

## Woodlands

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

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

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### MFA Board Meetings

Cambridge DNR  
Office, 10 am – 3 pm  
• July 14  
• October 13

Conference Calls  
8 – 9 am  
• June 16  
• August 18  
• September 15  
• November 17

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## MFA's 2015 Annual Meeting & Gathering Partners Conference

This year's Annual Meeting was quite a change from years past with over 300 participants associated with the four hosting organizations attending the three-day event: MFA, University of Minnesota Forestry, Minnesota Master Naturalist, and Minnesota Phenology Network. While the intimacy of our small spring gatherings may have been missed, there's no question that the offerings were far beyond what was previously experienced at MFA Spring Field Days.

The conference, held at the Sawmill Inn in Grand Rapids on May 15-17 began for MFA members with our Annual Meeting, followed by a delicious banquet. The Tree Farm awards were presented, with MFA members capturing a lot of attention! Member Carl Wegner of Grand Rapids was recognized for his outstanding Christmas Tree farm. Carl and his son plant between 9,500 to 12,500 trees annually, all of which are grown on site from seeds collected from their mature trees. This year's Minnesota Tree Farmers of the Year were MFA members Steve Bailey, and Bill and Mary Bailey of Chatfield, MN. Besides being heavily involved in the Bluebird Recovery Program, they also closely manage their 300 acres of woodland by logging 30 acres every year. Look for more information on these exceptional tree farmers in future newsletters.

Saturday was filled with a variety of workshops including classes in photography, chainsaw safety, reforestation, iNaturalist, bogs, sharp-tailed grouse and woodcock habitat management, agroforestry and more. An exceptional group of experts shared their expertise through the many indoor and outdoor sessions.

A big thank you to Dave Roerick who spent countless hours working with the other organizations to coordinate this event, Mike Reichenbach, and Carol Cartie for her work at the conference.

For more photos taken at the conference, check our website, [www.MinnesotaForestry.org](http://www.MinnesotaForestry.org).

*More Photos on page 2*



*Tree Farmers of the Year - Mary and Bill Bailey with Mike Bailey, Chatfield.*



*Carl Wegner, Grand Rapids, regional Tree Farmer of the Year, with Jim Berkeland, Tree Farm committee chair.*



*Workshop attendees learn from examining the hinge of a fallen tree.*

Minnesota Forestry  
Association

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## Legislative Update: Disappointed to say the Least

By Bruce ZumBahlen

I'm sorry to report that the Legislative bills (HF 1410/ SF 1414) to reform the Sustainable Forest Incentive Act (SFIA) were not able to be acted on by the Legislature. After a late start in having the bill introduced, it received a fast track through the committee hearing process to be laid over for consideration in an Omnibus Tax Bill (HF 848). Because the Senate, House, and Governor couldn't agree on how much taxes should be raised or reduced in the overall state budget, the Tax Conference Committee could not move on the bill's provisions.

The SFIA bills addressed key recommendations of the Legislative auditor's critical evaluation, but differed in how they treated conservation easements, annual payments, and penalties. The Senate version would allow back into the SFIA lands with conservation easements that were kicked out of the SFIA in the previous session.

The Senate version also proposed a new payment structure that could change every year, but not more than by 10%. The annual payments would be based on various percentages of the average statewide market value of 2c Managed Forest properties multiplied by the average township tax rate times 1%. Covenants with longer durations would receive higher payments. Based on the current value of 2c lands, per acre payments would be as follows:

- 8-year covenants with conservation easements - \$3.27
- 8-year covenants without conservation easements - \$ 8.50
- 20-year covenants would receive \$11.77
- 50-year covenants would receive \$15.04.

There are other features in the SFIA bills, such as transferring most of the SFIA administration to the MN DNR that can be covered at another time.

As this issue goes to print, the Governor will be calling for a special session to address the education budget bill he vetoed and possibly other issues that were left on the table as the Legislature adjourned. Whether a tax bill would be taken up as part of the special session is unknown, but if not, it surely will be taken up by the next regular Legislative session that begins March 8, 2016.



Bruce ZumBahlen

### Annual Meeting continued from page 1



Above: Mike Reichenbach, Carol Cartie & Dave Roerick at the MFA Display.



Right: Mary & Bruce ZumBahlen, Inver Grove Heights.

Top right: A large group enjoyed a beautiful day at the Forest History Center during the Wildflowers, Warblers and Whatever session.

Bottom right: Phones, pads and tablets in hand, now into the woods!



# Creature Feature

By Jodie Provost, DNR Private Land Habitat Coordinator

## Pollinators – Keeping Our Forests Abuzz and Healthy

The news is abuzz about pollinators these days and for good reason. When the insects that pollinate one third of our U.S. diet decline dramatically, it's time to take note! Wildlife pollinators assist over 80% of the world's flowering plants, creating healthy ecosystems. These creatures include birds, bats, insects such as bees, butterflies, moths, flies, ants, wasps, and beetles, and other animals, providing fruits, vegetables, and nuts for wildlife and people, and helping propagate plants that stabilize soil, buffer waterways, store carbon, and provide habitat.

**A Crucial Partnership:** Plants have evolved intricate visual, scent, food, and mimicry strategies for attracting pollinators and sticky or barbed pollen to attach to animals, while pollinators have evolved specialized structures and behaviors to eat nectar and move pollen. This partnership is crucial for healthy, diverse ecosystems.

**Serious Bee Declines:** Interest in pollinators has grown since colony collapse disorder became apparent in 2006. While this disorder does not affect native pollinators, many of the challenges that face honey bees also affect our native insects. Wild bees have suffered serious declines due to habitat loss, pathogens, parasites, climate change, invasive species, pesticide use and other factors.

**Minnesota's Native Bees:** Our fine state is home to 400 native bee species. Some are specialists, having adaptations for a particular genera or species of plant; others are generalists, using a wide variety of plants. Some bee species are active as adults only a few weeks of the year while others are active spring through fall. Of North America's native bee species, about 70% nest solitarily in the ground and 30% in wood tunnels.

**Neonics Under Scrutiny:** Growing scientific evidence suggests that neonicotinoid pesticides are a major contributor to the decline of bee populations. First introduced in the 1990s, "neonics" are now the most widely-used insecticide in the world. It can be difficult to find seed or plants not treated with them. These systemic pesticides are present in the entire treated plant, including pollen and nectar. Because they persist in soil, have high water solubility, runoff and leaching potential, and are detrimental to bees, other insects, aquatic invertebrates and birds, they are under increasing scrutiny.

**How You Can Help:** As a land or homeowner in Minnesota's forest region, whether tending your wildlife openings or gardens, opportunities to help our pollinators abound.

• **Create and maintain wildlife openings where appropriate.** The best pollinator habitats in our forest



region are sunny openings and edges of meadows, old fields, timber harvest landings, roadsides, and utility right of ways with a diversity of native flowering plants. In landscapes where forest openings naturally occur from disturbance (wildfire, wind, flooding, insects or disease), create and maintain five to ten acres of openings per 100 acres forest for pollinators. Manage these sites before May or after August and only a portion of the habitat each year to minimize negative impacts on reproducing wildlife and leave refugia for pollinators. Shrubs and trees such as chokecherry, raspberry, wild plums, crabapples, juneberries, pin cherries, hazel and oaks can be encouraged.

- **Eliminate or reduce the impact of herbicides and insecticides** that can negatively impact desired plants and wildlife.
- **When planting**, seek native plants, avoid modern hybrid flowers and ask merchants for items not treated with neonics. Select sunny, non-windy sites near water. Provide a variety of plants that bloom April-September and plant in clusters. To benefit butterflies, include larval host plants such as native common, swamp, butterfly and poke milkweeds.
- **Provide bee-nesting sites.** Allow material from dead branches, logs and snags to remain, and preserve patches of undisturbed bare ground. Install wood nesting blocks for wood-nesting natives. Brush piles, rock piles, bunch grasses, and old rodent burrows also provide nesting sites.
- **Create a damp salt lick for bees and butterflies** with a dripping hose, drip irrigation line, or place your birdbath on bare soil to create a damp area, adding a bit of sea salt.
- **Add nectar sources** by providing a hummingbird feeder.
- **Provide other food sources for butterflies** such as moist animal droppings, urine and rotting fruits.
- **Buy organic produce**, including honey.
- **Learn more about pollinators.** Guidebooks and close-focusing binoculars can aid in recognition of pollinators. Visit the DNR Minnesota Pollinator Resources web page.
- **Technical and Financial Assistance.** Federal and state conservation programs are available for habitat projects that support pollinator populations. Contact your local NRCS or SWCD office.
- **Reach Out, Inform and Inspire Others!** Celebrate Pollinator Week June 15 – 21. Together, we can ensure that stewardship of our forests keeps them abuzz and healthy.

# Peterson Farm Field Day

John and Mary Peterson of rural Delano might seem to be the perfect woodland tour hosts, with Mary's broad, welcoming smile and John's enthusiasm as he readily shares their woodland knowledge and experiences. But don't be fooled. Underneath the façade lie the hearts of ruthless, relentless killers. Just ask any garlic mustard or buckthorn plant that lives in their woods...if you can find any.

On a perfect afternoon on May 21st, John and Mary hosted 35 people on a detailed tour of their family's 25-acre Big Woods Restoration, sponsored by the MFA Metro Chapter. They saw first hand what can be accomplished over time with self-education, perseverance, planning, expert help and more perseverance.

After introductions by Barb Spears, MFA Metro Chapter Chair, the program began in the Peterson woodshop, where Michelle Martin, DNR Forest Ecologist, gave a slide show presentation on the changing face of the area known as the Big Woods. It was readily apparent that this maple/basswood forest has changed dramatically over the last 150 years, and that very little of the original Big Woods remains. "John and Mary are doing an excellent job on their small part of the Big Woods," said Michelle. "It's never going to go back to the way it was, but that's why we have to take care of what's left. Every fragment matters!"

John Peterson then gave a short overview of the long, **8-year process they've taken to restore their woods. It's a four-part program to remove invasive species and restore sites, remove man-made scars, implement timber stand improvement, and finally, plant trees, forbs and shrubs.** Removal of buckthorn and garlic mustard was the beginning step. "We took out dozens and dozens of hayracks piled high with buckthorn, and I'm happy to say we have to spend very little time on it now, as long as we keep an eye out for young seedlings that can easily be pulled out by hand. With cutting, application of Garlon 4 Ultra, and piling and burning, **we've been able to almost eliminate buckthorn from the farm,**" said John.

**Garlic Mustard has been a harder battle.** "We just sort of watched it for a few years, not knowing what it was. When we read an article about it in an MFA newsletter, we knew we had a problem." After three years of fighting what they thought was a losing battle, they were ready to throw in the towel when Eli Sagor (U of M Extension) sent them information on the Aldo Leopold Foundation's "Garlic Mustard Management Protocol." The couple made a trip to the center in Baraboo WI, receiving help from Steve Swenson, site ecologist. With a plan to follow, John and Mary renewed their attack, seeing the beginning of success the following year. To prevent weeds from moving into the now bare garlic mustard areas, they plant a variety of fescues.

"We keep very detailed records on all activity in our woods to document what we do, and to see if our actions are achieving the desired results. On site, **we use an Apple iPhone to dictate anything we see in the woods that needs to be transferred to our spreadsheet.** In the case of garlic mustard, a detailed record is the only way we can properly manage the 100+ sites."

The rest of the day was spent in a tour of their beautiful woods to see examples of their work first hand. There was plenty of time for questions and answers, and time to marvel at the tremendous passion, effort and stewardship that John and Mary have poured into their "Little Big Woods."



*John Peterson explains undergrowth restoration near a favorite, 300-year-old bur oak.*



*Thirty-five people took part in the tour and saw what can be accomplished through dedication and hard work!*



*DNR Forest Ecologist Michelle Martin identified various invasive species.*



# Forestry Grad School Journal

By John Saxhaug

*John Saxhaug has been sharing his experiences over the last year as he returned to graduate school after retiring from the DNR. With this last installment, MFA thanks John for his interesting reports and wishes him the best in all his future endeavors!*

*John Saxhaug, Minneapolis, is a former MFA board member and current chair of the Land Committee.*

Dear MFA Friends,

I have just completed the final exam for my Forest Fire and Disturbance Ecology class. Spring Semester is over and the summer break is here. Even after 40 years, this is a great relief; it seems like a whole summer of freedom awaits me. It's not really the case, but I think I'll go with it for now. It's also time to write this last message to you. Unfortunately, my laptop gave up the ghost yesterday. I lost my draft and was faced with a problem that didn't exist 40 years ago. In those days, it was more a problem of the dog eating the paperwork. Technology is a mixed blessing!

Yesterday morning (May 6th) in his "On Outdoors" column in the Star Tribune, Doug Smith described the problems

caused by earthworms in our Minnesota forests. He quoted Lee Frelich, who taught both my Fall Semester class on Landscape Ecology and this semester's Forest Fire and Disturbance Ecology. Lee emphasizes in these courses the serious impact that earthworms, which are not native to our area, have on our deciduous forests. It's an alarming situation and the article is worth reading if you haven't yet had the opportunity.

I have been considering researching earthworm infestations for my Master's Thesis, and it seemed like yesterday's article was a sign on how to proceed. There is relatively little known on the infestations, especially the extent to which they have moved into our northern forests. Sampling for earthworms will fit well with my plan to investigate the impact of climate change in the area of my Kanebec County tree farm. This summer I will take initial plots to provide a basis for more intensive sampling next year. Things seem to be falling into place.

Doing some consistent writing over the last few months has been a rewarding experience for me. I hope you benefited as well and I thank you and the editors for allowing me this opportunity.

Take care,

John

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## Got Birch?

Dave and Bev Medvecky live on their Big Woods Farm near Isanti. Through the years, Dave has found markets for most of what comes from his woods. "Maple syrup is the easiest product to sell," said Dave. "People ask to be put on a waiting list for it. In our best year, we produced 90 gallons of finished syrup."

In addition to the syrup, Dave has about two-dozen customers who buy everything from cherry wood for smoking on grills to logs for export to Japan to figured wood for bowl turners. One of Dave's steadiest customers is a former neighbor who moved to Texas and calls herself "The Nature Lady." She collects rustic items and resells them to floral shops in Dallas and Austin. Among these items are birch logs, branches and bark. However, Dave said, "My problem is I am nearly out of birch." As a result, he's put out an invitation to MFA members who might have birch to sell. "Logs 2 - 3" in diameter, poles that are 1 - 2" by 3 to 6' long, and peeled birch bark are all needed. I can put them directly into contact with The Nature Lady or, if they prefer, I'll act as a go-between."

**So, if you would like to consider selling birch and other products off your land, give Dave and Bev a call at 763-444-4840.** As a bonus, you might be able to arrange a visit to Big Woods Farm to see Dave's woods and his favorite machine, "The Mule", and Bev's gardens.

For more interesting information on the Medveckys, including their Member Profile, go to [www.MinnesotaForestry.org](http://www.MinnesotaForestry.org) and in the "Search This Site" box in the upper right corner, type "Medvecky".



Dave and Bev Medvecky on their Big Woods Farm.

## Member Profile: Jim & Linda Mielke

One can't help but feel a warm welcome when walking into Jim and Linda Mielke's home just outside of Center City, Minnesota. Part of it comes from the home-harvested wood that lines the walls and forms its cabinets and furniture. Part of it is the earth-sheltered home they built, nestled against a south-facing slope. **But underneath it all is Jim and Linda themselves and the vision and stewardship they've poured into the woods surrounding their home.** Like so many MFA members, the passion for trees and working with wood started long before they bought their own land. For Jim, it started in his dad's workshop.

"My dad taught college biology and horticulture and had a large greenhouse, so he certainly played a part in planting an interest in me for things that grow. But it was his woodworking skills that really caught my attention. He built our entire home and pretty much everything inside it, even turning every spindle of the staircase himself." As a youngster, Jim spent a lot of time in his dad's shop, cultivating a love for woodworking.

Years later, when Jim and Linda found themselves employed by the North Branch school district, they looked for a wooded acreage to set up a home and raise their family. They found an ideal spot with 13 acres of red and white oak, maple, basswood and ash, eventually purchasing adjacent land that brought their total land to just under 20 acres.

"We built the house in 1978 and then spent a number of years finishing the inside," said Linda. By the early 80's, they had their first forest management plan written up and began harvesting the mature red and white oak trees and sawed them on their first sawmill. **Jim remembers cutting a 16' and 14' log from one huge, white oak whose boards now enclose the beams in their open living room.** "It took two tractors just to load them up on the hay wagon," said Jim. During this time, the Mielkes and their sons Aaron and Curt set up a roadside stand, selling firewood to the people visiting Wild River State Park.

Jim spent many hours finishing their home with lumber from their woods, using figured hard maple to build the drawers in their dining room hutch, and green ash and red oak in the two bedrooms' closets and furnishings. **The centerpiece of their home is a beautiful maple table and six chairs, all built by Jim.** "Each chair has 28 mortise and tenon joints. It took years to finish them."

In the late 80's, the Mielkes purchased a hydraulic Woodmizer and also built a kiln from a pattern found in American Woodworker. They continued to harvest and sell lumber to other carpenters and wood workers. But, of course, the work of forest management continues. "The understory species of maple and basswood took off a little too much after we harvested the mature oaks and opened up the canopy. Unfortunately, so did the buckthorn. **I harvest a few basswood every year for carving, and we're working to re-establish the oaks.** The buckthorn is an ongoing battle."

Today, much of Jim and Linda's retirement revolves around family, their woodlands and the products they harvest from it. Jim spends the winter in his workshop turning out whimsical characters, puzzles, and Diamond Willow walking sticks. Every summer he volunteers for two months at the North House Folk School in Grand Marais where Linda enjoys time with her grandchildren who live in the area. They also attend several craft shows and sell Jim's work in local gift shops. And for both of them, there's nothing better than spending a day in their woods.



*The Mielkes seated at the maple table and chairs Jim built.*



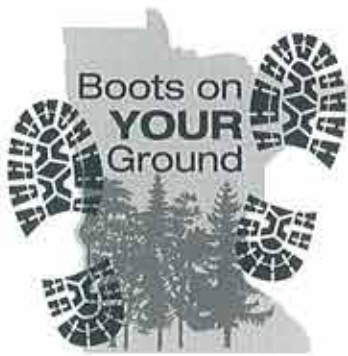
*Jim works to encourage oak regeneration.*



*Beams encased with white oak harvested from one tree.*



*A few of the figures Jim carves.*



## BOYG in Review

MFA's Boots-on-Your-Ground began in November of 2014. To date, 44 woodland owners with a combined 8,843 acres have requested the service which brings a professional forester to your woods for

a two-hour consultation at the cost of \$50 to the landowner. So far, 23 visits have been completed. Forester Dean Makey, who has been on board from the beginning of the program, shares some of his insights into BOYG.



Dean Makey

**Q: So far you've done nine Boots-on-Your-Ground visits with Minnesota private woodland owners. How is it working so far for the landowners and foresters?**

*Makey:* The landowners I've met with have really felt the program is worthwhile. The visits provide a good amount of information for them to continue on with proper management of their lands. There

are a number of things that happen in our meetings:

1. The landowners get good reinforcement for the practices they're doing well and find out if they're appropriate. I usually make suggestions to enhance or improve practices already being done.
2. I find the owner is usually seeking answers to a pressing issue or topic.
3. Through the visit, the landowner gets new information or a second opinion about a practice or practices they are considering.

As the visiting forester, I find that the site visit usually needs a follow-up summary since so many topics are covered during the discussion. Often I can provide additional information, people to contact, or literature. From the forester's perspective, there are several advantages to making a BOYG visit:

1. The forester is available to try and answer any questions the landowner may have.
2. The field visit allows the forester to see conditions first hand, allowing better evaluation of the situations.
3. The visit allows a good amount of time for discussion of the relevant topics.

**Q: What sort of things should the landowner have prepared for a BOYG visit to make the best use of time?**

1. Have the Forest Management or Woodland Stewardship Plan available for review.
2. Have records of past practices available for review, at least the ones that are of most importance and will be relevant to the visit.
3. Have a list of questions for the forester to answer.
4. Have an idea of how the land will be toured and a possible route to follow.

**Q: What's your hope for the future of the program?**

As long as funding is available to pay the foresters, I think the future is good. BOYG is really a win-win situation for everyone. It certainly appears that landowners like the visits. It allows them to show their land and completed practices, and get additional information they're seeking in a one-on-one session with a professional. I hope the program can continue!

**As a view into one landowner's experience with BOYG, MFA member Steve Stein had this to share about his recent session.**

*Dear Dean,*

*Thank you very much for your visit to our property last Saturday and timely summary. My family and I appreciate your valuable advice regarding the current state of our woodlands and suggestions for future improvements. I must say that your visit has generated a lot of excitement for projects that we can undertake this year. I also should add that I think that you and the Minnesota Forestry Association are providing a very valuable service to private landowners like us. It was a pleasure working with you!*

*Warm regards,  
Steve Stein*



*Four generations of Steins at the end of the BOYG visit.*

This program is coordinated by the Minnesota Forestry Association under a grant from the Minnesota DNR and the U.S. Forest Service. If you would like an application for a visit in the 62 counties where the program is available, see [www.MinnesotaForestry.org](http://www.MinnesotaForestry.org) or call MFA's office at 218-326-6486.

## Membership Application

### For New and Renewing Members

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
(second person for Family membership)

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Please make any address changes above.

### 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
Contributing	<input type="checkbox"/> \$75	<input type="checkbox"/> \$225
Supporting	<input type="checkbox"/> \$500 - \$1,000	<input type="checkbox"/> \$1,500 - \$3,000
Life	<input type="checkbox"/> One-time payment of \$1,000**	
Perpetual*	<input type="checkbox"/> One-time payment of \$3,000**	

\*Perpetual Membership is for any estate, corporation, limited liability company, limited liability partnership or similarly structured entity. A Perpetual Membership is entitled to one vote. Call MFA for more information.

\*\*80% of dues from Life and Perpetual Memberships go into MFA's Endowment Fund.

Mail this application with your check to:

**Minnesota Forestry Association**  
P.O. Box 496, Grand Rapids MN 55744

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## 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.

### Saturday, June 13, 2015

PlayCleanGo Day (Minnesota-wide)

- Various Minnesota State Parks
- In collaboration with the DNR and Three Rivers Park District, PlayCleanGo encourages individuals and families to take to the outdoors and enjoy parks, trails and campgrounds across Minnesota while supporting efforts to prevent the spread of land-based invasive species.
- More information:  
<http://playcleango.org/pcgday.html>

### Saturday, June 13, 2015

National Get Outdoors Day

- Entrance fees waived at all Minnesota state parks.

### Wednesday, July 29, 2015

Fillmore County Forestry Field Day (Chatfield MN)

- 5 pm - 9 pm
- The Fillmore Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) will host its annual Forestry Field Day at the Chatfield Fish and Game Club, 22143 County Road 102, Chatfield, MN 55923. A light supper will be served at no cost at 5:30 pm, and the program will begin at 6:00 pm covering broadcast seeding of hardwoods as well as various hardwood management techniques. For more details visit [www.fillmoreswcd.org](http://www.fillmoreswcd.org) or contact the SWCD at 507-765-3878 ext. 3 for more information.

### Saturday, October 10, 2015

Metro Chapter Fall Family Woodland Day; Princeton, MN

- A full day of activities for the entire family including draft horses at work, portable sawmill in operation, solar kiln, growing trees from seed, wildlife inventoring and lots more. Details in the next issue.

**Away from home for a time?** Please contact the MFA office if you'll be away from home for a time and when you'll be back. We'll hold on to the newsletter and its contents until you return so you won't miss a single issue!

Information@MinnesotaForestry.org or call 218-326-6486

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



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:

**218-326-6486**