



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
• July 16, 2013
• October 15, 2013

Conference Calls

8 – 9 am
• June 18, 2013
• August 20, 2013
• September 17, 2013
• November 19, 2013

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Whew! Another Nail Biter

by *Bruce ZumBahlen, chair of MFA's Government Relations Committee*

Right up until the end of the legislative session, the Omnibus Tax Bill was held hostage as the last major bill to pass. Prior to its passage, MFA expressed concerns to legislators over provisions in the Senate and House versions of their respective tax bills that had serious implications for the Sustainable Forest Incentive Act (SFIA). At stake were:

(1) eligibility to enroll in the SFIA if there is a permanent conservation easement recorded on the property, (2) a reduction in the payment after factoring in property taxes paid on the property and placing a burden on the MN Dept. of Revenue (DOR) to administer those reductions, (3) elimination of the annual \$100,000 cap per claimant, and (4) requiring claimants having more than 1,920 acres in the SFIA to permit motorized access on established and maintained roads and trails.

So, how did those issues play out in the final bill? Here's a summary: (1) **properties with permanent conservation easements will not be eligible for enrollment in SFIA after May 30, 2013.** Properties with permanent conservation easements that are currently enrolled in the SFIA can stay enrolled with one exception: Blandin Paper Company's 60,000 acres that are under a conservation easement funded with Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage monies must be removed from the SFIA program.

On the other issues above: (2) **SFIA annual payments will remain at \$7.00 per acre** and be administered by DOR as in the past; (3) **the \$100,000 cap on annual payments has been eliminated;** and (4) **motorized access must now be permitted on established roads and trails on SFIA enrolled lands with more than 1,920 acres.** All in all, the Tax Bill could have been worse.

On the budget side, the Omnibus Environment and Natural Resources bill passed with some great news. The MN DNR Forestry Division will receive about \$10.1 million more this coming biennium which **will enable the Division to hire 20 new forestry field staff.**

Plus DNR Seedlings Are Back!

The law passed in the 2011 Special Legislative Session that restricted future seedling production at DNR nurseries for planting only public lands **was repealed.** Thus, **private landowners will be able to continue purchasing seedlings as in the past.**



Bob Sonnenberg, New York Mills, registered for our Annual Meeting and Spring Field Day before May 1st. His name was drawn from among the early registrants as the winner of a Logrite Pickaroon. Thanks to all early registrants and congratulations to Bob!

On a scale of one to five, five being the highest, I would rate the last legislative session as a '4' in addressing forestry-related issues. **How would you rate it? Email your thoughts to Information@MinnesotaForestry.org.**



Bruce ZumBahlen

Minnesota Forestry
Association

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Annual Meeting Report

At our MFA Annual Meeting, held at the Owatonna Holiday Inn on Friday, May 17, a number of Significant Actions taken by the board over the past year were presented to the membership for approval. The actions included;

- **Adopted this Statement of Philosophy:** While MFA supports the sustainable management of all Minnesota forest land, efforts are focused on family-owned woodlands. Here is why:

When MFA was founded in 1876, no one was paying attention to the future of Minnesota's forests. Today much has changed. Professional foresters are employed to look after national, state and county forests as well as large industrial forests. The segment that still does not have consistent professional management is family-owned woodlands.

- **Adopted 2013 Budget to break even at \$77,310.**

- **Retained Lobbyist.** Agreed to retain Kevin Walli, of the Fryberger Law Firm, to look after our interests at the Minnesota Legislature at a fee not to exceed \$10,500. This is the 13th year we have had such a relationship.

- **Extended Call Before You Cut to all Minnesota Family Woodland Owners.** When MFA launched the Call Before You Cut program, the service was open to MFA members only. This year, MFA has agreed to make the service available to all Minnesota family woodland owners. There are two main reasons for this move: (1) Part of the funding for this effort comes from the U.S. Forest Service which would expect all landowners to be serviced and, (2) As we engage more Minnesota landowners, and provide valuable service, we expect membership to go up.

- **Produced Public Service Announcements.** Thanks to a grant from Blandin Foundation, MFA produced two public service announcements which are available on our website, www.MinnesotaForestry.org.

- **Met with Consulting Foresters.** The MFA board met with representatives of the Minnesota Consulting Foresters Association with the goal of increasing ways Minnesota's family woodland owners can be served.

- **Cooperated with Tree Farm Convention.** MFA's Dennis Thompson and Bruce ZumBahlen are soliciting items for the Silent Auction to be held in conjunction with the annual Tree Farm Convention set for Minneapolis from July 25 - 27, 2013.

- **Produced a TELE (Tools for Engaging Landowners Effectively) Workshop** in April. (See more information about it in this newsletter.)

In an informal vote, the members present supported these actions.

Annual Meeting Discussion Topics

Two propositions were presented to members for discussion:

The idea of a new membership category was proposed by Bob Sonnenberg, New York Mills. To be called something like a **Partnership/LLC Membership**, it would be a 50-year membership that goes with the entity controlling the land, not an individual. The cost would be a flat fee of approximately \$3,000. The partnership or LLC would have one vote which can be assigned to any individual who is active in the Partnership/LLC.

A second topic, presented by Bruce ZumBahlen, Cottage Grove, was a Century Woodlot Program in which any family that has maintained a woodlot for more than 100 years would receive special recognition, similar to the Farm Bureau's Century Farm program. **Do you know of any family who would qualify for the Century Woodlot recognition? If so, call our Grand Rapids business number, 218-326-6486, or email information@MinnesotaForestry.org.**

Both of these ideas received positive support from the members present and will be pursued by the board.

MFA's Annual Banquet

Friday, May 17, 2013, Holiday Inn, Owatonna



Our special guest, Forrest Boe, Director of DNR's Division of Forestry



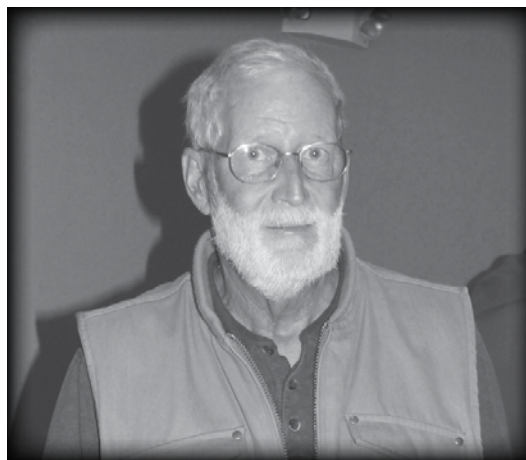
Chuck Erickson is so entertaining, he's earned a permanent position as MC.



*Right: Frank Smith, Emily
Left: Lyle Keller, Peterson and Larry Westerberg, Hastings*



Ruth Searle, Waseca with George and Carol Anderson, Wrenshall



*Far left: Brian Huberty, Hastings
Left: Jim Brooks, Lake City*

TELE Workshop

In mid-April MFA sponsored a Workshop entitled **Tools for Engaging Landowners Effectively** (TELE) at the U of M's Cloquet Forestry Center. Workshop leaders were Dr. Brett Butler of the U.S. Forest Service, Dr. Mary Tyrrell of the Yale School of Forestry and consultant Purnima Chawla.

Thirty Minnesotans participated in the workshop and were joined by one person from Indiana, four from Wisconsin and seven from Missouri.

Based on Dr. Butler's research, we Minnesota woodland owners, like owners everywhere, fall into one of four categories:

- 1 40% of us are **Woodland Retreat** owners who own woodland primarily for its beauty and recreational value.
- 2 30% of us are **Working the Land** owners who value the aesthetic and recreational benefits of woodland but also see woods as a financial asset.
- 3 8% of us are **Supplemental Income** owners who own land primarily for timber income and investment.
- 4 22% of us are **Uninvolved** owners who tend not to care about woods and assign low importance to their financial, recreational or aesthetic benefits.

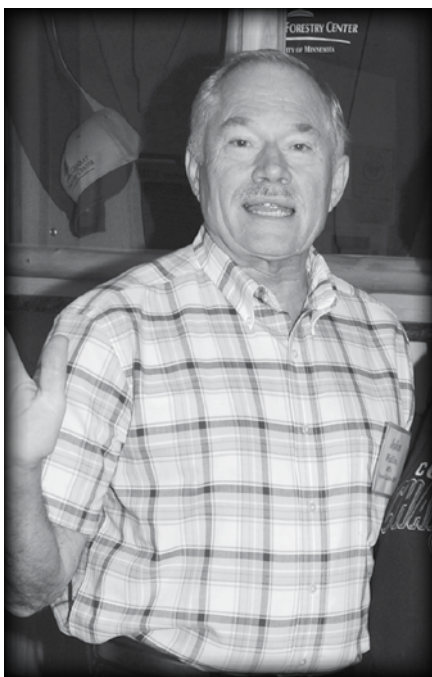
Of course, most MFA members are either Woodland Retreat or Working the Land owners. The workshop focused on what interests us and how an organization like MFA can be most effective in serving us.



Dr. Brett Butler.



Our friends from Wisconsin.



Jodi Provost (author of the Creature Feature in this newsletter) and Jan Bernu, Cloquet.



Above left: John Wallin took all of the photos shown here plus more that can be found on www.MinnesotaForestry.org.

Above right: Brian Schweiss, leader of the Missouri contingent, with his new MFA cap.

Far right: Great food!

MFA's Spring Field Day

Saturday, May 18, 2013, Cabela's, Owatonna



Above: In the morning, after a scrumptious Continental breakfast, we had presentations from Steve Von Groven, DNR: Good News from the Forest Products Industry; Kevin O'Brien, DNR: Black Walnut - My Favorite Tree; and Rick Horton, Wild Turkey Federation: Promoting Wild Turkeys.

Below l-r: Dave Roerick, Grand Rapids; Dennis Thompson, Aitkin; Lyle Keller, Peterson; Yvonne & Chuck Erickson, Battle Lake.



Above: In the afternoon we toured Jim Kileen's property located just outside Owatonna and the Sauber Woods direct seeding project.

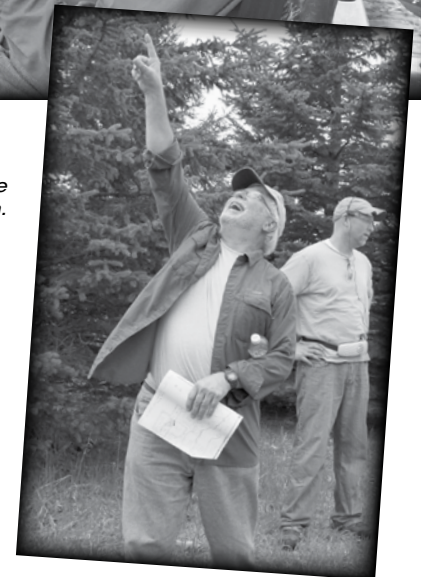
Below: MFA president John O'Reilly, Hinckley, with Ginger Koop, White Bear Lake, and Fayeth Witkowski, Brainerd.



Above: Host Jim Kileen.

Left: Dave Roerick, Grand Rapids, estimating the size of a magnificent white ash.

Right: Wayne Johnson, Pine City.



Member Profile: Lowell Thornber

Because he has attended the last 20 consecutive Annual Meeting events, Lowell Thornber has earned the title of MFA's Most Loyal Member!

Lowell, 78, lives in a Roseville condominium. He does not own any woodland but has an interest in trees and nature that goes back to his childhood. Thornber family members were pioneer farmers in rural Illinois and their original homestead is now maintained by the local historical society. Lowell remembers fondly spending time in the black walnut plantation that was part of the farm.

After serving in the Marine Corps, Lowell came to the Twin Cities to study at Macalester College and then the University of Minnesota where he earned a masters degree in business marketing. Lowell spent his career doing computer work for the Great Northern Railroad, Gould National Batteries and Remington Rand, which later became Unisys.

After retirement, Lowell worked at Byerly's for 15 years until heart problems forced him to resign. Those heart problems resulted in two by-passes, a new heart valve and a pacemaker yet, with all that, Lowell still made it to our next Annual Meeting!



Lowell Thornber

Thinking of harvesting timber on your land?

Call Before You Cut

A free service for members of the
Minnesota Forestry Association

218-326-6486

Tree Farm Awards

Presented at MFA's Banquet,
Friday, May 17, 2013



The Micheel family, Houston, was recognized as Tree Farmers of the Year for southern Minnesota. Shown here l-r: Forrest Boe, Director of DNR's Division of Forestry; Bob, Brenda and Johnny Micheel; and Jim Berkeland, UPM Blandin Paper, Grand Rapids and Chair of the State Tree Farm Committee.



John & Carolee Wallin and their family, Pequot Lakes, were recognized as Minnesota's Tree Farmers of the Year. Shown here are l-r, Forrest Boe, John & Carolee Wallin, Jim Berkeland, Jodi and Jeff Wallin. The Wallins are still in the running for Regional and National Tree Farmers of the year. Good Luck!



Dean Makey, center, DNR forester based in Brainerd was recognized as Minnesota's Tree Farm Inspector of the Year. Congratulations, Dean!



Creature Feature



by Jodie Provost, DNR Private Land Wildlife Habitat Specialist

Hooded Merganser (*Lophodytes cucullatus*) - "Hooded Diver"

The hooded merganser is a member of the waterfowl family, Anatidae, which includes geese, swans and ducks. Like its cousins in Minnesota, the common and red-breasted mergansers, it has a long, thin, serrated bill, short pointed wings in flight, and is adapted for diving. It's a small duck at about 18 inches in length and 1.5 pounds. Both the male and female sport a puffy crest of feathers. The male's crest has a showy white patch that is edged in black. His body has a dark back, brown flanks, and a white chest with two black bars on each side. The female's crest and body are brownish, like many female ducks to provide camouflage during nesting and brood rearing.

The hooded merganser nests in hollow trees and stumps, other natural cavities, and nest boxes in deciduous forest habitats near streams, ponds and lakes, flooded forests, and riverside swamps. Its habitat preferences are very similar to those of wood ducks. It is the only merganser that breeds and winters exclusively in North America. They were once found throughout the continent, including mountainous areas, wherever suitable habitats existed. Today, they are most common in the Great Lakes region and eastern Canada, but also reside in the Pacific Northwest.

Hooded mergansers are early migrants. They are monogamous and males perform dazzling courtship rituals and displays, including crest-raising, head-shaking, head-throws, head-pumping, and vocalizations. Females lay one smooth, glossy, white egg every other day. The average clutch size is 10 eggs and incubation averages 33 days. The male leaves once incubation begins. Egg hatching usually occurs within four hours. Hatchlings are brooded for a day, then encouraged by the hen with a soft, guttural vocalization to nearby water. They are precocial - covered in down and ready to swim and dive. Fledglings take to the skies at about 70 days old.

This "hooded diver's" diet is the most diverse of the mergansers, including small fish, frogs, tadpoles, and invertebrates such as aquatic insects, snails and other mollusks, and small crustaceans. They may also eat seeds and aquatic plants. Its unique bill and legs which are situated far back on its body make it well adapted.

Hooded mergansers are a migratory game bird and can thus be harvested in Minnesota each fall during waterfowl season with proper licensing. Until 2006, the bag limit was

one bird and had been the same for about 50 years. It was increased to two birds after surveys showed an increase in numbers over the past 10 – 20 years. They are one of the least harvested waterfowl species, with only about 100,000 harvested out of 13 million total ducks harvested each year in the United States. The average annual harvest in Minnesota for the last several years has been an estimated 6,800. For additional information on waterfowl hunting regulations in Minnesota, see the DNR's hunting and trapping regulation web page.

How can woodland owners benefit hooded mergansers? Maintaining healthy, diverse, native forests with adequate standing live and dead trees that are large enough to provide nesting cavities and near clean waters is key. Forestry practices should provide for such trees. These handsome birds compete strongly for nest sites with each other, wood ducks, common goldeneyes, and common mergansers, so addition of properly constructed, placed and maintained nest boxes can be a great benefit. Hens may nest a mile or more from water, but the shorter the journey from nest cavity to brood-rearing areas, the greater the chances for survival during the young ones' trek.

Nest boxes are educational and an adventure to maintain since other wildlife like flying squirrels, song birds and owls may use them, too. "Woodworking for Wildlife" is an excellent resource for people who enjoy or are considering building, placing and maintaining nest boxes and platforms for wildlife. It is available online from Minnesota's Bookstore. I highly recommend it!



The Tree Farm Convention is coming to Minnesota for the first time ever! The convention runs from Thursday afternoon, July 27th through Saturday evening Awards Banquet, July 29th. Find complete information online at <http://www.treefarmssystem.org/tree-farmer-conventions>.



Convention headquarters is the Depot Renaissance Minneapolis Hotel, located downtown Minneapolis at Washington and 3rd Avenue S. Tree Farm has a special rate of \$129 which is good through June 29th, although the hotel could sell out before this date.

Convention registration closes June 29th. The registration fee is \$360 per person but, for MFA members who register on or before **June 14th**, there is a special \$30 discount. To register online go to <http://www.treefarmssystem.org/tree-farmer-conventions>. To get the discount, on the payment page enter Promo Code 2013TFC.

If you have questions or need help with registration, call Carol Cartie on our MFA business line, 218-326-6486, or Sara Anrrich at the Washington DC Tree Farm Office at 202-463-2733.

Silent Auction Items Needed!

MFA will be managing the Silent Auction at the Tree Farm Convention and will receive 25% of all proceeds. MFA board members Bruce ZumBahlen and Dennis Thompson are leading our effort. Many Tree Farmers, who will be coming from around the country, will want to take back something tangible to remember their experience here. **So, if you have a handicraft item worth \$25 or more, please consider donating it to the Silent Auction! Cash donations are welcome, too!**

Inform Dennis or Bruce as to what you plan to donate and then bring it to the convention or send it to: Dennis Thompson, Aitkin County SWCD, 130 Southgate Drive, Aitkin MN 56431. Contact Dennis at 218-927-6565 / Treasurer@MinnesotaForestry.org, or Bruce at 651-458-0483 / ZoomerBruce@aol.com.

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



Here's what's new at MyMinnesotaWoods:

- Emerald ash borer community preparedness manual
- Observing seasonal changes: Metro and Cloquet workshops planned
- New and updated Extension insect and disease publications
- Required reading: Tick-borne diseases in Minnesota
- As always, news, events, and a monthly quiz.

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

For much more information on each topic, find a link to MyMinnesotaWoods on our website, www.MinnesotaForestry.org.

Upcoming Events

Find more events, and more information on these events, at the MFA website, www.MinnesotaForestry.org or by calling MFA at 218-326-6486.

Thursday, June 13, 2013

- 8:30am – 3:30pm Women Caring for the Land (Bovey MN). Women who own or manage land in Itasca County and surrounding areas are invited to participate in a free conservation discussion and field tour. The meeting will begin at Balsam Memorial Hall, 4138 Scenic Highway 7, Bovey, MN. A lunch will be provided and an afternoon field tour on a bus will allow participants to view conservation practices in the area. To register or for more information: Julie Miedtke, 218-327-7365, miedt001@umn.edu.

Tuesday, July 23, 2013

- 9:00am Minnesota Phenology: How to monitor seasonal changes. (Green Hall, U of M St. Paul Campus) A full-day training including an introduction to monitoring and reporting seasonal changes on Minnesota's seven focus species (or others of your choosing), including hands-on observation and online reporting. Details and registration at <http://z.umn.edu/phenology>.

Thursday – Saturday, July 25-27, 2013

- Tree Farm National Convention (Minneapolis). See more information in this newsletter and on www.MinnesotaForestry.org.

Tuesday, August 17, 2013

- 9:00am Minnesota Phenology: How to monitor seasonal changes. (U of M Forestry Center, Cloquet) A full-day training including an introduction to monitoring and reporting seasonal changes on Minnesota's seven focus species (or others of your choosing), including hands-on observation and online reporting. Details and registration at <http://z.umn.edu/phenology>.



2013 – A Banner Year for Maple Syrup!

Reports from all over Minnesota indicate 2013 was the best year in memory for maple syrup. Lucy and Don Opsahl, Hinckley, have been producing maple syrup for eight years. "Last year was a total bust,"

Lucy said. "But this year we made 25 gallons of syrup, that's two gallons better than our previous record. While we love the syrup, making it is a lot of work!"