



Minnesota Woodlands

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

www.MinnesotaForestry.org

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MFA Newsletter
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MFA Board Meetings
Cambridge DNR Office, 10 am – 3 pm
• April 15, 2014
• July 15, 2014
• October 14, 2014

Conference Calls
8 – 9 am
• January 14, 2014
• February 18, 2014
• March 18, 2014
• May 13, 2014

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Announcing! A New FREE Service for MFA Members: FORESTER PHONE LINE

Now when you have a question about your woodland, you can speak with a professional forester and get answers. This service is available to MFA members only and there is no charge and no one will try to sell you anything!

Here's how the service works:

- You call MFA's business line, 218-326-6486, to schedule an appointment with the forester. Appointments are generally available on Tuesday and Thursday evenings but other special arrangements can be made to fit your schedule.
- At the scheduled time, the forester will call you and discuss your questions. It may be possible to answer your questions on the spot or it may be necessary to do some research and call you back. Also, sometimes the forester will know of another professional who is in a better position to answer your questions. In that case, the forester will arrange for you to talk with that professional, again at no cost to you.

The forester who will be staffing MFA's Forester Phone Line is Dean Makey. Dean recently retired from the DNR after over 30 years as a forester with emphasis on working with private landowners. Dean will be under contract with MFA so his responses to your questions will be based on his vast knowledge and totally unbiased; he has only your interests at heart.

So give MFA's Forester Phone Line a try! Call today to set up an appointment!

218-326-6486 or contact Dean directly at Forster@MinnesotaForestry.org



Dean Makey



*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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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.

- **Established a Forester Phone Line** as a free service for MFA members (see page one of this newsletter).
- **Approved a contract with attorney Kevin Walli** of Fryberger, Buchanan, Smith and Frederick, P.A. to represent MFA's interests during the 2014 Minnesota legislative session. Kevin, working with MFA, was instrumental in getting both the SFIA and the 2c Property Tax Classification passed originally.
- **Approved proposing establishment of a new Perpetual Membership category** designed for those current MFA members who want to pass a membership to heirs along with the land. This membership would be for entities such as a trust, estate, corporation, etc. The Perpetual Membership would be entitled to one vote. If approved by the membership, the board will set the dues at a one-time amount, with no annual dues required. The specific changes to the Bylaws are below with the new wording underlined.

ARTICLE I: MEMBERSHIP, DUES AND VOTING

Section 1: Classification of Members

- (g) Perpetual Membership: Any Trust, Estate, Corporation, Limited Liability Company, Limited Liability Partnership, or similarly structured entity who shall concur in the objectives and purposes of this association and apply for perpetual membership by payment of the current one-time amount of perpetual membership dues shall become a perpetual member of this association.

Section 3: Voting

- (a) Every qualified member shall be entitled to one vote except that a family is considered to be two members for voting purposes. Perpetual Memberships are entitled to one vote.

Please fill out and return your ballot. When doing so, be sure to answer the survey questions which will give you a chance to win a Pickaroon!

Are Real Christmas Trees More Environmentally Friendly?

When people choose between a real and an artificial Christmas tree, cost, convenience and personal preference are all important considerations, but so too is the environmental impact of each option.

As a woodland owner who undoubtedly has a real Christmas tree, you will be happy to know that your choice is also the most environmentally friendly. In a study done by the Montreal firm Elliposos, it was shown that real trees have less overall impact in terms of distribution, disposal and average carbon emissions than their artificial counterparts.

When it comes to artificial trees, the key to achieving environmental gains lies in the length of time they're kept and reused. Average households replace an artificial tree about every six years. Evidence shows that, in general, artificial trees need to be reused for at least 20 years if they are to compare favorably with natural trees.

So, as you are decorating your real Christmas tree, you can rejoice in the fact that you are helping to protect the environment in the process.



What? - Repeal SFIA?

By Bruce ZumBahlen, chair, MFA Government Relations Committee

Lately, you may have heard or seen in the news media what the Office of the Legislative Auditor (OLA) had to say about the Sustainable Forest Incentive Act (SFIA) in a November 19, 2013 report to the Legislative Audit Commission's Evaluation Subcommittee. The

OLA's evaluation detailed a number of issues and made a number of recommendations to address those issues.

Here's a little background for those not familiar with the SFIA. It was enacted in 2001 to encourage sustainable forest management of private lands. To enroll, a landowner has to have 20 contiguous acres of forest land, record a covenant on the deed restricting development for at least 8 years, and agree to follow forest management guidelines when conducting management activities among other requirements. Currently, there are about 2,300 woodland owners enrolled in the program.

I was at the hearing when the report was presented and I have to say, it was a fair assessment of the SFIA. As a matter of fact, MFA was aware of some of the problems with the SFIA before the Auditor began the evaluation. A number of the issues that the Auditor raised in the findings were the same ones MFA had attempted to address in a bill MFA sponsored in the 2011 legislative session. But, it was not heard in committee because soon after MFA's bill was introduced, the Tax Committee Chairs at the time introduced their own proposal to repeal the SFIA.

So, the issues remain and need to be addressed if the SFIA is to remain a viable program. However, I do disagree with the Auditor's first recommendation, below.

1. The Legislature should either tie the incentive payments more directly to the goals of the SFIA or repeal the SFIA and use other programs to encourage sustainable forest management.

In the body of the report, the Auditor justified this recommendation arguing the SFIA may be attempting to address too much, citing four purposes:

- Providing property tax relief
- Encouraging sustainable forest management
- Preventing parcelization (partitioning) and development of forest land
- Securing public access for recreation for large tracts

The Auditor suggested that the above purposes might be better served by tailoring programs to address each in its own way – sort of implying that they might be at cross purposes. I strongly disagree. I think that those purposes are very complimentary to each other.

How can one say that providing property tax relief doesn't help prevent development of forest land for other purposes when landowners are facing higher property taxes or facing development pressures to cash in on their property's value? And, in turn, doesn't that help encourage sustainable forest management by providing an opportunity to manage it for forestry purposes while also providing recreational opportunities?

Here are the other recommendations:

2. The Legislature should require registration of forest management plans with the DNR prior to enrollment in the SFIA.
3. The Legislature should clarify the type of land that qualifies for enrollment in the SFIA.
4. The DNR should require the forest management plans developed in contemplation of enrollment in the program to specify the number of acres that meet the definition(s) of forest land.
5. The Legislature should amend the SFIA to better address issues related to subsequent owners of enrolled land.
6. The Legislature should require increased verification of participants' assertions that they are complying with program requirements.
7. The Legislature should consider revising covenant restrictions to better prevent parcelization (partitioning) and development.
8. The Legislature should expand penalty options for noncompliance with the SFIA requirements, including increasing financial penalties for owners who develop enrolled land.

It's likely that the Auditor's report will be discussed in the next legislative session beginning in late February 2014. If that happens, you can be assured MFA will be involved, looking out for your interests!

Tax Information

If you have tax questions, here are three sources of information. The first is the National Timber Tax Website, www.TimberTax.org. The site is maintained by the National Woodland Owners Association in cooperation with the USDA Forest Service and the University of Georgia.

Then, the DNR has a contract with CPA Geary Searfoss to answer questions from Minnesota woodland owners. There is **no charge** for this service. See Searfoss' website at www.GSCPA.biz or call him at 715-266-8290.

Finally, MFA has a supply of the 152-page booklet, "Forest Landowners' Guide to the Federal Income Tax" published by the USDA Forest Service. To obtain a copy, send a check for \$5 to cover postage to MFA, P.O. Box 496, Grand Rapids, MN 55744.

Northwoods Forestry Coop Field Day

The Northwoods Forestry Coop, an organization of interested woodland owners living in the Aitkin/Brainerd area, held its annual Field Day on Saturday, September 28th, at Gary Bodie's property east of Brainerd. Featured presentations were made by Bryan Pike, Crow Wing County forester on buckthorn control; Craig Shultz, DNR forester on chainsaw safety; and Linda Gormanson on Firewise wildfire protection.



Coop president Pat Lanin, Brainerd, demonstrates his collapsible firewood sawhorse (left) and his method of hand splitting firewood inside an old tire (above) to reduce bending.

Northwoods Forestry Enterprises

An offshoot of Northwoods Forestry Coop is Northwoods Forestry Enterprises, a for-profit organization that owns a Peterson Sawmill. Interested coop members purchase a share of the sawmill and, after training, are able to use the sawmill on their land for just \$8 per hour based on the machine's hour meter. The number of shares available is capped at ten. Currently, nine shares are out and one is available at \$1,250. Gary Bradford, Aitkin, is the custodian of the sawmill. For more information on the sawmill, go to www.PetersonSawmills.com, or to possibly purchase the one available share of the sawmill, contact Gary at 218-927-4599.



Pat Lanin demonstrating the Peterson Sawmill with Gary Bodie as 'tailman'.

IDEA!

You could establish a coop in your area to acquire and share a sawmill, a used Iron House Forwarder or a firewood processor like this one. Contact Gary Bradford who has written down some ideas on how they started their Northwoods Forestry Enterprises: 218-927-4599.



Winter Tree ID

The MFA Metro Chapter, under chair Barb Spears, held a Winter Tree ID and “Woods Walk” on Saturday, November 23 from 9 am to 12 pm at Richardson Nature Center in Bloomington. The class was limited to 20 participants because of the hands-on nature of the class, and it filled up within 36 hours of advertising, leaving 20 more folks on a waiting list! Saturday was VERY cold with wind chill temps well below zero. Nonetheless, the hardy participants were outside nearly all morning. Instructors Ben Johnson and Russ Kennedy, both ISA Board-Certified Master Arborists with Rainbow Tree Care, were excellent and received rave reviews from participants.



Woodstock Soapstone Wins the Wood Stove Decathlon

In an international competition to significantly reduce pollution from wood stoves, Woodstock Soapstone of New Hampshire won first prize. Two other teams, Travis of Washington State, and Wittus of New York, tied for second. The teams were recognized for all around performance in efficiency and emissions, affordability, consumer appeal and innovation.

The competition was held on the mall in Washington, D.C. with winners announced on November 19th.

Competitors represented a wide range of wood stove technologies. Two of the top three winners were catalytic hybrid stoves. Three masonry stoves did not take home prizes but had some of the highest scores in efficiency and cleanliness. Since our Minnesota manufacturers make only outdoor wood furnaces, they were not represented at this event for wood stoves.

Wood stoves typically deliver only 40 to 50 percent of the energy potential of the wood in the space they are supposed to heat. Some of the models in the competition deliver more than 90 percent and make the smoke cleaner. In wood stoves, cleanliness and efficiency turn out to be the same thing.

“If you can see it, if you can smell it, that’s energy that isn’t heating your house,” said Philip K. Hopke, a judge and professor at Clarkson University. “Parts of the smoke that can be smelled or seen are particles and gases that failed to burn,” Professor Hopke said.

The stoves in the competition were mostly cast iron or steel, and some were covered in enamel or soapstone. They looked like low-tech devices, but they were hooked up to digital meters that counted their output of carbon monoxide and fine particles, which, like the particles from coal plants, cause respiratory problems.

Woodstove Decathlon Placing	
Woodstock Soapstone	1
Travis	2
Wittus (Twinfire)	2
Inter-Conental	3
Tile Stove	3
Hwam	3
Tulikivi	4
Intensi-Fire	5
Milciber	5
Walker Stoves	6
Smart Stove	7
Kimberly	8

Photos and Contact Information for the Decathlon Entrants can be found at: www.ForGreenHeat.org/StoveDesign/Finalists.

A successful stove produces a white ash, made up of minerals like silica, calcium and magnesium, and not much else, because all the wood has been burned. Managing the combustion for efficiency and cleanliness means providing just enough air for thorough burning, but not too much because the more air that enters, the more heat leaves the room as exhaust. Some stoves use oxygen sensors, like the ones in cars, to adjust a fan or valve to keep the balance right.

Many of the stoves use catalytic converters, somewhat like the ones in cars, to take carbon monoxide and hydrocarbons, both pollutants, and convert them at high temperature into simple combustion products: carbon dioxide and water. In a car, the heat produced by a catalytic converter is useless, but in a stove, it is part of the product.

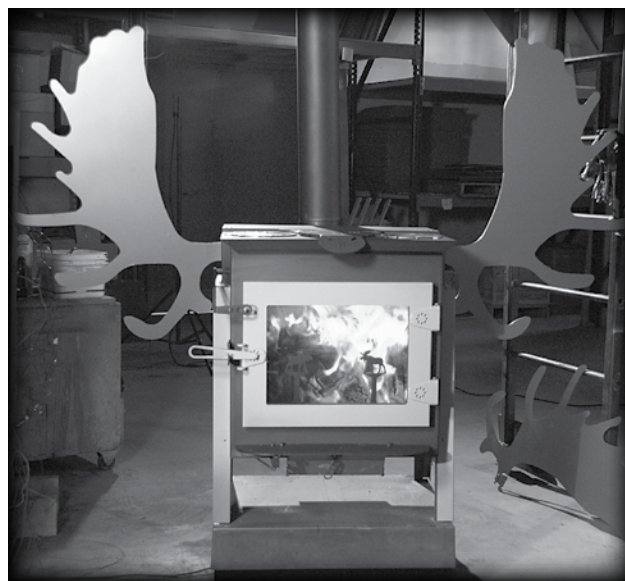
The stoves in the competition used clever innovations. Traditional stoves pull in cool air, but a team from the University of Maryland put the air intake pipe inside the exhaust pipe, an arrangement that heats the inlet air and cools the exhaust, thus conserving heat and improving efficiency. Their stove, a prototype, uses a fan to draw in air. A small computer controls the fan, varying its speed to keep the temperature in the firebox in the proper range.

In a twist, the electricity to run the computer and fan comes from a thermoelectric generator, driven by the heat of the stove. “Thermoelectric generators aren’t very efficient,” Ryan P. Fisher, a member of the team said, explaining that only about 10 percent of the energy is transformed into electricity. “But the heat that they do not use goes into heating the house,” he said, “so it really isn’t waste.”

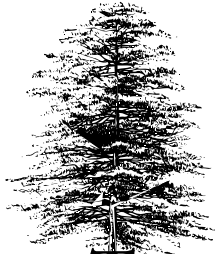
A German import, Twinfire, heats the wood to 1,400 to 1,800 degrees Fahrenheit until it gives off flammable gases, which form a yellow blowtorch of flame below the grate that holds the wood. Gas burns cleanly and thoroughly. “The Twinfire is 93 percent efficient,” said Niels Wittus, the importer. It

does not require any computer controls.

The base Twinfire unit retails for \$5,900. Other models begin in the range of \$1,000. Woodstock Soapstone’s winning unit is not on the market yet but the company expects the price to be in the \$2,000 range.



Woodstock Soapstone’s winning unit. By the way, those moose antlers are for show only and can be removed.



Meet a Tree **Yellow Birch**



By Dennis J. Thompson

Yellow birch is the most valuable of the native birches and is easily recognized by the yellowish-bronze bark for which it is named. This slow-growing, long-lived tree is usually found singly or in small, pure pockets with other hardwoods and conifers. Because yellow birch is seldom found in pure stands, it is not recognized as a separate cover type. It grows best on well drained loams and moderately well drained sandy loams. Yellow birch is common in northern Minnesota; however, about 50 percent of the growing volume of yellow birch in North America is in Quebec. The largest yellow birch can be found near Gould City, Michigan. It is a massive 114

feet tall and almost five feet in diameter! Yellow birch trees are commonly more than 300 years old and occasionally reach ages of more than 350 years.

Yellow birch starts producing seed at age 40; however, optimum seed-bearing age is 70. Seeds are dispersed in the fall and winter but do not germinate until early June. Good seed crops occur every two to three years. Yellow birch is considered intermediate in shade tolerance. It is more shade tolerant than other native birches but less tolerant than other hardwoods. It grows with sugar maple and basswood. It cannot regenerate under a closed canopy and must have soil disturbance and an opening in the canopy.

A decline of yellow birch and paper birch trees, called birch dieback, caused widespread mortality between 1932 and 1955 in eastern Canada and northeast United States. It affected yellow birches of all sizes, even in undisturbed stands. The first visible symptoms of dieback are curled and yellowish foliage in the upper crown of the tree. Branch tips then die with a downward progression until the entire branch and often half the crown dies. Within three to five years, the tree is eventually killed by a secondary pest, the bronze birch borer. To date, no single “triggering” cause of birch dieback has been widely accepted, but the condition is probably the result of one or more stress factors.

Yellow birch lumber and veneer is used in making furniture, paneling, plywood, cabinets, boxes, woodenware, handles, and interior doors. It is one of the principal hardwoods used in the distillation of wood alcohol, acetate of lime, charcoal, tar, and oils. Yellow birch is also a preferred food of snowshoe hares and deer. Deer and moose are especially fond of browsing seedlings during the summer and green leaves and woody stems in the fall.

Did you know? – The inner bark of yellow birch is aromatic and has a wintergreen flavor!



Photos by Keith Kanoti, Maine Forest Service

Membership Application

For New and Renewing Members

Name _____

Name _____
(second person for Family membership)

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Phone _____

If you use E-mail, what is your address?

Membership Categories

Renewing members, your membership will be extended by 12 or 36 months as you choose.

Category	One Year	3 years
Individual	<input type="checkbox"/> \$40	<input type="checkbox"/> \$120
Family	<input type="checkbox"/> \$50	<input type="checkbox"/> \$150
Life	<input type="checkbox"/> \$1,000**	
Contributing	<input type="checkbox"/> \$75	<input type="checkbox"/> \$225
Supporting	<input type="checkbox"/> \$500 - \$1,000	<input type="checkbox"/> \$1,500 - \$3,000

***Your Life Member Dues: 80% of the dues (\$800) goes into MFA's St. Paul Foundation endowment account. Once invested, it is out of MFA's control. The Foundation board determines investments and the amount of annual distributions, which has been about 5% of the account's balance. This means your Life Membership dues provide a perpetual benefit to MFA. Thank you!*

Mail this application with your check to:
Minnesota Forestry Association
P.O. Box 496, Grand Rapids MN 55744

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



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.

January

- Thursday, January 9, 2014**
- 12:00 - 1pm: **Land Transfer: Transferring your vision and land ethic to the next generation.** Learn about the legal tools available that can be used to pass your land on to the next generation. Presenter is Allison Eklund, an attorney, cabin owner and graduate of the Woodland Advisor Program. This event will be held online (register at <http://z.umn.edu/landtransfer>) and at four "live" sites:
 - Black Bear Crossing on the Lake, Como Park Pavilion, Saint Paul. More information and registration: Barb Spears, Metro Chapter MFA, barb@twflc.com or (651) 328-0463.
 - U of M Forestry Center, Cloquet. More information and registration: Mike Reichenbach, UMN Extension, at reich027@umn.edu or (218) 726-6470.
 - Forest History Center, Grand Rapids. More information and registration: contact Julie Miedtke, Extension at 218-327-7486.
 - Boulder Lake Environmental Learning Center, Duluth. More information and registration: contact John Geissler at jdgeissl@d.umn.edu or 218-721-3731.

March/April

- Friday & Saturday, March 14 & 15, 2014 (Bemidji)**
- Friday & Saturday, April 25 & 26, 2014 (Rochester)**
- These will be major family woodland owner conferences. Each will feature day-long workshops, tours, and 20 presentations by local professionals and University of Minnesota Extension faculty — all designed to help landowners implement their vision and keep their woods healthy, diverse, and productive. For updated information, check www.MinnesotaForestry.org.

May

- Friday, May 16, 2014**
- 4pm - 9pm: **MFA's Annual Meeting, Banquet and Tree Farm Awards** (U of M Cloquet Forestry Center)!
- Saturday, May 17, 2014**
- 8am - 3:30pm: **MFA's Spring Field Day** (U of M Cloquet Forestry Center). For details, see the flyer enclosed with this newsletter. Register early!

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.

218-326-6486

MFA's Forester Phone Line

A free service for MFA members only!
Call for an appointment with the forester:
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