



# 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  
• March 8, 2016  
• July 12, 2016  
  
Conference Calls  
8 – 9 am  
• December 15, 2015  
• January 12, 2016  
• February 9, 2016  
• April 12, 2016

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## MFA Fall Family Forestry Field Day

*By Linda K. Dinkel, Editor*

When Barb Spears, MFA Metro Chapter Chair and Gina Hugo, Resource Conservationist with the Sherburne SWCD met this past January to plan a fall field day, they had a fairly conservative objective. They wanted to organize a walk in the woods for 20 to 25 people on property located in Sherburne County that had a registered stewardship plan. Hugo immediately thought of Peter and Debra Jensen who own 194 acres near Princeton. "I've worked with Peter and Debra for the last two years and they are exceptional land stewards with a passion for improving their land and trying new projects based on their goals and resources. I knew they'd be the perfect hosts for a field day," said Hugo. As soon as the Jensens said yes, Gina and Neal Chapman, MFA Board member and MFA Metro Chapter co-chair, visited the site. "We all realized just how much the Jensens were doing with their property, and the possibilities just mushroomed," said Spears.

After countless hours of discussion, planning, gathering volunteer help, and readying the site, the October 10th MFA Fall Family Forestry Field Day had grown into much more than a walk in the woods. However, there was one more piece that had to fall into place to make the day a success, and it came through in spades. "We really couldn't have asked for better weather for the day," said Spears. The numbers agreed. Over 140 adults and 73 children attended the daylong event at the Jensen property.

Attendees watched demonstrations of draft horse skidding, V-plowing for oak wilt, portable sawmill and solar kiln operations, and light-on-the-land equipment. They visited with exhibitors and listened to talks on woodland tax information, utilization and marketing of wood, and healthy soils for productive forests. *(Continued on page 2)*

May you and your family enjoy a joyous Christmas season and a happy, prosperous and safe new year!



*Above: Attendees enjoyed a ride through the woods.  
Right: Children's activities took place throughout the day.*





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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.

**Officially approved** a Memorandum of Understanding with the University of Minnesota, Department of Forest Resources. We have enjoyed a fine relationship with the U of M for years; this MOU simply spells out the relationship on paper.

**Welcomed Matt Russell** to the board in an ex-officio capacity representing the U of M.

**Welcomed John Carlson** as a guest at our recent board meeting. John is the new DNR Private Forest Management Specialist.

**Reviewed our Boots-on-Your-Ground Program:** The MFA board approved using MFA funds to continue the program for existing MFA members. Also, thanks to a grant from Blandin Foundation, MFA is administering the program for all Itasca County landowners who have 20 or more acres of woodland.

**Approved working on a consulting basis** with retired U of M Extension Educator Julie Miedtke to help us promote the BOYG program in Itasca County.

**Approved a business relationship** with board member Bruce ZumBahlen under which he is compensated for successfully promoting MFA memberships. The same arrangement could be struck with any other MFA member who might be interested. Contact John O'Reilly at [President@MinnesotaForestry.org](mailto:President@MinnesotaForestry.org).

### *Family Forestry Field Day (continued from page 1)*

Participants headed to the woods for a wildlife inventory and monitoring tour that also included a tour of the Jensen's prairie restoration area. They also watched as mechanized loggers selectively cut for timber, firewood and mulch.

What really put the word "family" into the field day were children's activities and crafts coordinated by Sherburne SWCD District Manager Francine Larson and NRCS State Staff Forester Ginger Kopp. There was a visit from Smokey Bear and the DNR fire truck to climb on. There were even wagon rides through the wooded trails pulled by draft horses.

The Farm Friends Barn served food throughout the day with proceeds going towards an agricultural education exhibit for kids in Becker. With over 200 registered participants and over 40 volunteers, event planners, exhibitors and demonstrators, the "woods walk" became a fun and educational field day for everyone who attended!



*Demonstrating V-plowing for oak wilt control.*

## U of M Woodland Owner Survey

University of Minnesota Extension Forestry is planning a new series of classes offered next year to help Minnesota woodland owners care for their land. Before they begin crafting classroom material, they'd like to hear from you about what classes you would like to see offered, as well as learn a little bit more about you so they can tailor the content and communications appropriately. The survey takes about five minutes to complete and can be found at [MinnesotaForestry.org](http://MinnesotaForestry.org). *Do it today!*



# Pine Plantation Field Day

By Linda K. Dinkel, Editor

October 30th brought fine weather and 30 attendees to an area planted more than 30 years ago on land east of Browerville, where an exceptional field day was put on by the Minnesota Forest Resources Council West Central Landscape Committee together with Potlatch Land & Lumber LCC. According to Bud Bertschi, one of the foresters present at the field day, "There are a lot of pine plantations on private land that are ready for thinning but timber harvesting operations can be an intimidating process for a forest owner. We need to get the word out that there are foresters available to landowners to help them manage their woodlands." This was a step toward educating landowners on the hows, whys and ways of timber management.

**The 10-acre site was originally marginal farmland** owned by husband and wife Linda Rapatz and Bruce Curley, sister-in-law and brother-in-law to Greg Nolan. Greg and his wife, Marcia Nolan-Rapatz, had just started their business, Snowy Pines Reforestation. The two hand-planted Norway pine in rows, and white pine seedlings in two small patches inside the pines. They followed the 8 x 8 foot spacing recommendations of the time. While the ideal time for first thinning is nearer 25 years, the plantation had plenty of marketable timber and was well worth logging.

**"If the percentage of green on a tree, or live crown ratio, is less than 25%, they really stop producing,"** said David Johnson, Chairman of the West Central Landscape Committee. "Ideally, it shouldn't fall below one-third live crown to maximize growth. That first thinning opens up the canopy, lets in more light for more growth and a better second harvest, and most importantly establishes access corridors through the stand for the equipment to use in subsequent harvesting operations." C & M Logging of Park Rapids, a long-time family logging business, brought in a processor, reaching 20 feet on either side of the corridor to cut, limb, measure and sort timber. It digitally keeps a record of the harvest, separates out bolts in one pile, pulpwood in another, and leaves the limbs to cushion the equipment's footprint in the access corridors. These travel lanes lay the foundation for second and third thinnings. The forwarder followed, stacking logs on the field edge or directly onto a waiting truck.

"Bringing in a professional crew like C & M Logging really sets the landowner up for the best future harvests possible," said Brian Bignall, procurement forester for



Above: The processor creates access lanes of limbs while harvesting timber.

Right: Logs ready for loading.



Potlatch. **"In this type of plantation thinning, the money made by the forest owner increases with each successive harvest.** That second

thinning in another seven to ten years will have even higher quality trees, and the third even more. So the logger really has a vested interest in treating the land-owner, land and trees right, because he wants to be invited back for those next harvests."

Greg Nolan added that the best thing landowners can do, both for the environment and people, is to manage their timber by harvesting at the right time. **"There is a lot of economic power in trees,"** said Nolan. "Wood products have a 40 to 1 economic multiplier. Just like ag products, we create something out of nothing, and that helps create jobs, but we have to be there to manage our trees." Over the years, Greg and Marcia planted hundreds of acres of pine in the area and he's hoping others will consider a timber harvest soon. "I can't say enough about how well this job went. Hats off to Potlatch and the work done by Brian Bignall. The site looks beautiful. Linda and Bruce were paid more than we expected, and I've had several landowners contact me about thinning already."

Bignall acknowledged that **it can be hard for owners of small plantations to find someone to log their woods.** "Most loggers like to have at least 30 acres to log within 50 miles of home. If you fall outside that, that's when landowners need to work together to get enough timbered land to make it financially feasible for loggers to come work with you."

# Member Profile: Peter and Debra Jensen

By Linda K. Dinkel, Editor

If you stand in the middle of Peter and Debra Jensen's land just west of Princeton and rotate in a slow circle, you don't have to turn very far before your eyes fall upon another work in progress. Right beside the huge firewood pile is a mortise and tenon shed under construction, rising up next to the portable sawmill, which sits next to a solar kiln, which overlooks a rammed-earth yurt in the pasture with the donkeys. A walk in the woods would take you past carefully logged forests replanted, direct seeded or regenerating on their own, ongoing battles against buckthorn and oak wilt, and a prairie restoration project. With Peter just retiring this past June from his medical practice, one can only imagine what projects will be next!

"The first time I saw this land, I was canoeing the creek with the owner, Jack Grill. I just thought it was an incredibly beautiful piece of property, and I let Jack know I would be interested in it if they were ever ready to sell. **Jack and Dorothy really didn't want to see the land developed** even though they were approached numerous times. In 1990, we bought the first 80-acre parcel and built our home," said Peter. Over the next 10 years, Peter and Debra bought the remaining 110 acres, developing a close relationship with Dorothy Grill, especially after Jack passed away. "Dorothy is still a part of this property," said Debra. "It's been fun to share with her what new projects we've undertaken on the land that she and Jack loved."

New projects, indeed. After building their home and settling in, the Jensens spent some years enjoying the land and learning about what they had. **Much of the focus for the beginning phases of work was laid out in their first land stewardship plan completed 12 years ago.** "The Grills had planted 20 acres in mixed pines in the late '50s, and it needed work. We pruned and thinned, and seven years ago, hired loggers to clear-cut the stand of scotch pine. "We're amazed how the birch have regenerated in the clear-cut," said Peter. "It's really becoming a beautiful woods without much input from us." In fact, while they did plant over 10,000 Norway and white pine seedlings in 2001, Peter has become a huge fan of regeneration and direct seeding as opposed to planting bare rootstock. "If I fill out a tree order now, I try to cut it in half when I get to the end. My plans are always bigger than my time and energy, and for the investment, it just doesn't seem worth it. There are other ways to regrow trees."

In 2014, Jensens worked with Sherburne Resource Conservationist Gina Hugo to write up a new Forest Stewardship Plan. **"There is significant oak wilt in the area and that's a huge management challenge as the Jensens have large stands of red, white and burr oak,"** said Gina. This fall, loggers have been selectively harvesting oak to increase spacing in hopes of slowing the progress of the disease. Harvested trees are turned into lumber, firewood or mulch.



Peter and Debra Jensen

While three of Debra's four children have moved west in recent years, **Luke has found a broad canvas on the land for his varied interests.** "Luke is behind the yurt, the solar kiln and the mortis and tenon shed," said Debra. "He loves to read and research new projects, teach himself any skills he might need, and then build something new. Most of the building projects you see here are his brainchild." While Peter enjoys these new endeavors, his focus tends toward the more typical pursuits. "Cutting firewood is my main form of mental health maintenance. It's straightforward, mindless work that I enjoy."

According to Gina Hugo, the Jensens have been a joy to work with. "Peter and Debra are genuinely kind people and are so rewarding for me to work with," said Hugo. **"They are motivated by the simple pleasures that sustainably working their land brings,** and have taken steps to preserve their legacy by enrolling a significant portion of their property in the Minnesota Land Trust."

Talking to Peter, he easily sums up their views of land stewardship. "I know that I won't see these white pine become lumber, but someone has to plant them and tend them. Someone has to take care of today's forests for tomorrow."



Oak is selectively harvested to mitigate oak wilt.



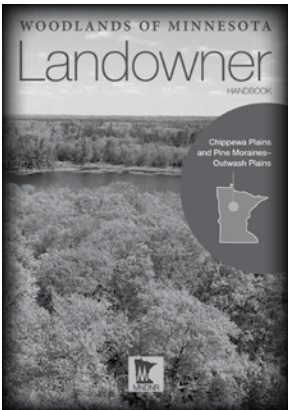


Peter Jensen explains how lumber from the property is dried in a home-built solar kiln.



A portable sawmill and a new building starting from home-sawed lumber.

## Woodlands of Minnesota



Be on the lookout for the new *Woodlands of Minnesota* series landowner handbooks produced by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources. The first handbook was just completed in October and covers the Chippewa Plains and Pine Moraines-Outwash Plains ecological subsections in north-central Minnesota (see map).

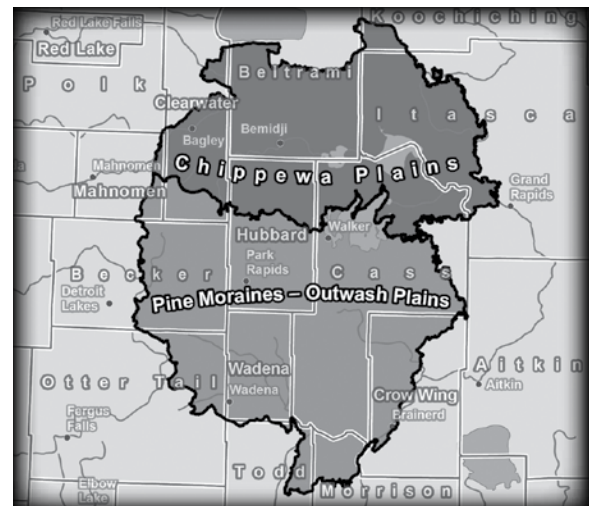
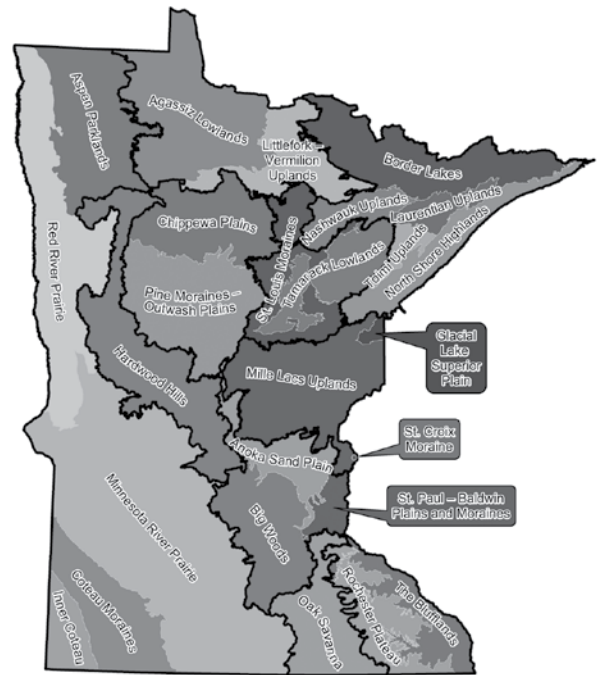
The handbook is designed to help forest landowners accomplish their land management goals. It is both a reference and a handbook. It introduces forest landowners to the idea of landscape-scale stewardship and the ecological

classification system. It contains past and present information on landscape conditions and offers some insight on local forest land issues. It also includes a few short stories about landowners and how they are managing and using their forests.

The complete series will consist of 10 handbooks that will cover 10 different landscape regions from around the entire state. At least two more handbooks focusing on two ecological subsections will be coming this winter. One will focus on the Mille Lacs Uplands and Glacial Lake Superior Plain and the other on the Hardwood Hills (see map). The rest of the handbooks will be developed later.

Also accompanying the handbook is a website at [mndnr.gov/woodlands](http://mndnr.gov/woodlands) that contains information on each region's specific plants, animals, and geology; a Woods Workbook; funding and grant sources; instructions on getting a Woodland Stewardship plan; and much more. The website also contains a digital copy of each handbook as they come out.

If you own land in the Chippewa Plains or Pine Moraines-Outwash Plains (the area covered in the first handbook), you can get a copy free from MFA. Call 218-326-6486 or email [Information@MinnesotaForestry.org](mailto:Information@MinnesotaForestry.org).



# Creature Feature

By Jodie Provost, DNR Private Land Habitat Coordinator

## Gray Wolf (*Canis lupis*) - Northwoods Icon

Gray wolves have a unique legacy and saga in Minnesota. Through the ups and downs, the majority of Minnesotans have valued this Northwoods icon as ecologically important, scientifically fascinating, aesthetically attractive, recreationally appealing and significant for future generations. Wolves inhabited most of North America north above 20 degrees latitude prior to European settlement, but due to human persecution, habitat deterioration, and reduction of prey populations, they declined dramatically in the lower 48 states. In the 1950s, the Minnesota wolf population was estimated between 300 to 600 animals. By the 1960s, the only population of wolves left in the lower 48 was in our state's northern forest and on Isle Royale National Park. In 1974, wolves in Minnesota were afforded full protection as endangered under the federal Endangered Species Act (ESA).

**Threatened or not?** Protections provided under the ESA, along with a rebounding deer population, allowed remaining wolves to flourish and repopulate northern Wisconsin and Michigan's Upper Peninsula. In 1978, wolves were re-classified as federally threatened in Minnesota, allowing the federal government to control wolves in response to livestock depredation. In January 2012, wolves in the western Great Lakes populations were completely removed from the federal Endangered Species List, allowing states to manage them. Minnesota then began annual harvests in 2012-14. However, in December 2014, a federal judge returned federal protection for wolves in Minnesota, Wisconsin and Michigan.

**Current Status:** Since the late 1970's, Minnesota has monitored its wolf population regularly using estimated amount of land area occupied by wolf packs, average territory size, and average mid-winter pack size. The current population estimate is 2,221 wolves and 374 packs in an occupied land area of 27,251 square miles. The 2001



Photo by Kari Moen.



Minnesota Wolf Management Plan, utilized when the wolf is delisted and the state has management authority, notes a minimum population goal of at least 1,600.

**Heat Pads:** Gray wolves are one of four native canids in our state. They vary in color from gray, black, buff with reddish coloring and even white. Females weigh 50 to 85 pounds and males 70 to 110 pounds. They stand 26-32 inches tall at the shoulder and leave tracks averaging 4.5 inches long. Their adaptations include long legs, thick undercoats of winter fur and paws with webs of tiny blood vessels on the bottom to act as "heating pads" for frigid cold. As habitat generalists, they thrive in any habitat provided prey is abundant and human-caused mortality is controlled.

**Pack Life:** Highly social creatures, wolves form packs, a related group of wolves consisting of a mated male and female and their offspring. Typically, only the mated male and female pair breeds between February to March, with four to seven pups born in a den in April and May. After six to eight weeks, pups are moved to rendezvous sites used by the pack throughout summer. By September or October, pups are ready to join the adults. At one to two years old, they disperse from their pack, often 50 to 100 miles, but up to 550 miles. Successful breeders commonly live six to eight years in the wild, but up to thirteen years is possible. Non-human causes of mortality include starvation, death from conflicts with other wolves, diseases such as mange and canine parvovirus, and injuries from prey animals.

**Mile Maker:** Wolf pack and territory sizes are highly variable. Data from 2014-15 radio-collared wolves reflected an average pack size of 5.1 wolves (range of 2 to 13) and average territory size of 73 square miles (range of 10 to 277). Territory size is often affected by prey density with primary prey being deer and moose. Up to 30 miles per day are put on to find and kill the 15 to 20 adult-sized deer per wolf per year to sustain their pack. Secondary prey are beaver and snowshoe hare.

**Role Player:** Wolves have an important niche to play in our ecosystems. In Minnesota, wolf and white-tailed deer populations are closely linked. Interactions between them are



affected by factors such as individual densities, sex and age structures, human-related activities (e.g., hunting, poaching, dogs, timber harvesting, road development, supplemental feeding), winter severity, presence of alternate prey, and habitat quality.

Wolves directly impact white-tailed deer populations as their main cause of natural mortality. The most vulnerable individuals are newborn fawns, and generally fawns and older adults during winter. Because of this, much of the wolf predation on deer is likely “compensatory”, meaning that many of the individual deer wolves remove were unlikely to survive the year anyway. Wolves also have less obvious effects on deer, such as affecting their habitat use and behavior. For example, deer may avoid high-risk areas, be forced to move around the landscape more, and be more vigilant or wary in landscapes where wolves are present.

In Minnesota, wolves are generally not the sole, nor often even the key, contributor to prey population declines, but their impact in combination with other factors can contribute to deer population declines. If deer habitat quality is reasonably good, any wolf-related effects are likely to be small-scale and short-lived. Their impact varies with circumstances such as winter conditions, deer habitat quality, and/or hunter harvest. Increases in annual deer harvests in much of Minnesota wolf range during the early to mid-2000’s, when the wolf population was at its highest estimate (about 3,000), indicate that wolves’ effect on deer harvests is minimal.



Photo by Gary Kramer.

Because deer are the wolf’s primary food across most of their Minnesota range, it is easy to understand the outcome for wolves when deer populations decline. In the last three years, wolf population estimates have been 2,200 to 2,400, while deer harvest has been its lowest since the mid to late 1990’s. This type of predator-prey relationship—a decline of its prey population, followed by a lag period and subsequent decline in the predator population—is classical, but it is not simple. As mentioned above, many other factors influence the dynamics of the relationship. In areas where multiple large ungulate prey exist (e.g., deer and moose), predator-prey dynamics can even be more complex.

**Challenges:** While the rebounded wolf population is an ecological success story, it creates challenges for farmers,

ranchers and rural residents who must protect livestock and pets. To prevent conflict, appropriate animal husbandry and deterrents are encouraged and depredating wolves are removed when needed. Helpful practices include maintaining healthy, well-fed livestock, keeping lame, sick, birthing or newborn animals in a safe area, using guard animals, keeping pastures free of brush, and keeping pets close to home and bringing them in at night.



If depredation occurs, evidence should be preserved and the incident reported to a DNR conservation officer within 24 hours. Because wolves are currently protected under federal law, it is illegal to harm or kill them, except in defense of human life. Attempts to frighten away wolves must be done without harming them. If a wolf kill is verified, a government trapper is contacted and compensation made.

**Preventing Mishaps:** Wolves are typically “shy” and avoid people. However, like any large predator, such as bear or cougar, they are capable of adapting to human activity, losing fear of humans, and posing risk to people. Rare, but well-documented accounts of wild wolves attacking people in North America do exist. Attacks can often be attributed to loss of fear of people, especially if they associate humans with providing food. Never encourage a wolf to approach or not fear you.

While your risk of being struck by lightning is greater than being attacked by a wolf, outdoor enthusiasts in wolf range should take precautions to prevent mishaps. Do not cook near your sleeping area, keep the site and utensils clean, properly disposing of food and garbage, and keep pets near and their food contained. In the rare event you do encounter an aggressive wolf, don’t run. Face and stare at it. If it approaches, aggressively step toward it, yelling or clapping your hands.

**The Future:** For now, the wolf population appears secure in Minnesota. To ensure their role in our ecosystems, management of human-wolf interaction will be key, especially as our human population continues to increase and impact habitat and key wolf prey. For more information on wolves, see the Minnesota DNR wolf management web page. Much thanks to Dan Stark, DNR wolf specialist, and John Erb, DNR furbearer specialist, for their expertise in developing this article.

# 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

1-2014

## 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.

**Mark your calendar!** MFA's Annual Meeting and Spring Field Day will again be held in conjunction with the Master Naturalists' Gathering Partners Conference. It is set for **Friday and Saturday, May 20 and 21st**. The event will be held at St. Mary's University in Winona which gives our northern members an opportunity to see how things are done in the "Land of Black Walnuts". There will be educational sessions available both inside and out in the field. Topics will include forestry, birds, wildlife, and environmental subjects. Housing will be at nearby motels or, for those who want an adventure, in dorm rooms. Watch for more information here and on our website, [www.MinnesotaForestry.org](http://www.MinnesotaForestry.org).

## Forester Phone Line Update

Recently, an MFA member called the Forester Phone Line with the following question: "What is the best way to plant black walnut seeds that have fallen from my black walnut tree?"

Forester Dean Makey responded to the call with some basic knowledge about preparing the planting site, stratification of nuts for bulk spring or fall planting, protection from rodents, and planting in field situations. Dean then referred the member to a very good U of M publication, *Growing Black Walnut*, and to DNR foresters Craig Van Sickle and Valiree Green who are very experienced in growing black walnut.

The Forester Phone Line is free to all members. Call 218-326-6486 to set up an appointment with a forester.

**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