



# Minnesota 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

- Annual Meeting May 20, 2016 Winona
- July 12, 2016

Conference Calls  
 8 – 9 am

- April 12, 2016
- May 10, 2016
- June 14, 2016

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## Managing Red Pine for Utility Poles

*By Sam Williams, Marketing Forester*

Everyone is trying to stretch every dollar these days. This article will explain how to maximize your red pine investment as well as stretch your red pine resource towards the sky with proper management to become utility poles.

Commonly called “telephone poles”, utility poles are used to support power and telephone cables and other overhead lines. They are also used to support street lights, transformers, and other devices. The specifications for red pine utility poles include: red (Norway) pine trees exclusively, with 13" or greater butt diameters. The lengths range from 35 to 65 feet with a 6.5" minimum top diameter. The trees must have minimal taper and be straight, and knots must be small without rot.

You may be asking yourself, “Why would I want to manage for utility poles?” Several studies have proven that managing red pine for utility poles maximizes both tree growth and net financial return. For many years, utility pole stumpage has been nearly twice what the same trees would be worth as saw bolts.

Proper utility pole management starts at the time of planting and continues through final harvest. Red pine planted for utility poles are spaced no more than six feet by seven feet. This close proximity promotes self-pruning and helps prevent excessive knot surface. The first thinning should not be performed until the majority of the trees have three eight-foot sticks in them. During the first thinning, the basal area is kept above 110 ft<sup>2</sup> and no more than 40% of the stand volume is removed. At most, every third row is harvested along with poor-quality trees in residual rows. Poor-quality trees consist of suppressed trees, forked trees, trees with excessive sweep and/or with knot defects.

The second thinning should be marked by a professional forester, with a basal area target of 110 ft<sup>2</sup>. Poor-quality trees are once again harvested.

*Continued on page 2*



## Spring Field Days and Annual Meeting

**Join other MFA members in Winona for our Spring Field Days and Annual Meeting** to be held on May 20, 21 and 22 in conjunction with the Master Naturalists' Gathering Partners event at St. Mary's University of Minnesota.

See more information on the enclosed postcard. For even more information, and to access online registration, visit our website, [MinnesotaForestry.org](http://MinnesotaForestry.org). If you need help or have questions, call Lynette Lothert at 320-589-1711 or send an email to [Lothe013@UMN.edu](mailto:Lothe013@UMN.edu).



*Utility poles waiting to be skidded to the landing.*

## Minnesota Forestry Association

### 2016 Board of Directors

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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. For a copy of minutes from any recent meeting, contact Carol Cartie at [Information@MinnesotaForestry.org](mailto:Information@MinnesotaForestry.org) or 218-326-6486.

### The MFA board conducted its annual election of officers in January.

Dave Roerick was elected vice president replacing Chuck Erickson. Re-elected were Dennis Thompson, treasurer, Lyle Keller, secretary, and Stan Grossman was re-appointed to sergeant-at-arms.

For the first time in memory, there was competition for the position of president. John O'Reilly, who has served in the position for the last eight years, was nominated along with Neal Chapman. O'Reilly then announced he would not accept the position unless the vote was unanimous. With the two candidates out of the room, a series of votes were taken. None were unanimous for O'Reilly and none resulted in a majority for Chapman. Finally, to break the deadlock, Dennis Thompson announced he would stand for election to the position of president. He was elected on the first ballot.

Dennis Thompson will serve for the rest of this year as both MFA's president and treasurer. John O'Reilly will continue to serve on the board.

**In other actions, the board agreed to submit a proposal to LCCMR** for a three-year project entitled *Promoting Active Management of Privately Owned Woodlands*. John O'Reilly has written the proposal which, if successful, would mean several hundred thousand dollars for the project.



### Managing Red Pine continued from page 1

If managed correctly, utility poles should be present at the time of the third thinning and non-pole-quality trees are again removed. The rest of the volume removed is dominant and co-dominant trees, marked by a professional forester as poles, where spacing allows. Harvesting the larger trees allows smaller-diameter trees to grow into poles, maximizing current and future pole values and the return on investment. Standard management practices on the third entry focus on removal of trees that are not going to grow into a pole (and thus, potentially doubling the value to the landowner by leaving pole quality trees for the next entry!) By the time the fourth thinning is performed, defective, non-pole-quality trees should be limited with the majority of timber being of utility pole and saw bolt quality.



Above: A large harvest of red pine poles piled at a landing.

Right: Looking up a future utility pole.



# Become a Master Woodland Owner!

By Matt Russell

The University of Minnesota Extension Forestry team is happy to announce the Minnesota Master Woodland Owner program. This program is designed for Minnesota's private woodland owners interested in becoming better stewards of their woods.

Many MFA members may have taken part in Extension's Woodland Advisor classes in the past. This new program will be different as its emphasis is on learning ways to manage your woods for the reasons you desire. You'll learn from experts and fellow forest landowners just like you.

In late 2015, Extension conducted an online survey to see which topics forest landowners are interested in learning about. Woodland management, growing trees, forest health, and wildlife were the most popular classes that forest landowners in Minnesota wanted to see. The new program will dive into these topics, in addition to others such as tax incentives for owning and managing your woods, non-timber forest products, and identifying invasive species.

So how is the course structured? The Master Woodland Owner program delivers a year-long training curriculum that will use both in-person workshops and online education to learn about woodland stewardship topics. Online topics are offered as a series of month-long, self-paced modules with exercises and group discussions. **Registration is now open** for the 2016-2017 class. The online course is scheduled to begin on May 5.

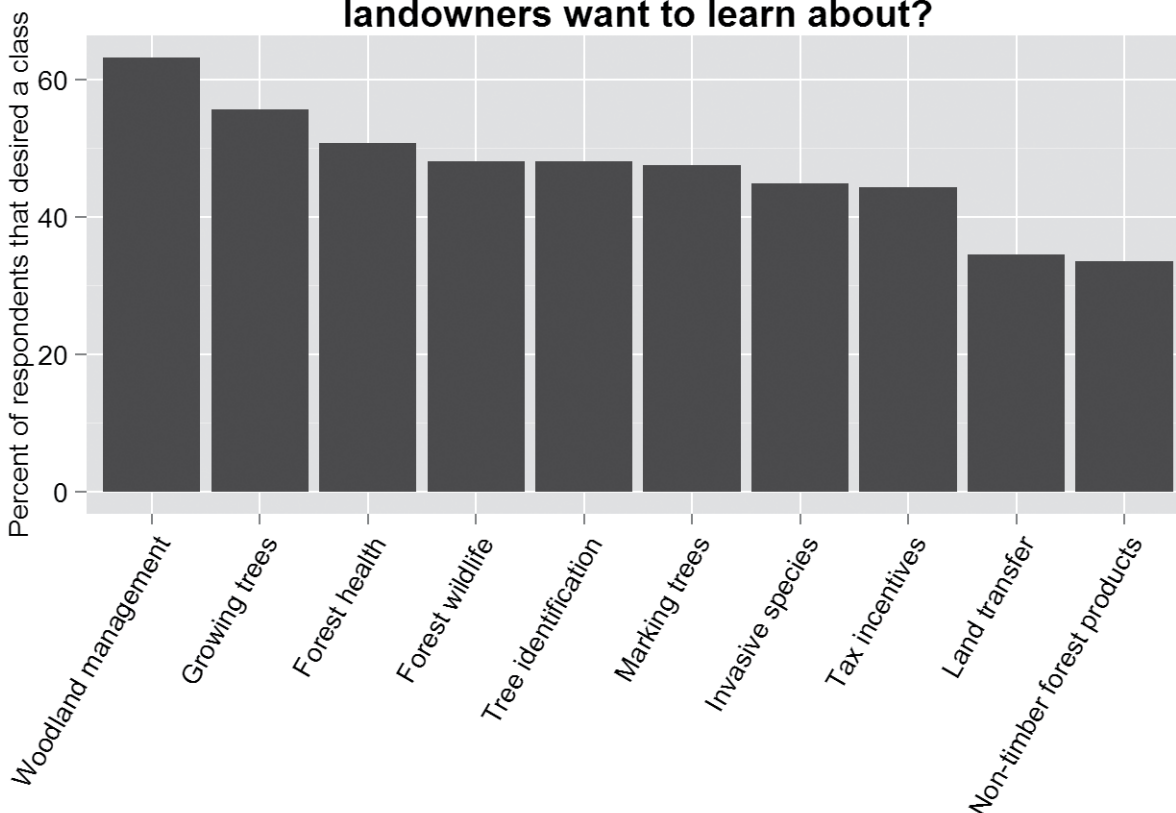
Our first in-person gathering will be in May at the Gathering Partners of Natural Resources conference scheduled in Winona. This is an annual conference co-sponsored by the University of Minnesota Extension Forestry and Minnesota Master Naturalist programs. All students enrolled in the program are expected to attend our Master Woodland Owner session on Saturday, May 21, but can also chose to attend other field tours and sessions available on Friday, May 20, and Sunday, May 22. As a part of our meeting on Saturday, we'll have an introductory session to meet fellow forest landowners and course instructors, a session on tree identification of Minnesota's southeastern species, and a field tour of invasive species. The second in-person session will be an all-day field tour in the fall of 2016. The third in-person session will be a gathering and graduation in spring 2017. **While we will focus on issues to southeastern Minnesota landowners in this first year, we plan to offer the program in other regions in future years.**

We hope that you'll consider being a part of the first class of Minnesota Master Woodland Owners. Information about the program, including registration and program details, can be found at our course website: [mwop.umn.edu](http://mwop.umn.edu). We hope to see you this spring!



Matt Russell

## Which topics do Minnesota landowners want to learn about?



Matt Russell is an Assistant Professor and Extension Specialist at the University of Minnesota, Department of Forest Resources. For questions about the Master Woodland Owner program, contact Matt at [russellm@umn.edu](mailto:russellm@umn.edu) or 612-626-4280.

# Member Profile: Dale and Suzanne Rohlfling

By Linda K. Dinkel, Editor

Sit for a while at the kitchen table with Dale and Suzanne Rohlfling of rural Zumbro Falls and you'll learn three things. First, they care passionately about their small corner of Minnesota woodlands and prairie grasses. Second, a sense of hospitality runs deep, and they see their home and surrounding acres as a gathering place to enjoy with friends and family. And last, don't mess with their land. They've been known to out-organize and outlast some pretty big opponents.

Both Dale and Suzanne are natives of Illinois, meeting at Southern Illinois University at Edwardsville, marrying in 1978. Suzanne was a forestry student for a time at Iowa State before becoming an RN. She has spent the last 35 years as a nurse, currently in obstetrics at Mayo. Dale pursued a career as a Chiropractor. Love of the outdoors brought them together, and to Minnesota.

**“We wanted to raise our children in the Midwest, and we fell in love with this area while visiting,” said Suzanne.**

They moved to Rochester in 1986, working and raising their three children. Their dream of living in the country simmered on the back burner until a friend's proposal came out of the blue.

“A friend of mine came to show me pictures of his property north of Rochester,” said Dale. “Cliff and Dorothy Laging loved this place and had poured a lot of time and energy into it. Over the years, they planted 17,500 red and white pine, spruce and black walnut seedlings. They had hoped to pass it on to their son, but Gregg was in a serious accident that eventually took his life.” The tragedy forced the Lagings to reevaluate their plans. “Cliff came right out and said, ‘Would you like to purchase my tree farm?’ I was speechless. **He gave me the keys to the gate and told us to go take a walk.**”

**That was all it took.** The Rohlflings purchased the 50-acre site in 2002, continuing to live in Rochester and spending as much time as possible on their new found passion.

“It was definitely the honeymoon phase,” said Suzanne. “We were finally living our dream of owning forest land. We spent every moment we could up here, even though there wasn't a structure on the property. **We didn't really know what we were doing, but we sure enjoyed ourselves while we learned!**”

Their first management plan, drawn up in 2003 by consulting forester Katie Dudley, might have signaled the end of the honeymoon, but not the passion to improve the land. “Finally, we had a direction,” said Dale. **“I can't speak highly enough of the foresters and the resources that are available to land owners in Minnesota.”** The couple have had numerous foresters walk their land and give advice, and Dale has attended many classes and workshops on a variety of forest topics, learning and networking with other tree farmers. “The big lesson those first few years was how much there is to learn!” said Suzanne.



Dale and Suzanne stand by a cottonwood that is one of the top ten biggest in the state.



Middle: Rohlflings and friend Joe Brown, DNR forester, walk the forest road back to the bunkhouse.

Above: Rohlfling's Raj: their corner of paradise on earth!

The main focus during the first years was thinning and pruning to manage blister rust and open up the forest floor. Eventually, the couple started building a home, moving permanently to the property in 2014. **“We are so much more thoughtful in our impact, and hopefully, we’re making more intelligent decisions,”** said Suzanne. She now gravitates to the pruning and thinning of black walnut, while Dale tends towards work in the pine stands, striving for quality timber rather than quantity. Trees aren’t their only focus, though.

“We have about 10 acres of prairie that we’re working to restore,” said Suzanne. “We recognized some of the plants that were here, but decided to bring in an expert to identify what we had. There are 28 species of native prairie plants, and the challenge is to suppress the non-native and invasive species while helping the natives thrive. Once again, we found wonderful resources and experts to help with that process, including the MN DNR, U of M Extension and Wabasha SWCD.”

**In 2008, the Rohlffings faced a different kind of “invasive species.”** Xcel Energy was making plans to run a west-east high voltage transmission line in the area, and one of the proposed routes came right through their land. Rather than give in, a group of neighbors organized to participate in the process. “We hired legal counsel and fundraised with raffles, polar plunges, even set up booths for hair braiding and massages.” The North Route Group attended hearing after hearing, wrote news releases and did radio and tv interviews. Ultimately, they were successful. “It was really grass-roots activism at its best,” said Dale. “We gave up a lot of tree farm time, but it was all worth it.” In the end, five tree farms were spared.

As you arrive on the property, you’ll see an interesting plaque hanging below the tree farm sign: Rohlffing’s Raj. “It’s Czech for “Paradise,” said Suzanne, proud of her family heritage. For the Rohlffings, their own little corner of paradise is more than they could have hoped for, and will be for generations to come.

## Wabasha Forestry Days

If you’ve ever met Terry Helbig, you know he goes in for things in a big way. Big ideas, big enthusiasm, and most importantly, big follow-through. That’s what it takes to pull off an “extra-large” event. Helbig was on hand to emcee the “XL” Annual Wabasha Forestry Day on February 12th. Forty years is an incredible record for any event, and illustrates the commitment of the organizers, the quality of the program, and the depth of interested woodland owners who keep coming back year after year.

This year’s featured speaker was Lance Sorensen, retired DNR forester, who gave an overview of the history of timber harvests in Wabasha County, followed by an extensive report on the economic impact of forestry management in the county. As in years past, informative sessions were balanced with the fun of Helbig’s door prizes. Winners never know what to expect from the prizes, but they’re assured of leaving the day having learned something new about woodland management.

Hats off to Terry and his crew for reaching this remarkable milestone!



Top: 2015 Wabasha County Woodland Managers of the Year were Max and Debby Siewert of rural Zumbro Falls. Pictured: DNR Forester Mark Miller, Max Siewert and Terry Helbig. Photo by Michael Smith.

Above: Tom Gosse’s 26-year string of door prizes continues with a walnut Christmas tree. Lucky guy!

Left: Fifty people attended this year’s event in Wabasha, MN.



# Meet a Tree Bur Oak

By Dennis J. Thompson

Bur oak (*Quercus macrocarpa*) is a slow growing tree that is widely distributed throughout the Eastern United States and the Great Plains. In Minnesota, bur oak is the major tree species in oak savannas along the prairie-forest transition zone. Bur oak is very drought resistant, which makes it a popular choice in shelterbelts. It is also a common tree for streets and lawns. They are known for their massive, clear trunk and open crown of stout branches.

Bur oak will start producing acorns around age 35 and may continue past 400 years of age, longer than any other oak species in America. Good seed crops occur every two to three years. Mature trees will typically range from 80 to 100 feet in height with 36 to 48 inch tree diameters. Some of the largest known bur oaks are in the Ohio Valley and are close to 170 feet tall with tree diameters approaching seven feet! Most live for 200 to 300 years.

The tree will flower shortly after the leaves appear, from about the first of April in the southern part of its range to about mid-June in the north. Acorns ripen within a year and drop from the tree as early as August or as late as November. Germination occurs almost immediately. Seedlings grow fast and concentrate most of their energy on putting down a strong tap root. At the end of its first growing season, a young bur oak seedling may have a tap root in the soil that measures over four feet.

Although bur oak is commercially valuable, its role in a woodland setting is that of a provider of food. Acorns are an extremely important source of food for many species of wildlife and are the primary food source for red squirrels. Acorns will also be eaten by deer, wood ducks, rabbits, and mice, just to name a few.

Acorns from the white oak family, including bur oak, are much more palatable than acorns from the red oak family. It has been said that if you were lost in the woods and needed to survive on acorns, the good part about bur oak acorns is that when you boil them to reduce the bitterness, you only need to change the water 10 times versus 40 times if you were eating red oak acorns.

Bon Appétit!



## BOB in Your Woods

Excerpts taken from an article by  
Jill Pokorny, USFS

An unwelcome guest is making its way through Minnesota woodlands. Bur oak blight (BOB) has been identified in 78 of the 87 counties in Minnesota, with more counties likely to be identified as forest owners become more aware and educated about what to look for when surveying forest health.

Originally thought to be caused by the common leafspot fungus, *Tubakia dryina*, studies by Dr. Tom Harrington of Iowa State University identified a new species of the fungus, *Tubakia iowensis*, as the culprit, and named the disease bur oak blight (BOB). There are six known species of *Tubakia* that can infect bur oak, but only *iowensis* causes dramatic leaf symptoms and sometimes tree mortality. To date, the fungus only affects bur oaks with small sized acorns (*Quercus macrocarpa* var. *oliviformis*).



Full range of leaf symptoms: dark veins, large wedge-shaped lesions, and totally brown leaves.

Photo from Jill D. Pokorny, US Forest Service.

**Symptoms:** Infected leaves typically first appear in late July or August, when the veins become necrotic and discolored. As the necrosis along the veins expands outward, large, wedge-shaped areas of necrosis develop on the leaf blade, and major leaf mortality may occur giving the tree an overall wilted or scorched appearance that can be confused with oak wilt.

**Fungus Appearance:** During the summer, black, fruiting structures form along the dark leaf veins and produce rain-splashed spores that can infect more leaves. Later in the season, black pustules, the overwintering stage of the fungus, develop on infected petioles.

**Tenacious Leaves:** A unique feature of BOB is that some of the petiole-infected leaves remain on the tree during the

winter. Healthy bur oak trees shed all of their leaves in the fall.

**Increased Intensity:** BOB tends to intensify from year to year in individual trees. If a tree is seriously affected one year, it tends to be severely affected the next year. However, BOB appears to spread slowly from tree to tree. Disease severity has increased over the past decade due to a shift in weather patterns towards increased spring rainfall.

**Management:** Over time, severely affected trees may die, usually associated with severe blight over many years and damage caused by secondary invaders such as the two-lined chestnut borer and Armillaria root rot. Boosting tree vigor

may prolong the life of affected trees and ward off invasion by secondary pests, but removing fallen leaves is not an effective management tool since the fungus overwinters on infected leaf petioles that remain on the tree. In preliminary studies, injections of the fungicide propiconazole in early June, just after leaf expansion and prior to leaf symptoms, have significantly reduced symptom development for two or more years.

You can find more in depth information on BOB from Dr. Harrington at the Iowa State web link: [www.public.iastate.edu/~tcharrin/BOB.html](http://www.public.iastate.edu/~tcharrin/BOB.html).

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# Creature Feature

*From DNR Reports*

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## Trumpeter Swans

Results from a recent statewide trumpeter swan survey show that Minnesota's population continues to grow. It is now estimated to be around 17,000 swans, according to the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources' Nongame Wildlife Program.

**Once eliminated from Minnesota and across much of the United States in the 1880's** due to overharvest for food and their value as a fur trade item to make powder puffs, trumpeter swans now grace the skies of Minnesota year-round. The largest concentrations of breeding swans occur in north-central Minnesota and west of the Twin Cities.

**"We are extremely pleased and encouraged by the results of this survey,"** said Carrol Henderson, DNR Nongame Wildlife Program supervisor. "The survey was the first to occur in Minnesota during the trumpeter swan nesting season and is part of a cooperative effort to survey and monitor the status of trumpeter swans in North America."

The survey was funded by the Nongame Wildlife Program, the Trumpeter Swan Society, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, all longstanding partners in the reintroduction effort.

In the early 1980's, after a previous attempt to reintroduce trumpeter swans in the state was met with limited success, **the DNR Nongame Wildlife Program decided to fund the restoration with Nongame Wildlife checkoff donations from state income tax forms.** The DNR partnered with the Hennepin County Park Reserve District (now Three Rivers Park District), the Trumpeter Swan Society, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, White Earth Indian Band, U.S. Forest Service, the Dellwood Foundation and many other swan enthusiasts to continue efforts to restore these birds to Minnesota.



**For more than 20 years, reintroductions occurred in various areas throughout the state.** By 2010, the state's winter population estimate was about 6,000 birds and Minnesotans could easily observe them throughout much of the state. Today, Minnesota has the largest population of trumpeter swans in the upper Midwest.

**"Minnesota is one of the best places in the nation to see them,"** Henderson said. "The restoration of these magnificent birds has been made possible by donations to the Nongame Wildlife checkoff on state income tax and property tax forms, and the many trumpeter swan volunteers and enthusiasts who worked hard to recover this species."

The trumpeter swan is the largest native waterfowl species in North America. While the DNR believes the trumpeter swan population is doing well in Minnesota, these birds are facing continued threats. Risks include loss of wetland habitat, being shot illegally, and poisoning from lead shotgun pellets and fishing weights.

**People can help support Minnesota's trumpeter swans** by making a tax-deductible donation using the Nongame Wildlife checkoff this tax season.

For more information on trumpeter swans and the DNR Nongame Wildlife Program, its success stories, and ways to volunteer and donate, visit [www.dnr.state.mn.us/eco/nongame](http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/eco/nongame).

# 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.

### Thursday, April 7

#### Minnesota's Native Elms: Threats and Opportunities (West St. Paul, MN)

6:30pm - 9:00pm Dakota Lodge, 1200 Stassen Ln, St. Paul, MN 55118. Free: Light refreshments beginning with social at 6:30 and program at 7pm.

### Wednesday, April 13 & 21

#### Weed Out: Early Detection Invasive Plants Workshops

**April 13:** 9am - 3pm. Itasca State Park, 36750 Main Park Drive, Park Rapids, MN 56470

**April 21:** 9am - 3pm. Stearns County Service Center, 3301 Co Rd 138, Waite Park, MN 56387

Learn how to identify and report emerging invaders before they become big trouble. Free: Registration is required to ensure sufficient seating and materials for participants; please bring your own lunch.

### Tuesday, April 19

**12pm - 1pm Webinar: Climate change and eastern larch beetle is a bad mix for tamarack in Minnesota.** Visit [www.MinnesotaForestry.org](http://www.MinnesotaForestry.org) for more information.

### May

### Tuesday, May 17

#### 12pm-1pm Webinar: EAB and woodland ash: Learning from the Michigan experience.

Visit [www.MinnesotaForestry.org](http://www.MinnesotaForestry.org) for more information.

### Friday, Saturday & Sunday, May 20-22

#### Gathering Partners of Natural Resources Conference/MFA Annual Meeting

Saint Mary's University of Minnesota, Winona, MN, Visit [www.MinnesotaForestry.org](http://www.MinnesotaForestry.org) for more information.

**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 onto 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