

Minnesota Woodlands

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

www.MinnesotaForestry.org

Minnesota Forestry Association (MFA)

Information@

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MFA Newsletter Vol. 18 No. 5

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MFA Board Meetings

Cambridge DNR Office, 10 am - 3 pm

- October 11, 2016
- January 10, 2017

Conference Calls

8 - 9 am

- November 15, 2016
- December 13, 2016

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New Faces, New Place, New Look!

By Linda K. Dinkel, Editor

New Faces With the ceremonious passing of the computer and files, administrative duties for MFA have officially been transferred to the capable hands of the Minnesota Logging Education Program (MLEP) staff. Carol Cartie, MFA's long-time executive assistant, has spent the summer months generously sharing the big and small picture of MFA's inner workings with MLEP Executive Director, Rachel Peterson, and Executive Assistant, Chris DeRosier.

Peterson has a long and varied history of forest-related work. "I graduated from the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point with a degree in Forest Management in 1999. Since then I've worked in a pretty broad range of forestry jobs and industries: Consolidated Papers, Georgia Pacific, Louisiana Pacific, and FISTA." Hired by MLEP in 2015, Peterson is a proponent of forests, woodland owners, loggers, training and safety, and sees a natural fit between MLEP and MFA. "The work we do for the two organizations is separate, and yet there are efficiencies and a synergy that happens because they're under one administrative roof. I'm really looking forward to working for MFA and getting to know the members and their concerns."

Chris DeRosier has been executive assistant for MLEP since 2001, working for Louisiana Pacific prior to that. Each year she works to publish the MLEP/MFA directory as well as development, design and maintenance of the MLEP website. "I'll be the voice on the other end of the phone when MFA members call with questions or requests," said DeRosier.

New Places

MFA Administrative Offices:

1111 Cloquet Ave. Suite 7

Cloquet, MN 55720

218-879-5100

information@minnesotaforestry.org

New Look

We hope you like the color format of our newsletter!



Chris DeRosier and Rachel Peterson, MFA administrative assistants.

National Woodlands Magazine

If you haven't already, you will shortly receive a complimentary copy of National Woodlands, the quarterly publication of the National Woodland Owners Association (woodlandowners.org). Enjoy the magazine and do consider joining the association which represents us at the national level.



Minnesota Forestry Association

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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 until you return so you won't miss a single issue!
Information@MinnesotaForestry.org
or call 218-879-5100.

Insurance for Your Woodland

Are You Covered?

Insurance is a dull subject, except when a loss occurs! As woodland owners, we face risks that normal homeowners do not. As a result, we should give extra consideration to our insurance coverage before a loss occurs.

Normal homeowners' insurance may provide coverage for a loss on your woodland. If Aunt Nellie trips over a fallen tree, breaks a leg and sues, you will probably be covered. But what about the neighbor who helps you cut wood with a chainsaw or friends who come deer hunting?

With homeowners' insurance, one key question is, "Were you paid?" If you are paid for any use of your land, such as hunting or a local group on an outing, homeowners' insurance will probably not cover any loss.

For peace of mind, all woodland owners should obtain special insurance that can be obtained through the National Woodland Owners Association.

- Woodland Liability Insurance, which costs \$160 for up to 535 acres, provides \$1 million for each occurrence and \$2 million aggregate.
- Hunting Lease Liability costs \$165 for up to 1,000 acres.
- **What all woodland owners should consider** is the combined Woodland and Hunting Lease Liability Insurance which costs \$210 for up to 525 acres.

For more information, and to print an application, see WoodlandOwners.org/Insurance.



When friends come hunting, are you covered?

In Memorium

Long-time MFA member General John W. Vessey passed away on August 18th at the age of 94. MFA member Tom Kroll met the former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff on one or two occasions. "Vessey had bought land adjacent to his good friend and 400-acre tree farmer, Professor Harold Deutsch, in Crow Wing county. I was working with Harold one day and General Vessey was at his house having coffee when I arrived. The General asked if I would also take a look at his 15 acres, so we hopped in his 4-wheeler and took a spin around the woods. What was odd is that I noticed several troops in camo gear and full automatic weapons stationed in the woods around his house." While Vessey spent his career serving his country and traveling the world, he chose to spend his retirement enjoying the woods and lakes of his home state.



Northwoods Forestry Cooperative Field Day

Article contributed by Pat Lanin, photos by John Wallin

The 15th Annual Northwoods Forestry Cooperative (NFC) Field Day was held on September 24th in Deerwood, MN. The well-attended event was co-hosted by the Central Minnesota Small Woodlot Owners Association (CMSWOA) and NFC, whose president, Pat Lanin, is an MFA board member. Attendees were offered presentations on red pine forest management, healthy water through healthy trees, and chainsaw safety. Demonstrations included a side-by-side comparison of two different sawmills, an 8-foot, folding sawbuck, and a one-of-a-kind, self-propelled, wood splitter/timber winch. Following a hearty lunch, participants headed out to host John Greene's woods, an impeccable woodlot that any woodland owner would aspire to. "It looks more like a formal garden than a woodlot," said Lanin. "I've seen similar woodlots in Finland, but few, if any, in the US." Demonstrations and discussion topics included thinning, spacing, and which trees should be removed and which should be saved.



Above left: (L to R) Patrick Lanin, Glenn Elvecrog and Pete Fetzek take part in the sawmill comparison, all shareholders in the NFC sawmill.

Left: Emily Lanin with displays provided by the Crow Wing Soil and Water District.

Top: Peter Bundy, consulting forester, lead discussions and hands-on exercises on woodlot management with help from Dean Makey, Alex Brothen, and Darren Mayers.

Middle: Inventor/builder John Trieichler demonstrates his one-of-a-kind, self-propelled, wood splitter/timber winch.

Bottom: John Greene's impeccable woodlot was the site of the afternoon's discussion and exercises in tree thinning.

Member Profile: Clair Fetzter

By Linda K. Dinkel, Editor

Like so many MFA members, it was childhood experiences that cultivated the ground for future career choices, passions and hobbies for Clair Fetzter. “I grew up on a dairy farm in Pennsylvania and if I worked hard during the week, my dad let me go camping some weekends. I loved being in the woods, so after military service in Germany from ’65 to ’68, I used the GI Bill to get a degree in Forestry from Penn State and returned later to get my Master’s in Silviculture.” Fetzter was hired by the Bureau of Indian Affairs, working 30 years in the Cass Lake, Red Lake and Fond du Lac areas as Reservation Forester, overseeing timber sales, forest development, inventory, protection and other duties. In 1989, he and wife, Nita, purchased 161 acres 12 miles east of Bemidji—more than enough land to provide years of work, enjoyment and recreation.

“I wrote up the first management plan in ’89. Timber had been harvested in the 60s and replanted in red pine, so when we became owners 22 years later, our first priority was the 85-acre red pine plantation.” Fetzter focused on thinning aspen and other species that were severely suppressing the pine. Meticulous records from the time indicate that 922 trees per acre (mostly aspen and birch) were cut during the red pine release, spending 21 hours/acre at a cost of \$147/acre. Pruning the red pines was also a part of the plan, with 18 hours/acre amounting to \$129/acre. “The boys were pretty young then, and I would tie ribbons on the trees that I wanted them to limb up. They would prune up to the ribbon and get 50 cents for every one they brought back.”

In 2014, Fetzter hired consulting forester Chris Brokl to supervise a large timber sale on 76 acres. “I had been out of forestry for a while. Chris had the experience, and he knew the loggers in the area better than I did. I spelled out what I wanted and I knew he would do whatever needed to be done on my behalf,” said Fetzter. “I wasn’t looking to make top dollar. It was a balance between harvesting timber and the aesthetics we’re trying to achieve on the land. This is a family forest, and that plays into the management decisions I make.” The sale produced 1,860 cords of timber, about half of them mature aspen harvested from the pine stand, and half from selectively harvesting pines to thin the stand. Other harvests over the years have included around 300 cords of pine, firewood, aspen and salvage wood.

Retirement hasn’t only found Fetzter in the woods. In 2004, he and Nita began building the house of their dreams on a 4-acre site just east of Bemidji, a Swiss chalet-style home that was inspired by their trip to Europe, and by a cabin of this type that Fetzter and his brother built long ago in Pennsylvania. While not all of the timber comes from his land, some does, as Fetzter uses his own tractor, skidder, circle sawmill and one-sided planer to work on the home. “I hired out the cement, electrical, and plumbing work. Most of the other work I could do myself, from the floor joists to the paneling to the rafters.”

When asked what the future holds for his woodlands, Fetzter is quick to mention family. “Nita and I hope that we can pass the land on to our children, but taxes are a concern. My compliments to MFA, and in particular Bruce ZumBahlin, for the work they do for the private woodland owner. SFIA is an important program for me, and I know MFA works to keep it in place.”



Top: Clair Fetzter, retired BIA Forester at his Tree Farm.

Middle: Clair and Nita have their own piece of Switzerland for their Minnesota home.

Bottom: Years of active management have paid off with a beautiful red pine forest.

Minnesota Family Forest Owners Rule!

If we are interested in the conservation of the forests and woods of the United States, we must be interested in those who control its fate: the forest and woodland owners. Woodland owners make decisions related to land use and forest management that impact these resources, and their decisions influence the benefits forests and woodlands provide, from timber supply to water supply to carbon sequestration to wildlife habitat.

The USDA Forest Service, Forest Inventory and Analysis program, through the Family Forest Research Center (FFRC; www.familyforestresearchcenter.org), conducts the National Woodland Owner Survey (NWOS; www.fia.fs.fed.us/nwos/) to better understand who owns the woodlands, why they own it, what they have done with it, and what they intend to do with it. The results presented below are based on responses from 351 randomly selected woodland ownerships with 10+ acres in Minnesota that participated in the NWOS between 2011 and 2013.

Family Forest Owners Dominate! An estimated 5.5 million acres of woodland in Minnesota are owned by an estimated 114,000 families, individuals, trusts, estates, and woodland partnerships, collectively referred to as woodland ownerships. Woodland ownerships control 34% of Minnesota's woodland 1+ acres.

Size of Holdings Makes a Big Difference The average woodland ownership in Minnesota has 49 acres of wooded land, with 46% of the ownerships having relatively small holdings between one and nine acres. However, 95% of the woodland area is owned by ownerships with 10 acres or more. This is important because size of holdings constrains what an ownership can do with her/his land, such as timber

harvesting, wildfire protection, or control of invasive species. This is also important because it is a strong predictor of many ownership characteristics, such as woodland management practices.

Beauty, Wildlife, and Nature are What Matter The most commonly cited reasons for owning woodland in Minnesota are related to beauty and wildlife, as well as privacy that wooded land provides. The goal of passing land on to future generations is also important to many owners. Protecting water, recreation, and hunting are highly regarded as an important reason for owning woodland, while financial objectives, such as land investment and timber production, are important to far fewer woodland owners.

They Love Their Land, but They are Not Engaging in Management Most woodland owners in Minnesota have a deep love of their land. The vast majority of owners, 86%, agreed or strongly agreed with the statement "I want my wooded land to stay wooded." However, most are not involved in traditional woodland management practices. Only 11% of woodland ownerships have a written management plan and 16% have received woodland management advice in the previous five years.

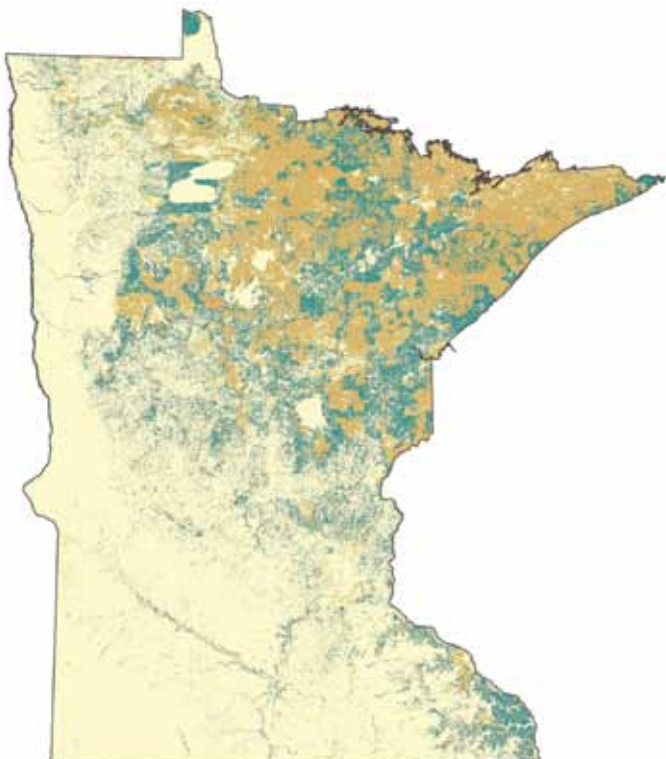
They are Old(er) The average age of woodland owners in Minnesota is 58 years with 44% of the woodland owned by people who are at least 65 years of age. Many acres of woodland will soon pass on to the next generation, but 78% of ownerships are worried about keeping the land intact for future generations.

Conclusions People interested in woodland conservation must also be interested in those who own the woodland. Across Minnesota, families and individuals own a significant number of acres, and this land has great potential for conservation. Owners are engaged with their land, but not in many of the traditional "forestry" activities, and there is a general disconnect between forestry and woodland owners that, if bridged, could have a major impact on our woodlands. Be it wildfire, intergenerational transfer of land, or invasive species, understanding the threats to the land and the concerns of those who own and influence this resource is critical for woodland conservation efforts. Using a common language and designing policies and programs that meet the needs of owners and practitioners will have a major impact on current and future owners and the vital lands that they own.

For more results visit the USFS National Woodland Owner Survey website at www.fia.fs.fed.us/nwos.

To learn more about the services and resources available to woodland and forest owners in your state, contact your local forestry agency or association (www.familyforestresearchcenter.org/landowners/).

Private (■) and public (■) forest land across Minnesota. Source: Hewes, J.H., Butler, B.J., Liknes, G.C., Nelson, M.D., and Snyder, S.A. 2014. Public and private forest ownership in the conterminous United States: Distribution of six ownership types – geospatial database. USDA Forest Service, Northern Research Station: RDS-2014-0002.



Creature Feature

By Jodie Provost, MN DNR Private Land Habitat Coordinator with contributions from John Erb, MN DNR Furbearer Research Biologist

Gray Fox (*Urocyon cinereoargenteus*) – The Tree Fox



Cat or Dog? The gray fox is a member of the dog family, Canidae, but it behaves more like a member of the cat family with its unusual tree climbing ability. Extremely sharp, curved, retractable claws and short, powerful legs make it well-adapted to tree climbing. It has been observed 32 feet in the air! Hence, it is also known as the tree fox.

Similar to a red fox in shape, the gray fox is gray (surprise!) with a distinct black back stripe. It is about 35-40 inches long, with 1/3 of that length being a long, bushy, black-tipped tail. It stands about 12 inches at the shoulder weighing 8-14 pounds. The backs of the ears, sides of the neck, underfur, legs, and feet are a yellowish buff. The dog-fox, or male, is slightly larger than the vixen, or female.

Brushy, Forested Homes This unique creature is distributed in suitable habitat from southern Ontario and Quebec, through the United States—except for Washington, Idaho and Montana—and down Central America into Venezuela and Columbia. Compared to the red fox, which has a more northern distribution, the gray fox avoids open habitats and has more difficulty navigating deep snow. Its northern range edge is likely limited by climate, especially harsh winters.

In Minnesota, suitable gray fox habitat entails deciduous forests, woodlands and brushy habitats. It is most common in the transition forest from the southeast to the northwest, and into the southern area of our northeast boreal forest. Special habitat features that benefit the gray fox as cover, especially for den use, include fallen logs, woody debris and piles, standing snags, hollow trees, rocky outcrops, burrows dug by other animals, or soil suitable for burrowing.

For Better or Worse The gray fox chooses a life-long mate. Its home range can be up to four square miles, and scent glands and urine are used to mark the portion it actually protects, known as its territory. Mating occurs in late winter, with an average of four pups, also called kits or cubs, born 53 days later in April or May. They are raised by both the dog-fox and vixen, are particularly playful, and are taught to hunt at about four months. In late summer or early fall they venture out on their own, becoming mature to breed at 10 months. They typically survive 6-10 years in the wild.

Bedtime Snack As a predator, the gray fox has keen eyesight and even better senses of smell and hearing. It is primarily nocturnal but may be active in day or seen basking

in the sun. Its vertically oriented pupils allow it to see well at night. By stalking and pouncing, it feasts on small mammals such as voles, mice, squirrels, and especially cottontail rabbits. More omnivorous than other canids, it also ingests plants, berries, wild grapes, apples, nuts and insects.

Critters to Beware The most common predators of the gray fox in Minnesota are coyotes, wolves and dogs. Coyotes may have an especially negative effect, but when wolves are present to push coyotes out, the gray fox may benefit. Diseases such as distemper and parvovirus, and parasites such as heartworms, are also causes of death.

Fancy Fur In Minnesota, the gray fox is managed with an annual regulated hunting and trapping season. This year it opens October 15 in the north furbearer zone and October 22 in the south furbearer zone, closing on March 15. Though the gray fox's coat is attractively marked, it is coarser and less lavish than the red fox's. Minnesota fur prices for 237 gray fox pelts averaged \$14.17, compared to \$20.41 for a red fox pelt. During the 2015-16 season, 1,186 hunters harvested 816 gray foxes; and during the 2014-15 season, 1,035 trappers harvested 1,902 gray foxes.

Doing Well Gray fox populations are generally stable today, with a conservation status of Least Concern by the World Conservation Union. Here in Minnesota, the gray fox has had an upward population trend since 2000. Trappers report it is now more common than the red fox in many areas. Minnesota's forest landowners can help ensure the gray fox population remains strong by managing for healthy, brushy and forested deciduous habitats that have young to old age patches, a diversity of native forbs, shrubs and trees, plenty of prey, adequate denning sites, and clean water sources.



Have You Mapped Your Land?

By Neal W. Chapman, MFA Education Chair

Google has recently updated their satellite imagery, producing better, clearer, sharper images for Google Earth. What might this mean for you? If you use MyLandPlan.org, which uses Google Earth images, this means you'll have an even better map of your property.

If you have a MyLandPlan map of your property, now's a great time to update it! If not, take some time to discover all the uses and benefits of using MyLandPlan. You can learn how to map your boundaries, trails, special spots, streams, lakes and ponds, and so much more.

Mapping your land is only one of many activities for which MyLandPlan can be used. Others include developing goals, planning for the future, receiving information specially tailored for what you want to do on your land, and recording your actions and experiences in your own personalized forest journal that can be shared with others if you want. You can also work with a forester using the online directory.

You can get free MyLandPlan access at mylandplan.org.

MyLandPlan is a free service of the American Forest Foundation—the Tree Farm people.



Sample of a MyLandPlan satellite image used to highlight woodland trails.

MFA's
Forester
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A free service for
MFA members only!

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ment with
the forester:
218-879-5100

Thinking of harvesting
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Call Before
You Cut

You will be sent a packet of
information with no cost or
obligation to you.

218-879-5100


UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
EXTENSION

For MFA members, the two best online sources of woodland information are the MFA website at www.minnesotaforestry.org, and the University of Minnesota Extension Forestry website at www.myminnisotawoods.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 218-879-5100.

Tuesday, October 25, 12 - 1pm

WEBINAR: OAK AND FIRE IN MINNESOTA FORESTS

For more details: sfec.cfans.umn.edu/2016-webinar-oak-and-fire-in-minnesota-forests/

Wednesday, October 26, 8:45am - 3:45pm
Hackensack, MN

PRACTICAL SILVICULTURE FOR NON-FORESTERS

Deep Portage Conservation Reserve - Hackensack MN

Instructors: Eli Sagor, UMN-SFEC, Marcella Windmuller-Campione, UMN-FR and Erik Undquist, Cass County Land Department. Cost: \$75 SFEC members, \$40 students, \$140 others. To register: z.umn.edu/SFECevents

Wildlife managers, ecologists, and others are often consulted for input on public lands harvest plans. This workshop is designed with these folks in mind, although anybody is welcome to attend. We'll review the theory and practice of silviculture, with a focus on common applications on Minnesota forests. The workshop will include lecture, field site visits, and hands-on prescription development exercises. And we plan to have some fun in the process.

Tuesday, November 15, 12 - 1pm

WEBINAR: UPDATE ON NORTHERN LONG-EARED BAT RESEARCH IN MINNESOTA

For more details visit: sfec.cfans.umn.edu/2016-webinar-update-on-northern-long-eared-bat-research-in-minnesota/



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Change Service Requested

Native Prairie, Honey Bees & Pollinators

Article and photos contributed by Jan Bernu

On September 10, Darla Van Heerde of Esko hosted the MN Women's Woodland Network-NE fall event: *Native Prairie, Honey Bees & Pollinators*. Darla showed us around her 40 acres on a gorgeous fall day. With lots of hard work and the assistance of various entities, Darla has created a beautifully blended mixture of orchards, gardens and native prairie with a variety of pollinator plants, as well as a pond for wildlife and some wooded acreage. She also is a bee keeper with 10 hives. At the end of the tour, she treated us to a glass (or two!) of her delicious homemade elderberry flower lemonade and carrot salsa.

