



# Minnesota Woodlands

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

[www.MinnesotaForestry.org](http://www.MinnesotaForestry.org)

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## MFA Board Meetings

Cambridge DNR Office, 10 am - 3 pm

- January 10, 2017
- April 11, 2017

Conference Calls  
8 - 9 am

- December 13, 2016
- February 14, 2017
- March 14, 2017

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## DNR is Back in the Business of Private Forest Management...

**...so says Forrest Boe, Minnesota's State Forester and Director of the Division of Forestry.**

You undoubtedly remember the days when you could call your local DNR office with questions, get a forester to come out to your property and obtain cost-sharing dollars to plant seedlings and other activities. Thanks to an appropriation by the last legislature, all of that is now possible again.

Several DNR foresters have been hired or re-assigned to private forest management (PFM) duties. They can now help with a variety of activities including seedling planting, wildlife habitat improvement, recreation projects and stewardship plans. Cost-sharing on most projects is 50-50.

If you have a project in mind, you should contact the DNR right away. There will likely be more demands on the foresters' time than they can handle, so it is first-come-first-served. Jeff Wilder, a PFM forester based at Carlos Avery, said he is already overwhelmed with requests from landowners. In addition, the state tree nursery is sold out of some species for the 2017 season.

For more information, go to MFA's website, [www.MinnesotaForestry.org](http://www.MinnesotaForestry.org), where you can find details about the cost-share programs and contact information for the PFM forester nearest you.



*Forrest Boe, Minnesota's State Forester and Director of the Division of Forestry*



May you and your family enjoy a joyous Christmas season and a happy, prosperous and safe new year!

## Minnesota Forestry Association

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**Away from home for a time?** Please contact the MFA office if you'll be away from home for a time and 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](mailto:Information@MinnesotaForestry.org)  
or call 218-879-5100.

## Jack Rajala: A Giant in Minnesota Forestry

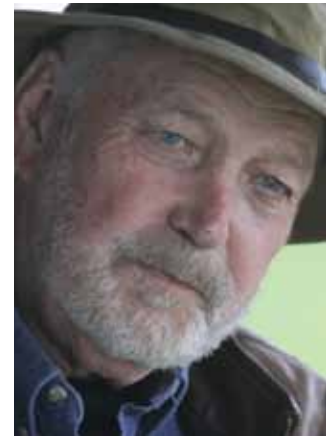
Long-time MFA member and giant of Minnesota forestry, Jack Rajala, 77, passed away August 2, 2016. The Grand Rapids resident was owner and CEO of several different forest products companies, including Rajala Mill Company of Bigfork, MN. Rajala was a leader in state and national efforts to find a balance between forest health, harvest and economic viability for forest-dependent communities and economies. It was a life well spent in committed care for the woodlands of Minnesota. It didn't begin that way, however.

Son Nathan Rajala said that he doubted his father was interested in sustainable forestry early in his career, but by the 1970s, more of the company's profits were going into buying land for replacing and replenishing. "He wanted to preserve what remained of the white pine," said Nathan. Through his own research and study, he believed that the big native pines that were nearly logged out of Minnesota, Wisconsin and upper Michigan in the 19th century could be brought back. "The Department of Natural Resources did not believe that the white pine could be restored, but Jack refused to believe that," said Al Hodnik, who served on the board of Allete, Inc. with Rajala. "The white pine was Jack's act of faith. The DNR director eventually acquiesced, and Jack proved you can restore a species and have a more natural forest."

Despite the early skepticism of others, Rajala poured his considerable energies into the king of the northern forests. In his lifetime, he personally oversaw the planting of more than one million eastern white pine seedlings and pioneered the widespread use of "bud caps" to protect white pine seedlings from browsing deer. To teach and inspire others, he authored the book "Bringing Back the White Pine" and was a frequent speaker on adapting to climate change.

Doug Lewis of Duluth, a longtime friend and hunting buddy, recalled deer camps with Rajala. At dinner after a day of hunting, Rajala offered a prayer of thanks for food and the trees. "He always said that we plant and care for the trees and God grows them. He knew his place in the universe," Lewis said.

Northern Minnesota white pine forests, and all Minnesotans, are certainly far better off for having been the recipient of Jack Rajala's considerable passion, work and devotion.



Jack Rajala



John O'Reilly receives award from Forrest Boe.

### John O'Reilly Receives Award

Forrest Boe, left, Minnesota's State Forester and Director of the DNR Division of Forestry, presented a State Forester Recognition Award to John O'Reilly. The award reads, "The Department of Natural Resources, Division of Forestry, recognizes John O'Reilly for outstanding contributions to forestry in Minnesota through your leadership as President of the Minnesota Forestry Association."

Congratulations, John, for your many years of dedication and service to Minnesota forests and the private woodland owner!

# After the Harvest: Where the Wood Goes

## Nelson Wood Shims, Cohasset, Minnesota

By Linda K. Dinkel, Editor

As a mine worker on the Iron Range of northern Minnesota in the 1950s, Wilbert Nelson faced frequent layoffs. During the down times, he worked as a carpenter in the construction industry, often installing doors and windows in the buildings he worked on. According to Nelson Wood Shims Executive Vice President and General Manager, Chuck Scherer, Wilbert grew frustrated with one of the tools of the job. “At the time,



Company headquarters in Cohasset, MN.

the only thing available for shimming was cedar shingle seconds, and Wilbert didn't like how they performed. He prayed about a solution, envisioning a shim that was consistent in width and length and feathered ends. He developed a machine to make the shims, replaced the back seat of his car with a load of shims and hit the road selling to the lumber yards of Minnesota. It was pretty hand-to-mouth at times, but eventually his shims made their way into the Payless-Cashway lumberyard chain and Nelson Wood Shims was off and running.”

The business was sold to Jerry Snuestad in the 80s, who took marketing to the next level with new, shrink-wrapped packaging and labels that put them ahead of other competitors. In 1996, the business was sold to current owner, Twin Cities entrepreneur Fred Bills. For many years, the company followed the same model of production, purchasing boards from local sawmills, shaping them into shims and shipping them to lumber yards. Then the recession hit. “So many small sawmills went out of business that we had a hard time getting enough wood to keep our production line going,” said Scherer. “We made the decision to bring the sawmill operation in-house and that's really worked well for us.” In 2014 they purchased an industrial-level, Woodmiser sawmill made in Poland and began working with loggers who contract with private landowners, bringing the logs directly to the site for processing. The

most radical change, however, came at the hands of divine intervention.

“A good shim has two important attributes, what we call nail-ability and snap-ability. A shim shouldn't split when a nail is driven into it, and we want it to snap clean. We've always been looking for the perfect wood and the perfect process to achieve that,” said Scherer. “We tried every tree species in Northern Minnesota but never got that perfect shim. And then one November, I was grouse hunting on what I knew was my old dog's last season. He was going deaf and had run off, so I was just standing quietly in one spot, waiting for him to find his way back. I remember looking up and thanking the Lord for the beautiful day, and deep down I felt this voice. ‘Try it again.’ It took a bit to figure out what that meant. I was in the middle of a large stand of basswood. I got my chainsaw and took home a basswood log.” Through a confidential process, Scherer found a way to enhance the natural properties of the basswood, and Nelson Wood Shims arrived at the perfect wood shim. “We branded it ‘Beddarwood’ because really, it's better than any other shim on the market.” Company sales have increased every year, and the plant has grown to 50 employees.

As the largest harvester of basswood in Northern Minnesota, Nelson Wood Shims is always looking for more. If you own basswood that's ready for harvest within an 80-mile radius of Cohasset, you might just want to give them a call at 1-800-441-7390.



“Nail-ability” and “Snap-ability” set Nelson basswood shims apart from competitors.

## Member Profile: Doug and Linda Appelgren

By Linda K. Dinkel, Editor

Doug Appelgren's praise of MFA is enough to make an organization blush. "Everything I've learned and implemented here is because of MFA," says Appelgren. "Everything" encompasses a plethora of forest management practices learned over the years through his MFA membership, either by taking advantage of learning opportunities provided by MFA in partnership with the University of Minnesota extension services (Woodland Advisor classes), or by following up on many of the best practices espoused, advertised or promoted by MFA. "MFA has been pivotal in teaching me the value of sustainable forest management."



**Appelgren's woodland passion began long before he owned his own.** While working in Adult Corrections in various Minnesota towns, he was always drawn to the woods for hunting deer, bear and grouse. After marrying Linda, a hospital dietitian, in 1987, they began looking for land "up north" where Doug could hunt and they could eventually build their retirement home. Living in Sauk Centre, Minnesota, at the time, Appelgren met a realtor on a piece of property near Wirt. "The old house had been vacated and the 158-acre property was in conservatorship. "It is just wonderfully diverse, with white cedar, aspen and hardwood forests, wetlands, meadows, and rolling topography. It was exactly what we were looking for," said Appelgren. They purchased the land in 1992 and shortly after that, Doug became an MFA member.

"Initially I was only able to be here on weekends. **I slowly became aware of the responsibility I had in owning such a beautiful woodland.** I researched and joined MFA shortly thereafter and attended Woodland Advisory classes. I learned just how much there is to learn and how little I knew. I became friends with Mike Reichenbach and he has been a huge help and resource for me. Linda and I loved this property, our paradise in the pines, and wanted to be good stewards."

**Christening the property "the Habitat",** their first stewardship plan written in 1994 focused on managing the land for hunting. "We were only able to come up here on weekends, but I packed a lot of work into that time." Work in the woods revolved around increasing the trail system and, of course, hunting. Old sheds and outbuildings needed to be torn down, six in all, and new structures put up, including a new pole barn, woodsheds and eventually a sugar shack. "We had a spring-fed water hole and, after securing the necessary permits through the Soil and Water District, we had that wetland dug and expanded to federal wildlife pond specifications in 2006. We built our retirement home in 2008."

**Appelgren is a life member of the Minnesota Deer Hunters Association and would like to see more MDHA members join MFA.** "Managing your woodlands for deer and other wildlife dovetails with managing your woods sustainably." He also thinks land owners need to be involved with encouraging the next generation of outdoor enthusiasts.



Top: Doug and Linda Appelgren.

Middle: Linda bud-caps all of the white pine while Doug takes care of the spraying. Managing their property is a shared passion.

Bottom: Appelgren has planted 3900 red pines in one of the open meadows.

“My generation has been trying to reproduce ourselves and that isn’t going to protect our forests and waterways, hunting or angling in the future. **We need to support new ways to engage a new generation of conservation-minded people,”** said Appelgren. He sees great potential in programs that include youth, women and diverse populations and cultures. The Forkhorn Camps supported by MDHA and environmental learning camps introduce kids to the outdoors and to hunting. In addition, high school trapshooting teams have exploded across the state. “In 2008, there were 3 teams and 30 athletes. This past year, there were 446 teams with over 13,000 students participating. Eighty-eight percent of these students had hunted in the last two years. This is great news for anyone who cares about Minnesota’s forests, prairies or farmland,” said Appelgren.

**Itching to do more work on the property, Appelgren retired in 2012...and went promptly to work.** “I wanted to be here for the first big harvest off this property, which took place in 2014. I hired forester Tom Crumpton to oversee the sale to Boise International, and he did a great job for us. We were able to hire Master Logger Mike Rieger to do the work. MFA supports the Minnesota Master Logger Certification Board which began under Governor Pawlenty’s term. They both did a tremendous job for us, and we harvested 1,295 cords of wood, mostly aspen, but some birch, ash, balsam and spruce,” said Doug. The regenerating aspen, already 12-15 feet, is now prime habitat for grouse and deer.

Tired of being apart and commuting to the Habitat for weekends, Linda retired last December and enjoys her time gardening, birdwatching, snowshoeing and cross country skiing, and working with Doug on the land, including bud-capping trees while Doug takes care of needed spraying. **They’ve utilized various cost-share programs and tax breaks to plant over 5,500 trees on their property in buffer areas adjacent to open meadows:** red and white pine, spruce, and choke cherry, plum, crab apple and red osier dogwood for the wildlife. “Dennis Thompson, MFA president, actually did our last stewardship plan, a Conservation Action Plan which provided our tree planting prescription.” They also tap 100 maples every spring, “because it’s something to do between hard water and soft water fishing,” said Doug. He also spends many winter hours in his wood-working shop. “So far, he’s made the dog a log bed, and one for the guest room,” said Linda. “I’m still waiting for mine.”

With the recent 16-inch snowfall, Doug might just have to park the ATV for the season and make time for that log bed.

*Middle right: A deer stand overlooks the wildlife pond.*

*Bottom right: After the 2014 harvest, aspen is regenerating well for grouse and deer habitat.*



*Doug's winter project: Linda's log bed!*



# Creature Feature

By Jodie Provost, MN DNR Private Land Habitat Coordinator

## Our Minnesota Forest Gems: High Conservation Value Forests (HCVF)



Temperance Pines

What's an expansive way to provide quality wildlife habitat in Minnesota's forests? Encourage landowners and businesses to use sustainable practices on, or certify, nearly 8.4 million acres of public and private forests, then identify the most outstanding and critical of those acres for management of their high conservation values. Voila! Quality forest management equals healthy, diverse wildlife habitats.

**Certifiable:** Three major, internationally recognized forest certification systems exist: the Forest Stewardship Council® (FSC), Sustainable Forestry Initiative® (SFI®), and American Tree Farm System (ATFS). These systems certify that forest landowners and businesses embrace “green” practices that maintain ecological, economic, and social components of forests. Through a chain-of-custody process, forest products are marketed and labeled as certified only if they were grown, harvested and manufactured in accordance with certification standards.

**High Conservation Values:** The FSC system also requires that certificate holders define and identify areas of outstanding biological, watershed, social and/or cultural significance, or “high conservation value forests” (HCVF). Biological, high conservation values (HCV) include rare, threatened or endangered ecosystems, and globally, regionally or nationally significant concentrations of either biodiversity or large, landscape level forests where viable populations of most naturally occurring species exist in natural patterns of distribution and abundance. Forests with these values can be managed as working forests provided the characteristics that make them so valuable are maintained or enhanced.

**National Leaders:** Minnesota DNR has 4.97 million acres, and 90% of that land is dual-certified through FSC and SFI. It administers the largest, single forest management certificate in our nation. To date, biological components have been the primary focus, with watershed, social, and cultural values evaluation in progress.

In 2015, Minnesota DNR formally designated 174,000 acres as HCVF on 82 sites and identified 89,000 acres on school trust lands for management consistent with the HCVF principle. Assessment of additional acres is in progress. Several Minnesota counties and private entities are also certified to FSC or SFI standards, providing additional HCVFs. Aitkin County, for example, has been a distinct leader, being the first county in the United States to be certified with over

222,000 acres under FSC and three HCVFs.

**Our Forest Gems:** These amazing, best-of-the-best forests, their habitats and creatures stretch from the northwest to the southeast corners of our beautiful state:

**Caribou Parkland:** A 11,300-acre gem in Kittson County along the Canadian border distinguishes itself as one of the best remaining examples of aspen parkland landscape with an impressive, functioning ecosystem. Its vast mosaic of glacial lake beach ridges and wetland swales has tallgrass prairie, savanna, shrubs, quaking aspen and bur oaks, with elk, wolves, sharp-tailed grouse, sandhill cranes, eastern towhee, marbled godwits, upland sandpipers, gopher snakes, and rare butterflies like the Assiniboia or Garita skippers.



Caribou Parkland

**Pat Bayle State Forest:** Bordering the BWCA, you can stand in awe at Temperance Pines under one of the largest, natural red and white pineries in the Laurentian Uplands. It covers 2,300 acres, including old growth forest with giant standing and fallen pines over a carpet of wild flowers, with lynx, heather voles, rock voles, black bear, black-throated blue warblers, goshawks, spruce grouse, common loons and bald eagles as residents.

**Whitewater Sand Savannas:** Located in the Whitewater WMA in Winona County with over 5,800 acres of bluffs, valleys and floodplain near the Whitewater River. Oak forest,



oak and jack pine savannas, barren and bluff prairies, as well as mesic prairies are home to red-shouldered hawks, peregrine falcons, cerulean warblers, blue-winged warblers, pickerel frogs, Blandings turtles and timber rattlesnakes. The area is also a critical migratory bird corridor and an important landscape for reptiles and mollusks.

**What Can You Do?** Maintaining and enhancing these special lands' unique characteristics and benefits are an important stewardship responsibility for all Minnesotans. We can recreate, enjoy and support management of these incredible places, and provide input on potential HCVF sites.

For maps of HCVF lands and additional detail, visit the DNR HCVF webpage ([www.dnr.state.mn.us/forestry/certification/hcvf.html](http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/forestry/certification/hcvf.html)). If you're interested in learning more, consider contacting Tim Beyer, Forest Certification Program Consultant ([tim.beyer@state.mn.us](mailto:tim.beyer@state.mn.us)).

*Whitewater Sand Savanna*

## More Government Cost-Sharing Dollars are Available

The U.S. Department of Agriculture, through the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS), is accepting applications for enrollment in the Conservation Stewardship Program through February 3.

Within the program, there are two dozen or more forestry-related practices for which NRCS cost dollars might be available. Examples are:

- Tree and shrub planting for wildlife cover or wildlife food.
- Sugarbush management.
- Adding food-producing trees and shrubs to existing plantings.
- Planting for high carbon sequestration rate.

Because applying for NRCS cost-share funds is a notoriously slow and complicated process, here is a suggestion:

1. Figure out what you want to do in your woodland: Plant seedlings? Control buckthorn? Thin hardwoods?
2. Call your local DNR office (there is a link to DNR offices on our website, [www.MinnesotaForestry.org](http://www.MinnesotaForestry.org)). Tell them what you have in mind and ask if cost-share dollars are available. If they are, the application process is much faster and simpler than applying for federal funds.
3. If DNR can't help you, contact your local NRCS office. To find the office nearest you, Google "USDA Service Center Locator". Click on Minnesota and then on your county.

Do not delay because the NRCS application process ends on February 3 and the dollars DNR has available are limited and distributed mostly on a first-come-first served basis.

Thinking of harvesting timber from your land?

*Call Before You Cut*

You will be sent a packet of information with no cost or obligation to you.

**218-879-5100**

  
UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA  
**EXTENSION**

For MFA members, the two best online sources of woodland information are the MFA website at [www.minnesotaforestry.org](http://www.minnesotaforestry.org), and the University of Minnesota Extension Forestry website at [www.myminnesotawoods.umn.edu](http://www.myminnesotawoods.umn.edu).

## “Mystery Medal” Strikes Again!

By Linda K. Dinkel, Editor

MFA members may remember an article that appeared in the 2016 June-July newsletter about the Silver Medallion Award. Recounted there was the story of the discovery of a medal in 1958 in a garden in Snohomish, Washington, with the words “Minnesota State Forestry Association, 1876” on one side and “Awarded to Charles King” on the other. A call at that time to MFA led to research into the origins of the medal. It was found that the award was given as an incentive by the MSFA to encourage tree planting.

Once again, a medal has surfaced far from Minnesota soil, this time in Clovis, California.

“I was contacted by Michael Swezey ‘out of the blue’ last July,” said former MFA Administrative Assistant Carol Cartie. “His family had moved his mother to a retirement facility and upon going through her personal items, they found an old medal that belonged to Michael’s grandfather. It was well worn, but Michael could make out the words, “Minnesota State Forestry Association, 1876, Awarded to Jesse Woolliscroft.” Thanks to the Internet, Swezey was able to research MFA and eventually spoke with Cartie by phone.

“I was amazed that the family had kept the medal for so many years and was so pleased that Michael thought to contact MFA. He asked if we would like the medal and I stated, ‘Yes!’” It arrived in August with a note enclosed:

*This coin was awarded to my grandfather, Jesse Woolliscroft and has been held by my mother, Rena Ellen Woolliscroft Swezey. We now would like to send the medal back home to Minnesota. - Michael Swezey*



*Jesse Woolliscroft Silver Medallion Award.*

**MFA's**  
*Forester*  
*Phone Line*  
A free service for  
MFA members only!  
Call for an appointment  
with the forester:  
**218-879-5100**



“No one over 50 should go into the woods without a Pickaroon,” says Pat Lanin of Brainerd. You can win one by returning your ballot and member survey. You can also buy one from Pat. Call him at 218-764-3315.