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Woodland Leaders News

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Marlene and Jim Zdanovec named the American Tree Farm System's National Outstanding Tree Farmers of the Year for 2004

Article by Tim Eisele

about woodlands."

Geary Searfoss, Executive Secretary of the Wisconsin Tree Farm Committee in Rhinelander, said that having the national award return to Wisconsin is a great honor for how forestry is practiced in the state.

"The Zdanovecs enthusiasm stands out, and having this award return to Wisconsin is a perfect end to the year when we celebrated 100 years of forestry in Wisconsin," Searfoss said.

To be a certified Tree Farmer, landowners must manage their forest in an environmentally sound manner in accordance with the American Tree Farm System's standards and guidelines. There are approximately 51,000 certified Tree Farmers are managing over 25 million acres in the United States today.

This is only the second time ever that a Wisconsin Tree Farm has won the national award. In 1996, Don and Rachel Jordan of Dodgeville became the first national Outstanding Tree Farmers from Wisconsin.

Marlene and Jim Zdanovec, graduates of the Woodland Leadership Institute's Class of 2003, were named the American Tree Farm System's National Outstanding Tree Farmers of the Year for 2004. It is only the second time that Wisconsin landowners have ever been selected for this national honor.

Jim Zdanovec said that the major consideration for the award was "our enthusiasm and outreach efforts in the way of field tours and inviting children out to learn about the land."

When they acquired their land in 1985, the Zdanovecs not only purchased property that had been poorly managed, but parts were pitted with scars from extensive granite excavations. The resulting "hills" of subsoil supported little or no vegetation.

"This Tree Farm is living proof that a well-managed forest is a better forest," said Shirley Bargander, Department of Natural Resources (DNR) forester, who along with Mike King, DNR forester, have worked with the Zdanovecs.

The Zdanovecs won the Wisconsin Outstanding Tree Farmers of the Year Award in 2002, the North Central Region Tree Farm Award this past August, and on September 25, 2004 received the 2004 national honor at the American Tree Farm national meetings in Fort Collins, Colorado.

"We felt it was a tremendous honor for us and for forestry in the State of Wisconsin," said Marlene Zdanovec. "We feel that our work as Tree Farmers is not done at the end of the day when we close the gate to our woodland. It is our personal mission to do more by reaching out and helping educate young people and others



Jim and Marlene Zdanovec on their land in Marathon County.

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Wisconsin's State Forests Certified

Governor Doyle received certificates officially conferring sustainable forestry certification for Wisconsin's State Forests in a ceremony on the Northern Highland-American Legion State Forest this June. The documents of certification from two independent auditors (Forest Stewardship Council and Sustainable Forestry Initiative) certify that Wisconsin's State Forests are being managed according to accepted sustainable forest management principles.

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) is in the process of investigating the viability and costs of achieving third-party forest certification for the State Forest, County Forest and Managed Forest Law (MFL) programs.

Forest certification is a process in which a forest landowner undergoes an audit of their practices by a third party organization. If the forest practices of the landowner meet the standards for long-term sustainability identified by the third party organization, then that organization will "certify" that the forest is "well managed" and that wood products originating from that forest were grown and harvested in a way that will assure long-term sustainability for biological, social and economic benefits.

Wisconsin's State Forests are administered by the Department of Natural Resources according to environmental principles established in state laws and regulations. Governor Doyle directed the

Department of Natural Resources to submit to a full certification assessment of the State Forest program by the two primary North American forest certification systems: the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) and the Sustainable Forest Initiative (SFI) late last year.

Scientific Certification Systems, the FSC-accredited auditing firm, has provisionally offered certification to DNR subject to completion of assessment report peer review and DNR's acceptance of minor Corrective Action Requests. NSF-International Strategic Registrations, the SFI auditing firm, likewise found requirements for SFI certification are generally met.

Forest certification provides assurance to customers, managers, landowners, and the general public that objective standards are being met in the management of forests. Certification also helps land managers understand how their programs and practices compare with other organizations and helps these managers improve their forestry and conservation practices.

To learn more about the certification of Wisconsin's forest lands visit the DNR's Forest Certification website at <http://dnr.wi.gov/org/land/forestry/certification/index.html>

MFL Forest Certification

The DNR is in the process of assessing the results of the gap-analysis reports for the Managed Forest Law (MFL) and will engage the Council in the process of deciding whether to proceed with one or more full assessments for group certification. Full certification audits would be required before the DNR could commit to forest certification for the MFL Program.

Sustainable Forest Management Workshops for Private Woodland Owners

The University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point (UWSP), in cooperation with University of Wisconsin-Extension, the Department of Natural Resources will be offering a program for woodland owners interested in learning more about their woodlands and sustainable forest management practices.

The program will be offered as a series of six one-day workshops throughout the summer months. Individuals can register for only those seminars that are of interest to them or register for all six and work towards becoming a Master Woodland Steward.

Seminars will be held in the Milwaukee area at the Seno Woodland Education Center and at UW - Madison's Kemp Research Station near Minoqua.

The tentative schedule is as follows...

Tree Identification and Forest Measurements
Saturday, May 14th (Seno)
Saturday June 4th (Kemp)

Forest Ecology, Silviculture and Crop Tree Management
Saturday, June 11th (Seno)
Saturday, June 24th (Kemp)

Timber harvesting
Saturday, July 9th (Seno)
Saturday, August 6th (Kemp)

Wildlife Management
Saturday, July 16th (Kemp)
Saturday, August 13th (Seno)

Goods from your woods – recreation, aesthetics, and specialty forest products
Saturday, August 27th (Kemp)
Saturday, September 10th (Seno)

Handling your finances long-term financial and estate planning
Saturday, October 1st (Kemp)
Saturday, October 8th (Seno)

Each seminar will explore different forest resource management and stewardship issues with presentations from UW-Extension and Wisconsin and Department of Natural Resource forestry and wildlife management specialists. Additionally, participants receive reference materials and publications providing additional information on each topic.

The cost to attend is \$20 per seminar or \$100 for those who wish to become Master Woodland Stewards. Program graduates are asked to work in their community and local woodland owner organizations to serve as a resource and to promote forest stewardship in exchange for the training that they receive.

The Master Woodland Steward Program is open to any one who owns or enjoys Wisconsin's woodlands. However, class size is limited and preference will be given to those interested in becoming Master Woodland Stewards.



Organization Management Workshop Scheduled

University of Wisconsin Stevens Point and University of Wisconsin Extension in partnership with Wisconsin's woodland owner organizations is offering a workshop on Organization Management. This program is for anyone who has recently been elected to serve in a position of leadership in a woodland owner organization.

The purpose of the workshop is to help those who have just been elected to understand their role and provide them with skills and techniques to help them fulfill their responsibilities.

Some of the topics that will be covered include understanding the rules that govern your organization, learning how to manage a meeting, learning how to build effective teams, ideas to promote and sustain your organization, and learning how to get your message out.

The workshop will be held on Saturday, January 22nd at the College of Natural Resources on the Campus of the University of Wisconsin Stevens Point. This workshop is open to anyone who is interested in learning about running meeting or developing skills to help manage their organization. There is no registration fee or charge for this workshop. However, you must be registered prior to the day of the program to attend.

For more information on this or other programs contact John DuPlissis at 715 346-4128 or by e-mail at john.duplissis@uwsp.edu



New website connects forests and land use planning

Although forested land is increasing in Wisconsin, it is also becoming fragmented into smaller forested areas broken up by non-forest land uses. Planning for forests is important if we want to sustain the forest related sectors of our economy, protect our remaining clean water and air, and continue to use the forests for recreation.

The Center for Land Use Education has just released a new website called Forest Planning for Wisconsin's Future to assist local officials, forestland owners and the public with forest planning and plan implementation. The website, which is funded in part by a grant from the Wisconsin Environmental Education Board, has three main sections.

The website contains a detailed description of the planning process and how forests and forest issues can be addressed during each step. Case studies describe a variety of forest conservation tools used in Wisconsin, from the County Forest Program to working forest conservation easements. The county reference pages include maps, economic data, and contact information for people who can help with forest planning in your community.

This informational website, at www.uwsp.edu/cnr/landcenter/forestplanning.html, was written for your use. Take advantage of this unique and useful blend of information; you will be better prepared to participate in the discussions about how best to manage the forests in your community. These discussions and the plans they produce will determine the type of forests we leave for our future generations.

For additional information on the Forest Planning for Wisconsin's Future project, contact Project Coordinator Bobbie Webster at 715-346-2407 or bwebster@uwsp.edu.

My Battle with Buckthorn

by Jack Rasmussen

Had I thought my Wisconsin Woodland Leadership Institute (WWLI) project would have been so colossal, perhaps I would have narrowed the project scope a bit further. My name is Jack Rasmussen and I was part of Crew 1, a fledgling of WWLI. I live in Baldwin and I am very active with manicuring my 50-acre tree farm (actually 60 acres because I just bought my neighbors house and 10 acres to stop a development!). Having been through the WWLI, I felt that combining a bit of public contact with forestry made good sense. Living in St. Croix County gave me a perfect opportunity to make a difference. What did I choose as my project? I decided to start a grassroots effort to educate the residents of St. Croix County about the threat of buckthorn and offer control options.

You may ask why I think that this is such a colossal project. On the surface, it seems simple; talk to a few people about buckthorn and demonstrate some control options. These people tell two people and so on... next thing you know, this grassroots effort has spilled into other counties of Wisconsin and everybody lives happily after ever. Somebody slap me, I think I am dreaming. This is how I had hoped my project would blossom. Now for the real story:

St. Croix County is an ideal model to have when it comes to showing the advancement of buckthorn infestation eastward from an urban area and the damage it is causing. This is precisely why I decided to take on the project. I learned about buckthorn from a Hudson Township resident, Mike Deneen. Mike is a member of my Wisconsin Woodland Owners Association chapter. Mike is the utmost authority I had ever met on buckthorn and once I learned what buckthorn was and what damage it causes, I felt I could join the coalition. I began by distributing pamphlets about buckthorn to outdoor organizations, hoping I would get a bite. I talked to Township meetings, hoping I would get a bite. I unleashed countless Letter to the Editors in local newspapers, hoping I would get a bite.

Each time I reached out, I would only get a handful of responses. These are the people whom I have hoped would help me ignite a grassroots effort in the fight to stop buckthorn from spreading across St. Croix County. I still am waiting for the fire to spread, it seems the grass is either a bit too wet or has flame retardant on it. In all seriousness though, I find it a considerable struggle to get people serious about the threat buckthorn that looms. I haven't quite figured out what it is but I have a good idea. People just don't prioritize properly anymore and put leisure before things of greater importance. It is kind of a damned if you do, damned if you don't scenario. Properties I visit with heavy buckthorn infestation seem to feel overwhelmed and actually enjoy the privacy buckthorn provides. People with minor buckthorn infestation don't see what the problem is.

Recently I have coined a statement about removal of buckthorn from properties with minor infestations, generally the eastern half of St. Croix County. "Make it a 30 minute job today, before it is a 30 day job tomorrow". Think about it and how true it is. If the people would remove the buckthorn today, it wouldn't spread and become thick tomorrow! Even calling it "Eurasian Milfoil of the woodland" doesn't seem to sound an alarm. I have found that people generally just don't care. At least care enough to help in the crusade against this exotic invasive. I need the people in eastern St. Croix County to visit western St. Croix County to see what is coming. I am still working on this project, but I have learned that it is very time-consuming. There is a much greater need for 1:1 personal contact than I originally anticipated.

Getting people serious about buckthorn control has been a hard task to complete. The fire is smoldering, I just need a few more puffs to get it to going to spread the word that buckthorn is a very serious threat to our woodlands that future generations will enjoy.

Good news for Woodland Owners

excerpts from the National Timber Tax Website

President Bush recently signed bill HR 4520, the American Jobs Creation Act of 2004 into law. This bill changes the federal tax rules regarding the Internal Revenue Service requirements in the sale of timber necessary to ensure capital gains tax treatment on lump-sum sales.

This tax reform will allow non-industrial private forest landowners capital gains treatment on income from lump-sum stumpage sales.

Under the current law timber "held primarily for sale to customers in the ordinary course of a trade or business," or for use in a trade or business, that is disposed of on the stump must be done so under a so-called "pay-as-cut" contract to qualify for long-term capital gains treatment. In tax lingo it must be "disposed of with an economic interest retained." The bill amends Internal Revenue Code (IRC) Section 631(b) to provide that the disposal of timber on the stump qualifies for capital gains treatment if sold with either a pay-as-cut, or a lump sum contract. Lump sum is the type of contract generally preferred by landowners because the total amount to be received from the buyer is fixed in advance, rather than depending on the volume actually harvested by the buyer. Effective date: Sales after December 31, 2004.

Other timber-tax provisions added to the bill will allow expensing of up to \$10,000 for reforestation costs in the year of occurrence with an accelerated amortization rate of 60 months for the remaining costs (a change from the current \$10,000 tax credit).

Under current law a qualified taxpayer can elect to amortize over an 84-month period up to \$10,000 of qualified reforestation expenditures. A 10% tax credit can also be claimed on up to \$10,000 or qualified expenditures. The bill amends IRC Secs. 194, to allow expensing of up to

\$10,000 of qualified expenses, and amortization over 84 months of any qualified expenses over \$10,000 per year. The amortization schedule remains the same: 1/14th for the first and 8th years, and 1/7th for years 2 through 7. The tax credit is eliminated. This expense would be reported as a business expense for taxpayers reporting their timber activities as a business. Likewise for the amortization deduction. It appears that taxpayers reporting their timber activities as an investment would still be able to report the expense as an adjustment to gross income. Effective date: Qualifying expenditures made after October 22, 2004.

However, until the IRS issues regulations to implement the provisions of this bill it is not possible to guarantee that these summaries will reflect actual law. To learn more about this or other questions about handling the income from the sale of timber visit the National Timber Tax website at <http://www.timbertax.org/>



100 years of Forestry in Wisconsin

excerpts from the Governor's Proclamation

The Governor proclaimed 2004 as the "Year of Wisconsin Forestry." It has been 100 years since the hiring of E.M. Griffith, Wisconsin's first State Forester and the beginning of the Wisconsin State Forestry Program. Wisconsin's forest are one of the state's most important natural resources; they support and improve the quality of life for all residents, provide innumerable social, ecological and economic benefits for Wisconsin, and offer scenic majesty and myriad recreational opportunities for residents and visitors.

Proclaiming 2004 as the Year of Wisconsin Forestry provides each of us the opportunity to honor the achievements of the past. Wisconsin's woodland built a nation as timber was harvested to build the great cities of the Midwest. Thanks to the foresight of legislative, conservation and community leaders in the early 1900's who established a regulatory framework encouraging reforestation of Wisconsin they insured the growth and development of our forest resources for future generations.

The 20th century witnessed the development of an efficient and effective forest fire prevention, detection and suppression program to tame forest fires that once raged out of control, the replanting of forests on our rural landscapes and in our urban communities, the establishment of a support network for

the 272,000 private forest landowners who own nearly 60 percent of Wisconsin's forestland, growth of a wide range of forest sciences and development of forestry practices that strive to meet the many demands on the forest today while maintaining this vital resource for future generations.

Therefore in 2004 we celebrate the profession of forestry, a dynamic blend of art and science that has evolved over the past 100 years, and the foresters in Wisconsin who guided the reestablishment of this great resource and championed the stewardship and sustainable forestry widely practiced today.

We congratulate and celebrate with each of our partners in sustainable forest management who are celebrating a landmark milestone this year.

Wisconsin DNR Forestry - 100 Years

Wisconsin Society of American Foresters - 85 Years

Wisconsin County Forests - 75 Years

Trees For Tomorrow - 60 Years

The American Tree Farm Program in Wisconsin - 60 Years

Wisconsin Christmas Tree Producers Association - 50 Years

Wisconsin Woodland Owners Association - 25 Years

The purpose of the "2004: Year of Wisconsin Forestry" is to promote a broader understanding of the role forests play in our lives, the many aspects of sustainable forest management and the successful recovery of Wisconsin's forest resource over the past 100 years. In addition to celebrating the history and advancements made in the field of forestry, goals for observing the "Year of Wisconsin Forestry" include raising the public's understanding of the forest resource, the benefits it provides and their dependence on the forest in their daily lives.