

Minnesota 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.
• January 14, 2020
• April 14, 2020

Conference Calls
8:30 – 9:30 a.m.
• November 12, 2019
• December 10, 2019
• February 11, 2020
• March 10, 2020

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Oak Wilt Risk Status in Minnesota is Currently Low

From My Minnesota Woods

What is oak wilt?

Oak wilt is a fungal disease that kills thousands of oak trees every year. Oak wilt spreads in two ways: through root grafts between similar species, radiating outward from a central infected tree; and over land, carried by oak sap beetles carrying fungal spores from tree to tree.

What are the “risk season” references?

There are three risk season timeframes: High Risk, Low Risk and Safe. They refer to the probability that oak wilt will infect a tree. Specific dates for time frames vary depending on weather conditions.

High Risk months in Minnesota are typically April, May and June. **Low Risk** months are March, July, August, September and October. **Safe** months are November, December, January, February and March.

What are these probabilities or “risks” based on?

Three criteria are considered. First, is the fungus that actually causes the disease active? Second, is the beetle that carries the fungus to the oak active? Third, is there oak wilt in the area? If all three criteria are met, then the transmission of oak wilt from one area to another is very likely. This is referred to as “over-land transmission” of oak wilt.

What are the best ways to either avoid or minimize the probability of oak wilt infection?

First, avoid any wounding during the High Risk (and hopefully, the Low Risk) period; no pruning, no construction activities near the oaks. If a tree is wounded, seal the wound quickly (within 15 minutes) with one coat of shellac (preferable) or a water-based paint. If oak wilt is in the area, it's the High Risk season and the wounding is unattended for more than 15 minutes, the probability of infection rises dramatically.

Second, and especially important if oak wilt is established in an oak woodland, prevent the spread of the pathogen through root grafts by cutting through the connecting roots using a vibratory plow. This will need to be done by a professional, preferably a certified arborist. If done correctly it is a very reliable technique to reduce the amount of oak wilt spread.

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Top: Fallen leaf showing oak wilt symptoms.

Bottom: Brown streaking in the sapwood of oak branches infected with oak wilt.

Photos from MNDNR.

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!
[Information@
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or call 218-879-5100.

Financial Assistance Available for Northern Minnesota Woodland Owners

The Department of Natural Resources has cost-share funds available to help improve the woodlands of woods owners in Northern Minnesota.

"We're always happy to talk with folks about cost-share for woodland planning," said Kent Wolf, cooperative forest management forester. "We want woodland owners to take advantage of this program to keep their woods healthy and productive."

Cost-share funds can be used to:

- Prepare sites for planting.
- Plant seedlings.
- Protect newly planted trees by removing competing vegetation, applying bud caps, adding tree tubes or constructing a fence.
- Thin trees to promote forest health and vigor.

Woodland owners with 20 or more acres can also receive an additional \$300 to create a new woodland stewardship plan or update an existing plan. To create a plan, a professional forester will walk the woodland with the property owner and will determine how to improve its health.

The forester then works to develop goals for the woodland and outlines recommendations to accomplish them. Having a current woodland stewardship plan allows people to participate in tax incentive programs.

For more information about the cost-share program or to discuss possible projects, call Kent Wolf at 218-846-8281 or email kent.wolf@state.mn.us. Complete information about the program can be found on the DNR's Cost-share for Woodland Owners webpage.



Woodlands restored with new seedlings. Photo by Eli Sagor.

Editor's Notes...

At the end of the April 19, 2019, MFA Board meeting in Cambridge, **Dennis Thompson** announced he had accepted the Assistant Land Commissioner position with the Aitkin County Land Department. With the new job, he said he could no longer serve as MFA's President. As per MFA's by-laws, Vice President David Roerick will serve as Acting President.

Dennis will continue to serve as MFA's Treasurer until the Board elects his replacement. We owe Dennis a big thank you for his years of dedicated service as a Board member and officer. He will be missed on the Board.

Look to future issues of the newsletter for more information about Dennis and the positions he held.

Julia Perpich, from Shoreview, MN, is the newest Life Member in the Minnesota Forestry Association. A Life Membership is achieved by making a one-time \$1,000 payment. MFA's endowment fund receives 80% of that amount.

Moose Mountain Scientific and Natural Area

By AmberBeth VanNingen

*View from the top of the power line in Moose Mountain SNA in autumn.
Photo by AmberBeth VanNingen.*

Moose Mountain Scientific and Natural Area suffers from a bit of a misnomer. The site, on the outskirts of Duluth near the Lester River, is not, depending on whom you ask, really a mountain. The site is situated on a bedrock ridge that runs for about three miles from southwest to northeast inland from Lake Superior. At 1,266 feet above sea level at its highest, and almost 600 feet above the big lake, the ridge commands an impressive view at the top. From there, visitors can gaze out on rural Duluth to the west and Lake Superior in the distance to the east. The ridge is composed mostly of igneous diabase material, meaning that its origin is volcanic and includes rocks such as gabbro and basalt similar to those found all along the North Shore. The site contains numerous rock outcrops. These outcrops are easily seen along the power line that bisects the site, as well as scattered throughout the surrounding forest.

The chance that you might run into a moose on the SNA isn't very good, either. Although not unheard of in rural Duluth, moose tend to prefer the boreal forest and wetlands a little further northeast. With the SNA's mixed hardwood-conifer forests, white-tailed deer, black bear, red squirrels and a variety of birds such as sharp-shinned hawks, ovenbirds and eastern wood-pewees are much more likely to catch your eye. In fact, Moose Mountain is along one of the country's most travelled migratory bird routes and a part of the same set of ridges as Hawk Ridge Bird Observatory, home to a renowned and long-standing annual bird migration count. Additionally, the larger area of the south-central North Shore is recognized as an Important Bird Area for the state of Minnesota by the National Audubon Society.

So, the mountain is better described as a bedrock ridge and the habitat is better known for migrating birds than for moose. What other surprises does Moose Mountain SNA hold? Perhaps the most unique thing about Moose Mountain is what it can tell us about the fire history of the area. The southwestern half of the site was burned in the 1918 Cloquet Fire, while the northeastern half escaped this fire. One hundred years later, the evidence of this catastrophic fire is still seen in the native plant communities present on the site. The burned area is mostly covered in fire-dependent forests and woodlands of quaking aspen, balsam fir and paper birch. It is second-growth forest, with the oldest trees dating back to after the Cloquet Fire. The canopy is patchy and many of the trees have open-grown forms. Comparatively, the northeast part of the site is old-growth northern hardwoods. Sugar maple, northern red oak and yellow birch are found here and the canopy is largely closed. A red oak cored in

1982 was aged to 192 years old. If still standing, that makes the tree 229 years old today. The best example of old-growth hardwood on the SNA is on the south side of the power line in the eastern part of the SNA.

The fact that this area escaped the 1918 fire and active logging makes it a rare occurrence this close to Duluth. The area was also recognized for populations of Carolina spring beauty, white baneberry and moschatel, all once considered rare in Minnesota. These three species are limited in Northern Minnesota to high quality, old-growth northern hardwood forests near Lake Superior. It was for all these reasons that the original 55 acres of Moose Mountain Scientific and Natural Area was designated in 1989, and the remaining 122 acres in 2006. The SNA will celebrate its 30th birthday on Nov. 16 of this year.

Management in the SNA includes invasive species removal and keeping the area open to deer hunting. Invasives found on the site include common buckthorn, exotic honeysuckles, common tansy and large-leaved lupine. Many of these species are found along the power line or other trails, likely providing them a vector in to the site on our boots and maintenance equipment. Emerald ash borer has been found only a few miles away at Duluth's Hartley Park, but not yet found in the SNA. Given the proximity to Duluth, this site is seen by managers as a bellwether for up and coming invasives into northeast Minnesota's natural areas. Although native to the Duluth area, white-tailed deer can still do damage to natural areas if their numbers are too large. To keep vegetation damage by deer to a minimum, the SNA is open to a shortened archery season and also for the length of the firearms season. Check the DNR's hunting regulations, available online, for the latest season dates and other rules.

Although beautiful and interesting any time of the year, Minnesota's shoulder seasons are favorite times to visit the Moose Mountain SNA. Autumn brings vivid colors and sweeping views of the neighboring forest and with spring comes ephemeral wildflowers that may bloom for only a few weeks. Both seasons are good for migratory bird watching as well. A small parking area is available off Lester River Road and has interpretive signs with information on the site and invasive species. Be sure to use the boot brush as you come and go to slow down the spread of invasive plants. A narrow foot trail threads its way up the side of the hill from the parking area to the power line. A walk along the power line is steep, but provides panoramic opportunities at

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Using Plants to Control Buckthorn

From the University of Minnesota Extension

What's the problem with buckthorn?

Common buckthorn (*Rhamnus cathartica*) is one of Minnesota's most notorious invasive plant species. Originally introduced in the 1800s as an ornamental plant for hedge rows, buckthorn has now invaded forests throughout the state and can be found in almost every county.

Buckthorn devastates native ecosystems as it shades out native plant species and reduces habitat quality for wildlife. Minnesotans are working hard to remove buckthorn, but keeping buckthorn out for good is an ongoing challenge. After its initial removal, buckthorn quickly returns through resprouting from cut stumps and from seeds in the soil.

What do we know?

The Cover It Up! research project investigates if re-establishing native plants can control buckthorn following removal efforts. Through a combination of field experiments, scientists have been able to determine the limits of buckthorn shade tolerance and identify key levels of shading that result in native species excluding buckthorn. In particular, they've shown woody species to be capable of producing this level of shading under some circumstances, but if, when, and where seed mixtures can result in these critical levels of shading is still unclear. To better understand the potential value of seeding, the help of Citizen Scientists is needed to expand the study throughout the state.

How can I help?

The Citizen Science project is open to anyone interested in conducting ecological research and in contributing to more sustainable buckthorn control. Participants can be landowners with buckthorn on their property, public or private land managers, non-profit groups, schools, community or friend groups, faith groups and others.



Buckthorn. Photo by Eli Sagor.

The project is expected to run through summer 2022 and will focus on forested and woodland areas throughout the state where buckthorn is currently present. Prior to spring 2020, participants will be asked to remove buckthorn from an area about 30x40 ft. Participants will then establish six 5x5 ft plots and replant with native seed mixes containing a variety of grasses, sedges, wildflowers, shrubs and trees.

Each summer between 2020-22, participants will report information about their plots back to the program. Training and materials needed for the experiment will be provided at no cost to participants by the University of Minnesota.

Learn more about the Project Timeline & Activities online at coveritup.umn.edu/timeline-activities. To learn more about identifying Common Buckthorn, visit extension.umn.edu/identify-invasive-species/common-buckthorn.



Call Before You Cut

Thinking of harvesting timber from your land?
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 minnesotaforestry.org, and the University of Minnesota Extension Forestry website at myminnesotawoods.umn.edu.

New Resources for Managing Ash Woodlands In a Future With Emerald Ash Borer

By Matt Russell, from My Minnesota Woods

Usually, a 20-year anniversary is an occasion to celebrate.

Unfortunately in Minnesota, we recently passed the 10-year “anniversary” of the emerald ash borer’s (EAB) first discovery in the state. A total of 18 Minnesota counties are under full or partial quarantines right now due to the presence of EAB.

Because of the tremendous impacts that EAB has had on ash trees and forests, a large volume of on-the-ground research has occurred over the past 10 years. Using many of these research results, UMN Extension recently developed two webpages to assist woodland owners with preparing their woodlands for a future with EAB:

1. Replacement trees for ash woodlands:

This webpage (extension.umn.edu/forest-pests-and-diseases/replacement-trees-ash) highlights potential replacement trees for ash. Prior to selecting any tree species, the document focuses on understanding your woodland’s plant community to make appropriate tree planting decisions.

2. Managing ash woodlands:

It is important to fully understand your woodland before taking management actions. This webpage (extension.umn.edu/forest-pests-and-diseases/managing-ash-woodlands) highlights the importance of a woodland inventory before identifying any management actions for ash in your woodland. The resource describes common timber harvest and regeneration systems in addition to ways to increase non-ash species in your woodlands.



Hardwood replacement options for ash. Photo by Eli Sagor.

As with all management decisions about your woodland, foresters and other professionals are an excellent source of woodland management advice. With all of the new knowledge that has entered the world since EAB’s first arrival in Minnesota, woodland owners have several options to keep their ash woodlands healthy and productive.

Coming This Fall: Farms and Woodlands Educational Program

The University of Minnesota Extension is launching a new six-month long course later this fall. This course will focus on landowners who own or manage both farms and woodlands and are seeking to make their land more resilient.

The course will be administered online with in-person workshops in southeast Minnesota.

This program will be similar to the Master Woodland Owner program and will focus on ecosystem management of both woodlands and cropland.

To learn more about the course announcement, sign up to the extension’s course email list and stay tuned to next month’s newsletter from My Minnesota Woods.

MFA’s Forester Phone Line

A free service for MFA
members only!

Call for an appointment with
the forester: 218-879-5100

Oak Wilt continued

Third, injection of a chemical fungicide may reduce the risk of oak wilt-related tree mortality from root graft infections for two to three years. If combined with vibratory plowing, chemical treatment may provide long-term protection. This should only be done by a trusted and experienced professional that is licensed to apply pesticides and ideally is a certified arborist.

Fourth, do not move firewood from oaks that have died from oak wilt off of or onto the property in question. The red oak group in particular harbors the fungus for several months under a tree's bark, even if it has been cut down. Unless the bark of oak wilt-killed oaks has been removed, that firewood needs to be used on site (burn before the next High Risk period) or covered completely. If the wood with the bark on is tarped, the tarp must be at least four millimeters thick and preferably clear in color. The tarp should be weighted down at the ground line and sealed with soil at the ground line so no beetles can crawl in and out. Keep the wood covered for at least one full year after the tree has died.

Can any beetle move the fungus from one area with oak wilt to another?

The nitidulid beetles that move oak wilt are commonly called "sap-feeding beetles." There are only a couple of these types in Minnesota and they're very small.

Can an oak become infected during the Low Risk or Safe periods in Minnesota?

Oaks can become infected during the Low Risk period, but the probability is very low. However, since it could happen, it's best to delay pruning of the oaks until the Safe period or to quickly seal the pruning wounds with shellac or paint to avoid attracting the beetle if pruning during the Low Risk period is unavoidable. During the Safe period, there is virtually no risk that an oak can become infected with oak wilt by over-land transmission of the fungus.

Is "over-land" transmission the only way oaks can become infected with oak wilt?

No. Most oak wilt is spread via root grafts. Oaks of similar species, for instance red oaks, can root graft with other oaks nearby, easily within 60-80 feet of mature oaks. When this happens, fluids can pass from one oak to another, including fluids that carry the fungal pathogen. Oak wilt spreads from one area to another (distances greater than a quarter mile or more) via the beetles carrying the fungus. Once the disease is established in a tree, it spreads from that tree to others via root grafts.



Top: Crack from oak wilt pressure pads under the bark.

Bottom: Oak wilt pressure pads.

Photos from MNDNR.

Are all oaks affected the same way?

The red oak group (red, black, Eastern pin, northern pin and scarlet) is more seriously affected by the disease-causing pathogen. Once infected, they do not recover and die very quickly, often within four to six weeks of infection during the growing season. The white oak group (bur, white, bicolor) can become infected, but they often live with the disease for a long time before dying. This lengthy period allows tree care professionals to intervene, even after infection, and can often save the trees.

What do I do if I suspect my tree is infected?

Accurate diagnosis of the disease is highly recommended before any control action is undertaken. Diagnosis can be done by an experienced tree care professional or by consulting the University of Minnesota's Plant Disease Clinic.

Once the tree becomes infected, is there any treatment?

For oaks in the red oak group, no.
For oaks in the white oak group, yes.

A qualified tree care professional will prune out the dead wood (if the disease hasn't progressed too far) and if licensed, inject the tree with a systemic fungicide. In most cases, the trees will recover if there are no other health problems affecting them.

In areas where oak wilt has killed the oaks, should replacements be something other than oaks?

Genetic diversity is always a good way to make a forest, woodland or landscape healthier. Few insects or disease-causing pathogens kill wide varieties of trees. If the area that suffered oak wilt losses is dominated by oaks, replant with other species such as sugar maples, black cherries, hackberries, white or river birches or maybe some of the disease-resistant American elms. If oaks didn't dominate the landscape (made up less than 10% of the tree population), some of the replacements can be oaks, especially those in the white oak group.

Are there any other resources that can provide more detailed information and pictures of oak wilt?

The publication *Oak Wilt in Minnesota* by David French and Jennifer Juzwik is one great resource. Additionally, the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources website has valuable oak wilt information, and the University of Wisconsin Extension has a short publication called *Oak Wilt Management: What Are the Options?*

Moose Mountain continued

the peak of the ascent. Other, old trails can be found in the SNA but none are maintained. Moose Mountain is open to bird and wildlife watching, hiking, snowshoeing, skiing and photography. The SNA remains open during hunting season and visitors are encouraged to wear blaze orange during this time.

Additional information on allowed uses of SNAs across Minnesota can be found at mndnr.gov/snas/rules.html and on Moose Mountain SNA at dnr.state.mn.us/snas/detail.html?id=sna01017.

AmberBeth VanNingen is a Regional Scientific and Natural Areas Specialist, traversing the wilds south of Canada for the Minnesota DNR Scientific and Natural Areas Program.

View from the top of the power line in Moose Mountain SNA in early spring.

Photo by AmberBeth VanNingen.



50 years of shoreland protection and land management

From Minnesota DNR website

Fifty years ago, the Minnesota Legislature ensured better land management and conservation through three key conservation measures. The Shoreland Protection Act, Floodplain Management Act and legislation authorizing scientific and natural areas were all signed into law in 1969 by Gov. Harold LeVander.

At that time, most lake properties consisted of relatively tiny seasonal cabins built close to the water on small lots in a relatively natural state. Many Minnesota cities routinely suffered extensive flooding, endangering residents and causing massive economic losses. There was no broad program or legislation in place to protect natural landscapes in the state.



Fifty years later, shoreland management protections benefit both lakes and lake users. These measures have proven to be particularly important as large year-round lake homes and lawns, brick or stone hardscaping and large docks and powerful boats have become common. While some communities still experience negative impacts from flooding, those that have undertaken flood risk reduction projects have fared relatively well, even with today's more frequent and extreme rainfall events.

Scientific and natural areas protect native habitat and unique geologic features through a combination of private land purchases, land and money donations, leases from organizations like the Nature Conservancy, conservation easements and agreements with local governments.

“Minnesota leaders had tremendous foresight in enacting these measures 50 years ago, and all Minnesotans have reaped the benefits,” said DNR Commissioner Sarah Strommen. “Now, it’s our responsibility to build on the foundation these programs have provided as we manage our natural resources for the future.”

More information is available on the DNR website about how to protect shorelands, how communities can reduce flood risks, and how everyone can enjoy and enhance Minnesota’s scientific and natural areas.

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.

Webinar: Expanded Climate Adaptation Resources from NIACS

Tuesday, Oct. 15, 12-1 p.m.

The Northern Institute of Applied Science (NIACS) has led the development of climate adaptation strategies and approaches to help natural resource professionals respond to site-specific vulnerabilities. This webinar will describe some of the adaptation strategies and approaches that are currently available and applicable to Urban Forests, Forested Watersheds, Wildlife Management and Tribal Perspectives. Speakers: Stephen Handler, Leslie Brandt and Danielle Shannon, USDA NIACS. For more information, visit sfec.cfans.umn.edu/2019-webinar-oct.

Having a Healthy Forest

Tuesday, Oct. 22, and Friday, Nov. 15 at 7 p.m.

Grand Rapids Community Education

Minnesota Forestry Association is working to inform residents about healthy forests, how and where to find opportunities and incentives to create a healthy forest on your property. Opportunities include tax incentives from the Department of Revenue. Course includes a free visit to your property from a consulting forester with no strings attached. Instructor is Dave Roerick. Register at getlearning.org or at 218-327-5730.

2019 Buckthorn Curb-side Pick-up

Monday, Oct. 28 - Friday, Nov. 1

Maplewood residents who remove large volumes of buckthorn from their properties will qualify for free curbside pick-up of buckthorn this fall (no other trees or shrubs will be picked up). You must have enough buckthorn to fill more than a large pickup truck. Register by 3 p.m. Thursday, Oct. 24, at maplewoodnaturecenter.com. Click on the Register Online-Go button, or by calling 651-249-2170. You will receive a confirmation with stacking and other instructions. There will be no early or late pick-ups.

Woodland Spoon Carving

Saturday, Nov. 9, 1-4:30 p.m.

Maplewood Nature Center, 2659 E. 7th St., Maplewood
Get the scoop on trees that grow in Minnesota that are good for carving, and take a short tree ID walk outside with the Naturalist. Learn how to carve a spoon from a fresh cut native tree using traditional Nordic carving techniques. The class fee includes tool rental, materials, a finishing kit and safety glove rental. Spoon Carving instruction and materials by Jess Hirsch of Women's Woodshop. For more information, visit maplewoodmn.gov/Calendar.aspx?EID=6343&month=11&year=2019&day=23&calType=0

Webinar: All Lands Forest Stand Mapping

Tuesday, Nov. 19, 12-1 p.m.

A major obstacle to effective landscape-scale vegetation management across multiple ownerships is acquiring and utilizing all the datasets relevant to a large project area. To address this issue, the Superior National Forest and The Nature Conservancy have been developing a repeatable workflow that synthesizes existing GIS datasets into a seamless, generalized stand layer for the forested regions of Minnesota. Hear an overview of this approach, including the latest results of this effort, and discuss how these products might help land managers describe the existing condition of forests and identify restoration needs within a large project area. Speaker: Chris Beal, Superior National Forest. For more information, visit sfec.cfans.umn.edu/2019-webinar-nov



Minnesota Forestry Association

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Change Service Requested

Taking a New Look at My Land

This event will take place Saturday, Dec. 7 at the McGregor Community Center. This all day event, hosted by the Aitkin County Private Woodland Committee (ACPWC) seeks to help landowners better understand their property and how it fits into the landscape by connecting them to resources and providing education and motivation to take action.

The cost for this event is \$20, which includes lunch, tour transportation and materials.

Eric Otto, DNR Forest Health Specialist, along with additional speakers on wildlife habitat and resources available to private landowners, will speak in the morning. In the afternoon, hit the road to see how local landowners are managing their woodlands to benefit timber, wildlife, water and recreation. The tour will end back in McGregor with a visit to the local sawmill, Savanna Pallets.

Contact Dennis Thompson at 218-927-7364 or Troy Holcomb at 218-429-3025 for more information or to register.

The ACPWC is a non-profit group of local foresters, landowners and biologists formed in 1985 with the objective of educating and empowering the woodland owners of Aitkin County. Their long-term goal is to bring about better levels of forest management on non-industrial private woodlands in our county.