

Woodland Advisor
Program's Vision:

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

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Minnesota's Forest Land Prices Continue to Rise

By Mike Kilgore, Assoc. Prof., CFANS, U of MN

Ten years ago, paying \$500 per acre for forest land in northern Minnesota would have seemed outrageously high. Today, finding a tract of forest land selling for \$500 per acre in the state would be a real bargain. The reason: demand for a piece of the approximately 6.5 million acres of the state's private forest land has never been stronger. People are buying Minnesota's forest land for hunting and other types of recreation, as well as a place to build their "home in the woods". In addition, prices paid for standing timber (termed "stumpage") in the state are at an all-time high for several tree species. These factors combined have led to unprecedented forest land prices in Minnesota.

According to a University of Minnesota study, the price of forest land in Minnesota has increased an average of over 12 percent per year over the past 15 years (Figure 1). In 2004, the average sale price of forest land topped \$1,300 per acre. In contrast, the state's forest land sold for an average of just over \$200 per acre in 1989.

Each year, approximately 500-600 tracts of forest land that are at least 20 acres sell in Minnesota, with the number of annual forest land sales rising in recent years. From 1989-2004, 94 percent of all forest land

purchases were made by individuals. Forest product, real estate, and land development businesses accounted for most of the other 4 percent of forest land purchases.

Most of Minnesota's forest land sales are between 40 and 80 acres -- small compared to the size of forest land parcels in other regions of the U.S. It's rare to find more than a handful of timberland sales each year in Minnesota that are greater than 300 acres. The state's larger forest parcels (those greater than 200 acres) have historically sold for about half the per acre price as tracts between 20 and 40 acres. In 2004, the median price of forestland tracts over 200 acres was \$577 per acre, while the median price of 20-40 acre tracts was \$1,075 per acre.

The study also found that the average size of a forest land tract has been declining (Figure 2). In 1991, the average size of a wooded tract that sold in Minnesota was 84 acres. By 2004, the average parcel size had declined to 66 acres. This decreasing tract size likely indicates that Minnesota's private forests are being parcelized into smaller ownership blocks. If true, this trend has important economic, recreational, and ecological implications.

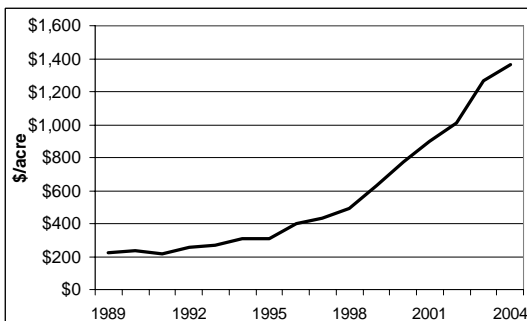


Figure 1. Average sale price (\$ per acre) of Minnesota forest land at least 20 acres: 1989-2004.

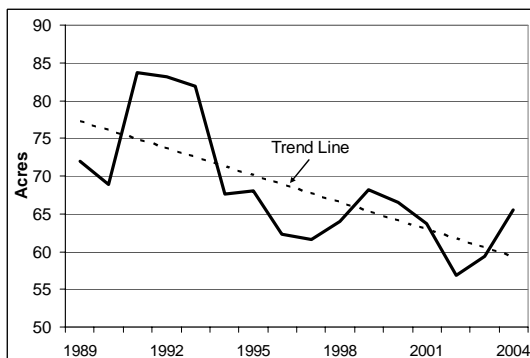


Figure 2. Average size (acres) of Minnesota forest land sales at least 20 acres: 1989-2004.

Jim Ballenthin: a Woodland Advisor Making a Difference on Private & Public Land



"Jim loves the outdoors" is the 1972 entry his mother wrote in her journal, the year he graduated from law school. During the 34 years since Jim has pursued this love, which now focuses on both public and personal stewardship of our forests, lands and waters.

Jim's public stewardship emphasizes conservation of the land/lake interface to promote healthy and safe shoreland and waters for human use and the myriad of animals and plants that inhabit these environmentally critical areas. In this effort Jim serves on the Cass County Soil and Water Conservation District and is a member of a Cass County citizen group developing intra-lake reclassification standards to guide responsible development in sensitive shoreland and lake habitat areas.

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Fires in the Boundary Waters

Compiled by Angie Gupta

July saw the beginning of two major fires within the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness (BWCAW) in Superior National Forest. The Turtle Lake fire, 15 miles east of Ely, burned 2085 acres in an area affected by a 1985 blowdown. The other fire, called the Cavity Lake Fire, at the end of the Gunflint Trail about 44 miles north of Grand Marais, began on July 13, and burned 31,830 acres. This fire was in the large 1999 blowdown. Both fires were started by lightning strikes.

After the July 4, 1999 blowdown in the BWCAW, caused by 90+ mile an hour straight-line winds affecting 350,000 acres, the US Forest Service's resource managers began preparing for these inevitable fires. They worked with communities to prepare for wildfires; some areas adopted the Firewise program (see the Suggested Readings section of this Newsletter for more information).



In addition to heightening community awareness, emergency response planning, and fire suppression preparation, several fuel reduction strategies were undertaken. The Council on Environmental Quality allowed the USFS to begin immediate fuel reduction. Additionally, outside the BWCAW salvage harvests on private land totaling 45 MMBF were implemented, and 40,000 acres of blowdown were treated by prescribed burns within in the BWCAW. These measures helped manage this summer's blazes.

Just before this went to press the Famine Lake fire broke-out and caused voluntary evacuations on the Gunflint Trail. The Cook County Community Center checked-in 132 evacuees.



News from the Itasca Woodlands: Keith Matson Retires

By Julie Miedtke

Keith Matson retired in early August from the US Forest Service on the Chippewa National Forest in Deer River. Keith began his career with the Forest Service in 1973 and began working on the Chippewa National Forest in 1978, serving as a paraprofessional and working on the monitoring, inventory and survey team.

Over the years, Keith accomplished many things and was recognized this spring for his professional achievements with the Society of American Foresters (SAF) for maintaining the organizations records and participating on the executive committee. Keith has helped create an interpretive trail and a kiosk at the CCC (Civilian Conservation Corps) Camp 707, located twenty miles northwest of Deer River on Highway 46. For many of us, we note his diligence and dedication to the Itasca Woodlands Committee. For many years Keith volunteered his evenings positioned at the kitchen table keeping track of all details associated with events, newsletters and grant dollars. He has also been willing to go the extra mile to visit landowners and talk about forest management. Keith was involved with the original training for the Woodland Advisors held in Grand Rapids in the 1970's and continues to be actively involved in the local MFA chapter and willing to roll up his sleeves to help things along. Congratulations Keith—and see you in the woods!



Our youngest Woodland Advisor?

Following Angie's example, Woodland Advisor organizer Eli Sagor became a parent in July. Evelyn Julianne Sagor was born on July 21. She's growing like a hybrid poplar! Evelyn's tree ID skills need some work yet but she shows early promise and will be a Woodland Advisor in no time.



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/wa/volunteer.htm>

Unfortunately, I am unaware of any volunteer activities for this quarter. If you know of any please let me know and I'll get the information to all of those on our listserv and post it on the web-site. I can be contacted at the information above.

Additionally, if you have any announcements you think the Woodland Advisor community would be interested in hearing about, ie: retirements, hirings, family changes, forest news, etc, please let me know. We, Woodland Advisor organizers, appreciate the importance of creating a Woodland Advisor community and one way to do that is to keep everyone up-to-date on that activities of others within the community.

Never doubt that a small, group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.

~ Margaret Mead ~

Upcoming Events

Activities: Woodland Advisor Program Classes are underlined. For more information or to register please see the website cfc.cfans.umn.edu/wa/
Save these dates!

October 2006

- Tues, Oct 3, Buckthorn, Emerald Ash Borer & Other Invasive Species, 5:30-8:00 PM, Quarry Hill Nature Center, Rochester, contact Mary Jane Stearns, 888-241-4536 to register
- Mon, Oct 9, Columbus Day observed
- Wed, Oct 11, What's Bugging Your Tree?, 1:00-3:00 PM, Forest History Center, Grand Rapids, contact Julie Miedtke, 218-327-7365 to register
- Tues, Oct 17, Native Tree & Plant ID, 1:00-4:00 PM, Garvin Heights Park, Winona, contact Mary Jane Stearns, 888-241-4536 to register
- Tues, Oct 17, Nuts & Bolts of Timber Sales, 6:30-8:30 PM, Squaw Lake Community Center, Squaw Lake, contact Julie Miedtke 218-327-7365 to register
- Tues, Oct 17, Productive Conservation Systems: Alleycropping and Silvopastoral Systems, 3:00-6:00 PM, Central Lakes College Experiment Center, Staples, contact Diomy Zamora, 888-241-0720 to register
- Thurs, Oct 19, Wildlife in Your Woodland and River Bottom, 3:00-6:00 PM, Snell Motors Community Room, Mankato, contact Gary Wyatt, 888-241-3214 to register
- Fri, Oct 27, Woody Biomass Harvesting and Utilization Equipment, 9:00 AM-3:00 PM, location TBA, Grand Rapids, contact Diomy Zamora, 888-241-0720 for information and to register
- Sat, Oct 28, How to Use a GPS Receiver, 9:00 AM-5:00 PM, Boulder Lake Environmental Learning Center, Duluth, contact Boulder Lake Environmental Learning Center, 218-721-3731 or boulder@d.umn.edu to register
- Sat, Oct 28, Daylight Savings Time change, Don't forget to change your clocks to fall back an hour.
- Tues, Oct 31, Halloween



November 2006

- Tues, Nov 7, Election Day, don't forget to vote!
- Tues, Nov 7, Minnesota's Forest: Ecology, History and People, 6:00-9:00 PM, Boulder Lake Environmental Learning Center, Duluth, contact Boulder Lake Environmental Learning Center, 218-721-3731 or boulder@d.umn.edu to register
- Thurs, Nov 16, Energy Saving Landscapes, 7:00-9:00 PM, Nobles Co. Gov. Center (downtown) Farmer's Room, Worthington, contact Gary Wyatt, 888-241-3214 to register
- Thurs, Nov 23, Thanksgiving Day
- Wed, Nov 29, Energy Saving Landscapes, 3:00-5:00 PM, location TBA, St. Cloud, contact Diomy Zamora, 888-241-0720 for information and to register

December 2006

- Fri, Dec 1, How to Use a GPS Receiver, 9:00 AM-4:30 PM, location TBA, contact Diomy Zamora, 888-241-0720 for information
- Sat, Dec 2, Balsam Fir as a Profitable Forest Product, 10:00 AM-12:00 PM forest management discussion/tour, 10:00 AM-4:00 PM tree cutting and wreath making, Boulder Lake Environmental Learning Center, Duluth, contact Boulder Lake Environmental Learning Center, 218-721-3731 or boulder@d.umn.edu for more information and to register
- Sat, Dec 2, Balsam Management and Holiday Wreath Production Tour, 9:00 AM-Noon, Mickman Brothers, Inc., 14630 Hwy 65 NE, Ham Lake, contact Barb Spears, 651-644-5800 to register
- Tues, Dec 5, Maintaining a Healthy Forest: Insects and Disease, 6:00-9:00 PM, Boulder Lake Environmental Learning Center, Duluth, contact Boulder Lake Environmental Learning Center, 218-721-3731 or boulder@d.umn.edu to register
- Fri, Dec 22, Winter Solstice
- Mon, Dec 25, Christmas
- Sun, Dec 31, New Year's Eve



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In March 2006 the Cass County Board of Commissioners appointed Jim, as a member of the Cass County SWCD, to facilitate development of county land-use ordinances implementing conservation design principles.

Jim and his wife, Jean, are stewards of 160+ acres of woodlands in Cass County under a stewardship plan (American Tree Farm System), including 60 acres of red pine planted in the mid-1990's, 23 acres in a natural stand of white pine, and the balance in mixed aspen, pines, and oak.

Management activities include removal of diseased and damaged trees to optimize basal area in the white pine stand; clear and select cuttings in aspen/jack pine stands; thinning to optimize mixed forest areas; and additional red pine planting in 2004 and 2006. He is an active Minnesota Forestry Association (Brainerd Chapter) member and is completing his Woodland Advisor courses.

Jim spends his spare time in his woodworking shop or operating his sawmill and solar dry kiln. He also serves as a Boy Scout citizenship merit badge counselor, president of his church congregation, and Chair of the Town Board of Ponto Lake Township.



We're on the web!
cfc.cfans.umn.edu/wa

Suggested Reading for this Quarter:

Minnesota has adopted Firewise, a program devoted to addressing "the risk of homes in the wildland/urban interface to wildland fire."

At the most risk are homes close to evergreens and tall grasses in prairies or marshes, according to the MN DNR. For further reading visit the MN Firewise website:

www.dnr.state.mn.us/firewise/



Woodland
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E-mail: agupta@umn.edu

Return Service Requested

Changes at the U

There have been big changes at the University of Minnesota this past year. A major reorganization is underway effecting several colleges. The Woodland Advisor program with Extension has historically been affiliated with the College of Natural Resources. As a result of the recent reorganization it is now a part of the College of Food, Agricultural, and Natural Resource Sciences: CFANS.

We do not expect these changes to have a major impact on Extension. However as a result our web address has changed to cfc.cfans.umn.edu/wa (don't worry the old one still works). For additional information check out: www1.umn.edu/systemwide/strategic_positioning or www.cfans.umn.edu

**College of Food, Agricultural
and Natural Resource Sciences**

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 Service. Enquire when you register about a discount.

For class times and locations, registration information, or more about the Woodland Advisor program, visit the Woodland Advisor website at cfc.cfans.umn.edu/wa.