



The Voice for Illinois Forests

Acting on issues that impact rural and community forests and promoting forestry in Illinois

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****Inside this Issue****

President's Message	1
Association & Partner News	2
New Member Benefit	
Tree Farm Turns 75	
Policy/Program Updates	6
State Forester Report	
Timber Price Trends	
New Urban Forestry Website	
RCPP Project Approved	
The Case for State Nurseries	
Wrongful Tree Cutting Act	
Featured Articles:	10
Smiling Faces, Slimy Hands	
Photographing your Forest	
Commentary	13
Walnuts and Acorns	
Cutting Edge	
Resources	14
Quarterly Tree: Silver Maple	
Invasive: Paulownia	
... and more!	

Message from the President

By Mike McMahan

One of the things I love about having the woods around my home is the seemingly endless supply of firewood. My wife and I burned a nice fire in the fireplace almost every evening this past winter.

What I like best about heating with wood is that it is FREE – well, almost. I do have to cut it, haul it back to the barn, split it and then stack it to dry. Then, I have to haul the split pieces up to the house, carry it inside and build the fire. That work is the “cost” I guess, but I enjoy the work - and the rewards.

A few weeks ago, a friend stopped in and commented on the nice fire we had burning. He said he liked a fire but was putting in a gas fireplace so he didn't have all the hassle. He asked me “why” I was still burning wood. That question got me thinking.....why was I working so hard over the year to enjoy fires in the winter?

After he left, I sat there and asked myself – Why do I do what I do, in and for my woods? I'm not a deep thinker, so it didn't take me too long to figure it out – BECAUSE I LIKE IT. Then, I thought about the IFA and its many members like me. I began to wonder what each of you would say if you were there with me that cold evening. Why are *you* a member? Are you getting what you want out of our association? Why do you renew your membership when the time comes? I doubt it is because of all the “things” you get as a result of your membership.

If you're like me, the reasons you support the IFA run deeper than tangibles like a quality newsletter, first class website, access to events, or a having a voice in Springfield. I think many of us have something in common – we take responsibility for our woods because we care and want to do the right thing. We have discovered a best kept secret called “forestry” that is worth passing along to others.

The IFA was formed with landowners in mind. We stand for something important - forests that are healthier and more productive because we manage them wisely. There's a lot of work involved, and it's an uphill battle because so few people are aware. They don't understand or appreciate forestry and what foresters can do for us.

In fact, there are MANY landowners we would like to reach and encourage. We want to inspire people to care and take care of their woods. Even more important and urgent is the need to earn the support of agency leaders, legislators, partner organizations, and the general public - so they will care about our issues as much as we do, and work with us to secure the resources and policies needed to manage Illinois forests wisely for the future.

Like heating with wood or managing a forest, there's a lot of work involved in pursuing the IFA mission. Personally, I think it's worth it. Thanks for caring enough to help us keep the fires burning!



Mike McMahan



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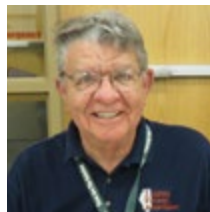
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Secretary's Report

by Dave Gillespie



First I want to again say hello and welcome to all of the new members who joined the IFA as a result of the mailing of

the Illinois Forestry Development Act (FDA) certification forms sent out by the Forestry Division of the IDNR. Your support is essential for us to continue to move forward. Thanks also to State Forester Tom Wilson and forestry staff Chris Whittom and Kym Wycoff for their support and work on the FDA program. And, of course, thanks to the long-standing members of the IFA for their continued support.

I'd like put on one of my other hats and report on pending legislative issues. We've been working behind the scenes to save the Mason Nursery from closure, and hopefully leave the options open to restore operations at the Union Nursery. Our position statement on the nurseries is complete and ready for sharing with legislators. A bill has been introduced that would allow the nurseries to sell seedlings, but unfortunately, it also contains a fee for FDA plan approval.

We are trying to get the nursery issue and fee issue separated into two separate bills so we can get this nursery problem fixed before it's too late. Then, we want to start a conversation with IDNR leadership about the Division's dependence on General Revenue Funds (GRF) and see if we can help come up with some solutions we can fully support. Senator Sullivan is working with us and has pledged to separate the issues into two different bills. We are also working to get language included that would allow the nurseries to sell liner stock - bare root seedlings that would be purchased by private nurseries and then grown larger and resold to support efforts to restore native oaks in the Chicago region. This would bring a significant income source to the Division, something they are continually being pressured to do. I had the opportunity to attend a Senate Environment & Conservation Committee meeting where SB2587 was passed in the combined form. We expect it to change before the "second reading." Also discussed and approved during that hearing was an amendment to the Wrongful Tree Cutting Act that would increase the penalty for unlawfully cutting trees on lands set aside, for example, as nature preserves. See the articles on Page 8-9 for more details.

New Benefit Available to Card-Carrying IFA Members

Members living near or planning a visit to the Chicago region may want to take advantage of a new IFA member benefit. Effective May 1st, you can present your official IFA membership card for free admission for yourself and a guest to [The Morton Arboretum](#)! See the fee schedule on the right for the amount you will save. No other discounts are included or implied, such as fees for trams, special events or program registration. This is strictly a basic admission discount, similar to the reciprocal benefit available to members of the American Horticultural Society. Consider becoming a member of The Morton Arboretum to enjoy other special discounts and freebies, including 10% off in the Arboretum Store (no discounts in the Ginkgo Restaurant or Cafe' unless a member is at the \$250 Friend level or higher). Call Visitor Services at 630/968-0074, or visit The Morton Arboretum website to help plan

your trip to this amazing place. Contact Dave Gillespie at Dandgisp@aol.com or call 217/483-2711 to request your IFA member ID card, which you must present at the gate to receive the discount.

Current Admission Rates at The Morton Arboretum

December through March
AND every Wednesday:

\$9 Adults ages 18-64
\$8 Seniors ages 65+
\$6 Youth ages 2-17

April through November:

\$14 Adults ages 18-64
\$12 Seniors ages 65+
\$9 Youth ages 2-17

Children 1 and younger are free.

Admission includes FREE parking.

Building a Better IFA

with Stephanie Brown, Executive Director



When I was a little girl, I spent a lot of summers with my grandma out on the farm. It was a simpler time, with no technology – or air conditioning –

to keep me indoors. I spent most days outside, making do and imagining whatever I could find as the backdrop for pretend play.

When I got really bored, my grandma would slip into the old smokehouse and emerge with a familiar box of lumber scraps. I would go to work – imagining them in every possible combination to build something grand.

Each time I would assemble a project, it seemed like there weren't quite enough blocks. A solid foundation wouldn't leave enough blocks to make it tall. The other challenge was that no two blocks were alike – they were different shapes and sizes. I couldn't always find the right piece to add here or there. If I just had one more wedge for a truss, or dowel segment for a matching pillar, it would have made my project complete.

Now I am all grown up and helping to build the Illinois Forestry Association. Instead of wood scraps, we have people. Our volunteer board and committee members are the building blocks that we have available to accomplish the IFA mission. Their interests and skills represent the different shapes and sizes that we try to put together in the best possible formation to build a strong and functioning association.

Our greatest challenge is finding new people to add to and round out our collection of building blocks.



There is no one-size-fits-all job description for an IFA volunteer, short of willingness and availability to engage in *some* aspect of the work we do. The reality of a volunteer-led association is that the array of programs and services offered are limited by the assortment of people involved in planning and carrying them out. That's why you see shifts in program emphasis over time. If coverage is lacking, it is probably because no one is currently on board or available to tend to that area of concern.

When I think about where we are in the evolution of the Illinois Forestry Association, I think about this box of wood I remember so fondly. We've been fortunate to have a succession of good people involved in building the IFA. Volunteers of different shapes and sizes have flowed into and out of service, contributing their unique part to the overall design. To further support the willing workers that have come together, we're still working to add building blocks to strengthen this association and make the IFA all that it can be. Each year we do the best we can with what we've got.

The house that IFA continues to build has a blueprint – our [strategic plan](#). Crews are working on the marketing, membership, legislative/policy, education, finance, and governance fronts. We are all members like you, sharing the cost of the build and reaping the rewards and satisfaction of what we constructed together.

Times have changed, but we still need the building blocks for progress and the people who know how to put them together in support of Forestry in Illinois.



IFA Board Members met in Springfield for a Planning Retreat. We began and ended with a full board discussion (left). Four committees, including Membership (above), met concurrently during the day-long session.

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IFA Committees Off to a Good Start in 2016

by Stephanie Brown

Following a successful planning retreat in December, five of the IFA's eight committees met in January and February to set plans in motion on various fronts.

Finance - Tom Desulis, Chair

Conducted the annual financial review, finalized the 2015 Year-End Financial Report, prepared the 2016 Budget, and reviewed investment strategies.

Legislative/Policy - Dave Gillespie, Chair

Worked to develop an effective position statement in support of the state tree nurseries, considered an appropriate response/strategy for working with the proponents of an amendment to the Wrongful Tree Cutting Act.

Marketing - Stephanie Brown, Chair

Formulated a 2-stage plan, with messaging that better describes the WHY of IFA to be incorporated into a new brochure and telescoping display. Stage 2 will follow with roll-out of the new materials/message and a branded event series called Fireside Forestry.

Membership - Carol Bryant, Chair

Satisfied with the response to last year's membership drive and lapsed member initiative, the committee turned its attention to correcting bad email addresses and adding a personal touch to friendly reminders going out to nearly lapsed members.

Technical - John Edgington, Chair

Charged with leading IFA's goal of Promoting Forest Management, our committee of technical advisors is focused on repurposing "A Landowner's Guide to Woodland Stewardship." This comprehensive 3-ring binder reference still contains useful and relevant material, but needs new sections on invasive species, prescribed burning, and available assistance.

The full board met on March 2nd to discuss progress, consider recommendations, and take action on items including the 2016 Budget, and a revised position statement in support of the state tree nurseries.

For more information, contact Stephanie Brown at 618/949-3699, or send an email to ilforestry@gmail.com.

Special Thanks to Our...

Sustaining Members¹

Doug Baner
Stephanie Brown
Elizabeth L. Bumgarner
Wanda Crabb
Matt Drumm
Mary Duff
David Gillespie
Illinois Consulting Foresters, Inc.
Michael & Patricia Johnson
Jim & Patricia Krebs
Diane Laws
Eric Luckey
Michael McMahan
Lynn McMahan
Andy & Eileen Partak
Tom & Judy Syke

Supporting Members²

James & Laura Bickers
Tom Cropper
Steve Dougherty
Richard Dugas, Jr.
Paul Fairless
Sally Ferguson, Rock Island Co. SWCD
Richard Floyd
Deborah Fluegel, Trees Forever
John Freiburg II
Linda Friend
Ann Garrett
Jeffrey Garst
Robert Giannoni
Andrew Gulya
Neil A. Hamerlinck Trust
Ron Hart, Sr.
City of Henry, IL
Illinois Tree Farm Committee
Tony & Jill Kreke

Noel Lane
Brent Lecher
Lauren Lurkins, IL Farm Bureau
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Marion County SWCD
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Perry County SWCD
Nicholas Peters
Dan Price
Rey Reinsma
Marygene & Steve Ritchie
Chris Ritchie
Richard & Linda Saslow
Dennis Schneider
Bob Schnettgoecke, LLC
Ray Searby, Marion Co. SWCD
Shawnee RC&D Area, Inc.
Mark Shofner
Oleg Simkovic
Duane Snow, Marion Co. SWCD
Brad Tarr, Jasper County SWCD
John Torbert
Rich Tucker & Billman
John Trnovec
James VonderHaar
Patrick Walter, BPW Land & Cattle
John E. Warnock
Williamson County SWCD,
in memory of Bob Nelson
James Zaczek, SIU Forestry

Going above and beyond to support the cause - You are appreciated!!

¹—Sustaining Members (IFX) contribute \$100/year

²—Supporting Members (IFS) contribute \$50/year

Help Wanted:

The IFA is seeking qualified volunteers to assist with the following functions:

Policy Support - Seeking members who know their state legislators and/or are willing to reach out periodically to share talking points provided. Familiarity with, or interest in learning more about the legislative process is a plus.

Estate Planning Expertise - Active or recently retired estate planner needed to advise on program development, present a program, and/or author a newsletter article.

Social Media Support - Seek out and post appropriate content on the IFA Facebook page. Prior experience with managing a Facebook page - or a keen interest in learning is preferred.

Tree Farm - 75 Years and Counting

by Kurt Bobsin, Forester
(Retired, but not tired)



One of my favorite quotes by John Muir [he was Gifford Pinchot's buddy by the way for all of you forestry buffs] that was on a poster hanging in my office goes "In every walk of nature, one receives far more than he seeks". That, I believe, captures the heart of every Tree Farmer whether they are running their favorite chainsaw; looking for that prime mushroom spot; hoping to catch a glimpse of that blue looking bird noticed during the last time out in the woods or maybe catching a fish down by the creek or pond.. but if not, enjoying that quiet stillness, the beauty of that water in the creek meandering by is good enough for the day. Tree Farmers are stewards of their land for profit, pleasure and pride but before I get too far along here, let's take a step back.

Tree Farm is celebrating its 75th year. The program is sponsored and funded by the American Forest Foundation through the American Tree Farm System [ATFS]. The very first Tree Farm in the nation became certified in 1941. One hundred twenty thousand acres of forest land in the state of Washington owned by Weyerhaeuser became Tree Farm #1. In 1955, Illinois certified their first Tree Farm, Sinnissippi Forest which was later to become part of Illinois' state forest system. Today, forty four states have more than 80,000 Tree Farmers managing 24 million acres of certified forestland. In Illinois, 913 Tree Farmers manage 81,242 acres, less than ½ % of the total number of forest landowners in the state. However, we don't want every landowner in the



program, only those that are passionate and excited about managing their forest land.

As I scan the 75th anniversary edition of Woodland, ATFS' quarterly magazine, one thing that strikes me is the stories of landowners from across the country. Tree Farming is about people. They love the land they steward and are passionate and committed to leaving it in better shape than when they found it. Along the way, Tree Farmers reap the satisfaction of improving the resources of wood, water, wildlife and recreational opportunity on their land. That is the hallmark of those in the Tree Farm program, unchanged through the decades since its beginning.



So what will the next 75 years look like for Tree Farm? There is probably a lot more going on behind that green & white Tree Farm sign displayed on your property than you know. The ATFS leadership consists of a passionate, enthusiastic group of people working hard to advocate for the private woodland owner. There are a number of resources to help you become educated about what ATFS is doing, to help you become more educated and help you accomplish the goals and dreams for your property. Check out the Learn tab on the ATFS website. Field days continue to be an effective way in Illinois to share information and connect Tree Farmers in the state. On May 7th there will be a Tree Farm family field day just outside of Jacksonville, IL in Morgan county. Watch the IL Tree Farm and IFA websites for more details.



I am not going to tell you how to become a Tree Farmer. If you are interested, then you will pursue that by checking out the websites for the IL Tree Farm Committee www.treefarmssystem.org/Illinois or the American Tree Farm System www.treefarmssystem.org/ to find out more. We are waiting for your call to become part of a special group of forest landowners.



Are you on Facebook?

So is Illinois Forestry...

Illinois Extension Forestry
www.facebook.com/IllinoisExtensionForestry

Illinois Forestry Association
www.facebook.com/ILForestry

Illinois Tree Farm
www.facebook.com/IllinoisTreeFarm

Illinois Walnut Council
www.facebook.com/IllinoisWalnutCouncil

Find us.

"Like" our pages.

Share your favorite posts with friends.

Join us in promoting Forestry in Illinois!

State Forester Update

by Tom Wilson



The Division of Forest Resources continues to provide technical and professional forestry assistance to forest owners statewide. Our highly motivated field staff demonstrates and assists with spreading forestry knowledge, care and management. Program Managers in Springfield continually provide guidance and structure for Urban and Community Forestry, Fire, Forest Health, State Forests, Timber and Wood Utilization, Private Forest Stewardship, Forest Legacy, Forest Inventory and others.

Existing state budget concerns continue to hamper forestry grant opportunities including, but not limited to Volunteer Fire Grants and Urban Forestry Community Assistance Grants

A draft of the Illinois Forest Action Plan is due out this month for editing and collaborative review. We will ask partners and professionals from the resource community for input and approval to finalize this document. (Paul Deizman)

Efforts are underway to create a web application for real-time reporting of Ginseng sales between harvesters and ginseng dealers. These efforts will assist with enforcement of Illinois ginseng conservation laws. (Paul Deizman)

The IFDA forest stewardship program continues undergoing a full-scale monitoring and update of records. This is occurring on all levels including district offices and IDNR headquarters. The process is utilizing results and returns associated with program renewal letters that were sent out to nearly 11,000 participants between July and December 2015. (Chris Whittom)

Urban Forestry has created a new website which will help provide information and guidance to communities and individuals. (Reinee Hildebrandt)

Timber Price Trends

by Paul Deizman



Historically, timber investments out compete the discount rate. That claim by forestry economists has been true for many, many decades in Illinois and in most regions of USA having good timber soils. It means growing logs beats out the interest rate by a couple or a few points. Since 2007, until very recently, it seems any investment beats the near zero interest rates financial institutions are paying on invested funds. Today, it follows that timber and logs do much better in a short term scenario versus banks. Long term timber investments are still expected to out perform the banks by the historic margin of two or three points.

Illinois timber prices are affected by global, regional, and local markets due to the demand for quality hardwood veneer and sawlogs worldwide. All timber markets are affected by the cost of money or capitol, fuel and oil prices, weather patterns, timber quality, species, site and access, and other factors. Data suggests that industrial use Illinois logs which are processed in Illinois or by our immediate neighbors represent about half of our state output this last decade. Industrial uses include railroad ties, pallets, crane mats, mine timbers and other non-lumber non-veneer use. Veneer export log markets represent about 20 percent of our annual output. That market has become less diversified during the last decade, but prices remain strong. China itself now consumes about half of our export quality veneer and grade logs. The other half is split with a half dozen countries or less. Prior to this decade no one country bought more than 10 percent of our veneer output, and about a dozen countries were actively buying.

Best estimates are the remaining 30 percent of our Illinois output is sawlogs processed for lumber by Illinois mills or adjacent mills in neighboring states. The industrial timber use upswing is a positive trend. A relevant example is: As more corporations and governments require environmentally-friendly construction and assess protection of natural resources, soils and wetlands; the more industrial timber for crane mats is needed. Mats also wear out and must be replaced.

Regardless of the timber and logs ultimate fate, timber is being bought and sold from forestland in Illinois at a robust pace. Since 2007, and until 2013, the trend had been low overall timber prices for all species with the exception being white oak and walnut. White oak and walnut fell in price over the recession, but relative to the typical other Illinois species they fell very little. Since 2013, all Illinois hardwood species have recovered, and white oak and walnut remain at historically high prices. Ash prices are slowly and steadily rising due to a shrinking supply caused by the Emerald Ash Borer; new customers are recognizing ash's excellent appearance, working properties, and appeal as a hardwood choice. Ash is at an all time high and remains a good buy as a fine hardwood.

The Illinois timber markets for standing hardwood timber are currently excellent. The trend which was reinforced over the recession and is true today is that walnut and white oak veneer and quality sawlogs are in high demand and bring top dollar from our woodlands over most species.

Due to the global nature of the log and wood markets it is impossible to predict the long term future. Markets could change quickly. In the short term, markets are excellent for hardwood logs of desirable species. Sales of quality white oak and walnut are expected to be excellent in the short term.

[Summer 2015 Timber Price Report](#)

[Winter 2014-2015 Timber Price Report](#)

[Summer 2014 Timber Price Report](#)

Paul Deizman is the program leader for Forest Utilization/Marketing & State Forests with the Illinois Department of Natural Resources, Division of Forest Resources.

Check Out the New Illinois Urban Forestry Website

by Dave Gillespie

We all know that Illinois has millions of acres of some of the most productive farmland in the World, and that agriculture is the number one industry in our State, but sometimes we forget that about 83% of the citizens of Illinois live in urban areas. Often the urban forest is the city dweller's only opportunity to enjoy a natural environment. Like the rural forests, the urban/community forest contains many of the resources common to the rural settings, such as trees, related vegetation, water, soil, and animal life. These forests provide temperature modification and energy conservation, abatement of air, water, and noise pollution, they mask unpleasant views, and provide physical and psychological health benefits, too. Therefore, Illinois' urban forests are just as valuable and important as their rural counterparts.

The IDNR is upgrading its website. Reinee Hildebrandt, the Urban Forestry Coordinator in IDNR's Division of Forest Resources, has used this opportunity to upgrade the Urban Forestry part of the website. It is a very informative, well done, and now the go-to site to find the answers to everything related to Urban Forestry in Illinois. Go to the site and learn – and also be entertained. You will have a great experience. Go to <http://dnr.illinois.gov/conservation/Forestry/UrbanForestry/Pages/default.aspx>

If you have any suggestions regarding the urban forestry website you can contact Reinee at reinee.hildebrandt@illinois.gov. Don't forget that **Arbor Day in Illinois is the last Friday in April – April 29, 2016**. Go out and plant a tree, or 2 or 3 or more.



Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) Proposal Funded

by Bill Gradle

Illinois is projected to receive roughly \$400,000 a year for 5 years to share the cost of 16 different forestry practices available through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP).

Under this new RCPP initiative, applications for forestry practices will compete against each other, rather than with the myriad of practices in the general EQIP program that have tended to outcompete forestry.

Landowners in the shaded target areas (see right), who previously signed up for EQIP forestry cost-sharing will likely receive first consideration. An estimated \$4 million in unfunded applications are already in the system - a major factor that contributed to RCPP project approval.

If you already have an EQIP forestry application in the hopper, on land located in the target areas, it would be a good idea to check in with your local NRCS office. Let them know you are still interested, and make sure your paperwork is complete and up-to-date.

Find Your Local USDA-NRCS Office

Click on the map below to find contact information for your local NRCS office.



RCPP Project Target Areas

If you haven't yet applied, this might be a good time to dust off your forest management plan and consider getting an application in the system for future consideration. If you don't yet have a plan, there is a possibility this program would share the cost of having a plan prepared by a professional consultant.

The following NRCS core conservation practices will be used to address the primary resource concerns of soil erosion, soil health, and water quality - along with secondary concerns relative to wildlife habitat and degraded plant condition: Forest Management Plan (NRCS Practice Code 106+); Forest Stand Improvement (666); Tree/Shrub Establishment (612); Restoration of Rare/Declining Habitat (643); Upland Wildlife Habitat Management (645); Critical Area Planting (342); Prescribed Burning (338); Brush Management (314); Fire Break (394); Riparian Forest Buffer (391); and Herbaceous Weed Control (315).

[CLICK HERE](#) to find the contact information for your local NRCS Office, or visit your local USDA Service Center.

[CLICK HERE](#) to download a map and contact information for your IDNR District Forester.

Making the Case for Our State Tree Nurseries

by Stephanie Brown & Dave Gillespie

The State of Illinois budget impasse continues to drag on, leaving several aspects of Illinois forestry - and conservation at large - in jeopardy. One issue of growing concern - both literally and figuratively - has been the uncertain future of our State Tree Nurseries.

The Union State Tree Nursery has already experienced the fate now forecast for the Mason Nursery - de facto closure due to complete staff loss. Retirements and persistent unfilled vacancies left the Union County site without anyone to operate the program. The Mason Nursery stands to lose all of its staff in a single blow of the budget ax, if the court injunction currently preventing that personnel action is lifted. Since the time the layoffs were announced last September, the nursery program has been in a sort of purgatory -- still "open," but with no budget or confidence to make plans for future growing seasons.

Position Statement

The IFA Legislative/Policy Committee, led by Dave Gillespie, recently completed a formal [position statement](#) that will help others see the tremendous value of the State Tree Nursery program and what we stand to lose if the Mason Nursery closes.

The conservation impact of the state nursery program is undeniable, and the operation virtually pays for itself, making the motivations behind this targeted closure very difficult to understand. This is one of the few revenue sources available to support the Division of Forest Resources, which has been under increasing pressure to reduce its dependence on state tax dollars, a.k.a. the General Revenue Fund.



Perhaps the nursery seemed like a clean and easy target for a mandatory cut - better than cutting District Forester positions. Or, maybe the strategy has been to threaten something that is widely supported, in order to gain other concessions. Either way, this has been a short-sighted, needless disruption of an otherwise self-supporting enterprise that plays an essential and strategic role in the conservation of public and private lands throughout the state.

A Legislative Solution

An IDNR-authored bill (HB5893) has been introduced which would allow the state to sell nursery stock to other nurseries - a move that would presumably save the Mason operation. It has a companion in the Senate ([SB2587](#)), sponsored by Senator Sullivan. Unfortunately, each of these original amendments also included, but did not specify, a FEE to be charged for District Forester review/approval of FDA management plans. Our concern about such a fee has been that land ownership and property tax scenarios vary so widely across the state that it would be virtually impossible to establish a fair fee schedule. While we heartily agree that District Foresters provide a valuable service, charging a fee would not produce enough funding to put the Division's budgetary concerns to rest. It would be an added administrative burden on a workforce already spread too thin. Fees might even discourage a landowner from getting or maintaining a forest management plan.

After explaining our position to Senator Sullivan, he has pledged to separate the nursery issue and the FDA fee issue into two separate bills. Our immediate concern is to secure a bright future for the state nurseries. We will oppose the FDA fee amendment and work toward a more proactive dialogue with IDNR that will likely include a mix of policy and legislative solutions designed to resolve this persistent and difficult issue.

ANTICIPATED IMPACTS OF STATE NURSERY CLOSURE...

LOSS OF UNIQUELY QUALIFIED SOURCES OF PLANT MATERIAL:

- Native plant material grown from locally-sourced seed are best-adapted and most closely match pre-settlement vegetation.
- No *private* nurseries in the State of IL produce the quantity and quality of tree seedlings and other plants needed to meet the demand.
- Vast losses of trees caused by such insects as the Emerald Ash Borer have inspired efforts to replant native oaks from local seed sources throughout the Chicago region, i.e. from seedlings grown at the Mason State Nursery.

CONSERVATION, INTERRUPTED:

- Illinois landowners, State and Federal agencies will be extremely hampered in their ability to secure high quality, native plant material if the Mason State Nursery is closed.
- Landowners with Stewardship Plans approved by the IDNR and the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) may find it difficult to follow through with certain practices that establish/restore native habitats for wildlife.
- Arbor Day, Earth Day, and School Yard Habitat Action projects for youth education will be severely curtailed without state-grown seedlings to plant.

LOSS OF STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS WITH FAR-REACHING IMPACT:

- Because of the expertise, specialized equipment, and reputation of the IDNR Mason State Nursery, cooperative agreements and MOU's have been developed with the U. S. Forest Service, Midewin Tallgrass Prairie, the Shawnee National Forest, the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Illinois River Refuges, and the Cypress Creek National Wildlife Refuge to provide native plant material and seed for restoration projects.
- The Mason State Nursery is the only such facility east of the Mississippi River with the ability to produce pollinator seed of a desired quality and quantity. The milkweed plant is an example of a pollinator seed as it is the desired food of the Monarch butterfly. Presidential policy states that all federal agencies must aid butterfly habitat.

Anticipated Impacts, continued -

- Prior to the lay-off notices, agreements were near completion with Indiana, Iowa, Kentucky, and Missouri for the Mason State Nursery to be the primary supplier of pollinator seed to these states in exchange for plant materials the Mason Nursery would not be able to produce while growing the seed.
- The Mason State Nursery is capable of producing at least 1000 pounds of pollinator seed per year, with a 2-3 fold increase in 2 years. Pollinator seed is worth an average of \$100.00/lb.

LOSS OF PUBLIC INVESTMENT AND PLANT MATERIAL:

- The infrastructure and specialized equipment at the Mason Nursery is valued conservatively at \$15 million.
- Plant material in the ground, and grass seed in storage is valued at \$1,557,500. It cost approximately \$1,150,000 to produce this plant material.
- With the production of pollinator seed and other plant material, the value of all products of the Mason State Nursery will continue to grow, **IF** there is a budget, in 2017 and 2018.
- It costs less to produce plant material at the Mason State Nursery than to buy it on the open market.
- The Mason State Nursery makes a profit. All this will be "written off" if the Nursery is closed.

LOST CAPACITY TO REDUCE GENERAL REVENUE FUND (GRF) DEPENDENCE:

- Since the 1920's the IDNR Division of Forest Resources has relied on GRF.
- Cuts in GRF to the IDNR have resulted in cuts to the Division, of which the nurseries belong.
- The Division once had a headcount of over 100 personnel. Now that headcount is down to 29.
- Lay-off of nursery personnel would further reduce that headcount by 17%.
- No other Division or Office in the IDNR, except for the State Museum, has been asked to make such reductions.
- Conservation of our forests, prairies, and other native landscapes are essential to our survival. State tree nurseries are a legitimate public investment with no market-driven substitute.
- The IFA is seeking proactive dialogue about overall Division sustainability vs. reacting to piecemeal cuts and fees.

Righting the Wrongful Tree Cutting Act

by Stephanie Brown

Imagine taking a walk out to the back forty and finding the stumps of 61 mature trees, their tops strewn across the landscape. Your heart sinks and your blood pressure rises. You've fallen victim to timber theft. If prosecuted under Illinois' Wrongful Tree Cutting Act (WTCA), those who intentionally cut your trees will have to pay three times the amount you *would* have received if you had decided to sell that timber yourself.

The Wrongful Tree Cutting Act was passed into law about 20 years ago as a way to deter rural timber theft, while providing just compensation to the landowner for the loss. It has since been used in many court cases, some of which didn't exactly fit the original intent of the law. Once precedents were set, the law continued to be applied to situations where the value of the trees lost - or the full measure of damage incurred - was arguably greater than three times the value of the stolen logs.

Applying the WTCA to lands that are permanently set aside for conservation has presented a special challenge. The stewards of many of these properties see timber harvesting as utterly incompatible with their management goals. The triple stumpage penalty has not been sufficient to pay for the follow-up measures needed to restore these sites to their original composition or character. You can't just put trees back on the stump. Harvesting equipment may bring in exotic plant seeds and leave ruts; trees fall and logs get dragged across plants that were supposed to be left untouched.

While landowners well-versed in the benefits/methods of forest management are inclined to overlook a short term mess for longer term rewards, the stewards of protected lands want to be able to put it back in such a way that the land can continue to fulfill its original purpose. A group of organizations, including the owner of the site described in the first paragraph, introduced an [amendment](#) to the WTCA that would add remediation cost recovery for protected lands to the existing law.

We first became aware of the effort to amend the WTCA through a collaborative network of conservation interests called [Vital Lands Illinois](#). They invited IFA to take part in a group exercise examining the process for amending a state law. It just so happened that the bill under consideration (HB5577) had close ties to IFA member interests. In fact, the initial proposed language caused quite a stir in forestry circles. Not because anyone supports wrongful tree cutting - we all hate it and wish every bad actor was out of business. What concerned us was the potential for unintended consequences.

The prospect of higher legal judgments in wrongful cutting cases could increase liability insurance rates across an industry already crippled by onerous worker's comp rates (now \$1.26 per \$1 of payroll). Without forestry consultants, timber buyers, and loggers, we lose the capacity to manage forests. Even long-standing critics of tree cutting have started to realize the essential role of harvesting and other methods of forest disturbance in restoring oak-hickory forests. We have to be careful not to hurt those who are best qualified/equipped to do the work.

Rather than sit back and react, we decided to engage in the process and work with the proponents to improve the amendment. To limit increased liability, we pressed for specific language to guide the courts in awarding reasonable and professionally-guided remediation on protected lands. We also tried to correct a significant flaw in the original law by adding a residential section that appropriately uses shade tree appraisal guidelines instead of triple stumpage to value wrongfully cut yard trees. The negotiated amendment ([SB3289](#)) is far more specific, and tempered by the most qualified experts available to carry it out.

Time will tell whether we were successful in curbing unintended consequences. We did our best to convey industry concerns. The negotiated bill is much better than the open-ended original, **and** the process allowed us to correct some persistent negative misperceptions about forestry. We are the good guys, too often confused with the bad. By working with others who share our good intentions, trusting that we all want to do what's right, I believe history will show we held our own as the Voice for Illinois Forests.

Smiling Faces, Slimy Hands

by Bob Gillespie



Shafer Spotted Salamander

You know, when you think about it, nothing brings a smile to a child's face like a hoppy frog or toad in hand. Maybe that hopper is a toad captured after a persistent chase in the backyard, a big fat bullfrog wriggling to escape at the pond, or a spring peeper at a favorite wooded wetland, jumping from grandma's hands. We all have remembrances of hopppers, and there is no season like springtime to celebrate these esteemed amphibians.

Amphibians in Illinois which include frogs, toads, and salamanders, all need ready access to moisture to support their life history requirements. Most Midwestern amphibians breed in wetland areas and develop as larval stages, tadpoles (as is the case for frogs and toads) and larval salamanders. Amphibians have specialized and delicate skin, an adaptation to life on land and in water. Their skin, which is permeable to gaseous exchange, may act as a respiratory surface allowing amphibians to breathe while lungs are developing or as a supplement to their lungs. Amphibian skin is readily permeable to oxygen and water but must be kept relatively moist to allow oxygen to pass through. To maintain

necessary moisture levels, amphibians secrete mucus via glands in the skin. The mucous serves as a protective layer to ward off desiccation when the animal is on land and to maintain the proper salt and water balance within the animal's body when the animal is in water. The slimy secretions (among other strategies) help to defend against predators or - often to no avail - those pesky kids.

Amphibians are considered sensitive indicators of environmental health. Their specially adapted skin unfortunately makes them particularly susceptible to pollutants. Individuals may encounter chemical pollutants that may cause malformations as the animals develop. Pollution often results in the decline or extirpation of populations. The fragility of the developmental stages of amphibians, and their particular morphology, causes them to be the unfortunate "canary in the coal mine" in so many cases.

Where quality habitat remains, spring is the time of year when amphibians undergo a particular ritual that is a welcome harbinger of warmer days ahead. Springtime is the season to

exercise the vocal repertoire. After an extended winter of inactivity, sometimes referred to as aestivation, frogs and toads emerge and seek out their favored locations to vocalize. In Illinois, species such as the wood frog, spring peeper, and chorus frogs may get a head start just as winter seems to have abated, only to be driven back by a cold snap. Luckily their blood contains nucleating proteins that help to freeze the water in cells first and a glucose-based "antifreeze," produced from the animal's liver, that supports the cells as the water freezes. Animals can then completely freeze and survive unharmed during those early freeze-thaw cycles.

At wetland habitats, while frogs and toads are singing their overtures, salamanders are quietly congregating for the same reason, mating season. These wetland nurseries are essential not only for breeding and laying egg masses but also for the development of larvae through immature stages into adulthood. Amphibians require moist habitats, such as the permanent aquatic environments (rivers, streams, ponds, seeps, and springs) and ephemeral wetlands (springtime pools, flooded fields, and even rain-filled puddles). Many of those favorite amphibians that bring smiles to our faces utilize naturally occurring wetlands in forests.

Maintaining high quality habitats for amphibians in our working forestlands enhances property values by helping to assure ecological diversity and create recreational benefits. Certain species of amphibians flourish in fishless wetlands and will benefit from constructed wildlife watering holes or



Slimy Hands - Continued from Page 9...

shallow depressional areas that pond water in wet periods. As landowners we should maintain wetlands on our properties and ensure that best management practices are exercised when conducting timber management in and around those habitats. Manipulating existing natural wetlands, draining or further impounding them can be counterproductive for maintaining amphibian populations. Sometimes it is simply best to monitor wetlands and if amphibians are utilizing them, then perhaps those habitats need no further modification.



LaRue Salamander

Springtime is an outstanding time to learn which amphibians you may have on your property. If you are inspecting your timber, look for salamanders under logs and listen to the various frog and toad calls that may chorus through your woods. To learn more about the various calls, visit the US Geologic Survey's Patuxent Wildlife Research Center's website titled: USGS Frog Quizzes. You can reach that informative website at the following link: <<https://www.pwrc.usgs.gov/Frogquiz/>>

For specific habitat management guidelines for amphibians, please visit the Partners in Amphibian and Reptile Conservation (PARC) website, <<http://www.parcplace.org/>>. Interested readers may elect to download the PARC Habitat Management Guidelines for Amphibians and Reptiles of the Midwestern United States. This publication is available at the Midwest PARC website: <<http://www.mwparc.org/>>.

Bob Gillespie is a Natural Resources Coordinator with the IDNR Division of Natural Heritage, located at Prairie Ridge State Natural Area near Newton.

Photographing Your Forest: A method to both monitor progress and capture the beauty of your woods

By Chris Evans



Use photography to help tell the story of why you are a forest landowner

Photography is a powerful tool for landowners. It can be a fast and effective way to track management, keep records of activities, monitor progress, and evaluate success. It can also allow landowners to appreciate the beauty and diversity of their lands as well as share that appreciation with others.

One of the simplest ways to use photography as a monitoring tool, is to establish a few photo points to track changes in your forests. A photo point is simply a place that you come back to and take photographs over time. Having sets of photos from the same place allows you to easily see changes. Photo points are a great way to show the progress with timber stand improvement cuts, invasive species control, or prescribed fire. They are also good at capturing how your forests changes with the seasons. The easiest way to be consistent in your photo points is to hammer in a fencepost, piece of rebar, piece of PVC or something similar to indicate the exact location and height for the photo. Note down the direction and the zoom used for the photo so you can capture the exact same area in each photo. Revisit these photo point sites and take pictures over time. It could be a picture each year to watch the growth of your trees or the long-term changes of a management practice such as prescribed fire or tree planting, or it could be before and after shots to see the immediate changes to the forest caused by an activity such as a thinning, harvest, or invasive species control.

Another good method for landowners to monitor their forest is the use of trail cameras. Trail cameras have long been used by hunters to scout for great places to hunt but they can be used by anyone to help record what animal life is using their land. Set up these type of cameras at game trails, near food plots, or other high use areas. Forest edges or travel corridors, such as fence rows or streamsidess, are also great locations for photographing animals. Selecting a trail camera that can capture images at night is useful for photographing predators, such as foxes, bobcats, or raccoons.

Photography is extremely useful when you are utilizing contract work in your forest. Taking pictures of a site before work starts documents the state of the site before the work, allowing for easy comparison and determine of what the contractor did and did not do. If the work involves disturbing the soil or bringing equipment in, take pictures of stream crossings, proposed log yard sites, and other areas where work is planned.

Digital photography allows you to easily consult with experts when you have questions, particularly about identification of a tree or other plant species. Good pictures of the buds, leaves, bark, flowers, and/or fruit of a tree or plant can be sent to places like the Extension Forestry Program at the University of Illinois or shared on the IFA Facebook page for experts to weigh-in on the correct identification.

Continued on the next page...

Featured Articles

Photographing your forest - Continued...

Perhaps the greatest use of photography for a landowner is simply to help them appreciate their land. Beautiful photographs of the scenery, of the wildlife, the wildflowers, or trees help tell the story of why you are a land owner, why you care about your land enough to become a member of IFA, and why forests are important to you.



LEFT: Before and after series are a great way to see progress. These pictures show the result of one day's work removing the invasive garlic mustard.

RIGHT: Pictures at or just below the level of your subject are often much more interesting and provide more detail than from above.

The usefulness of photographs can be limited by the quality and size of the photo as well as what is actually being photographed. Below are a tips for photographing your forests.

Tips for taking good photographs –

- Use the highest resolution setting available on your camera. Having a larger photo allows you to do more with it, including enlarging prints or cropping it. You can always create a reduced copy if need be. Digital storage is very inexpensive now. Camera cards that can hold hundreds or even thousands of pictures for under \$30 can easily be found for sale.
- Utilize early morning or late evening light to emphasize detail and colors. Avoid the harsh light of midday which



*The forest is full of great things to photograph, such as this white trillium, *Trillium flexipes**

washes out colors and casts hard shadows. Bright overhead sunlight is particularly problematic when shooting in a forest as it casts strong dappled shadows which complicate backgrounds and leads to areas that are under- or over-exposed.

- For sharper pictures, hold the camera with both hands closer to your body to remove hand shake. Using the

viewfinder instead of the LCD screen helps steady the camera and results in sharper pictures. Consider using a tripod for extremely sharp pictures. Getting closer to the subject instead of using the camera's zoom also helps reduce hand shake and creates sharper pictures.



Burn results. Photography can be used to help assess the results of management. This photo captures the response of understory plants to prescribed fire.

- Learn how to use the exposure compensation settings on your camera to avoid pictures that are too dark and too light. This setting is usually denoted with a +/- symbol. Review digital pictures on the LCD screen after you take them and adjust the exposure compensation as needed. If the lighter colored areas of the photo appear washed out, lower the exposure compensation on the camera and try the

shot again. If the dark areas of the photo lacks any detail or the overall picture looks dark, try increasing the exposure compensation. Learning to use just this one camera setting can drastically increase the quality of your photographs!



- For more interesting photos, don't place the subject in the middle. Instead offset the subject 1/3 of the way to the left or right and 1/3 of the way up or down. Also place horizon lines either 1/3 of the way from the bottom or top to add interest.

- Watch the direction of the light. Arrange the photo so that the sun is over your shoulder and shining onto the subject. This will illuminate the subject and avoid backlighting that cast shadows on the subject.

- Get down on your subject's level. If you're taking pictures of wildflowers, don't be afraid to lay down on the ground to face that flower head-on. Pictures at or just below the level of your subject are often much more interesting and provide more detail than from above.

The most important tip to great photography is practice. Take your camera with you when you walk in your woods. And remember, if you take a great photo of your forest, be sure to share it around!

Chris Evans is Extension Forester with the University of Illinois, Department of Natural Resources & Environmental Sciences.



Walnuts & Acorns

by Lee M. Rife

As I write this there are about two inches of new snow on the ground and the old thermometer is heading south. Of course, it is the middle of February, and what else should we expect here in Central Illinois. Springfield is not in a "snow belt", so we manage to get two or three snows every year that are gone after a few days and then it is back to mostly frozen earth for a while.

February, however, becomes maple syrup time. This is a big deal in Wisconsin and Michigan as well as New England. In Illinois, not so much, although I am seeing some renewed interest in various parts of the state. In my native deep Southern Illinois a maple syrup workshop was held at the Dixon Springs Agricultural Center. Also, SIU planned a two day Maple Syrup Festival and pancake breakfast at the Touch of Nature Environmental Center for late February. I suppose that if you can't get rid of all the sugar maples, you can tap trees and make the sap into syrup. Unfortunately, in my opinion, there are not enough freeze/thaw episodes in the lower Midwest to make a maple syrup industry viable. Funks Grove has a sign advertising maple syrup, but it seems like they sell out in a few days. Perhaps there are some people who know a lot more about this subject who can enlighten me and show the opportunities that woodlot owners have each winter.

For those who aren't interested in making syrup and want to get oaks and hickories up and going, now is the time to be doing some TSI work. Maples tend to shade out everything around their canopy. A few are OK, but if you want a more valuable species for lumber and to feed wildlife, they must be controlled. I have two soft maples in my yard that put out seeds by the thousands every year and I wind up pulling up dozens of little maple trees every summer. One of my old professors defined a weed as "any plant out of place". These trees are definitely weeds when they are in flower beds, the vegetable garden, in the fence or next to the foundation of my house. Now, oaks, I would dig up and transplant.

CUTTING EDGE

Husqvarna Combination Roller File Guide

by Jay C. Hayek, Illinois Extension Forester

Over the last 16 years, I've come to learn a great deal about chainsaw safety, directional felling, and saw maintenance. Arguably, one of the most challenging aspects of owning and operating a chainsaw is keeping your loops of saw chain razor sharp. An important step to honing the sharpness of your cutters is establishing the correct file angles and repeating this process over and over until you've properly sharpened all your left- and right-hand cutters.

My favorite chain-filing guides include the STIHL file guide, Oregon file guide, and the rather odd-looking Husqvarna combination roller file guide. Most saw owners likely have a STIHL or Oregon file guide laying on their workbench or in their chainsaw toolbox. However, I'm willing to bet that the vast majority of saw operators are relatively unfamiliar with Husqvarna's combination roller file guide. The Husqvarna combination roller file guide allows you to accomplish two essential chain sharpening tasks: (1) Maintain razor sharp cutters set to the proper filing angles, and (2) Ensure the chain's depth gauges are set at the proper offset to the working point of all your cutters, which is generally measured at .025".

The Husqvarna combination roller file guide comes in three common flavors of saw chain pitch: 3/8 low profile, .325", and 3/8". Saw chain pitch information is stamped on your guide bar and it can also be gleaned from the coded numbers stamped on your saw chain. Please refer to your saw chain manufacturer's website to decipher coded numbers on your saw chain.

saw chain pitch = distance between three consecutive rivets divided by two

If you have 3/8" pitch saw chain, you'll need the blue roller guide. If you have .325" pitch chain, you'll need the silver roller guide. And lastly, if you have 3/8" low profile pitch chain, you'll need the gold colored roller guide. Make sure to orient the arrows on the roller guide toward the front of the saw, not back



more than 20-25% of the round file is observed over the top plate of your cutters.

1. Use the correct size roller guide for your saw chain pitch.
2. Use the correct size round file for the saw chain pitch.
 - a. 3/8" low profile chain requires a 5/32 round file.
 - b. .325" chain requires 3/16 round file.
 - c. 3/8" pitch chain requires 13/64 (STIHL) or 7/32 round file.
3. Push forward with your round file using light pressure, ensuring no watch?v=xXzoSEiu4R0
4. Both rollers must move when you use this guide, otherwise you're using the guide incorrectly (i.e., you're not holding the round file level).
5. Check each cutter to ensure you're getting a razor sharp side plate angle, top plate chisel angle, and working point.

Video on how to use the Roller Guide: <https://www.youtube.com/towardthepowerhead>.

Where to Purchase: I've found Lowe's to have the best price for the Husqvarna Combination Roller Guide. The have a bundled clam pack that contains the combination roller guide, two round files, a flat file, and a very nice plastic file handle, for the bargain price of \$15.

Husqvarna Website: <http://www.husqvarna.com/us/accessories/chainsaw-sharpeners-filing-equipment/combo-file-guide/505243501/>

Products and other innovations featured in the Cutting Edge are not necessarily endorsed or recommended by the author or the Illinois Forestry Association.

Featured Tree: Silver Maple

(*Acer Saccharinum* L.)



Description

A native tree reaching to mature heights of 90-120 ft, usually with a short, thick trunk and spreading, open, irregular crown of long, curving branches with pendulous branchlets turning up at the ends; twigs with slightly unpleasant odor when crushed; bark gray and thin, becoming furrowed into long, shaggy, scaly ridges on older trunks and branches. The leaves are deciduous, opposite, 3-6 in. long and nearly as wide, long-petioled, deeply 5-lobed and long-pointed (middle lobe often 3-lobed) with V-shaped sinuses, doubly toothed, with three main veins from the base, dull green above, silvery-white beneath, usually turning pale yellow or soft gold in the autumn, occasionally scarlet and crimson (perhaps reflecting hybridization with red maple). The flowers are usually greenish or yellow from reddish buds, about 6 mm long, the male (staminate) flowers fascicled, the female (pistillate) flowers in drooping racemes, the flowers functionally male or female. Individual trees commonly have all male or all female flowers. The fruits are winged nutlets (samaras) 1.5-2.4 in. long, light brown with pink veins, in a long-stalked, wide-spreading pair. The common name refers to the silvery appearance of the underside of the leaves.

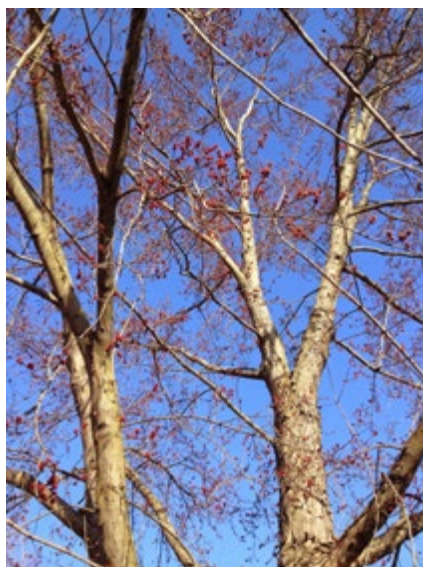
Uses

The wood of silver maple is fairly hard, even texture, rather brittle, and easily worked; it is used for furniture, cabinetry, paneling, flooring, woodturning, veneer, musical instruments, boxes and crates, tool handles, wagons, carts, and rails. Old heartwood develops a swirled pattern that is sold as "bird's eye maple." Silver maple on good sites can be managed for timber - it is often cut and sold with red maple as "soft maple" lumber.

Silver maple has been heavily planted as an ornamental in many urban areas because of its ease of transplanting and

establishment, adaptability to a wide range of sites, rapid growth, and good form. The species also has been used for vegetative rehabilitation of surface mined lands as well as for bottomland reforestation.

Silver maple sap can be used to make a good, light syrup, although the sugar content of the sap is the lowest of the maple species used for syrup production. The sap has been used for kidney and liver ailments and also as a cough syrup.



The abundant seeds of silver maples are eaten by many birds, including evening grosbeaks, finches, wild turkeys, ducks and other game birds, and small mammals, especially squirrels and chipmunks. The buds are an important food for squirrels when stored food is depleted, particularly in late winter and early spring. The bark is a food source for beavers and deer and rabbits browse the foliage. Silver maple tends to develop cavities that are used by cavity-nesting birds and mammals and provide shelter and breeding habitat for many other species, including raccoons, opossums, squirrels, owls, woodpeckers, and many other birds.

Because of the abundance and wide distribution of silver maple, its early-produced pollen may be important to the biology of bees and other pollen-dependent insects.

Management

Despite its former usefulness in urban plantings, especially on poor sites, silver maple has significant limitations. It has been over-planted, and many cities have banned it as a street tree. It often grows to a larger size than anticipated, and the brittle branches are easily broken in winter storms and wind storms. Pruning is often required to develop good form and to remove broken branches and old, multi-trunk trees often require cabling. Relatively soft wood renders silver maple susceptible to a number of wood rotting fungi and it is susceptible to various leaf molds and wilts (e.g., anthracnose, verticillium wilt, leaf spot, tar spot). Its large, vigorous, shallow-rooted root system can damage sidewalks and driveways, clog drain pipes, and penetrate septic systems and sewer pipes.

Silver maple is susceptible to fire damage because of its thin bark, soft wood, and shallow/surface roots; surface fires kill seedlings and saplings and wound larger trees, exacerbating the tendency to rot. Prescribed fire is not recommended where silver maple is a desirable species. Silver maple can be managed on good sites for saw timber and on poor or wet sites for pulp or cordwood.

Adaptation

Silver maple is found on stream banks, flood plains, and lake edges where it grows best on better-drained, moist alluvial soils. Silver maple can grow on sites where soils are usually saturated most of the growing season. It ranges from moderately shade-tolerant (good sites) to intolerant (poor sites). Silver maple dominance is usually in forest types that are pioneer to intermediate in succession and maintained only with management or disturbance, particularly flooding. It will quickly invade abandoned agricultural clearings and other cutover areas. Although it does not compete well with other species in upland sites, silver maple grows vigorously under a wide variety of conditions when planted as an ornamental.

Silver Maple - continued...

Silver maple flowers in early spring, before the leaves emerge. All flowers on one tree are nearly synchronous. Fruiting occurs in April-June, maturing about 3 weeks after pollination and released over a short period, usually less than 2 weeks.

Establishment

Silver maple may begin producing seed as early as 11 years old. The seeds are primarily wind dispersed but may be carried by water. Germination usually occurs in the spring shortly after dispersal - the seeds require no pretreatment or stratification (although seedlings require a considerable length of chilling to break dormancy). Natural regeneration by seed is most successful on moist mineral soil or moist litter. Seedling establishment requires full sun, but subsequent growth is best with partial shade.

Seeds are abundant but seedlings are highly variable. Sprouts from the stump or root crown are prolific. The best sprouting occurs from younger trees with stumps less than 30 cm in diameter. Flood energy breaks off above-ground portions of silver maple - the remaining stems sprout vigorously and may vary in number after such damage.

Silver maples can live to 130 years or longer.

Prepared by Guy Nesom, BONAP, North Carolina Botanical Garden, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, NC. **For more information about this and other plants, please contact your local NRCS field office, and visit the PLANTS <<http://plants.usda.gov>> and Plant Materials Program Web sites <<http://Plant-Materials.nrcs.usda.gov>>.**

Featured Invasive:

Paulownia (*Paulownia tomentosa*)

by Chris Evans

Paulownia, or Princess tree, is often touted as 'the fastest growing tree in the world'. Paulownia had its heyday in the 70s and 80s as a potential cash crop throughout much of the eastern United States.



With stories about its incredible value to overseas markets, many farmers planted fields of

as bluffs, cliff faces, barrens, etc. It often readily invades after fire due to its ability to produce millions of minute, wind-dispersed seeds.

Paulownia is fairly easy to recognize. It has large, opposite, heart-shaped leaves (some shaped leaves look five-sided and can get extremely large). The twigs are stout with round, sunken leaf scars. Paulownia flowers early in the spring, before the leaves erupt. Flowers are large, fragrant, light purple, and occur in

upright clusters. The fruit are upright capsules that somewhat resemble pecans but split in half to release the tiny seeds. Paulownia can be mistaken for catalpa but can be easily distinguished by the fruit (catalpa has long, bean-like fruit).

Paulownia stumps should be treated with herbicide after cutting to prevent sprouting.



Paulownia. Unfortunately the market never really developed for Paulownia wood and many of the former tree plantings ended up being scrapped, bulldozed, or otherwise abandoned. Now Paulownia is a serious invader of forests. It can be found escaped in the southern 1/3 of Illinois and is particularly problematic on areas with thin soils, such

Chris Evans is the University of Illinois Extension Forester located at Dixon Springs

**[CLICK HERE](#) to download Extension's new Technical Bulletin - NRES 1601
"Invasive Plant Species Regulated by the Illinois Exotic Weed Act"**

History of Conservation in Illinois

by Dave Gillespie, IFA Secretary

This account of the history of conservation in Illinois was written by Joseph P. Schavilje in 1941. This 15th installment begins where #14 ended.

The population in Illinois during the State's infancy increased rapidly, despite the friction with the Indians. It was the start of a vast land clearing program for agriculture purposes that resulted in the

removal and destruction of Illinois' vast timber resources. Not all went smoothly for the early settlers, according to Pease (1925) who writes, "The conquest of the frontier and the clearing of the land took its toll in health and life alike. As forests were cleared away or prairie sod broken, vast masses of decaying vegetable matter were exposed to the sun - underbrush, decaying logs, the debris of centuries, from these and from the stagnant pools and swamps came wasting diseases."

An early law passed by the General Assembly in 1845 with relation to trees was one which set a fine for cutting or destroying trees and saplings of black walnut, black, white, yellow or red oak, white-wood, poplar, wild cherry, blue ash, yellow or black locust, chestnut, coffee or sugar trees, standing or growing upon land belonging to any other person or person without having first obtained permission to do so from the owner of such lands.

(To be continued in the next issue)

Word Search - "Springtime in the Forest"

BUDS
DOGWOODS
EPHEMERALS
FIDDLEHEAD FERNS
FLOWERING TREES
GREENING UP
MAYAPPLE
MORELS
PEEPERS
POLLEN
PRESCRIBED BURNS
REDBUDS
SAP FLOW
SERVICEBERRY
SKUNK CABBAGE
SPRING BEAUTIES
TRILLIUM
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Stan Sipp
Director, Region 3
P.O. Box 111
Mansfield, IL 61854

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Questions? Contact
Stan by email at
skipp@illinois.edu

ILLINOIS FORESTRY ASSOCIATION POSITION STATEMENT

CLOSURE OF ILLINOIS STATE TREE NURSERIES EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Illinois Forestry Association (IFA) strongly recommends that the Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) reverse the current plan to close the Mason State Tree Nursery. We further recommend reopening the Union State Tree Nursery before it is too late to restore functionality.

CURRENT STATUS

The IDNR has operated two (2) State Tree Nurseries (the Union State Nursery & the Mason State Nursery) since the 1930's. Both nurseries produce or produced high quality, native Illinois tree species, prairie plants and grass seed, and other much needed plant material.

The Union State Nursery was taken out of production in late 2013 due to IDNR budget cuts in General Revenue Funds (GRF) and lack of qualified personnel to operate the nursery due to early retirements. Personnel at the Mason State Nursery were recently given lay-off notices, which would then lead to the closure of the nursery. Cuts in GRF was given as the reason for the lay-offs. Legal challenges to the lay-offs have kept the Mason State Nursery open, but without a budget for the 2016 and 2017 planting seasons, or the confidence to honor multi-state and in-state cooperative agreements.

In addition to the IFA, State nursery partners such as the Morton Arboretum, the Illinois Landscape Contractors Association, and the Illinois Green Industry Association have been exploring legislative and other options to help the IDNR to continue state nursery operations.

ANTICIPATED IMPACTS OF NURSERY CLOSURE

LOSS OF UNIQUELY QUALIFIED SOURCES OF PLANT MATERIAL:

- Native plant material grown from locally-sourced seed are best-adapted and most closely match pre-settlement vegetation, as grown at the Mason State Nursery.
- No private nurseries in the State of Illinois produce the quantity and quality of tree seedlings and other plant material needed to meet the demand for such plants for Illinois' landowners, the IDNR, and other State and Federal agencies.
- Vast losses of urban trees caused by such insects as the Emerald Ash Borer and the Asian Longhorn Beetle have led to plans to replant native oaks from local seed sources in the Chicago region, i.e. from seedlings grown at the Mason State Nursery.

CONSERVATION INTERRUPTED:

- Illinois landowners, State and Federal agencies will be extremely hampered in their ability to secure high quality, native plant material if the Mason State Nursery is closed.
- Stewardship Plans approved by the IDNR and the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) may not be able to remain in compliance or complete parts of the plans to establish and/or restore native habitats for wildlife.
- Programs to educate young people regarding the importance of trees through plantings for Arbor Day and Earth Day, plus School Yard Habitat Action Grants will cease due to lack of free seedlings from the State nurseries.

LOSS OF WELL-EARNED PARTNERSHIPS WITH FAR-REACHING IMPACT:

- Because of the expertise, specialized equipment, and reputation of the IDNR Mason State Nursery, cooperative agreements and MOU's have been developed with the U. S. Forest Service, Midewin Tall-grass Prairie, the Shawnee National Forest, the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Illinois River Refuges, and the Cypress Creek National Wildlife Refuge to provide native plant material and seed for restoration projects.

- The Mason State Nursery is the only such facility east of the Mississippi River with the ability to produce pollinator seed of a desired quality and quantity. The milkweed plant is an example of a pollinator seed as it is the desired food of the Monarch butterfly. Presidential policy states that all federal agencies must aid butterfly habitat.
- Prior to the lay-off notices, negotiations were underway and close to completion with Iowa, Missouri, Indiana, and Kentucky for the Mason State Nursery to be the primary supplier of pollinator seed to these states in exchange for other plant materials the Mason State Nursery would not be able to produce while growing the pollinator seed.
- The Mason State Nursery is capable of producing at least 1000 pounds of pollinator seed per year, with a 2-3 fold increase in 2 years. Pollinator seed is worth an average of \$100.00 per pound.

LOSS OF PUBLIC INVESTMENT AND PLANT MATERIAL:

- The infrastructure and specialized equipment at the Mason Nursery is valued conservatively at \$15 million dollars.
- Plant material in the ground and grass seed in storage for 2016 is valued at \$1,557,500. It cost approximately \$1,150,000 to produce this plant material.
- With the production of pollinator seed and other plant material, the value of all products of the Mason State Nursery will continue to grow, if there is a budget, in 2017 and 2018.
- It costs less to produce this plant material at the Mason Nursery than to buy it on the open market.
- The Mason State Nursery makes a profit. All this will be "written off" if the Nursery is closed.

LOST CAPACITY TO REDUCE GENERAL REVENUE FUND DEPENDENCE:

- Since the 1920's the Division of Forest Resources has relied on GRF.
- Cuts in GRF to the IDNR has resulted in cuts to the Division, of which the nurseries belong.
- The Division once had a headcount of over 100 personnel. Now that headcount is down to 29.
- Lay-off of nursery personnel would reduce that headcount by 17%.
- No other Division or Office in the IDNR, except for the State Museum, has been asked to make such reductions.
- Conservation of our forests, prairies, and other native landscapes are important to our survival-it's a legitimate public investment that has no market driven substitute.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- The IDNR should reverse the current plan to close the Mason State Nursery, and furthermore, make plans to reopen the Union State Nursery. Provide funding for the State Tree Nurseries in the FY17 and FY18 budgets, and allow the Mason Nursery's anticipated profit to materialize.
- The IDNR should continue to establish and refine a system to charge for seedlings and plant materials to reduce the need for GRF dollars to the Division of Forest Resources.
- The IDNR should work with the Illinois Green Industry Association, the Morton Arboretum, the Illinois Landscape Contractors Association, the Illinois Forestry Association, and other partners to support needed legislation to allow the State Tree Nurseries to sell bare root seedlings to private nurseries for liner stock that can be further grown and ultimately re-sold to municipalities and other entities to restore the Illinois landscape with native oak trees.
- The IDNR should allocate Fish & Wildlife funds to cover the costs of producing plant material used to establish fish and wildlife habitat in Illinois.
- The IDNR should insure that all plant material used by all Divisions and Offices within that Department acquire their plant material from the IDNR nurseries.
- The IFA is seeking proactive dialogue about overall Division sustainability vs. reacting to piecemeal cuts and fees.
- Read the full position statement at <http://ilforestry.org:80/resources/Documents/Positions/THE%20FINAL%20IFA%20Nursery%20Position%20Statement.03-29-16.pdf>



Membership Registration Form

Privacy matters to us. We will not sell or share this information.



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(We are always on the lookout for potential committee or board members, and occasionally need help with events, mailings and other tasks. If you have special skills or interests that might fit – forestry, clerical, legal, real estate, marketing, IT, etc., please let us know!)

Please return this form and your payment to: (or join and pay online at <http://ilforestry.org/join>)

Illinois Forestry Association
P. O. Box 224
Chatham, IL 62629

For IFA Administrative Use (01/2016)

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IFA is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit charitable organization. Dues may be tax deductible as a business expense, and donations counted toward charitable contributions. We encourage you to explore the tax benefits of IFA membership with your accountant. Welcome, and thanks for your support!

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