

## Speaker Bios by Session

### **Forest and Woodlands Management at The Morton Arboretum – Kurt Dreisilker**

Kurt Dreisilker is the Head of Natural Resources for The Morton Arboretum. Since 2004 he has been planning and implementing ecological restoration throughout the Arboretum's 900 acres of natural areas. He has tracked changes through time, observing impacts of management in oak ecosystems, which has included canopy thinning to enhance oak regeneration. Kurt is a board member of Midwest Invasive Plant Network and was a founding steering committee member of Northeast Illinois Invasive Plant Partnership. He has a B.S. and M.S. from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign where he studied plant biology and natural resources management.

### **The Fourth Wave - Shaping a Common Conservation Future – Ed Collins**

*Ed Collins* is Director of Land Preservation & Natural Resources with McHenry County Conservation District. His career spans thirty-one years with the McHenry County Conservation District where he currently serves as the Director of Land Preservation and Natural Resources, administering restoration and land preservation efforts on 25,000 acres of open space. During that time, Ed has been involved in a number of interesting projects including the re-meandering of Nippersink Creek in Glacial Park, the development of the first comprehensive spatial mapping of oak loss in the region and most recently playing an instrumental role in the creation of the Hackmatack National Wildlife Refuge. He teaches across the region including classes in Forensic Ecology and Ecological Spirituality. His hobbies include collecting drain tile memorabilia, constructing stone labyrinths and working as a trained hypnotist.

### **Widespread Tree Damage Forum - Marty Kemper**

Marty earned his BS in Zoology and MA in Zoology, with a specialty in Ecology and minor in Statistics, from SIU-Carbondale. He worked 35 years as a Wildlife, Natural Heritage, and Private Lands Biologist with IDNR. He's a certified Illinois Pesticide Applicator and Illinois Prescribed Burn Manager. Now retired, he spends most of his time (when not gardening and babysitting with grand daughters) controlling exotic species, restoring prairies, and assisting with prescribed fire application in southwest IL. He's a lifelong resident of Washington County and has been married to wife Linda for 43 years.

### **Field Diagnostic Tour and Canker Disease/Bur Oak Blight Updates – Fredric Miller**

*Fredric Miller* is professor of horticulture in the Department of Agriculture and Horticulture Sciences at Joliet Junior College, Joliet, Illinois, a Senior Research Scientist – Entomology at The Morton Arboretum, Lisle, Illinois, and Adjunct Professor in the Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Sciences (NRES) at the University of Illinois-Champaign-Urbana where he is an instructor and faculty student advisor for the off-campus Master of Science horticulture graduate degree program. He received his B.S. in Forest Management from the University of Missouri-Columbia, a M.S. in Forest Entomology from the University of Arkansas-Fayetteville, and the Ph.D. in Entomology with a minor in Plant Pathology from Iowa State University of Science and Technology at Ames, Iowa. Dr. Miller's research efforts primarily focus on host plant resistance of *Ulmus*, *Carpinus*, *Acer*, and *Fraxinus*, *Populus* biotypes for major economic leaf-feeding and wood-boring insect pests. Contributions from this research are being utilized as part of a more comprehensive tree breeding program for development of new woody landscape plants.

### **Climate Change Implications for Illinois Forest Management – Leslie Brandt**

*Leslie Brandt* is a Climate Change Specialist for the Northern Institute of Applied Climate Science and the USDA Forest Service, Eastern Region and Northern Research Station. Her work focuses on climate change adaptation and outreach for natural resource managers in the Midwest and Northeast. She currently coordinates the Central Hardwoods and Urban Forestry Climate Change Response Framework projects. She earned her doctorate in ecology from the University of Minnesota.

## **Latest Trends in Invasive Plant Species *and* Agroforestry: Forestry on the Edge of Ag**

**Chris Evans** is an Extension Forester with the Dept. of Natural Resources & Environmental Sciences at the Univ. of Illinois. He earned his B.S. in Wildlife Biology from Murray State University and an M.S. in Forest Biology from Iowa State University. Prior to coming to the U of I, Chris was Coordinator of the Illinois Wildlife Action Plan's Invasive Species Campaign. He helped establish the River to River Cooperative Weed Management Area in southern Illinois, serving as its first Coordinator. Prior to that, he was a natural resource and invasive species specialist at University of Georgia's Warnell School of Forest Resources.

## **Options for managing small parcels of forestland – Michael Woolery**

**Michael Woolery** received his Bachelor's degree in Forest Science in 1997 and his Master's degree in Natural Resources and Environmental Sciences in 2000. Past work experience includes working for a forestry consulting company in central Illinois as well as a timber export company in southern Illinois. He started Greenwood Forestry after moving to northern Illinois in 2004. He currently provides a wide variety of forestry consulting services in the northern 1/3 of the state. Michael has served on the External Advisory Committee for the Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Sciences at the University of Illinois, and currently serves as a Region 1 Board Director for the Illinois Forestry Association.

## **Urban Wood Utilization in Riverside – Michael Collins**

**Michael Collins** is a Certified Arborist, having served as Village Forester for Riverside, IL for the past 13 years. In that capacity, he manages and supervises tree evaluations, tree pest control, tree planting, and tree trimming operations for a city that cares for around 10,000 trees. Prior to that, Michael was an Arborist for the McCormick Foundation, a Graduate Research Assistant at The Morton Arboretum, and a Forestry Technician for Clark Forestry in Baraboo, WI. He earned his B.S. degree in Forestry from University of Wisconsin-Madison, and his M.S. degree in Natural Resources and Conservation from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

## **To our Children's Children, Ad Infinitum – Kevin O'Rourke/Joe FitzSimmons**

**Kevin O'Rourke P.C.**, is a licensed attorney based in Norridge, IL. A sole practitioner, his practice covers the areas of real estate, family, probate, elder law, and estate planning. His background includes helping the elderly reduce and defer their property taxes. Kevin has been a member of the Illinois State Bar Association since 1995. He received his law degree from John Marshall Law School, his M.A. degree in Criminal and Social Justice from Lewis University, and earned a B.A. degree in history from the University of Illinois at Chicago.

**Joe FitzSimmons** is a private forest landowner and IFA Member in far southern Illinois. He was employed as a street police officer in the Chicago Police Department (CPD) from 1970 to 2008. Joe also attended Law School at Loyola University (Chicago) and was admitted to the Illinois Bar in 1983. He engaged in a part-time law practice from 1983 through 2008. After retirement from the CPD he took a full-time position representing law enforcement members and their union organization. He retired again as his children entered their final year in college. Joe and his father purchased 90 acres of hunting property in Johnson County in 1973. A transaction with a neighbor increased the plot to 167 acres in 2008 and it is now the home of a Wood-Mizer sawmill and a developing wood shop for the production of custom wood products. Joe has been serving as Vice-President of the Illinois Forestry Association for the past year, and is set to be elected President during the business meeting at this conference.

## **Illinois Forest Pest and Disease Update – Tricia Bethke**

**Tricia Bethke** is the Illinois Forest Pest Outreach Coordinator for the State of Illinois. Her position at The Morton Arboretum is funded through a cooperative grant with the USDA Animal & Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS). Tricia's responsibilities include statewide training of key stakeholders on invasive species, forest pest identification, regulations and quarantines and reporting protocols. Tricia also coordinates and instructs tree identification, pest detection programs, and tree health monitoring.