

Leaves

Newsletter of the Michigan Forest Association

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Association News

Annual Meeting Set. The annual meeting for 2013 has been set for August 16 & 17 at Camp Tamarack, near Jones, MI. That's a little different from what we told you last time. Please consider this a refinement, not a change. Watch this space for details next issue.

Bill Cook Named Editor of Michigan Forests. At its November meeting, the MFA board of directors named **Bill Cook**, of Escanaba, as the new editor of Michigan Forests Magazine. Bill is a forester and wildlife biologist, MFA board member and MSU extension forester for the Upper Peninsula. He writes columns that appear in numerous newspapers around the state. We are proud to have him filling this important position.

Saginaw Bay Forest Owners' Network Continues. A workshop for landowners was held near Lupton back in September as part of the work on the Forest Owners' Network (FON) funded by a grant from the US Forest Service. The workshop was hosted by MFA board member **Ned Caveney**; Ned led a tour of his forest property showing results of management over the 20 years he has owned the land. His treatments ranged from aspen clearcuts to northern hardwood selection harvests. The tour was followed by an indoor session in which landowners were exposed to information on various sources of assistance and how to get started. One landowner commented after the session that he no longer feels intimidated by the prospect of managing his land. He now knows who to call to get started. A similar workshop is being planned for the Cass River watershed in April.

Teacher Workshop Date Set for 2013. MFA will conduct another workshop on sustainable forestry for school teachers next summer. Dates will be July 29 to August 2. Location will be the R.A. MacMullan Conference Center on Higgins Lake. Tell your favorite teacher to mark her calendar; watch for more information.

Wildlife News

Are Cowbirds Hoodlums? Jeffrey Hoover, researcher with the Illinois Natural History Survey, suggests they are. He presents evidence that suggests cowbirds strive to "get even" with host birds whose nests they have parasitized if those hosts eject the cowbird eggs from their nests. Hosts' own eggs and nests have been destroyed after the researchers removed cowbird eggs while conducting a study unrelated to cowbird behavior. The surprise actions of the cowbirds led Hoover to brand the cowbirds "Mafia Birds". Check it out at <http://www.pnas.org/content/104/11/4479.abstract>.
Nature Conservancy magazine

Michigan DNR Verifies Cougar Photos. Three photos of at least two different cougars have been verified by DNR biologists. Two of the pictures were taken in Menominee County; the third was in northern Marquette County. The Menominee photos showed cougars wearing radio tracking collars; the Marquette picture did not show a collar. This makes 20 verified Michigan cougar sightings since 1980.
DNR listserv

More on Cougars. Studies at the University of Minnesota and Southern Illinois University at Carbondale found "strong trends of cougars' increasing numbers in an area of more than 1.2 million square miles covering states from Texas and Louisiana north to the Canadian provinces of Ontario and Manitoba. They recorded 178 confirmed reports..... Given their rarity and habitat preferences, it is unlikely that cougars are coming to a neighborhood near you. But like bears, coyotes, and wolves before them, cougars will test the ability of humans to accept the presence of top predators recolonizing parts of the continent."
Natural History

Forest Health

It Depends on Your Definition... Bark beetles aren't destroying forests after all, according to a US Forest Service Rocky Mountain Research Station study that concludes the forests left behind after the beetles' rampage are more diverse and healthier. The e-forester

Quarantine Imposed in Massachusetts. The Emerald Ash Borer has been discovered in a trap in Massachusetts, and the state has initiated a “massive response” including a quarantine, stakeouts of logger traffic routes, inspections and more. The e-forester

Alternative Energy

Biomass Research Center Proposed. The Sault Ste. Marie (Ontario) Innovation Center has proposed conversion of the former St. Mary’s Paper mill to a biomass research center. The e-forester

More US Households Turning to Wood and Pellets for Heat. Households heating with wood are expected to increase by 3 percent over last year, according to a report from the US Energy Information Administration. The total number of households heating with wood and/or pellets this winter is predicted to be 2.6 million. The e-forester

What about Kites for Wind Energy? Might the pull of a kite be harnessed to a generator to produce electricity? Some folks think so. “Kites are promising because they can go higher than a regular wind turbine, to altitudes where wind speeds are faster and more consistent.” Popular Science

Markets

Biomass Plant for Escanaba? Escanaba Green Energy (EGE) is pursuing funding to purchase the now shuttered coal-fired power plant at Escanaba with the intent to convert it to biomass. Michigan Biomass

NewPage adds Tree Farm System to its List of Preferred Suppliers. MFA member NewPage has added the American Tree Farm System (ATFS) to its preferred suppliers. NewPage is the largest buyer of pulpwood in the Lake States; last year, nearly half the wood they purchased was from certified sustainable sources. Adding ATFS members encourages the management of forests on private lands. Michigan Forest Products Council

New Life for RenewaFUEL . *RenewaFUEL*, the company that was formed to produce biomass cubes for the iron smelting industry is now *Michigan Renewable Carbon*. They have received a \$2 million business development program incentive from the Michigan Strategic Fund to produce torrefied (essentially, cooked without oxygen) biomass products. Included among these products will be carbon for use in water filtration and other industrial uses. The plant is located at the former K.I. Sawyer Air Force Base in Marquette County. Michigan Biomass

Besse Plans Expansion. Besse Forest Products Group, of Gladstone, plans to expand its operations by re-opening and modernizing its Escanaba sawmill. The company currently has 14 facilities in the Upper Peninsula and Wisconsin. The Escanaba operation is expected to add 20 to 25 workers. Escanaba Daily Press

Bioplastics? Ford Motor Company and Weyerhaeuser are investigating the possibility of making plastics from mill waste. Ford uses vast amounts of plastics in its manufacturing process and Weyerhaeuser generates abundant “waste” wood. The e-forester

Miscellaneous

DNR Solicits Public Comment on Regional Plans. The Department of Natural Resources has released drafts of regional forest management plans for public review. Comments will be received until Jan 2, 2013. Find more information at <http://www.michigan.gov/dnr> . DNR listserve

Violation of “Heavy Cut” Law in Vermont is Costly. Two logging companies in Vermont will pay a total of \$150,000 in fines for “improper timber harvesting” , i.e. violating a 1997 law “*requiring landowners to follow sound forest management practices when heavy cutting 40 acres or more.*” The e-forester

Modify Your Gloves for Use With Touchscreens. Since touchscreens sense a weak electrical current from our fingers, they don’t work well when the fingers are insulated. To remedy this, sew a star shape or other solid shape, using silver-plated nylon thread, onto the index finger of your favorite work gloves. (This might be a little tricky with choppers’ mitts, but it seems as if it would be possible – once through the leather shell, and another one in the liner.) Popular Science