



# Minnesota Woodlands

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

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

## Minnesota Forestry Association (MFA)

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## MFA Newsletter Vol. 15 No. 4

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## MFA Board Meetings

Cambridge DNR  
Office, 10 am – 3 pm  
• October 15, 2013

### Conference Calls

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

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## My New Favorite Tree

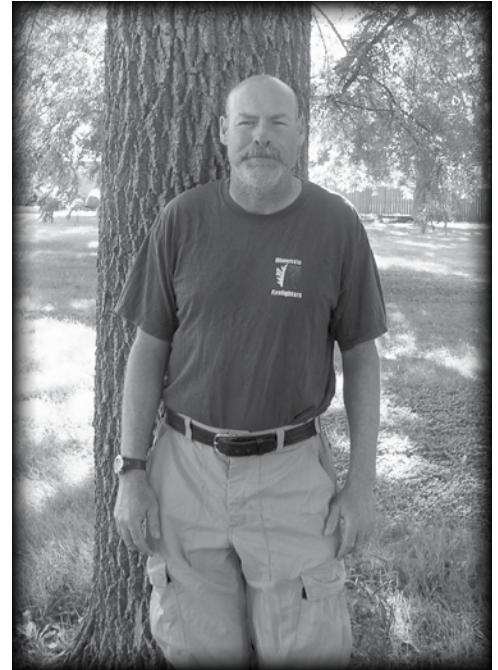
by Kevin O'Brien, DNR Forestry, Lewiston MN

Being a bit of a tree species snob, I've always had a bias toward oak. After all, my first job with the MN DNR Forestry in the early 90's was as an Oak Regeneration Specialist down here in SE Minnesota. I sang the praises of the oaks: over 200 mammals and birds make a living from their acorns, their lumber is the staple for the fine hardwoods industry in our region, and they historically have grown well on most sites in the driftless region. Because of oaks' importance, much of our state forestland management in southeast Minnesota aims to preserve or enhance the amount of oak.

However, I might have a new first love, black walnut. Of course, I've always known about walnut and the small fortune nice walnut logs can bring to the lucky few who have a small patch growing somewhere on their farm. I possibly would have appreciated walnut's superior qualities sooner, but I thought those people nuts about walnut, were well, a little too nuts about walnut. What with all the time these people were putting in establishing their plantations – the planting, spraying, mowing, and pruning – I wrote walnut off as a high value, but equally high maintenance tree. I now see this isn't the case. Au contraire, walnut is a fairly low maintenance tree and when I appraise its virtues against oaks, I've decided we should be planting more walnut in a greater variety of sites in southeast Minnesota.

### Here's my list of why I like walnut over oak.

1. **No surprise its timber is more valuable**, but I was surprised by how much more. On stateland timber sales in southeast Minnesota between 2008 and 2012, red oak, our bread and butter, averaged 59% of the volume and produced 58% of their value. Meanwhile, walnut has been averaging only about 4% of sale volume, but is bringing in 24% of their value. This corresponds to red oak averaging \$344/MBF, while black walnut averages 6 times more at \$2,036/MBF<sup>1</sup>.
2. **Of our most valuable hardwoods, walnut is the easiest to establish** either by direct seeding or planting. We are using direct seeding almost exclusively for converting fields to hardwoods due to the overall lower establishment cost and quicker conversion to forest. Walnut seed is relatively cheap and usually readily available compared to red oak or bur oak (white oak isn't recommended due to low survival). The germination is usually very good and walnut grows faster than the oaks, black cherry, shagbark hickory or sugar maple. We've lowered our percentage of walnut in our direct seeding mixes because they can completely outcompete oak. However, heavy grass competition does stunt walnut growth, so I recommend judicious use of herbicides until crown closure is achieved.



Kevin O'Brien with his favorite tree.

*Continued on page 5*

Minnesota Forestry  
Association

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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 the 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.

### **Moving forward with a statewide launch of Call Before You Cut.**

**Approving a new Partnership/LLC membership category.** This requires a change in our by-laws and will be presented to members in December.

**Approving** production of No Trespassing signs that meet Minnesota state laws.

**Discussing** a number of initiatives, which are all in the developmental stage:

- Promoting MFA membership
- A field forester to service MFA members
- MFA's role in mediating a dispute between a landowner and supplier.

## The Future for Private Woodlands

The Minnesota Legislature requested a study be made of private woodlands and recommendations developed on how to promote their sustainable management in the future. These six recommendations were reported back to the Legislature:

1. Improve and stabilize reliable tax programs (SFIA and the 2c property tax classification) affecting private forestland.
2. Increase efforts to reach landowners by improving outreach, technical assistance, and continuing research regarding the most effective ways to communicate with landowners.
3. Maintain financial incentives to landowners, but improve effectiveness and efficiency.
4. Support the continued use of conservation easements, including consistent tax treatment of land with an easement.
5. Increase the service delivery capacity to private woodland owners (i.e. more DNR and private consulting foresters working with private woodland owners).
6. Support landscape scale management programs.

For the complete report, Google "Minnesota Forest Resources Council" and click on "Private Forestland Study."

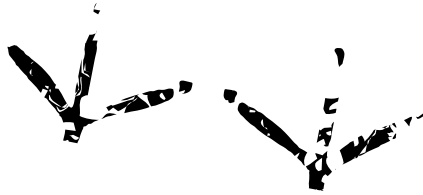
### **Tree Farm Convention Silent Auction a Success**

For the Tree Farm Convention, MFA was responsible for soliciting items for the Silent Auction and managing the process. **Dennis Thompson**, Aitkin, and **Bruce ZumBahlen**, Cottage Grove, lead the effort with help from volunteers **Carol** and **David Cartwright**, Rush City; **Don Janes**, Dellwood; **John Wallin**, Pequot Lakes; and **Tom Trevor**, New Brighton. Thanks to their efforts, over 150 items were donated. MFA's share of the proceeds will amount to more than \$1,000!



*Dennis Thompson, left, and Bruce ZumBahlen.*

# Creature Feature



by Rick Horton, National Wild Turkey Federation Regional Biologist

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## Overlapping Benefits

I watched and listened as the woods slowly woke around me. Rustling leaves, an owl calling in the distance, a furtive movement across the way.... I love this time of day! My setup was perfectly situated on a slight rise at the edge of a wildlife opening within a mature oak forest in southeastern Minnesota. I had high hopes to take a nice tom that morning.

The growing light revealed that the furtive movement was a young doe moving into the opening to feed. She was looking a bit thin from the hard winter, but her large belly belied the fact that she would be fawning nearby within the next few weeks. She kept looking to her left, so I cautiously peered through my blind, expecting to see a turkey. Instead, I was treated to the sight of a red fox hunting its way through the field. Suddenly it cocked its head, reared up and pounced! It looked like her breakfast was a mouse of some sort. As the sun moved higher in the sky, I watched a number of different songbirds flit about in the opening and along its edge – American redstart, catbird, field sparrow, flycatchers, and several warblers. By noon I had seen a couple of hens, but it was plain that my tom wasn't coming that day. I collected my gear and headed back to camp.

Reflecting back on that morning I thought about all of the different animals that were benefiting from mowing and maintaining that wildlife opening. It was perfect example of what I like to call "overlapping benefits." Most activities undertaken for wildlife management create habitat for more than just the target species – other animals get something out of it, too. Therefore, the habitat practices promoted by the National Wild Turkey Federation on behalf of wild turkeys also benefit populations of everything from bears to butterflies. Here are a few other examples:

- Restoring healthy functioning oak/hardwood forests through active management and planting benefits a huge array of animals that require that habitat type and the abundant mast produced by oak forests. Species include deer, ruffed grouse, squirrel, bear, red-headed woodpecker, ovenbird, scarlet tanager, whip-poor-will, and Cooper's hawk.
- Wildlife openings provide structural and habitat diversity within closed-canopy forests, providing seasonal food resources and nesting sites for a variety of animals, including deer, ruffed grouse, bear, American woodcock, woodland rodents, and red-tailed hawk.
- Creating young forests provide abundant food resources and escape cover for a very wide array of animals including deer, ruffed grouse, American woodcock, cottontail rabbit, golden-winged warbler, mourning warbler, red-eyed vireo, and northern goshawk.
- Restoring eroded riparian areas, including planting woody cover, provides not only turkey roost sites, but winter cover for deer and pheasant, perch sites for raptors, nest sites for wood ducks, and food for beaver.
- Planting conifer trees will eventually result in good turkey roosts, but well-managed stands also provide winter cover for deer and pheasants, and nesting cover for numerous songbirds, including pine warblers, kinglets, and vireos.
- Planting agricultural crops for winter food resources can be essential to turkey survival and fitness in tough winters like this year. Those crops are also often used by deer, squirrel, raccoon, and some songbirds.



*Jodie Provost, DNR Wildlife Specialist based in Aitkin, created the Creature Feature department in our newsletter. Recently, Jodie was promoted and moved to Brainerd. With her greater responsibilities, she no longer has time to do our Creature Feature. We say, **"Thank you, Jodie, and congratulations on your promotion!"** For the future, we'll look to a series of authors to fill the Creature Feature role, starting with Rick Horton, National Wild Turkey Federation, in this issue.*



# Forest Industry: Bad News & Better News

by Steve VonGroven, DNR Utilization & Marketing

## Bad News:

- Georgia Pacific closed their hardboard plant in Duluth, August, 2012.
- Same month, Verso announced permanent closing of Sartell Paper Mill.
- Wausau Paper has announced that three of their technical paper mills, including two in Wisconsin and one in Brainerd, MN will be closed and offered for sale.
- Since 2007, Minnesota has lost three Ainsworth Oriented Strand Board engineered wood plants, one TrusJoist-Weyerhaeuser plant at Deerwood (producing Laminated Strand Lumber panels and lumber) in addition to the two plants mentioned previously. The combined wood annual usage from these six mills amounted to a little less than 1.4 million cords.
- In May, 2013, Boise Cascade announced plans to close two of their four paper machine lines as well as an off-machine coater at their International Falls paper mill. The two closed lines were the oldest and least efficient. The silver lining is that Boise will still purchase the same amount of pulpwood as they did before the line closures.

## Better News:

- Resolute, Thunder Bay, in December of 2012, announced plans to build a pellet mill next to their existing sawmill in Thunder Bay. The pellets are already “contracted” to produce electricity for Ontario Power.
- SAPPI, Cloquet, is on schedule to convert their paper pulping process to produce “specialized cellulose,” used for the production of textiles (ex. rayon) and other products, by June of 2013. They will still produce paper at the mill, but plans are to buy all the kraft pulp needed to make paper from other mills. They will also purchase the same amount of pulpwood as they did before the conversion to specialized cellulose. They will be buying mainly aspen and maple.
- Norbord, Bemidji, finished upgrading their forming head equipment in the fall of 2012 with “newer” equipment purchased from the now closed Ainsworth OSB mill in Cook. They feel their board quality and production

efficiency have increased significantly as a result. Prices of OSB have been increasing in the past several months, fueled by a modest housing recovery, which translates to more profitable business activity.



Steve VonGroven

## Just “News”

- The TrusJoist facility at Deerwood, MN, has been purchased by Crow Wing Recycling. Future plans for the facility are still being formed.
- The Verso mill site in Sartell has officially been sold to a company named AIM Development. Aim Development is a subsidiary of American Iron and Metal Company headquartered in Montreal, Canada. No plans for the site have been announced.
- A purchase agreement has been signed to transfer ownership of the old Ainsworth mill site at Grand Rapids, from the Itasca Development Corporation to Longyear, Inc. of Marquette, Michigan. Final closing is not anticipated until sometime in 2014. Eventual uses for the site have not been discussed.
- “Heating the Midwest” is a volunteer group promoting biomass as a renewable fuel for “thermal” heating where deemed appropriate. They hosted a conference in April, 2013 at Black Bear Casino in Carlton, MN, highlighting the opportunities for using biomass fuels. Google “Heating the Midwest” for more information.
- Ely and Grand Marais have recently finished feasibility studies on converting selected heating systems within their respective city limits to woody biomass. The only thing holding them back now is “funding”.
- Wolf Ridge Environmental Learning Center, near Finland, MN, has converted their heat system from solid wood/Tarn boilers to a sophisticated wood pellet boiler system. Utilizing Swedish built controls on a WoodMaster pellet boiler. WoodMaster is manufactured in Red Lake Falls, MN, using advance European wood burning technology.
- Deep Portage Learning Center, near Hackensack, MN, has installed state of the art, Scandinavian solid wood gasification technology and they have a hard time keeping the buttons on their shirt.
- Other places in Minnesota considering biomass for thermal and Combined Heat & Power (CHP) include the Shooting Star Casino in Mahanomen, City of Kelliher, and Kelliher Forest Products.

Thinking of harvesting timber on your land?  
*Call Before You Cut*  
A free service for members of the  
Minnesota Forestry Association  
**218-326-6486**

# Introducing *My Land Plan*

by Neal W. Chapman, MFA's Education Committee

American Forest Foundation – the Tree Farm people – has released a new tool to assist private landowners in starting the process of thinking about what they want from their woods. This tool, called *My Land Plan*, is a first step in knowing what actions are needed to ensure your woods stay healthy and productive. Currently, over 2,600 landowners who collectively own and manage over 275,000 acres in 40 states are enjoying the benefits *My Land Plan*.

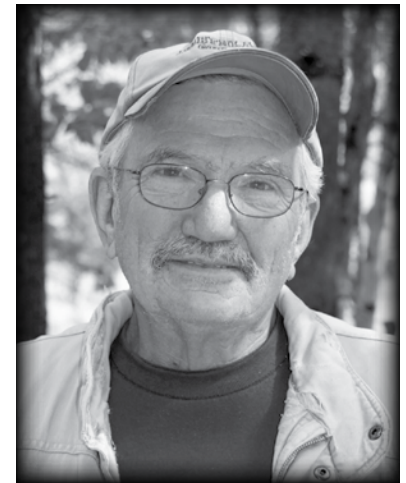
You need not be enrolled in the Tree Farm program and there is no cost to use *My Land Plan*. It is a place where you can learn about the easy steps to take to improve the health of your woods, set goals, and track your progress.

One of the most-appreciated elements of *My Land Plan* is the online mapping tool. It includes aerial photos that provide a living visual resource vital for your land planning and decision making. The map you create online can be used to show your key features on your land such as various stands, trails, physical characteristics, and soil survey information. The map can also tell a story about your land over time.

I personally encourage you to check out *My Land Plan*. Go to <http://MyLandPlan.org/>. For a nice introduction, click on “Play Our Video” located toward the bottom of the home page. When you work with *My Land Plan*, everything you do stays online; there is nothing to download or save.

In conclusion, *My Land Plan* is a tool every landowner should be using to assist them in making informed decisions about their land to meet their goals and objectives in owning it. The tool is provided at no cost by American Forest Foundation, the Tree Farm people.

I'd personally appreciate your comments after using *My Land Plan*. If you have questions or difficulties with it, I'd be happy to help. Send an email to me at [Woodland.Steward@gmail.com](mailto:Woodland.Steward@gmail.com).



Neal Chapman



*Favorite Tree continued from page 1*

3. **Deer prefer oak 2 to 1 over walnut in blind taste tests.** Actually, it's not that scientific, but in areas with high deer populations like southeast Minnesota, oak is becoming harder and harder to get above the 5' browse height. Deer will browse walnut, but after they've browsed all the oaks.

4. **Walnut is very adaptable.** While they grow best in well drained, fertile bottomlands, I see good quality walnut on former goat prairies and everywhere in between. This may be due to the deep tap root they grow, enabling them to tap into moisture deep underground on dry sites. If you're not in pure sand, pure rock or in wetland, you should consider walnut in your hardwood planting mix. If you are planting into sites you have

harvested or preferably going to harvest, consider underplanting one-third to one-half to walnut. On stateland, we are planting around 650 trees per acre (two-thirds oak and one-third walnut) one to two years before harvesting to allow root establishment. After

harvesting, we conduct a post harvest treatment to fell damaged, poorly formed, and weed trees so the shade intolerant walnut have enough sunlight to prosper.

5. **While wildlife may prefer oaks to walnut,** I'll take the rich taste of black walnut meat to the English walnuts or the bitter acorn. Also, research suggests walnuts have antioxidant and anti-inflammatory nutrients, reduce cholesterol and have anti-cancer benefits.

Of course, while I would like to see walnut planted more in hardwood mixes because of its value and relative ease of establishment, all planting should be a mix of species to limit the uncertainties of climate change, insects and disease.

<sup>1</sup>Kurt Hinz, Area Timber Program Forester, review of Lewiston Area Timber Sales Data-2008-2012, internal DNR report 2013.



## Tree Farmer of the Year

Congratulations to our Wisconsin neighbor, Joe Arington, who was named national Tree Farmer of the Year at the Minneapolis convention. Joe's tree farm journey began in 1998 with the purchase of 20 acres just east of Madison. He then purchased more land and hired a staff including an arborist! To see the story on his website and blog, Google “Joe Arington Tree Farm”.

# Tree Farm Convention

The 20th Annual Tree Farm Convention was held in Minneapolis on July 18 – 20. Over 250 tree farmers and their spouses attended including two dozen from Minnesota. Convention headquarters was the Renaissance Hotel which includes buildings from the old Milwaukee Railroad Depot.



The convention next year will be held in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania on July 17–19, 2014. If you would like to become a Tree Farmer, start by checking the information on MFA's website, [www.MinnesotaForestry.org](http://www.MinnesotaForestry.org). In the left column under "Resources", click on "Tree Farm".

The highlight of the convention was the Saturday Field Day hosted by Dave and Bev Medvecky at their Isanti tree farm. The event included a walking tour of the woods led by Dave, over two dozen displays of wooden handicrafts most of which came from the Medvecky's woods, good food and entertainment by the Chimieleski Funtime Band.



Left: Dave and Bev Medvecky  
Above: An Iron Mule, Dave's favorite machine.





*Above: Dancing during lunch!*

*Left: Florian Chemieski*

*For many more photos of the Tree Farm Convention see our website, [www.MinnesotaForestry.org](http://www.MinnesotaForestry.org).*

## Member Profile: Paul & Betsy Hoppe

Paul and Betsy Hoppe bought some land 25 years ago. Ten thousand seedlings later they have a tree farm!

Their land, 383 acres, straddles the border between Kanabec and Mille Lacs Counties. Their mail address is Ogilvie and the nearest larger town is Mora.

Paul and Betsy bought the land after it had been on the market for a year. The former owner had purchased it right after World War II. The owners before him had failed at farming on the land because the soil is heavy clay and poorly drained. This fellow tried to create pasture for beef cattle but gave that up in 1952. "The land wanted to go back to trees," Paul said.



*Paul Hoppe*

Paul spent his career as a conservation officer, first in Glencoe and then in the Mora area. He retired in 2002. "It was a wonderful job but it is also good to be retired," he said.

Now Paul spends part of every day in the woods. He harvests some wood for his outdoor boiler that heats their home and sells some stumpage. But that is just the start. Maple syrup is an annual spring-time project. This year, he and Betsy made 28 gallons of syrup. That's a lot by any measure but especially when you consider the fact that all 1,120 gallons of sap were collected from trees scattered around the property and carried to a tank behind Paul's four-wheeler in five-gallon buckets. "We have a few sugar maples," Paul said, "but mostly we tap red maple which seems to work just fine."

Right after finishing with maple syrup, Paul starts work inoculating his mushroom logs. He grows Shittake and Oyster mushrooms. "Getting a crop of mushrooms required six months of weather in the 70s. That means here in Minnesota it takes two years," Paul said.

Paul's newest projects are honey bees and a pollinator pasture in which he's planted 60 species of wild flowers.

Off the land, Paul does lots of volunteer work. He is chair of the Kanabec County Soil and Water Conservation District Board, chair of the Citizens Advisory Committee for the Snake River Joint Powers Board and participates on the Minnesota Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts Forestry Committee. Needless to say, Paul spends hours each week in meetings!

Back to those 10,000 seedlings. As anyone who has planted and tried to nurture that many seedlings knows, there are lots of ways to fail. "Some seedlings I planted in the understory 15 years ago aren't much bigger today than when I planted them," Paul said. But, those that do grow provide great satisfaction for Paul and Betsy and a legacy for their seven grandchildren.

# The Wallin Technique

John Wallin, Pequot Lakes, has developed his own technique for planting seedlings. He uses his skid steer with an auger to loosen the soil. He bores a hole and then, rather than lifting the auger to pull the soil out of the hole, he reverses the auger. This leaves the loosened soil in the hole making it easy to plant the seedling with a spade.



## Why the Dead Pines?

Have you noticed individual red and white pines in a clump of apparently healthy trees? According to Jan Albers, DNR, NW Region Forest Health Specialist, the deaths are related to drought. Eight of the last eleven

years have been very dry during the summer and fall, plunging many forested areas of the state into severe drought.

The pines' photosynthesis was shut down for days and weeks during droughty growing seasons in the past decade. To make up for this, trees used up their reserved sugars and starches in order to remain alive. Critically, they couldn't resupply their reserves in the following years because, they were also droughty. Eventually, reserves were drawn down too far and they also died of starvation.

Now, the good news. For most of Minnesota, the 2013 spring and early summer have been wonderful for tree growth and the restoration of sugar and starch reserves. We sure could use a few more years just like this to completely resupply reserves and tree vigor.

For MFA members, the two best online sources of woodland information are the MFA website, [www.MinnesotaForestry.org](http://www.MinnesotaForestry.org) and [www.MyMinnesotaWoods.UMN.edu](http://www.MyMinnesotaWoods.UMN.edu).

**MyMinnesotaWoods.org**  
Your source for woodland stewardship advice



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

Find a link to MyMinnesotaWoods on our website, [www.MinnesotaForestry.org](http://www.MinnesotaForestry.org).

## Upcoming Events

Find more events, and more information on these events, at the MFA website, [www.MinnesotaForestry.org](http://www.MinnesotaForestry.org) or by calling MFA at 218-326-6486.

### August

#### Wednesday, August 14, 2013

- 9am – 12pm Invasive plants in Minnesota's forests: Knowledge, Action and Challenges (Cargill Bldg., U of M St. Paul campus). This is a symposium focused on buckthorn and garlic mustard. Researchers will share their latest findings and land managers their experiences in attempting to control them. For questions and to register for this free symposium, email [BuckthornSymposium@gmail.com](mailto:BuckthornSymposium@gmail.com).

#### Saturday, August 17, 2013

- 9am – 3pm Minnesota Phenology: How to monitor seasonal changes. (U of M Cloquet Forestry Center) 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>.

### September

#### Saturday, September 21, 2013

- 9am – 4pm Goods from the Woods – UpNorth Fine Arts & Crafts Show (Civic Center, Grand Rapids). For more information, Google "Goods from the Woods."
- 8am – 4pm Northwoods Forestry Coop Field Day. (Stanchfield, MN – north of Cambridge) Everyone is welcome! Event to be held at Peter Fetzek property, 1708 373rd Avenue NW, Stanchfield, MN. Topics will include "Fire Safe," Controlled Burns, Site Preparation for Tree Planting, Low Impact Forestry Equipment Demos, Tools, Tips, Helpful Ideas. For more information contact Pat Lanin at 218-764-3315 or via email at [PELanin@Brainerd.net](mailto:PELanin@Brainerd.net).

#### Friday, September 27, 2013

- 9am – 3pm Minnesota Forest Resilience: Practical steps for landowners and land managers (Cedar Creek Reserve, East Bethel) A classroom and field workshop for Minnesota Master Naturalists, woodland owners, and land managers. We'll discuss key concepts in ecosystem resilience with a focus on practical steps that landowners and land managers can take to improve the health and resilience of woodland and other ecosystems in the face of emerging forest health threats including invasive species, extreme storms, and changing tree species ranges. Lead instructor is Eli Sagor, University of Minnesota Extension. Contact Eli with any questions at 612-324-6948 or [ESagor@UMN.edu](mailto:ESagor@UMN.edu).