

Leaves

Newsletter of the Michigan Forest Association

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Association News

MFA Holds Inaugural Meeting of Saginaw Bay Forest Owners Network Team. Sixteen people gathered in Bay City late last month for the first meeting of the grant team for the Forest Owners Network (FON). MFA received a grant from the US Forest Service to assume the leadership role in this new program of outreach and assistance. Two areas within the Saginaw Bay watershed will be chosen for emphasis in this first phase of the project. Areas under consideration are the Rifle River watershed, the Cass River watershed and the Midland-to-Sanford Lake-area. On the team with MFA are Michigan Department of Natural Resources, Michigan State University Extension, Saginaw Conservation District, USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service, USDA Farm Service Agency, The Nature Conservancy, Little Forks Conservancy and others.

Plans Underway for 2012 Teacher Workshops. Teacher workshops for 2012 are in the planning stages. One is being planned by Michigan Tech to be held at Houghton; one will be at Higgins Lake, near Roscommon. Watch the MFA website for details. www.michiganforests.com.

Annual Meeting 2012 Scheduled. The 2012 annual meeting will be held in Houghton next August. Watch this newsletter and the website for details. Thanks for your responses to our proposal to rent a bus to travel to Houghton next summer. We had between 40 and 50 responses. Most said they thought it was a good idea and that they planned to attend the meeting, but wanted to retain the freedom to make other stops along the way or to add a day or more and one end of the trip or the other. Of the 40 some respondents, three said they would be interested in riding the bus. That's not quite enough to cover the cost of the bus and driver, so we won't be going to Houghton by bus. Thanks to all who responded so quickly.

WILDLIFE NEWS

Sporting Swine are Invasive Species. Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Director Rodney Stokes has issued an order naming sporting swine as an invasive species. The order will take effect next April 1. The listing is aimed at stopping the spread of wild hogs across the state. More information can be found at www.michigan.gov/dnr. DNR listserve

Shoot a Sick Deer, Gain \$200. The Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (MDARD) is offering an incentive to report deer infected with Bovine Tuberculosis. "Under this new program, if a wild free-ranging white-tailed deer harvested during the 2011 hunt is turned in for bovine TB testing, and it cultures positive, the hunter may apply for a \$200 incentive," said MDARD director Keith Creagh. Here's how the program will work: 1. Hunters take deer to a DNR check station. 2. DNR collects the heads from all check stations and takes them to the Wildlife Disease Lab at Michigan State University. 3. If the deer is confirmed TB positive, the hunter will receive notification from the lab with an Incentives Program contact number. 4. Notified hunters contact MDARD with their confirmation code; then will receive a form to complete and mail in for payment. 5. MDARD receives application and mails hunter \$200 for each TB-positive deer harvested. Michigan Farm News

Alternative Energy

Wood to Oil in Two Easy Steps. A University of Maine chemical engineering professor, Clay Wheeler, has discovered a two-step process for making crude oil from wood. The process involves acid and heat. Wheeler says he has produced 82 Octane gasoline and believes he can boost it up to the 87 we normally use as Regular grade. The economics of his process are still under study. The e-forester

Wood Heat Increasing. U.S. Census figures show the number of households heating with wood increased by 34% between 2000 and 2010 – faster than any other heating fuel. Two states more than doubled their use of wood heat during that period. Yep, Michigan was one of those – with a 135% increase; the other state that more than doubled was -- Connecticut (122%).

BTEC Newsletter

Legislation

Forestry Bills Scheduled to Move Out of Committee Soon. House Bills 4969, 4970 and 4302 were discussed at a meeting of the Forestry and Mining subcommittee of the House Natural Resources, Tourism and Outdoor Recreation committee on October 18. These bills seek to modify the Commercial Forest Act (CFA) and the Qualified Forest Property Act (QFP). HB 4969 would fix several problems with the QFP, including the ban on buildings, the requirement to hold a timber sale within 10 years of enlistment and other unpopular provisions in the act. Your executive committee considers these changes to be positive. Unfortunately, however, 4969 also proposes to raise the minimum forest acreage required for admission into the CFA from 40 acres to 160 acres. This does not have the support of MFA. Several of you wrote us suggesting strongly that we oppose this, and we did. HB 4970 would allow farmers to count forest land toward their requirement for listing under the Qualified Agriculture Act. HB 4302 would fix the onerous recapture tax provisions in the existing QFP. We supported the latter two bills.

Appeals Court Changes Rules for Logging Roads. The San Francisco-based Ninth Court of Appeals has ruled that loggers and others building roads in the woods must apply to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for permits under the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System. Formerly, such permits were handled by the respective state agencies. This ruling is a concern to people in the forestry business in all parts of the country. Many people fear it will make it difficult or impossible to get permits for necessary road construction, if they can be acquired at all. Nineteen states have asked the Supreme Court to review the case.

The e-forester

Miscellaneous

Big Tree Contest. People are encouraged to search for big trees and enter a statewide contest. Winners will be named for largest tree overall in the state, largest white pine, largest tree entered by a youth (15 years or younger) and the largest tree entered per county. Entries must be submitted by August 1, 2012. Get an entry form by calling 800-642-7353 or send an e-mail to globalreleafmi@aol.com.

Bill Cook

Volunteers Needed for Stewardship Workdays in November in SE Michigan. The Department of Natural Resources is seeking volunteers to help cut invasive shrubs and collect native plant seeds in natural areas within state parks and recreation areas in Livingston, Oakland and Washtenaw Counties. Further information can be found at the DNR website at www.michigan.gov/dnrvolunteers and link to the "Calendar of Volunteer Stewardship Workdays" or call Laural Malvitz-Draper at 248-359-9057 (malvitzl@michigan.gov).

DNR listerve

Details Gained on DEET. Do you remember the onslaught of mosquitoes last summer? Some wizened, old foresters said they were the worst in "recent" memory, and "recent" can mean the past 50 years or more. DEET seemed to work as a repellent, but maybe not. Research at the University of California, Berkeley suggests the bugs are more confused than repelled. Perhaps this explains how they find us so quickly when the DEET wears off.

Science News

Fire! Fire! The Great Chicago Fire and the Peshtigo Fire in Wisconsin occurred in October, 1871 – 140 years ago. Less well known was the first of Michigan's disastrous fires, which happened at the same time. Many land-clearing fires coalesced into one huge fire when conditions became right; an estimated 2 million acres burned in Michigan between Oct. 8 and 18 with an estimated loss of life of 200 souls. The area covered by this fire extended from Manistee and Glen Haven across the state to Lake Huron. The Forest Timeline; Forest Fires and Forest Fire Control in Michigan, Mitchell & Robson, 1950.

AARRGH! The Northern Hardwood Lumber Association reports they have spent a great deal of time and energy in Washington convincing Members of Congress, the administration and other organizations that the U.S. hardwood lumber industry is sustainable and renewable and should not be excluded from government procurement programs. USDA has vowed to promote the use of U.S. wood products, but evidently the Department of Defense didn't get the memo. In a renovation of a military base, a new "renewable" gymnasium floor was specified. "Basically, the choice came down to bamboo or hardwood (sic) maple, and bamboo received preference with a price tag of \$30,000 more."

Hardwood Matters