



Minnesota Woodlands

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

www.MinnesotaForestry.org

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MFA Board Meetings

Cambridge DNR
Office, 10 am – 3 pm
• January 15, 2013
• April 16, 2013

Conference Calls
8 – 9 am

- December 18, 2012
- February 19, 2013
- March 19, 2013
- May 14, 2013

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Dennis Thompson

Logrite Pickaroon Winner

Congratulations to
Dennis F. Thompson, of
Owatonna and father of
MFA Treasurer Dennis J.
Thompson, whose name
was drawn from among

those who answered this question posed in the
last issue of *Minnesota Woodlands*. On our web
site, name the three families shown in the Meet
a Member section of the Home Page. Dennis'
correct answer was: John & Mary Peterson,
Delano; Joe & Jean Crocker, Isanti; and Roger &
Linda Howard, Aitkin.

One way YOU can win a Logrite Pickaroon
is to vote and fill out the short survey. See the
ballot and information enclosed.



*May you and your
family enjoy a Joyous
Christmas Season and a
Happy, Prosperous and
Safe New Year!*

MFA's Public Service Announcements

With support from the Blandin Foundation, MFA has produced two public service announcements that tout the role private woodland owners play in Minnesota's forestry scene. To listen to the announcements, go to our web site, www.MinnesotaForestry.org where you will find links to the announcements at the top of the home page.

Another way YOU can win a Logrite Pickaroon is to get our new public service announcements played on your local radio station. Here's what you should do:

1. Call or email Carol Cartie in our MFA office at 218-326-6486 or Information@MinnesotaForestry.org. She will send to you a CD with our PSA announcements and a copy of the news release.
2. Take the CD and news release to your local radio station and ask them to play the announcements.
3. When you hear announcements being played, call or email Carol and let her know. If you are one of the first six members to call, you are an automatic winner of a Logrite Picaroon!



Logrite Pickaroon at work.

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MFA Board Actions

The MFA board meets every month. During January, April, July and October, the meeting is face-to-face at the Cambridge DNR Forestry office starting at 10 a.m. During all other months, the meeting is held via conference call. Any MFA member is welcome to sit in on the face-to-face meetings and listen in on the conference calls. See a list of board members and meeting dates elsewhere in this newsletter. Contact any board member for further information. For a copy of minutes from any recent meeting, contact Carol Cartie at Information@MinnesotaForestry.org or 218-326-6486.

Approving a contract with Kevin Walli of the law firm Fryberger, Buchanan, Smith and Frederick to represent the interests of Minnesota's private woodland owners, and particularly the members of MFA, during the 2013 Minnesota legislative session.

Approving final versions of our public service announcements (PSAs). See more information in this newsletter and on our web site, www.MinnesotaForestry.org.

Approving plans and funding source for a TELE Workshop to be conducted at the U of M Forestry Center on April 16, 17 & 18, 2013. Details will be announced in the next issue of *Minnesota Woodlands*.

Approving the Nominating Committee's recommendation to nominate a total of seven MFA members to the board. See the ballot enclosed with this newsletter.

Agreeing that MFA will take responsibility for the Silent Auction at the July Tree Farm Convention. Board member Dennis Thompson has agreed to lead the effort as chair of the committee.

Adding a new Family Life Membership category at \$2,000. Both Life Membership categories are for those members who want to make a substantial, and lasting, contribution to MFA. Eighty percent of the dues paid go into our perpetual St. Paul Foundation fund.

SFIA, 2c and the 2013 Legislature

By Bruce ZumBahlen, Chair, MFA Government Relations Committee

A few weeks ago, MFA's Government Relations Chair, Bruce ZumBahlen, and MFA's lobbyist, Kevin Walli, met with Jeff Van Wychen, a member of Governor Dayton's staff. **The purpose of the meeting was to emphasize MFA's interest in participating in discussions that might revise the Sustainable Forest Incentive Act (SFIA) or the 2c Managed Forest property classification during the 2013 legislative session.**

Currently, there are 2,189 claimants who have woodlands enrolled in the SFIA that cover 762,588 acres. Claimants annually receive \$7.00 per acre for maintaining their woodlands according to the SFIA provisions. Another 147 woodland owners, covering 28,791 acres, applied for enrollment in the SFIA as of this past September.

The 2c Managed Forest property classification has also grown in popularity to the point that there are now 240,000 acres under that property tax classification. The property values of 2c woodlands are assessed at 0.65% instead of the 1% rate for rural vacant lands, a savings to woodland owners of 33%.

MFA has played a significant role in enacting these programs to encourage the retention and sustainable management of family owned woodlands. Thus, when Molpus Woodlands, a Timber Investment Management Organization (TIMO), that recently bought Forest Capital Partners woodlands, threatened to close forest roads and recreational trails on their properties in northern Minnesota not covered by conservation easements, MFA recognized that this would put pressure on northern legislators to revisit the SFIA.

Continued on page 7





Creature Feature



By Jodie Provost, DNR Private Land Wildlife Habitat Specialist

Wood Turtle (*Glyptemys insculpta*)

For the first time, our “creature” is a reptile, the wood turtle. In Minnesota, this uncommon, attractive creature is one of nine turtle species and the most terrestrial of them. Adults grow to eight inches long, have a distinctive, sculpted shell and typically have yellowish-colored skin on their limbs and neck underside. In Minnesota, they are located on the western edge of their northeastern North American range. They inhabit rivers flowing through our eastern forests, are listed as threatened and protected by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR).

Wood turtles prefer small to medium-sized, fast-moving rivers and streams, typically with sand or gravel bottoms, that are adjacent to deciduous and coniferous forests. Adjacent alder thickets, forest, grassland, and agricultural fields, in a home range of usually just several acres and usually within a ¼ mile of the river, are used for basking and foraging. Sandy, sparsely vegetated areas, not prone to flooding and with direct sunlight, provide important nesting sites.

Wood turtles overwinter in rivers or streams, become active by late April, and court and mate primarily in spring. Their peculiar courtship display involves the male and female approaching each other slowly with necks extended and heads held high. Then, as they close in, they suddenly drop their heads and sway them from side to side. Males are known to emit a “muted tea kettle” sound. Females nest in late May or June, and dig nests in exposed sandbars, cut-banks, or other open, well-drained areas, laying up to 18 eggs. The whole digging, laying, filling and tamping process may take over three hours. Hatchlings, just over an inch in size, emerge in late August or September.

Life is tough for a young turtle, as nests can be destroyed by predators like raccoon, skunk, and fox, and hatchlings fall prey to birds, fish, snapping turtles and other predators. **Wood turtles are very long-lived, maturing between 14 and 18 years of age. A captive one was reported to live 58 years.** A variety of foods, including berries, succulent leaves, mushrooms, insects, slugs and earthworms, are gleaned from adjacent riverine habitat. An interesting “stomping for worms,” feeding behavior that causes vibrations and induces worms to the surface has even been observed!

To learn more about habitat use of wood turtles in Minnesota, DNR tracked three turtles in 2009 and 2010. One

female was frequently found using a small black walnut plantation where it traveled throughout the sun-dappled forest floor feeding on worms, utilizing small wetlands, and nesting in open fields. A particular highlight of the study was a male that traveled downriver roughly nine miles out of state to an overwintering site, much farther than expected.

In Minnesota, wood turtle populations have declined for numerous reasons, including loss and fragmentation

of riverine forests due to agriculture, timber harvest, road construction and development; siltation of streams; river damming and channelization; flooding of nesting areas; illegal turtle collection; road kills; and an increase in predators due to human activity. These problems are compounded by its low reproductive potential and low survival rate of juveniles.

How can you help wood turtles? Conservation of forest habitat along rivers is number one! Support floodplain conservation techniques and zoning restrictions, maintain water quality, control sedimentation, restrict pesticide use, support set-back requirements and stream-side buffers, and use best management practices for timber harvest, livestock grazing, and agriculture. Also, leave woody debris in rivers for cover and loafing sites, pick up trash from sandbars and islands that can attract skunks and raccoons, limit recreational use of streams in prime turtle habitat, watch for them in agricultural fields when farming, and help identify populations and key habitats. If you see a wood turtle, please leave it alone unless it is in harm’s way such as on a road. Please report sightings to the DNR Animal Report Line at 1-888-345-1730 or e-mail mcbs.e-report@state.mn.us and include a photo if possible.



Member Profile: Dave & Beverly Medvecky, The Big Woods Farm

Dave Medvecky was working on a power line project near Cambridge in Isanti County in the mid-1970s when he saw a For Sale by Owner sign outside a small farm that looked appealing to him. Dave wrote down the phone number meaning to give the owner a call. A year later, Dave hadn't gotten around to calling when he saw the owner's obituary in the local newspaper.

Dave contacted a neighbor who had been appointed executor of the estate and learned that the farm would be sold by auction and that the bee hives on the property needed attention. Dave volunteered to care for the bees and made plans to bid on the farm. A few weeks later, Dave and Bev were proud owners of the 40-acre Big Woods Farm. Since then they have acquired another 200 acres nearby, making for a nice 240-acre spread. The place was an enrolled Tree Farm when the Medvecky's bought it and they have maintained the relationship.

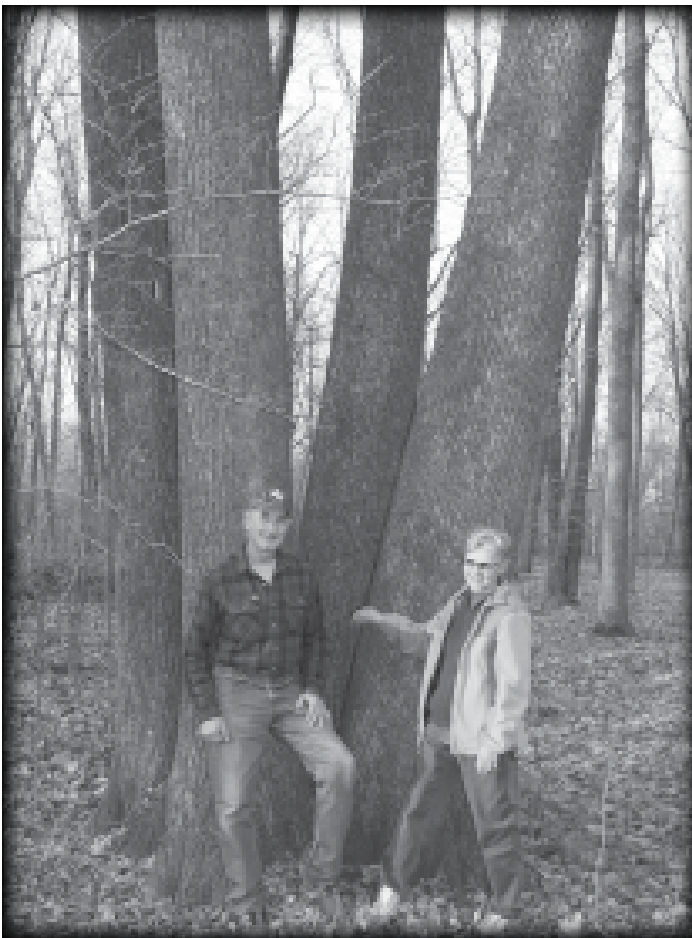
Most of Isanti County is in the Anoka Sand Plain, suitable for pine. The area around the Medvecky's farm has heavier, clay soil and was called the "Big Woods" by local farmers in the early days because of the huge maple, oak and basswood trees growing there. The original owner named the place, The Big Woods Farm, a name the Medvecky's have kept.

While Dave was working, he'd spend his spare time in the woods at the farm. He learned that it takes a full winter season to thin five acres of woods. At that rate, he spent eight years covering the entire 40 acres. Then, in 1995, Dave was laid off from his job and went to work full time on the farm. "Now I work out in the woods from sun up to sunset and love it," Dave says. "One question is what would happen if I were to get hurt out in the woods? I don't have a cell phone because I'd probably smash it somehow while working. But, without the phone, Bev wouldn't come looking for me until after dark." Good reason to be careful in the woods!

Through the years, Dave has found markets for most of what comes from his woods. "Maple syrup is the easiest product to sell. People ask to be put on a waiting list for it. Last spring was a total bust but we've had good years, too. Our best was the year we produced 90 gallons of finished syrup."

"One problem with producing maple syrup," Dave says, "is that you have to be in the woods during breakup when the roads and trails are most vulnerable to damage. It seems that some years we've spent most of our maple syrup revenue on fixing up the trails after the season."

Somehow, Dave got connected with a woman who calls herself The Nature Lady. She collects rustic items and resells them to floral shops in Dallas and Austin, Texas. She was at Big Woods Farm recently and loaded up on birch logs, branches and bark plus mushrooms that grow on birch trees



Top: Dave & Bev Medvecky. In the foreground is a load of cherry wood being dried in the sun. It will be sold to a fellow who uses it in his meat smoker.

Bottom: Basswoods like these were the inspiration for the name Big Woods Farm.

and hornets nests Dave found in his woods. Dave and Bev's 14-year old grandchildren, a boy and a girl, helped load the woman's truck and saw Dave collect the money. "It is good for the kids to see that you can make money from the woods but I had to warn them that most sales aren't as easy as this one."

Dave has a local fellow bring in his Wood Mizer saw mill several times a year. They saw lumber for a local outfit that makes flooring and paneling. Also, logs with figured wood, ones with what normal mills would call defects, are sawed for local bowl turners.

In all, the Medveckys have more than two dozen customers who buy everything from cherry wood for smoking on grills to logs for export to Japan.

One of Dave's favorite customers is the Ebner family in Elk River. Five members of the family, who are the fifth generation in the business, make wooden berry boxes. They do it all by hand with no outside help. They do have machinery that is approaching 100 years old. Like the flour mills used to be operated, all of the machines are run off belts from a single shaft that is powered by one three-phase motor. The berry boxes have seen an increase in popularity thanks to the organic fruit market. Recently the Ebners received an order for one million boxes! On average, they buy three semi loads of basswood from the Big Woods Farm each year.

What to do with the wood scraps?

The Medveckys have always heated their home, and all their hot water, with wood. Their only back-up system is a second wood burner. Recently Dave bought a new outdoor wood furnace from Classic Sales located just down the road in Isanti. At some point in the near future, the U.S. EPA will ban the current, smoky models of outdoor furnaces and require that all new models be a more efficient type that produces less smoke. A problem with the efficient type is they require seasoned wood for fuel. Dave says, "As a tree farmer, we always have wood scraps we can use for heat but they are not dry. I bought this new furnace so we can put it into operation when the old one, that is 25 years old, needs replacement."

Bev also has a little business going. She maintains a huge garden that produces flowers and vegetables to sell locally. Her biggest seller is asparagus which, according to Dave, is as easy to sell as maple syrup. Bev has 400 feet of asparagus rows in her garden. Another of her major products is peonies. From a few plants obtained from a relative 25 years ago, Bev now cultivates over 250 peony bushes. Vegetables include tomatoes, strawberries and peas. Bev plants one row of sweet corn every week for eight weeks so she has sweet corn available for two months.

Since they purchased the place 35 years ago, the Medveckys have never used any fertilizer or pesticides on Bev's garden or anywhere on the farm. Dave says, "I guess this makes us organic, although we have never applied for certification."



Top: Bev in her asparagus patch that has been covered with leaves for the winter.

Above: Maple logs are set out in a shady area to dry slowly to make spalted maple – wood with interesting discoloration caused by fungi – that is sought after by woodworkers.

Below: The only major piece of equipment Dave uses in his woods is this Iron Mule, made in Upper Michigan in the 1970s. "I like to keep all my logs free of dirt and other debris. With this Iron Mule, I can wind my way up to a felled tree and pick up the logs without ever skidding them."



Garlic Mustard Control

Casual Doesn't Cut it, but Consistency Does

By Steve Swenson, Aldo Leopold Foundation

Garlic mustard, like most invasive species, multiplies unchecked and spreads rapidly in the absence of pest or disease. Other invasive species have slower rates of spread (e.g., buckthorn), giving the landowner years to recognize the problem and react, and not be too late. An obligate biennial, garlic mustard attempts seed production in its second year without exception, even if on the brink of death (e.g., uprooted and lying on the ground). It proves in many cases to establish and spread quickly, especially on disturbed soils, including situations within (e.g., timber harvests) and outside our control (e.g., wildlife movement). It will grow in a density capable of excluding all else on the ground layer of your woods. A consistently applied program over five to seven years that includes scouting, mapping, effective control, and follow-up guarantees YOU remain its most feared pest and, like us, significantly reduce its influence on the woods.

Our garlic mustard control program is both preventative (i.e. attempts to find previously unknown patches) and curative (i.e. controls known patches) and includes reconnaissance, GPS mapping, herbicide treatment, and post-treatment monitoring. For our research, we catalog and collect data on each patch also. Over the years, we tried other control techniques including flame weeding, prescribed burning, pulling, and mowing. Although every situation is different and other methods have merit, herbicide is the only method offering effectiveness consistent over the necessary years of treatment.

Annual scouting provides property-wide perspective on the problem and opportunity for early detection of new populations. Systematically transect your property on and off-trail looking for garlic mustard in the rosette stage (leaves in a flat bunch near the ground; see photo). Late fall (Oct. or

Nov.) or early spring (March) can be a great time of year as there is less chance of snow cover and most vegetation has died back while garlic mustard remains bright green, typically in circular patches (“apples don’t fall far from the tree”).

Depending on the severity of your problem and ground to cover, mapping patches is helpful, especially for small and remote populations easily lost or forgotten. In our case, we GPS, flag and number each patch. This allows the sprayers to “cross them off the list” during treatment. This step becomes less valuable in cases of many close patches. GPS signal under the tree canopy can be inaccurate, ultimately placing locations incorrectly on a map relative to one another (e.g., point 15 is really west of 16, but GPS shows otherwise). Simply flag these areas and don’t waste time creating a map. With scouting and mapping completed during the off-season, spring and early summer are more wisely spent controlling the plant. For us, the value of this has been obvious; new patches are significantly smaller (less than three feet in diameter) and thus more manageable.

A control program is more efficient if it controls seedlings through mature seed-producing plants. This is true for herbicide, not for pulling, mowing or burning. For us, herbicide application begins late April/early May and continues through early June. As you might guess, timing matters. Trade-offs to consider are earlier spraying misses some seedlings but lessens incidental spraying of yet-to-emerge native plants; later spring spraying more efficiently targets garlic mustard seedlings and adults, yet it can be harder to see as the plant matures and the petals drop (surprisingly, when the tiny petals are gone it’s much harder to see) and there is more native vegetation to avoid.

We use products that contain glyphosate (e.g. Buccaneer, Touchdown, Roundup) in solution at 1.5%-2% active ingredient. Most of these glyphosate products have



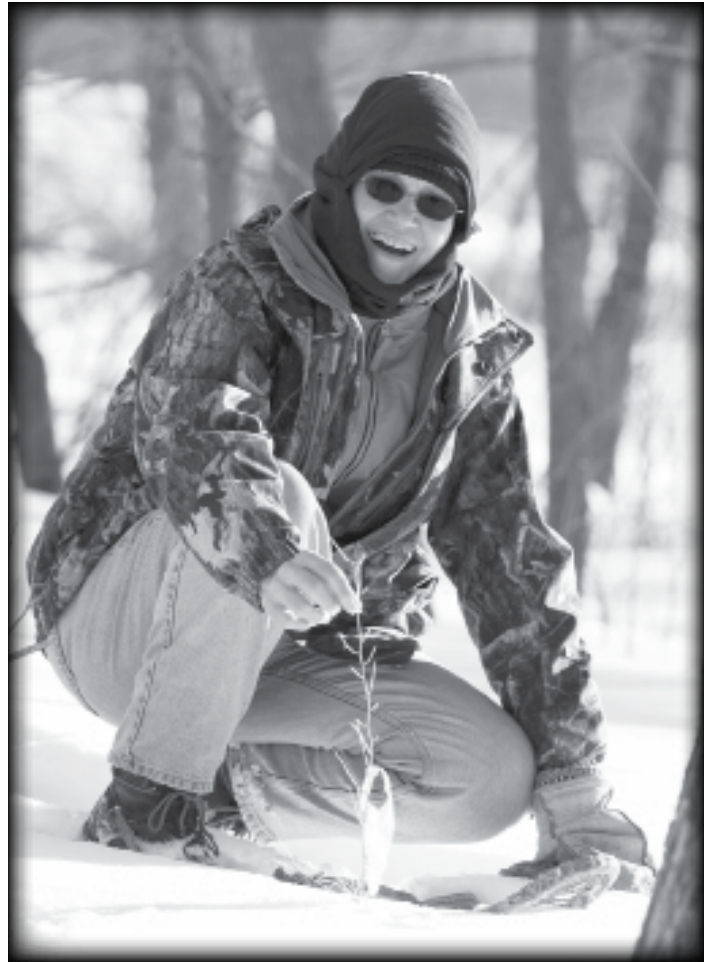
In the first year (left), garlic mustard plants form clumps of round shaped, slightly wrinkled leaves that smell like garlic when crushed. The next year (right) plants flower in spring, producing cross shaped white flowers in dense clusters. As the flowering stems bloom, they elongate into a spike-like shape.



Above: John Peterson, of Delano, with author Steve Swenson discussing garlic mustard control outside the Aldo Leopold Shack in Bariboo, Wisconsin.

Top right: John Peterson with a healthy garlic mustard plant root.

Right: During winter scouting, Mary Peterson found an adult garlic mustard plant that has gone to seed. She will mark the area for treatment in the spring.



surfactants in them to break the water tension spread over the leaves rather than bead up. We also add a colorant (Tracer brand) indicating where we sprayed. The dyes break down quickly and are typically not visible 24 hours later.

For follow-up, we revisit (at least once) all of the patches a couple of weeks later to pull any garlic mustard plants still alive after our initial treatment. We pull plants (or dig up, if the roots break off) because there are relatively few, often on the edge of the patch nearest desirable native vegetation and may have produced viable seed that replants the area if not completely removed. Follow-up should be completed by July 4th, when adults drop seed.

Yes, an annual investment of time and money is required, but this method, if followed, will make sure you are not wasting either or losing your woods.

Steve Swenson is the Ecologist for the Aldo Leopold Foundation, Baraboo, WI. Steve teaches land management courses through The Woodland School which offers practical classes for landowners and professional land managers (<http://www.aldoleopold.org/WoodlandSchool/index.shtml>). For more information on their garlic mustard program, visit: <http://www.aldoleopold.org/woodlandschool/garlicmustard.shtml>.

Legislative Update continued from page 2

At issue for Molpus and other large woodland owners is the \$100,000 cap placed on SFIA annual payments to any one claimant by the 2012 legislature. Lacking incentives to maintain these woodlands for forest management and public recreation, the TIMO is compelled to consider partitioning their properties for sale or development, which would not be good for forestry in northern Minnesota. Molpus has since held off on gating their properties this winter pending the outcome of the 2013 legislative session.

At the same time, the Department of Revenue (DOR) has been working on recommendations to simplify Minnesota's property tax laws as directed by the Governor. **What does this all mean to woodland owners? A lot! Stayed tuned – MFA will keep you abreast of the latest news and do what it can to help woodland owners hold on to and manage their properties in the face of rising property taxes.**

MFA Land Committee Report

In 1995, MFA accepted responsibility for monitoring a conservation easement on 35 wooded acres in Dellwood, near White Bear Lake. The contract included a one-time payment to MFA which was in poor financial condition at the time. (MFA is currently in excellent financial condition.) Every year since, our Land Committee members have inspected the property to ensure the terms of the easement are being followed.

This year, the inspection was done in late October. The committee observed that the larger trees are doing fine. Species present include white pine, red pine, red and white oak, red and sugar maple, black cherry, hickory, aspen and birch.

Unfortunately, there is little regeneration because of deer browsing and an increasingly dense growth of buckthorn. The committee strongly recommends work be done to control the buckthorn, protect some areas from deer and do general timber stand improvement. However, the owners,



Land Committee members, l-r: John Saxhaug, Minneapolis, committee chair; Barb Spears, St. Paul and Bruce ZumBahlen, Cottage Grove. Not shown in the photo is Neal Kingsley, White Bear Lake.

who have veto power over any recommendation, have not yet approved any work on the land.

Thanks to the Land Committee for fulfilling our responsibilities under this conservation easement and for continuing to advocate active management of the woodland. Hopefully, the owners will “see the light” some day soon.

Tree Farm Convention

The 20th National Tree Farm Convention will be held in Minneapolis at the Renaissance Depot Hotel on Thursday, July 25 through Saturday, July 27, 2013. (The last MFA newsletter had incorrect dates.)

WANTED: Silent auction items! We understand that some of the southern tree farmers come to the convention ready to spend big dollars on items with a woody theme. The Minnesota Tree Farm Committee has asked MFA to manage the silent auction and offered to share the proceeds with us. **Dennis Thompson** is the chair of our Silent Auction Committee. Please find one or a few items to donate and contact him at 218-927-6565 or at Treasurer@MinnesotaForestry.org.

We will also need volunteers for various convention-related duties. If you would like to help out, please contact Bruce ZumBahlen at 651-458-0483 or at zoomerbruce@aol.com



Thanks to David and Carol Cartwright, Rush City, for being the first to volunteer to help at the convention!

For MFA members, the two best online sources of woodland information are the MFA web site, www.MinnesotaForestry.org and www.MyMinnesotaWoods.UMN.edu.



Here's what's new at MyMinnesotaWoods:

- Minnesota red pine: Comparing managed and unmanaged stand conditions
- Northern Minnesota Phenology Report: An old white pine
- Recap of the 2012 Upper Midwest Invasive Species Conference
- Minnesota oak wilt risk status is now SAFE until spring
- ...and as always, Minnesota forestry news, events, and more

Have a question about your woodland? Post it on the Discussion Board. You may be surprised at how many good responses you get!

For the live version, with much more info on each topic, visit MyMinnesotaWoods.org.

Thinking of harvesting timber on your land?

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A free service for members of the Minnesota Forestry Association

218-326-6486