help fund many of these programs (see the American Tree Farm Service & 2012 Farm Bill article on next page). The MN DNR is undergoing many changes, some of which are impacted by politics. There are many spokes to the wheel of public assistance that helps family forest landowners, many of which are being threatened. We at Extension can keep you informed of changes, but we have very little ability to impact these changes - YOU the voting citizen; the woodland owner; the engaged participant CAN make a difference. If you are concerned about these issues please voice your concern by contacting your elected officials. Visit [www.gis.legmn.gov/OpenLayers/districts/](http://www.gis.legmn.gov/OpenLayers/districts/) to learn who your elected officials are and how to contact them. Additionally, the MN Forestry Association (MFA) actively engages in forest policy for woodland owners. If you are not a member of MFA consider joining, they can help your voice be heard by government. Information about MFA is available at [www.MinnesotaForestry.org](http://www.MinnesotaForestry.org)

## Changes in DNR Forestry & Private Forest Management Capacity

By Eli Sagor



At a recent meeting of the state Forest Stewardship Committee, Andrew Arends and Gary Michael reviewed changes coming to the DNR's Private Forest Management (PFM) program. The news is not good.

The PFM program budget was cut by 75% from \$2 million to \$500,000. While PFM forester capacity will not drop by quite that much, it will be dramatically reduced, leaving only a total of 12 full-time equivalents, 7 of which will be funded by grants, rather than DNR funds. These staff, along with private sector partners, will be responsible to serve Minnesota's 75,000 family woodland owners with more than 20 acres of land. This will dramatically change the services available to family woodland owners.

How will this capacity be deployed? Arends and Michael's plans were still in development, and they wanted input from the Stewardship Committee members. But a core element of the plan is that DNR foresters will begin to charge substantially more for the Stewardship Plans that they write. While DNR-generated plans have been subsidized in the past, the new cost structure will likely be higher than the prevailing cost of hiring a local private consulting forester. Writing Stewardship Plans will not be a top priority for the limited PFM forester staff; this responsibility will continue to shift, as it has since passage of the Sustainable Forestry Incentive Act and 2c Managed Forest Lands property tax-related programs during the past decade.

So what will DNR PFM foresters do? Most likely their responsibilities will focus on three things: 1) approving and recording Stewardship Plans written by private consultants, 2) working with landowners in a technical assistance role to implement Stewardship Plan recommended practices on the ground, and 3) landscape-level stewardship projects, which are a key priority for the USDA, which funds the Stewardship Program.

If that's not enough of a change, in the recent shakeup in the Division of Forestry, Andrew Arends, former director of Cost-Share Programs, was reassigned to direct the state's timber program. Lillian Baker, the new Cost-Share Programs director, is eager to learn the ropes of her new position and to hit the ground running. We look forward to Lillian's leadership on the Stewardship Committee and will keep you posted as things develop.

## American Tree Farm & 2012 Farm Bill Recommendations

by Diomy Zamora

As the US congress is soliciting inputs for the 2012 Farm Bill, the American Tree Farm System® (ATFS), a network of more than 83,000 woodland owners sustainably managing 26 million acres of forestland throughout the country, is actively engaged in providing key recommendations that should be included in the 2012 Farm Bill for a healthy and well-managed forest. Below are ATFS recommendations:

**Improve outreach, education, research and technical assistance:** There are over 10 million family forest owners in the US, who own over 1/3 of the nation's forest. However, only 4% of those who own these lands have management plans, meaning very few have put together a plan for good stewardship of their forest. There is a need to engage family forest owners in getting their forest healthy. To achieve this, ATFS specifically recommends to 1) reauthorize the Renewable Resource Extension Act enabling forestry outreach and education; 2) boost Technical Assistance Capacity for family forest owners ensuring that State forestry agencies, NGOs, and other private technical service providers are fully utilized to reach landowners; and 3) continue to support the USFS Forest Stewardship Program, NRCS conservation operations and key programs that provide technical assistance and forest management planning assistance.

**Strengthen conservation tools:** ATFS believes that Farm Bill conservation programs provide critical tools for family forest owners by helping family forest owners implement necessary forest management practices. Therefore, ATFS specifically recommends to 1) strengthen cost-share opportunities for family forest owners through the EQIP, WHIP, CSP and EFRP programs; 2) better incorporate forest priorities into conservation programs by encouraging State Technical Committees to consider the priorities in the State Forest Action Plans and the State Wildlife Action Plans; and 3) provide tools for Forest Conservation through WVRP and CRSP such as permanent easements, 30 year and 10 year contracts, to enable landowners to keep lands as forests.

**Enable market opportunities for traditional forest products, renewable energy, and ecosystem services.** There is a need for new and improved income streams for family forest owners. ATFS recommends to strengthen policies and programs that enable generation of renewable energy from the forest; establishment of renewable energy infrastructure development assistance especially community scale electricity, heat and power projects, and development of new supplies of forest-related biomass.

**Combat invasive species.** For a family woodland owner, the invasion of a forest pest can mean a complete loss of their woodland, destruction of a family treasure, reduction in income from their land, or the elimination of wildlife habitat. ATFS recommends maintaining the Plant Pest and Disease Management and Disaster Prevention Program to help build and preserve critical plant health initiatives.

**Educate the next generation.** Family forest owners know all too well the need to educate the next generation about forests. With over 60% of private forest owned by people age 55 or older, the fate of the nation's private forest will be in the hands of the next generation. ATFS recommends the creation of new tools for educating the next generation about forests and the environment through providing continued support for the USDA Forest Service Conservation Education work funded through the Forest Service's State and Private Forestry deputy area.



Flickr photo by Justin Russell

*"How wonderful it is that nobody need wait a single moment before starting to improve the world."*

~ Anne Frank

## Upcoming Events

**Activities:** Woodland Advisor Program Classes are underlined. For more information please see the web-site <http://woodlandadvisor.org/>

### January 2012

- Mon, Jan 2, **New Years Day** holiday celebrated - many offices closed.
- Mon, Jan 16, Martin Luther King Jr. Day - some offices closed.
- Thurs, Jan 26, What's Bugging Your Trees? 6:30-8:30 PM, UMN North Central Research & Outreach Center, Grand Rapids. Contact Julie Miedtke for info and to pre-register [Julie.Miedtke@co.itasca.mn.us](mailto:Julie.Miedtke@co.itasca.mn.us) or 218-327-7365.
- Sat, Jan 28, EAB & Ash Management, 1-4 PM, Great River Bluffs State Park (south of Winona). Pre-registration required contact Mary Jane Stearns [mstearns@umn.edu](mailto:mstearns@umn.edu) or 507-536-6310 to register or Angela Gupta [agupta@umn.edu](mailto:agupta@umn.edu) or 507-280-2860 for info.

### February 2012

- Fri, Feb. 10, Forestry Days, Zumbro Falls VFW. Contact the Lake City DNR office for details 651-345-3216 x 238.
- Mon, Feb 20, **President's Day** - some offices closed.
- Thurs, Feb 23, Small Woodland Management, 6-9 PM, Heintz Center, Rochester. Pre-registration required contact Mary Jane Stearns [mstearns@umn.edu](mailto:mstearns@umn.edu) or 507-536-6310 to register or Angela Gupta [agupta@umn.edu](mailto:agupta@umn.edu) or 507-280-2860.
- TBD Forest Pest First Detector classes, 6 statewide, late Feb & early March. For details check [z.umn.edu/firstdetectors](http://z.umn.edu/firstdetectors)

### March 2012

- Fri & Sat, March 9 & 10, Minnesota Family Woodlands: A Landowner Conference, DECC, Duluth. For info contact Stephanie Kessler at [MFWConference@yahoo.com](mailto:MFWConference@yahoo.com) or 218-326-1130.
- Tues & Wed, March 20-21, 50th Annual Shade Tree Short Course, Bethel University, Arden Hills. For info visit [www.cce.mn.edu/shadetree](http://www.cce.mn.edu/shadetree)

## Windbreaks and Living Snow Fences offer Winter Protection

By Gary Wyatt

Windbreaks and living snow fences benefit open and rural landscapes in protecting homes, farmsteads, communities and roadways from blowing and drifting snow. Windbreaks are Agroforestry practices, when placed in the proper locations, can serve multiple purposes and offer benefits which enhance rural eco-systems.

Multiple species of trees and shrubs need to be planted in windbreaks to prevent insect or disease infestations affecting a large part of the planting. In the past, American elm trees were planted in large numbers and the Dutch elm disease nearly eliminated this tree in North America. Green ash trees were numerous planted and we now have the invasive specie, Emerald Ash Borer which has killed millions of ash trees in 15 states plus Ontario and Quebec.

Landowners need to determine the purpose of the windbreak, how many rows, and what species of trees and shrubs to plant. The number of rows can vary from one shrub row for a living snow fence to 10 or more for a wildlife or farmstead shelterbelt. Generally a mix of deciduous and coniferous plants is recommended and should be based on the purpose of the planting. Many plants can also offer potential income or homegrown benefits such as edible, decorative, crafts, medicinal, and specialty woods.

Winter weather in Minnesota on the average claims 8 fatalities each year due to winter driving conditions. These conditions are responsible for an average of 280 injury accidents amounting to over \$17 million annually. Snow does blow. Snow moves at 5 to 13 mile per hour (mph), at 20 mph snow can be suspended to 3 feet, at 30 mph – 4 feet, at 35 mph (blizzard conditions) – 5 to 10 feet and 50 mph – 16 feet. Blowing snow (snowflake) can move up to 2 miles before it breaks up or evaporates.

Windbreaks and living snow fences reduce winter fatalities and accidents, benefit wildlife, enhance rural aesthetics, reduce blowing snow problems, reduce snow removal costs, protect top soil, and much more. These plantings are justified, especially when the multiple benefits of snow capture, water and soil conservation, rural diversity, and beautification are taken into consideration.

To learn more about Agroforestry practices such as windbreaks, living snow fences, shelterbelts and wildlife winter cover plantings, and possible tree and shrub species download the Windbreak fact sheet at: UM Extension Agroforestry, [www.extension.umn.edu/agroforestry](http://www.extension.umn.edu/agroforestry) County Soil and Water Conservation District and local Natural Resource Conservation Service offices can also help landowners with plant selection and cost share programs.



Flickr photo by D.Bjorn

## Volunteer Opportunities



The **2012 Minnesota Family Woodlands Conference** will pick up where the 2001 and 2006 Million Acres in Minnesota conferences left off. With 72 different sessions on Saturday alone, we're planning for at least 500 attendees. More info is at <http://z.umn.edu/MFWC> Like previous conferences, we're looking for volunteers! If you're willing to help out on-site during the conference, we'd love to hear from you. Likely responsibilities include serving as a room moderator (keeping presenters on time, making introductions, etc), helping with crowd control, handling registration, and similar work. The registration fee will be discounted

for any volunteers that are approved and signed up in advance. If you'd like to volunteer, or would like more info to help you decide, contact Eli Sagor at [esagor@umn.edu](mailto:esagor@umn.edu) or 612-624-6948.

Angela Gupta is the Woodland Advisor Volunteer coordinator. To contact her call (888) 241-4536 or [agupta@umn.edu](mailto:agupta@umn.edu)



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<http://woodlandadvisor.org/>

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### In the News

#### Go Green Get Real

MN Christmas Tree Association has a new ad campaign called Go Green Get Real to promote buying local Christmas trees and the environmental benefits of real trees.



### Greg Cuomo, Associate Dean leaves Extension



Greg Cuomo, the Associate Dean for Extension's Food, Agriculture, and Natural Resources Sciences (EFANS), is leaving Extension and moving to other positions at the

UMN. Greg will be missed. He will continue in this position until his replacement is found.

In addition to Greg's departure Extension is experiencing dozens of retirements after a retirement package was offered earlier this year. Mel Baughman, Extension Forester, retired this summer.

Extension administration is considering strategic positions to future Extension's mission critical work in the wake of these retirements. Ten positions have recently been announced with more following in coming months. Currently none are in forestry.

### 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/wa/](http://cfc.cfans.umn.edu/wa/).

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