

Minnesota MFA Woodlands

Minnesota Forestry Association

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

www.MinnesotaForestry.org

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MFA Board Meetings
DNR Cambridge Office
10 a.m. – 3 p.m.
• April 9, 2019
• July 9, 2019
• October 8, 2019

Conference Calls
8:30 – 9:30 a.m.
• May 14, 2019
• June 11, 2019
• August 13, 2019
• September 10, 2019

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Seeing Orange: Member Profile Mike & Randy Quale

By Dennis J. Thompson

I have known brothers Mike and Randy for 20 years now. We all started working in the Aitkin area at about the same time. We finished college at roughly the same time and were lucky enough to find jobs in our fields. For Mike and Randy, it was a homecoming. They grew up in Aitkin, as did their dad. They always dreamed of being able to come back. We quickly became friends and learned we shared many of the same interests, including a passion for deer and deer hunting.

The amazing thing about deer hunters is that it doesn't take much for a conversation to get derailed and quickly turn into story time. Seems everyone has a big one that got away! It did not take long before I knew Mike and Randy's hunting experiences were a lot different from mine. I grew up hunting private land—land owned by my family or relatives. I never worried about someone else being in my stand. They grew up hunting public land—very popular public land, and the thought of someone else in their deer stand was all too real.

The Quale brothers first started deer hunting on land that was public and close to Aitkin. It was also the same land their dad had always hunted.

"At first, everyone knew everyone else and each group had their own area," remembers Randy. "You may have been hunting public land, but you kind of felt like you had your own slice of it."

Then it all changed. As deer hunting grew in popularity, so did the number of people wishing to hunt that same chunk of public land.

The next series of events is what most deer hunters would consider a nightmare. Randy recalls the horror one opening morning when the sun had finally climbed high enough to shed light on the surrounding woods.

"I saw nothing but orange," he recalls.

Four other hunters were visible within 100 yards of Randy's stand. The freezer would go empty that year. Mike tells a story of a hunter walking under his deer stand shortly after legal shooting time, smoking cigarettes along the way. The freezer stayed empty. The final straw was a guy driving his four-wheeler through the woods at eight o'clock one opening morning. He parked for about an hour or so near Randy's stand. The brothers soon realized they needed to find some land they could call their own.

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Top: Randy Quale

Bottom: Mike Quale

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 an extended time and let us know when you'll be back. We'll hold onto the newsletter until you return so you won't miss a single issue!
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or call 218-879-5100.

Member Profile continued

They started looking outside of Aitkin County but later decided that something closer to home would be more convenient. It was Randy who saw the listing in *Outdoor News: Aitkin County*, 76 acres, great access and 20 miles from town. That was all the brothers needed to hear. After years of hunting public land, the boys finally had a place to call their own. The year was 2008.

They started with a project list, penciling down all the activities they wanted to accomplish. The first item on the list—access! Other than an overgrown skid trail, the property had nothing in the way of trails. Starting from the west, they slowly cut their way through the woods, eventually ending up at the small hay field in the southeast corner of the property. More trails would be added in the years to come. Next on the list was food plots. The field offered opportunities for planting more desirable forage for wildlife but was not strategically located.

Three food plots in total were added to the property. The shack was built in 2009, which allowed the brothers to move out of the fish house they had been staying in during the hunting season.

The property is about as diverse as 76 acres can be. Although roughly one-third of the property is comprised of black ash, some of which is veneer quality, three distinct age classes of aspen can be found. Mix in some northern hardwood, a couple 30-plus-inch diameter white pine, some lowland brush and lowland grass cover types along with a small hay field, and you have a haven for all sorts of wildlife. Oh, I forgot to mention there is also an intermittent stream that flows through the property! Given the ages of the aspen on the property, the next large-scale timber harvest is likely many years away.

"Depending on what happens with the emerald ash borer though, we might be looking at harvesting some veneer black ash sooner rather than later," Mike says. "We had a buyer look at some a few years ago but figured as long as they are healthy, we'll let them keep putting on more growth."

The old saying "it's all in who you know" could not have been truer when it came to harvesting a small pocket of mature aspen. The stand, which was the only area of mature aspen left on the property, was three acres in size and needed to be cut. The problem was finding a logger to move into a sale that small. With the cost of moving equipment, who in their right mind would be willing to come in to cut 50 to 60 cords of wood? For foresters who work with private landowners, these situations are all too common. The landowner wants to harvest the timber, but the volume is not large enough to attract a logger. As it turns out, Mike and Randy found out through a good friend, who happened to be a county forester, that there was a logger in the area working just south of their property. After some quick negotiations, the logger was soon cutting the small stand of trees. In total, 50 cords of aspen and 12 cords of mixed hardwoods were harvested.

The brothers have learned a lot about managing their own land and have learned many things the hard way, according to Mike. Future management activities include maintaining the current trail system and connecting some of the "dead ends." Food plots are worked up and seeded as needed, although according to Mike, "Rocks seem to be the best thing we can grow." Randy would like to implement Quality Deer Management but knows that can be difficult to coordinate with neighbors. It has been a lot of work and some trial by error, but results of their hard work show up in the freezer. Seeing orange?—only when the neighbors come by to see how the hunting has been going.



The brother's property is a diverse 76 acres, although about one-third of it is comprised of black ash, many of the ash are of veneer quality like the one pictured here.

Minnesota Point Pine Forest Scientific and Natural Area: A Remnant of the Great Lakes Forest

By Anna N Hess, Kelly Randall and AmberBeth VanNingen

When French voyageurs ventured into what would become Northern Minnesota, they encountered a seemingly endless expanse of pine, spruce, and aspen forest. Populated by the Dakota people and then the Ojibwe, this area was rich in tall forests, fruit-bearing plants, and a vast array of animals including beaver, elk, moose, woodland caribou, waterfowl and fish.

This Great Lakes Pine Forest, spanning the breadth of the Great Lakes and into Canada, had evolved over thousands of years. The boreal forest claimed the landscape after the last glacial retreat around 12,000 years ago, establishing itself during the lags between glacial advances. This biological community would evolve into the expansive white pine forests that fueled the development of the Midwest's largest cities. Remnants of this forest are still present on the landscape, preserved in the Chippewa and Superior National Forests, Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness and other locations.

A unique vestige of this forest flourishes on the world's longest freshwater sand spit, near the Twin Ports, the world's largest active freshwater harbor. Estimated to be between 3,200 and 5,000 years old, the sand spit spans seven miles in Minnesota and three miles in Wisconsin, comprising a 10-mile baymouth bar system. Formed by the drifting sediment from the sandy south shore of Lake Superior, the sand spit contains open beach, beach ridges, forested areas, and a residential zone on the north side. Mixed red and white pine stands extend across the Minnesota and Wisconsin segments, comprising several hundred acres of forest with old-growth trees. On the Minnesota side, some stands have been protected by the Minnesota Scientific and Natural Area Program, City of Duluth, and Superior Water, Light and Power.

The Minnesota Point Pine Forest Scientific and Natural Area (SNA) encompasses an 18-acre stand of 120- to 270-year-old red and white pine. Established in 2002, this SNA supports old-growth forest features as well as several rare species not found elsewhere in Minnesota. A classic vegetation gradient can be seen here: From beach heather and beach grass along the shoreline, then arching over dune systems where it transitions to juniper shrubs before abutting the tall stand of towering red and white pines. Red pine dominates the forested area, residing primarily on the sandy well-drained portions of the sand dunes. As the forest dips slightly, white pine, pin cherry and birch become more common. The area is a combination of native Minnesota red pine sand forest and freshwater dune system.

The area experienced varying degrees of disturbance over the last 250 years, ranging from residential use to trail development. According to local history, a minor settlement

became established along the water's edge of the Minnesota Point SNA site in the 19th century. Known as Peabody's Landing, it grew in the early 1900s as Superior residents established seasonal cabins and utilized a ferry service provided by John and Charlotte Peabody. When the ferry service discontinued and access became more difficult, the settlement dwindled down to only a few structures. The last building, known as the Pine Knot cabin, was removed in 2010.

According to surveys of cut stumps, very few trees were removed when buildings were constructed, indicating selective cuts with no significant impacts to the existing old-growth stand. Clearing of the understory and some periodic low-intensity ground fires resulted in an open pine-savanna complex.

These low-intensity disturbances mimicked natural successional stages that take place in forest gaps, opening the understory and generating suitable conditions for early successional species such as paper birch. It is thought that paper birch was not present on the site until around 100 years ago. As the century moved on, the woodland gaps filled with the denser forest floor that we see today. In addition to paper birch and pin cherry, the forest floor today contains chokecherry, wild honeysuckle, serviceberry, lowbush blueberry and scattered mountain ash.

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Meet a Tree

Balsam Poplar



Dennis Thompson

By Dennis J. Thompson

Balsam poplar (*Populus balsamifera*), also referred to as Balm of Gilead or simply bam, is a hardy, fast-growing tree that is generally short-lived. Considered one of the northernmost American hardwoods, its range extends through most of Alaska and Canada. It also dips down to the northern states of the lower 48. Throughout much of its home range, mature balsam poplar will vary from 35 to 70 inches in diameter and 75 to 100 feet in height. Although capable of reaching 200 years of age, most trees start declining before they reach 100 years. Balsam poplar is typically found in mix stands but may occur in pure stands, especially on river floodplains. The best tree growth is also found in stands growing on the floodplains.

Flowering and seed production start in trees as young as eight years old. Throughout most of the tree's range, seed dispersal begins in May and June with large seed crops almost every year. Each small seed is attached to a tuft of long, silky hair ideally suited for long-distance dispersal by the wind. Seed viability is highly dependent on temperature and moisture. Most balsam poplar seeds die within several weeks of dispersal. Given the right conditions, however, some will remain viable for four to five weeks. Like aspen, balsam poplar also produces suckers after the parent tree has been cut. The response, however, especially when parent trees are harvested during the growing season, is less prolific.

Balsam poplar is most accurately classified very intolerant of shade and shows all the characteristics of an early succession or pioneer species. Common traits of pioneer species include fast growth, especially when young, prolific seed production, relatively short life span, and low shade tolerance.

Balsam poplar is generally described as an underutilized species in the timber industry. The wood can be used for a variety of products including pulp; however, species like trembling aspen are preferred. In northern areas, balsam poplar is used for structural lumber and milled house logs when other species are not available. Various extracts from the buds of balsam poplar were recognized by Native Americans as having therapeutic value. For example, a salve or ointment (balm of Gilead) made by heating the buds in oil was used to relieve congestion.

Just for Fun – Have some balsam poplar trees in your woods? Make a point to walk through the stand in the spring at bud break. That fragrance in the air is from the sticky resin on the buds and twigs. It is noticeable on calm, humid days throughout the growing season but more so in early spring as buds begin to break.



Photos by Dennis Thompson

Northeastern Minnesota Moose Population Remains Low But Stable

Eighth consecutive year of stability means the overall number of moose aren't declining

Results of the 2019 moose survey indicate northeastern Minnesota's moose population remains stable but relatively low for the eighth year in a row, according to the Department of Natural Resources (DNR).

"We're encouraged that the moose population is not in the steep decline it was," said Glenn DelGiudice, DNR moose and deer project leader. "In the short to medium term, we're likely to keep seeing moose in the forests, lakes and swamps of northeastern Minnesota. But their long-term survival here in Minnesota remains uncertain."

Survey results estimate northeastern Minnesota's moose population at 4,180, statistically unchanged from 2018's estimate of 3,030. The results reflect a 90 percent certainty that the moose population is between 3,250 and 5,580 animals.

The last significant population decline occurred between 2009 and 2012. Since then, the number of moose in northeastern Minnesota has been statistically stable.

Since the DNR began its modern moose surveys in 2005, northeastern Minnesota's moose population was at its highest in 2006, when survey results estimated 8,840 animals. Each subsequent year's survey estimate is compared to 2006's peak estimate to calculate the population decline.

This year's population estimate is 53 percent lower than 2006, an improvement from 2018 when the estimate was 65 percent lower.

Reproductive success and adult survival have the greatest impact on the annual count and dynamics of the moose population over time.

"We know from our research that adult female moose are getting pregnant," DelGiudice said. "The problem is there aren't enough female moose that are successfully producing calves and raising them to one year. That's a significant challenge in our efforts to maintain Minnesota's moose population."

Survey results indicate that calf survival from birth in spring to January continues to be relatively stable but consistently low. Field studies have indicated that survival rates are even lower by spring, translating to low numbers of moose calves living through their first year.

The DNR's detailed field research has shown that wolf predation has consistently accounted for about two-thirds of the calf mortality and one-third of the adult mortality. In some cases, injuries suffered during predation attempts—not



the predation itself—ultimately killed the adult moose. In others, sickness or disease likely made the adult moose more vulnerable to predation.

The annual population survey is the most critical aspect of DNR moose management. Tracking moose numbers and determining the gender and age makeup of the population allows the DNR to closely monitor the health and well-being of moose.

In 2012, the DNR made nine forested areas a permanent part of the moose survey. These areas include different types of forest, including forests disturbed by events such as wildfires, blow-downs and timber harvests. Higher population counts within specific areas may indicate that moose prefer certain types of habitat. The DNR and its partners can use this information to better target current and future habitat enhancement projects to provide better conditions for long-term moose survival in Minnesota.

DNR wildlife research also is in its seventh year of an extensive study to determine how winter nutrition affects moose survival and reproductive success.

"There are many things we still don't know," DelGiudice said. "But our understanding of habitat preferences, population structure, nutrition and predation has significantly improved. Our goal is to use this new information to identify management options that better the chances for long-term survival of moose in northeastern Minnesota."

This year's survey involved flying in 52 survey plots distributed across northeastern Minnesota's moose range from Jan. 3-17. While the survey is statistically sound, there is inherent uncertainty associated with it, because researchers will never see and count all of the animals across the 6,000-square-mile survey area.

The DNR has conducted annual aerial moose surveys each year since 1960 in the northeast. Adjustments made to the survey in 2005 made it more accurate and its annual results more comparable from 2005 to the present.

The Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa and 1854 Treaty Authority again contributed funding and provided personnel for the annual moose survey.

More information about moose is available on the DNR website at mndnr.gov/moose.

Would you like a healthy forest?



Free Program for Landowners to Discuss Timber Management Options

By *Kassandra Tuten*

For private woodland owners, our forests represent one of our most valuable assets. The decision to harvest, and how to do so, can either improve or set back the future value of the land and its potential for wildlife habitat and as a source of pleasure for families to enjoy now and into the future.

A service of the Minnesota Forestry Association (MFA) and the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Division of Forestry encourages landowners to consider their goals for their woodlands. Whether they intend to gain income from timber, improve wildlife habitat and water quality, or reduce fire and disease risk, landowners can access assistance to tailor a plan for their woodlands and contribute to a healthy forest.

The Call Before You Cut program is a free service offered by MFA to private landowners to help manage their woodlands to meet their individual goals. Upon request, landowners receive a no-obligation packet of information about timber harvest on private lands, factors to consider and helpful resources to manage a timber sale.

“It truly is a great program to offer private landowners who are interested in selling timber,” said MFA President Dennis Thompson. “Confidential, no-strings-attached advice on one of the most important management decisions a landowner can make that will have lasting effects.”

The Call Before You Cut program is relatively new in Minnesota, initiated in 2011, but it is certainly not new in the Midwest. Currently, six other states offer a similar program, the idea being to give private landowners as much information as possible on harvesting their timber.

According to information provided by Thompson, when

a landowner calls the number, 218-879-5100, they leave their address. A participating organization (in the case of Minnesota, MFA), will then send them a folder full of valuable information on harvesting timber such as a sample timber sale contract; a Best Management Practices booklet; a list of consulting foresters; a list of local DNR offices; a list of Soil and Water Conservation Districts, which provide forestry services; the “Mistakes people make when selling timber” brochure; a sample certificate of insurance; and a list of Minnesota Logger Education Program loggers.

The idea for the Call Before You Cut program is loosely based off the Call Before You Dig campaign of the power companies, a mandatory program. However, the Call Before You Cut program with MFA is completely voluntary. Landowners harvesting timber are not required to call the number provided, and landowners who do call the number and receive the packet of information are under no obligation to harvest timber.

“We just want to get as much information out to the landowners as possible,” said Thompson.

As participants in the Call Before You Cut program, landowners may also qualify for a free two-hour consultation with a forester to walk their land and discuss the site’s unique needs and opportunities.

Whatever a landowner’s reason for harvesting, MFA recommends working with a professional forester as they are uniquely qualified to assist with a timber harvest plan that meets the landowner’s expectations.

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NESTING AND OVERWINTERING HABITAT FOR BEES

(ADULTS)

SATURDAY, APRIL 27, 1:00PM – 4:00PM

\$5/person

The availability of nesting habitat is a critical yet often over-looked factor impacting native bee populations.

- Learn practical approaches to create and manage nesting and overwintering habitat features for bees, including dead wood, stems, brush, rock piles, bare ground, leaf litter, and more. Approaches are relevant to gardeners, landscapers, natural resource professionals and anyone interested in taking the next step in supporting pollinators.
- After classroom activities go outside to search for active nests of stem-nesting bees!

Instructed by Sarah Foltz Jordan (Xerces Society) and Colleen Satyshur (University of MN).

Space is limited, so register early to hold your spot!

Pre-register by Wednesday, April 24. Activity #16358 Register at www.maplewoodnaturecenter.com and click on the [RegisterOnline-Go](#) button, or call 651-249-2170



Location: Maplewood Nature Center
2659 E. 7th Street
Maplewood, MN 55119



Healthy Forest continued

For more information about Call Before You Cut, call 218-879-5100 or visit www.minnesotaforestry.org

MFA is a private, membership-based organization. They receive no payment from any individual or organization that is recommended by the Call Before You Cut program. The Call Before You Cut program is available for both MFA members and non-members.

This article was printed in an earlier form in the *Grand Rapids Herald-Review*.



UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA EXTENSION

For MFA members, the two best online sources of woodland information are the MFA website at minnesotaforestry.org, and the University of Minnesota Extension Forestry website at myminnesotawoods.umn.edu.

Minnesota Point continued

Smaller forbs include bunchberry, wild sarsaparilla, mayflowers, bedstraw, clubmosses, moonwort, Rubus (raspberry and blackberry) species and a healthy dose of poison ivy.

Long-term preservation goals require active management at Minnesota Point SNA. This management includes maintaining species composition and habitat functions of the pine forest and dune system through invasive species removal, monitoring disturbance, and implementing restoration efforts when necessary. Over time, a sand deficit combined with increased storm events has eroded portions of Minnesota and Wisconsin Point, resulting in a receding shoreline that endangers portions of the dune system and pine forest. Beach nourishment will help replace sediment, allowing beach species to move back into the area and stabilize the sandbar system.

Today, the SNA site is split into two pieces, divided by

a Superior Water, Power and Light pump house. Visitors can reach the SNA by passing through the residential Park Point area to parking at Sky Harbor Airport. Foot trails lead through the dune system to Minnesota Point SNA. Enjoy hiking, snowshoeing and cross-country skiing, bird and wildlife watching, and the distinctive dune and pine forest setting.

Additional information on allowed uses of SNAs across Minnesota can be found at www.mndnr.gov/snas/rules.html.

Anna Hess is a natural resource manager, engaging in scientific education and outreach throughout the Arrowhead. Kelly Randall is the statewide Scientific and Natural Area Volunteer and Outreach Coordinator, shaping SNA outreach and education across the state of Minnesota. AmberBeth VanNingen is a Regional Scientific and Natural Areas Specialist, traversing the wilds south of Canada.

Photos by Anna Hess

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.

Tree-mendous Arbor Day Celebration

Maplewood Nature Center, 2659 7th St. E, Maplewood
Saturday, May 4, 1-3 p.m.

Join us in a celebration of trees and all they do for us. Fun tree activities for kids and adults. Learn about trees and the animals that depend on them. Meet Smokey the Bear, and learn about safe campfires. Enter a drawing for a gift certificate to purchase a tree. Complete the Tree Quest trail to win prizes for kids and adults. Visit with a live raptor and discover all the ways they depend on trees. Tree games, crafts and snacks while supplies last. No registration required.

Choosing the Right Trees for Your Property and Deer Protection Techniques

St. John's University, Collegeville
Tuesday, May 7, 6-9 p.m.

Learn how to choose the right trees (focusing on native Minnesota tree species) based on soil, amount of sunlight, and landowner objectives. Then learn how to protect new seedlings from deer browse utilizing tubes, cages and budcapping. Space is limited to 20 participants. Fee: \$10-Outdoor U Members and Avon Hills landowners; \$20-All others. For more information, visit csbsju.edu/outdooru/events/landownerlearning.

Gathering Partners Conference

Willmar
May 17-19

The Gathering Partners annual conference brings together people from all corners of Minnesota to learn about our state's natural resources. The conference is hosted jointly by University of Minnesota Extension program teams for Forestry, Aquatic Invasive Species, Minnesota Master Naturalist, and Citizen Science. For more information, visit gatheringpartners.umn.edu.

Webinar: Understanding Treaty Rights and Obligations

Tuesday, May 21, 12-1 p.m.

Speaker: Joseph Bauerkemper, Department of American Indian Studies, University of Minnesota Duluth

Treaty rights and obligations are simultaneously fundamentally important and significantly under-appreciated. When it comes down to it, treaty relationships between Indigenous nations and the United States form the basic structures through which governance takes place. This is particularly salient in the context of natural resource stewardship. This webinar will present and explore key concepts associated with treaty relations, consider the impacts of specific treaties on current forestry work in this region, and invite questions and conversation about the obligations and opportunities at hand. Cost: \$20 per webinar or \$50 for the entire 2019 series. For more information and to register, visit sfec.cfans.umn.edu/2019-webinar-may.

Identifying and Managing Invasive Plant Species

St. John's University, Collegeville
Monday, June 17, 6-9 p.m.

Participants will learn how to identify common and glossy buckthorn as well as exotic honeysuckles. Lessons will also include strategies for control and removal of these species. Fee: \$10-Outdoor U Members and Avon Hills landowners; \$20-All others. For more information, visit csbsju.edu/outdooru/events/landownerlearning.



Minnesota Forestry Association

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MFA's
*Forester
Phone Line*

A free service for MFA members only!
Call for an appointment with the forester:
218-879-5100

Webinar: Treaty Rights and the Chippewa National Forest

Tuesday, June 18, 12-1 p.m.

Speakers: Doug Thompson, USFS, and Andrea Brandon, The Nature Conservancy

This webinar builds on the May "Understand Treaty Rights and Obligations" webinar. We will hear from Doug Thompson, Tribal Relations Specialist with the Chippewa National Forest, who will provide an overview on how treaty rights apply to the Chippewa National Forest. We'll then hear from Andrea Brandon of The Nature Conservancy who will introduce the Sand Plains Pine Project, a current real-world applied example of how treaty rights are currently affecting land management. Cost: \$20 per webinar or \$50 for the entire 2019 series. For more information and to register, visit sfec.cfans.umn.edu/2019-webinar-jun.