

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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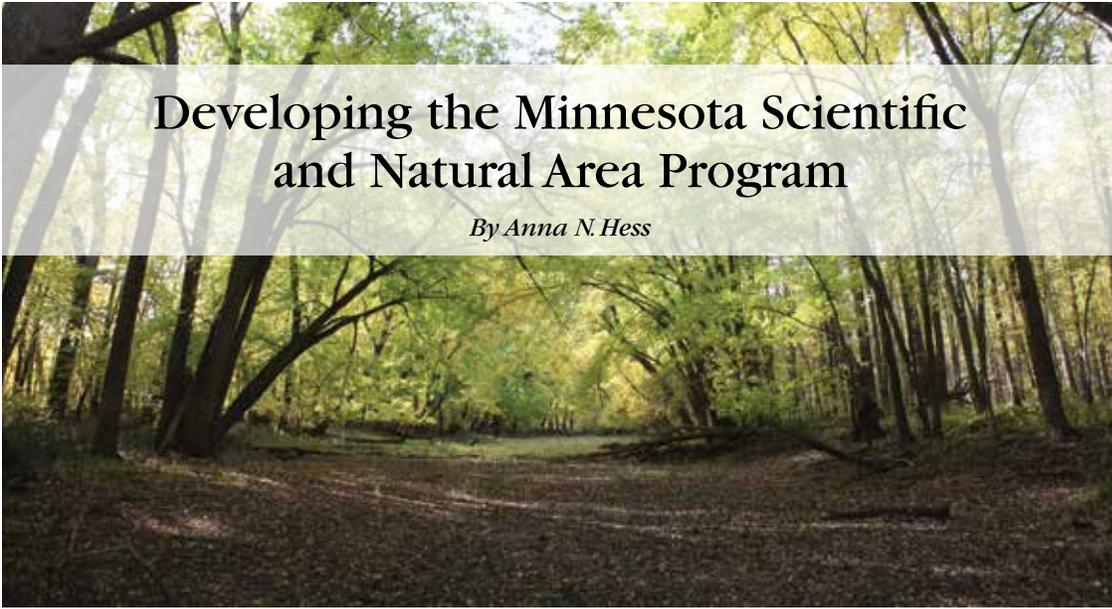
MFA Newsletter
Vol. 21 No. 6
December/January 2020
The Minnesota
Woodlands newsletter
is published by the
Minnesota Forestry
Association.

MFA Board Meetings
DNR Cambridge Office
10 a.m. – 3 p.m.
• January 14, 2020
• April 14, 2020
• July 14, 2020

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

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Developing the Minnesota Scientific and Natural Area Program

By Anna N. Hess

If you venture north in Koochiching County to where the Rainy River meets with the Black, you'll find two lowland islands. Knobby glacial till defines the surrounding landscape. Black ash and silver maple share the site with eagles and kingfishers that partake in the local angling. Almost as close to the Canadian border as you can get without touching it, these islands make up a new Scientific and Natural Area (SNA) called Watrous Island.

Sites such as Watrous are made possible through the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources Scientific and Natural Area Program. With 168 SNAs, 144 Native Prairie Bank sites and 38 Natural Area Registries, the SNA Program protects and recognizes over 200,000 acres of unique features on the diverse Minnesota landscape.

Founded in 1969, this program was developed through the efforts of scientific experts that recognized the importance of preserving unique features, as well as the significance of providing opportunities to study and visit these features. The Scientific and Natural Areas Program was established by the Minnesota legislature under Minnesota Statute 84.033 – Scientific and Natural Areas.

Instituted on the implementation of three principles, the SNA Program seeks to preserve and perpetuate sites that represent the diversity of Minnesota habitat, promote scientific research and educational opportunities and encourage public engagement through stewardship and enjoyment of outdoor activities.

Scientific and Natural Areas protect areas with exceptional natural features. These features include native plant communities and their successional stages, sites of outstanding biodiversity, seasonal habitat for animal populations, rare and threatened species, relict species that are displaced from current habitat ranges and unique features such as geological formations.

Continued on page 2

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.

SNA continued

From its foundation, the SNA Program has evolved to include the Native Prairie Tax Exemption, Natural Area Registry and Native Prairie Bank. These programs collectively conserve public and private lands, and recognize areas that are not designated as SNAs.

The Native Prairie Tax Exemption, authorized in 1980, offers tax incentives to citizens to preserve prairie on their private lands. This is particularly important in Minnesota where only 2% of the original 18 million acres of native prairie persists. Once spanning the breadth of North America, native prairies were both diverse and functional. The vast North American prairie generated unparalleled amounts of biomass, producing some of the most fertile soil in the world. Native prairies also contribute to aquifer recharge, water filtration and carbon sequestration. Once the largest ecosystem on the continent, today native prairies are the most endangered. The Tax Exemption provides an opportunity to protect and understand the significance of these habitat areas. Native prairies can also be enrolled in Natural Areas Registry or in the Native Prairie Bank.

Conservation easements, through Native Prairie Bank, became available to private landowners in 1987. This voluntary agreement recognizes native prairie on private lands and provides protection in perpetuity. Landowners agree to manage the prairie in accordance with some basic guidelines which are then tailored to each specific site. Together with the Tax Exemption program, these efforts contribute to the understanding and preservation of native prairie habitat.

The Natural Area Registry (NAR) was developed in 1982 to recognize unique features not on designated SNAs. This voluntary non-binding agreement with landowners acknowledges and preserves sites with rare species, native plant communities and other significant natural features. Today, nearly 40 NARs, owned by state and federal agencies, cities and counties, add to the diversity across Minnesota.

Complimenting each other, these facets of the SNA Program preserve and protect the diversity of the Minnesota landscape. Due to the efforts of dedicated staff and engaged individuals for 50 years, the SNA Program includes native western prairies, expanses of bogs and peatlands, rocky shores on Lake Superior, thousands of acres of woodlands and much more.

The SNA Program is based on preservation, scientific understanding and public engagement. No permanent facilities are maintained at sites, and there are no fees for access to an SNA. Scientific research, outreach and education is encouraged to interested parties. These sites allow a variety of activities, including hiking, birding and wildlife watching, photography, winter activities including snowshoeing and skiing, and in some areas foraging, fishing, hunting and trapping.

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

Anna Hess is a natural resource manager, engaging in scientific education and outreach throughout the Arrowhead.

More on Watrous Island

This set of floodplain islands was designated in 2017, maintaining 68 acres of Black Ash-Silver Maple Terrace Forest within the Laurentian Mixed Forest Province. Although the site must be accessed by some type of watercraft, visitors can enjoy birding, fishing, trapping, hunting and other recreational activities. More information can be found online at www.dnr.state.mn.us/snas/detail.html?id=sna02063.

*Watrous Island.
Photo by Craig Halla.*



Walk in the Woods Report: Young Forest Management

By Kelly Smith, Carlton SWCD



The Kettle River chapter of the Minnesota Forestry Association held a walk in the woods for private forest landowners Sept. 24 near Wrenshall. Our host was Charlie Hanson. We toured the forest regrowth resulting from a 68-acre timber harvest completed in the summer of 2016.

We noted the dense stand of aspen sprouts, generally of one-inch caliper and eight feet tall. Among the aspen regeneration were seedlings and stump sprouts of bur oak, red maple, paper birch, basswood, green ash and red oak. Mature mixed hardwoods, singly and in clumps, were scattered about. They had been left uncut to provide wildlife habitat. Where aspen regen was sparse, wildflowers and grasses—great butterfly and bee habitat—were growing. Periwinkle New England aster, common milkweed and golden Canada goldenrod were on display. The harvest had special provisions to provide young forest habitat for wildlife.

Charlie nearly stepped on a woodcock hidden on the trail. Invisible in mottled brown, this feathered rocket was out of sight in the dense saplings in three heartbeats. Deer sign was common on the trails we walked. A red-tailed hawk circled the edge of a field and sandhill cranes gargled overhead. A pair of sunning garter snakes slid off a stump into cover. Charlie told us he always sees some kind of wildlife whenever he comes here, including Harry the Hawk, who has been hanging around awhile. Charlie noted that since the harvest, coyotes have been replaced by timber wolves.

In May 2017, less than a year after the harvest, a bird count was made. Already the richness of species was very high: 32 species. These included American woodcock, cerulean warbler, golden-winged warbler and veery—all species of greatest conservation need. Populations of these species over their ranges have dropped significantly, often due to

decreases in young forest, their habitat. Generally, forests in their ranges are aging. To boost these birds, conservation agencies provide incentives for landowners to create young forest.

Before the timber harvest, Charlie's woods were mainly elderly aspen and birch. A few more years or a strong storm and his forest would tumble, likely to be replaced for many years with brushland. Charlie had the Natural Resources Conservation Service write a plan and set up funding assistance to harvest his forest in such a way as to promote wildlife habitat. Charlie and Duane Fogard, forester with the American Bird Conservancy, managed the timber harvest. Salmela Logging did the harvest, taking three weeks. One of those weeks they were idled when wet weather made the ground too soft for heavy equipment. To avoid rutting the soil, work was halted. Using a feller-buncher and skidder, trees were hauled to scattered processing sites around the forest. This created smaller piles of tops and branches, ideal for cottontail, garter snake, weasel, woodchuck, great horned owl, salamander, chipmunk, red fox and many other species. We could see care was taken not to ding the bark of reserved trees, nor to damage the soil.

In 2018, Charlie had forester Jan Bernu write a woodland stewardship plan. Jan inventoried the forest and wrote stand by stand recommendations to achieve Charlie's forest management goals. Charlie was then able to change his property tax classification to 2c Managed Forestland. This sort of land is generally taxed at a lower rate than regular forest.

Charlie is looking forward to watching the changes in his fast-growing forest, the influx of wildlife and hearing new bird song. He says he was happy with the service he received from forestry professionals, and would do it again.



Membership Dues Process Explanation

At the last MFA Board meeting, the Board made the decision to migrate from an annual dues payment to a calendar year dues payment system.

Historically, membership dues were renewed during the month of the year in which the membership originated. If someone became a member in August, their annual membership would be due in August, with a renewal notice sent the month before.

This process has been very confusing for many members, especially if they do not remember when they originally joined the association. Budgeting for membership dues when you are uncertain of the due date can be difficult.

To streamline the dues process and consolidate membership information, the Board has decided to implement a calendar year dues system.

All annual memberships are good for one calendar year. Membership payment will be due Jan. 1 each year. The payment will allow for membership from Jan. 1 until Dec. 31 of the year in which it is paid.

To accomplish this change with existing membership, 2020 dues will be pro-rated from the last membership dues payment received. Members will receive a membership renewal invoice indicating what is due in 2020 to extend membership until Dec. 31, 2020, from their current

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INVOICE TO:
John and Jane Doe
Doe Forest Forever
123 Woodland Drive
Smalltown, MN 54321

2020 Membership Invoice
MFA is moving to an annual dues payment system. All membership dues will be due January 1st each year. To accomplish this migration, all current members are being invoiced for 2020 dues with a pro-rated membership rate from their original renewal month. This pro-rated amount will extend membership dues through 12/31/2020. You will be invoiced for 2021 membership dues in December of 2020.

This invoice reflects the pro-rated amount due to extend your membership through 12/31/2020.

DESCRIPTION	ORIGINAL RENEWAL MONTH	MEMBERSHIP CATEGORY	MEMBERSHIP AMOUNT	PRO-RATE AMOUNT	LINE TOTAL
Annual Membership Dues	August	Contributing	\$75.00		\$75.00
Pro-rate		Through 12/31/2020		-8 months	\$43.75

Amount Due	\$75.00
Pro-Rate Amount	\$43.75
Subtotal	\$31.25
Total Due	\$31.25

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membership. **Please see the example invoice to the left.** As an example: Membership that originated in Aug. 2019 is good through July 31, 2020 (Aug. 1 through July 31 is 12 months). To extend that membership through Dec. 31, 2020, a pro-rated amount of four months will be due.

After this initial year adjustment, all annual memberships will be due on Jan. 1 and a renewal notice will be sent to all members in Nov./Dec. prior to that due date. The three-year dues payment option is still available. This change does not represent an increase or decrease in dues. There have been no changes made to how much memberships cost, only when membership renewals are due to be paid.

This change does not affect Life or Perpetual Memberships.



MFA Board Elections 2019

Stan Grossman, Grand Rapids

I grew up on a hobby farm on the edge of Benson, Minn., and was instilled with a love of trees by my grandfather, who had a commercial apple orchard. Armed only with that love of trees and the outdoors, and zero knowledge of forestry, I headed to Vermilion Community College in Ely to pursue a degree in forestry. I graduated in 1988 with an AAS degree in forestry, and immediately began completing forest inventory contracts for the state. During those first few summers, I established and maintained a Christmas tree plantation on my parents' land. In 1996 I established Itasca Woodland Services, Inc., and have been consulting for private landowners since. After spending over 20 years in the Park Rapids area, my wife and I found our nest empty, relocated to Grand Rapids, Minn., and shortly thereafter opened a business office in Grand Rapids. IWS has written over 650 woodland stewardship plans for private landowners covering over 80,000 acres. I began serving on the Board of Minnesota Forestry Association in 2016, and if re-elected, I look forward to continuing to serve, meet and develop relationships with new people, while expanding my knowledge of forestry issues in Minnesota and advocating for private landowners in this capacity.



Beth Kleinke, Duluth

I grew up in the Twin Cities metro area, but some of my fondest memories are of escaping to my family's tree farm along the Kettle River. In 2013, I graduated from the University of Minnesota with a degree in forest resource and ecosystem management. I currently split my time working for the two Soil and Water Conservation Districts that cover north and south St. Louis County, with offices in Duluth and Virginia. I feel very lucky that my job allows me to spend most of my time working with family woodlands. Recently, I have been working on updating the MFA website. There is still a lot to do, but I'm excited about making MFA more accessible to a wider audience. This year I became a mom, and I'm so excited to take my son exploring in the woods as he grows.



MFA Board Elections 2019, continued

Dave Roerick, Grand Rapids

Dave has two adult children and five grandchildren whom he says can wear him out quickly! Dave retired in April of 2009 after 35 years with the U.S. Forest Service, where he was most active in the timber program. Dave currently owns and actively manages several hundred acres of woodland, mostly in Itasca County. He also owns a fire extinguisher business, sells timber for building log homes and is an active volunteer for five non-profits in the Grand Rapids area. Dave says he enjoys volunteering and serving in the area that has been so good to him.



Ryan Rothstein, Waite Park

Ryan was born and raised in Farming, Minn., where he developed a strong passion for wildlife and the outdoors while exploring his family’s property. This passion led to studying wildlife management at Minnesota State University Moorhead where Ryan received his B.A. in biology. From there, Ryan packed up and moved to Kingsville, Texas, to pursue his M.S. in wildlife management.

After receiving his M.S., Ryan returned to central Minnesota in 2018, where he now works for the Stearns County Soil and Water Conservation District as the Farm Bill Wildlife Biologist. In his spare time, Ryan is either hunting deer or thinking about hunting deer, and he still gets out every chance he can to explore Minnesota’s many woods and prairies.

Greg Wuerflein, Cambridge

Greg Wuerflein started with the Minnesota DNR Forestry Division in Lewiston in 1977—moving to Cambridge in 1980 from where he retired in November 2018 after over 41 years of service. He is married to wife Susan and they have a son and daughter and son-in-law and one grandson. He has a certified Tree Farm in Isanti County with a stewardship plan. He has been a Lions Club member since 1992 and since retiring has been substituting in local schools as an instructional aide.



OFFICIAL BALLOT 2019 Directions

1. Select a candidate by placing an “X” in the appropriate box. Those with Family Memberships are entitled to TWO votes.
2. Return the ballot to the MFA office, postmarked no later than Jan. 15, 2020. (Any ballot postmarked after this date will not be a valid vote.)
3. You may write in the name(s) of any MFA member in good standing.

Vote for five, each for a three year term on the MFA Board of Directors	First Vote	Second Vote (Family Members)
Stan Grossman, Grand Rapids (incumbent)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Beth Kleinke, Duluth (incumbent)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Dave Roerick, Grand Rapids (incumbent)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ryan Rothstein, Waite Park	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Greg Wuerflein, Cambridge	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Write In: _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Write In: _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
For Family Members, please print your name here so we can verify that you are entitled to two votes: _____		

Thank you for voting!

Tape Here

Tape Here

Tape Here

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Return Address (Optional)

<p>Affix a 1st Class Stamp Here</p>

TO:

MINNESOTA FORESTRY ASSOCIATION
 1111 CLOQUET AVENUE, STE. 7
 CLOQUET, MN. 55720

Any comments you'd like to add? Put them here and then fold this side in first.



Meet a Tree

Balsam Fir

By *Kassandra Tuten, Editor*

Balsam fir, *Abies balsamea*, also known as balm of Gilead, is a tree that is native to the far northern parts of the United States and up into Canada. This evergreen tree has flat, dark green needles with a strong balsam scent and a narrowly-pyramidal shape. It is celebrated for its needle retention after being cut, and it is notably the most fragrant of all Christmas tree varieties. Balsam fir is also grown as an ornamental tree for many parks and gardens.

Balsam fir is a small to medium-size evergreen tree, typically 46-66 feet tall. The narrow conic crown consists of dense, dark-green leaves. The bark on young trees is smooth, grey and has resin blisters, becoming rough and scaly on old trees. The leaves are flat and needle-like, and are arranged spirally on the shoot. The seed cones are erect, dark purple, ripening brown and release winged seeds in September.

Balsam fir is a very prolific species, which will form thickets of thousands of stems to the acre. These dense stands will suffer density-induced mortality early in their development. Balsam fir is one of the most shade tolerant species in North America and can persist in the understory below faster growing species, growing only slowly but suffering little mortality. The species can resume high levels of growth after release from overstory tree suppression.

The balsam fir is the preferred main host of the eastern spruce budworm (*Choristoneura fumiferana*), a destructive pest throughout the eastern United States and Canada. During cyclical population outbreaks, major defoliation of the balsam fir can occur, which may significantly reduce radial growth. This can kill the tree. An outbreak in Quebec in the 1950s killed more than 75% of balsam fir in some stands.

Balsam fir are a very popular Christmas tree choice. Contrary to popular belief, however, the balsam firs which are cut for Christmas are not taken from the forest, but are grown on large plantations. Many of these plantations are family farms which are handed down from generation to generation. Balsam fir branches are also used to make Christmas wreaths. Most balsam boughs are harvested from early October to early December and retain their needles best if harvested after the second hard frost. Balsam bough wreath sales from Minnesota forests exceeded \$20 million in 2016.

Historically, the resin of balsam fir was used for a variety of medicinal purposes and as a sort of adhesive. The wood of the balsam fir is milled for framing lumber and siding and is pulped for paper manufacture. Balsam fir oil is also often used as an air freshener and as incense. An estimated 123,000 cords of Balsam fir were harvested in Minnesota in 2016, mainly for making high quality paper where it is prized for its excellent fiber qualities. Some balsam is also used by the sawmill industry, mostly for studs, some OSB and fuelwood.



Top photo by *Eli Sagor*.

Information from the recent annual meeting and awards ceremony coming soon!

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: Ruffed Grouse and Forest Management Tuesday, Dec. 17, 12-1 p.m.

Speaker: Jon Steigerwaldt, Ruffed Grouse Society
Cost: \$20 per webinar or \$50 for the entire 2019 series. This webinar will discuss recent trends of ruffed grouse populations in Wisconsin and the Lake States and how forest management practices are integrated with the success of this popular game species. To learn more or register, visit sfec.cfans.umn.edu/2019-webinar-dec

S'more Nature Fun Saturday, Dec. 28, 1:30-3 p.m.

Maplewood Nature Center, 2659 E 7th St., Maplewood
Take a hike or snowshoe down to the pond for a fun exploration, then make S'mores. Cost is \$5 per person. Register by Thursday, Dec. 28 at www.maplewoodnaturecenter.com and click on the Register Online-Go button, or call 651-249-2170.

Snowflake Wonders Saturday, Jan. 4, 2020, 1:30-3 p.m.

Maplewood Nature Center, 2659 E 7th St., Maplewood
Cut and create beautiful snowflakes for your windows and other snowflake crafts from simple to highly complex. Learn how snowflakes are formed in the sky, and peer at beautiful preserved snowflake crystals up close on the microcam. Cost is \$5 per person. Register online by Thursday, Jan. 2, 2020, or call 651-249-2170.

2020 Forestry and Wildlife Research Review Thursday, Jan. 9, 2020

University of Minnesota Cloquet Forestry Center
175 University Road, Cloquet
Cost: \$75 SFEC members, \$40 students and \$140 others; prices increase 10% after 5 p.m. on Jan. 3, 2020. The purpose of the event is to present new applied research relevant to regional natural resource managers, with a focus on silviculture, forest management and forest-based wildlife. This focus includes research related to policy, economics, inventory, remote sensing and other topics pertaining to forests and associated natural resources. To learn more or register, visit sfec.cfans.umn.edu/2020-research-review.

Nature of Saint John's Hiking Series Saturday, Dec. 14, and Saturday, Jan. 18, 2020 10 a.m.-12 p.m.

Abbey Arboretum at Saint John's University, St. Joseph, Minn.
Join Outdoor U educators on designated hikes using the *Nature of Saint John's* field guide. Along the hike we'll highlight various topics from the book with interpretive talks. Participants are encouraged to read the guidebook excerpts prior to each hike. Event is free. For more information, visit <https://www.csbsju.edu/outdooru/events/hikingseries>.

Luminary Hike Friday, Jan. 17, 2020, 6:30-8 p.m.

Maplewood Nature Center, 2659 E 7th St., Maplewood
Snowshoe or hike along the luminary trail. Cost is \$5 per person. Register online by Sunday, Jan. 16, 2020, at www.maplewoodnaturecenter.com or call 651-249-2170.

Meet The Animals Saturday, Jan. 25, 2020, 10:30-11:30 a.m.

Maplewood Nature Center, 2659 E 7th St., Maplewood
Meet a snake and salamander and learn where Minnesota's wild reptiles and amphibians go in the winter. This program is free. Register online by Friday, Jan. 24, 2020, at www.maplewoodnaturecenter.com or call 651-249-2170.



Minnesota Forestry Association

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Change Service Requested

A word from the editor:

As snow begins to fly, the temperatures dip into the single digits (or below) and yet another year comes to a close, I want to again extend gratitude to you, our loyal members. Without you, this wouldn't be possible. I, and MFA, look forward to continuing to work on behalf of family forest owners and, through education and advocacy, promote wise stewardship of forest lands.

As always, I want to encourage you all to reach out to me with ideas, thoughts, suggestions, concerns, and more.

May your holiday season be joyous, safe and prosperous. Happy holidays!

Save the Date: Oct. 2-3, 2020

MFA Annual Meeting
St. John's University

More details to follow as the agenda gets firmed up in the coming year.