

Leaves

Newsletter of the Michigan Forest Association

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Association News

Debra Huff signs on to MFA staff. Debra Huff, a recent retiree from the Michigan Department of Natural Resources, has signed on to work with MFA on certain projects of importance. Deb has been a long-time member of MFA and of our board of directors. At this writing, we haven't settled on a job description or compensation, but she's not worried about that – see the next item below for evidence of that.

MFA Seeks Grant from US Forest Service. MFA has applied for a grant from the US Forest Service that would take up some of the slack caused by budget reductions at the state level. The grant application, written by Assistant Executive Debra Huff, focuses on the Saginaw Bay watershed. "Saginaw Bay has been targeted for certain water quality issues in recent years; this grant would enable MFA, through local conservation districts and forestry consultants, to assist landowners with management of their forest lands in the Bay's watershed area. Forest cover provides important beneficial effects on water quality, so sustainable management of those forests affecting the Bay will always be important", Huff said. We will know in early February whether we made the first hurdle on the road to receiving grant money. We will keep you posted.

WILDLIFE NEWS

Watch out for Eagles! The Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR) is cautioning people to watch for eagles along Michigan roads this winter. Eagles often feed on road kill – especially in the winter – making themselves vulnerable to car collisions. Slow down if you see an eagle along the road. DNR listserve.

Kirtland's Warbler doing Well. The population of Michigan's endangered Kirtland's Warbler has remained quite steady for the past three years. About 1,700 singing males were observed in spring, 2010. This is more than ten times the lowest recorded number (167 in 1974 and 1987) and nearly twice the number established as the recovery goal. DNR Endangered Species Coordinator Chris Hoving said, "We are working with our federal partners to secure habitat plans for the future and remove the species from the endangered species list." This is a great story of cooperation among several interest groups, including wildlife biologists and foresters. DNR listserve

Feral Swine Declared Invasive. Last month, the DNR declared feral swine and wild boar an invasive species in Michigan. Then DNR director Rebecca Humphries said, "Feral swine pose a significant risk to Michigan's wildlife, ecosystems and agricultural resources, and they are a serious disease threat to humans, wildlife and domesticated pigs. I urge the Legislature to address this issue in 2011. Michigan is in a unique position to address this threat to our natural and agricultural resources by having our legal options aligned, but regulation is greatly needed for us to be effective." DNR listserve

Forest Health

Hemlock pest found in 3 counties. The Michigan Department of Agriculture (MDA) has confirmed small infestations of the hemlock woolly adelgid (HWA) in Emmet, Macomb and Ottawa counties. These were all associated with nursery stock brought in from other states. HWA is an aphid-like insect that has killed whole stands of hemlock in the eastern United States. MDA has imposed a quarantine on the movement of hemlock nursery stock into Michigan and on movement of hemlock from infested areas. More information is available from MDA at www.michigan.gov/mda.

The Michigan Landscape

Forest Pests Increasing. According to a study published in the December, 2010 issue of BioScience, nonindigenous insects and pathogens continue to become established in US forests with regularity despite regulations intended to prevent their spread. The e-forester

Alternative Energy

Coal from Wood? A new process has been developed that produces coal-like fuel from wood chips using high-efficiency microwaves and recycled heat. This "bio-coal" could be used in place of or in combination with coal for fuel for power plants. Find more information at rotawave.com.
Great Lakes Timber Professional.

Ethanol Project Moves Forward. Frontier Renewable Energy has received a permit to install from the DNR for their project in Chippewa County. The project is scheduled to produce 40 million gallons of ethanol from 1 million tons of quality hardwood chips.
Michigan biomass

Burning Wood is Still a Good Way to Heat Homes. So says Michael Jacobson, extension specialist at Penn State University. "At today's fuel prices, burning wood remains a wise and viable option to reduce home-heating bills." The e-forester

Wisconsin biomass plans dropped. Plans for a biomass power plant in Ashland, WI have been halted due to rising cost estimates, decreasing costs of more conventional fuels, and uncertainty over regulations at both state and federal levels.
The e-forester

Chicago Climate Exchange Expires. Carbon trading through the Chicago Climate Exchange (CCX) has died as of the end of 2010. Citing lack of certainty regarding US cap and trade regulations, CEO Jeff Sprecher said the company would revamp itself "so that it's simply a registry."
The Forestry Source

Legislation

(Dear MFA)

Thank you for contacting me regarding changes to the estate tax. I share your views on this issue. While I believe we should eliminate the estate tax for family farms and small businesses, we also need to make sure that the wealthiest Americans contribute to vital community services, just as hard-working middle class families do. As a member of the Senate Finance Committee, I have been working with my colleagues to ensure that we continue to have an estate tax system that is fair and provides certainty for families. As Congress debates legislation regarding the estate tax, I will keep your views in mind.

Sincerely,
Debbie Stabenow
United States Senator

Miscellaneous

BCAP returns. The USDA program called Biomass Crop Assistance Program (BCAP) is returning to an office near you. Assistance will be available for landowners to establish bioenergy crops and for harvesters and transporters of biomass for energy. Look for more information at farmenergy.org.

Wetlands Preservation The USDA is accepting applications for financial assistance in restoring wetlands. They will also purchase permanent or long-term easements on such lands. Contact your local USDA Service Center or visit the Natural Resource Conservation Service website at <http://www.mi.nrcs.usda.gov/>
Michigan Farm Bureau

Volunteers Needed. The DNR is looking for volunteer hosts for campgrounds in Michigan state parks and state forest campgrounds. To volunteer, for state parks call Pam Ames at 517-467-7401; for state forests call Ada Takacs at 989-275-5151.
DNR listserve

United Nations Declares 2011 International Year of Forests. The United Nations General Assembly adopted a resolution naming 2011 as the International Year of Forests, drawing attention to the importance of forest resources around the world.

Now, This is Smart! The Society of American Foresters (SAF) has launched a new application for smart phones that features common forestry formulas, including interest calculations, basal area, growth percentage, relative spacing, log scales and more. Are you ever at a loss for words on the phone? Never again...
The e-forester

More Trees for Detroit. The USDA Forest Service, Michigan DNR, The Greening of Detroit and Michigan Department of Transportation are cooperating in a tree planting initiative in southeast Michigan. The project is funded through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009. The first phase of the project will see 344 trees planted in the medians of Telegraph Road, Woodward Avenue and Vernier Road. The final phase is expected in the spring of 2011, establishing 356 trees in freeway interchanges in and near Detroit.
DNR listserve

China is Hungry for Wood. The Wood Resource Quarterly reports that China's demand for wood is forcing American timber prices up and that China's imports of logs and chips were at record levels in the first 8 months of 2010.
The Forestry Source