

Leaves

Newsletter of the Michigan Forest Association

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Association News

LAST CHANCE

MFA Bus Tour to Biltmore Estate & Great Smoky Mtns

Your initial response to the bus tour has been strong, but the bus is still only **half full**. Our **deadline** for reserving the bus is **September 1**; we need a dozen more riders to make the trip possible. The dates are Oct. 22-25; the cost is \$619 per person, double occupancy; \$839 single occupancy. \$150 will reserve a seat for you – make check to “Gail Andrus Travel” and send it to MFA at 6120 S. Clinton Trail, Eaton Rapids, 48827.

WILDLIFE NEWS

Internal GPS? Zoologists at the University of Duisburg-Essen in Germany have concluded that cattle and other large ruminants have an ability to perceive Earth’s magnetic lines of force. A research team last year noted that free-ranging cattle and deer tend to align themselves in a north-south direction. High-voltage power lines appear to confuse their sensibility, however. Surely there’s a message here for the serious deer hunter... Natural History

The Porkies are coming! A couple of months ago we ran a picture and a story about a road-killed porcupine in Eaton County. Not to be outdone, Dr. Pat Ruzs, of the Michigan Wildlife Conservancy, spotted one in Saginaw County – a little closer to their normal range, maybe, but still ‘way south of where we’d expect to find them. No one seems to know what’s going on here, but the Wildlife Conservancy is interested in tracking it. If you should see a porcupine outside its expected range, you can report it to MFA and we will forward the information. Remember – you read it here first!

Deer Check Stations Reduced. The Michigan Department of Natural Resources has announced it will greatly reduce the number of deer check stations this fall. More than half of the former 125 stations will be closed and those that are open will only operate during the November firearms season. During the other hunting seasons, hunters will have to take their deer to DNR operation service centers. Michigan Farm News

Forest Health

Asian Longhorned Beetle is being battled in Massachusetts in hopes of preventing its spread into the surrounding forests. An infestation in Worcester has been quarantined. More than 25,000 maples have been removed so far as part of this eradication effort. NECN.com reports that residents can buy over-the-counter chemicals to prevent infestation of their trees by the ALB. The e-forester

Report on Emerald Ash Borer available. An update of the 2008 report from Dovetail Partners is now available. It gives information on areas of infestation, quarantines, regulations etc. Visit the Dovetail Partners website. The e-forester

Alternative Energy

Ethanol Plant Reopens. After going through bankruptcy, the ethanol plant at Woodbury in Barry County has reopened as Carbon Green Bioenergy and is once again processing corn for ethanol. Michigan Farm News

A Poplar Idea at Michigan Tech. MTU researchers plan to start work on development of poplars that will grow well on dry, nitrogen-poor soils and to study the genetic factors that enable them to grow there. See the Michigan Technological University website for more information. The e-forester

Interesting Events

Family Forestry Field Day. Sat., Sept. 26 at Ashley, MI. Hosted by Saginaw & Gratiot Conservation Districts; supported in part by MFA. Cost: \$25 per individual; \$35 per family.

MFA bus tour to Biltmore Estate and Great Smokey Mts. Oct. 22 – 25

See Bill Cook's Michigan Forest Pathways web site for a complete list.

Miscellaneous

Watch that spray! Michigan Department of Agriculture (MDA) cautions us to be careful in spraying pesticides to see that the spray hits the target and not unintended areas. Off-target drift is the most common mistake made by applicators. Several precautions are recommended:

- Using largest possible droplets
- Using specialized spray equipment
- Minimizing distance between nozzle and target
- Using buffer strips or setbacks from sensitive areas
- Monitoring weather conditions to avoid windy days

MDA listserve

Amazing Grass Seed. Seeds of many grasses have bristle-like projections called *awns*, each covered with tiny barbs. When the seed is partially buried in the ground with the awn pointing up, the barbs point down – a sort of ratchet. As the soil responds to changes in moisture with slight movements, the awns ratchet the seed into the ground. Researchers at Harvard University think there may be clues here for improving the gripping surfaces of gloves or tires. Natural History

Dirt is the Culprit -- or maybe the lack thereof. The warming of the tropical North Atlantic has been analyzed by a team from the University of Wisconsin, Madison and found to be about 20% due to a long-term decrease in dust blowing in from the Sahara Desert and at least 50% due to the gradual subsidence of dust and sulphuric acid particles from volcanic eruptions in Mexico and the Phillipines. The dirt in the air had previously reflected much of the sunlight from reaching this part of the ocean, keeping it fairly cool. Now, in the absence of the atmospheric “aerosols”, as they are called, the water is warming. The remaining 31% is due to other factors, including climate change, according to the team. Natural History (Science)

Campground closures. The Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR) is seeking advice from citizens on the possible closure of certain campgrounds in response to pending budget reductions. A Campground Assessment Questionnaire is posted on the DNR website at www.michigan.gov/dnr. This questionnaire asks for your help in determining criteria to be used in determining which campgrounds to close. Responses are needed by September 14. DNR listserve

Anti-Development Action in Florida. A group called Florida Hometown Democracy has secured permission to place a proposed amendment to the state constitution on the 2010 general election ballot. The amendment would require voter approval for any changes in comprehensive local development plans. Environment & Climate News

Wood Tires? Researchers at Oregon State University are looking at the possibility of using microcrystalline cellulose as a replacement for silica as a reinforcing filler in rubber tire manufacturing. Microcrystalline cellulose (try to say that six times) is a product that can be easily made from almost any type of plant fibers. Its use in tires is expected to reduce the cost of the tires and improve vehicle performance. No mention is made of vulnerability to ash borers or porcupines. The Northern Logger