



# Grey County WOODLOT

## Association ...ON THE LEADING EDGE

A CHAPTER OF THE ONTARIO WOODLOT ASSOCIATION

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### CHAIR'S CORNER

Since sending our September Newsletter our members have been involved in two important educational events; the Technical Seminar we held on October 16 and the Bruce-Grey Forest Festival October 19, 20 and 21. The purpose of these events was outlined in our last Newsletter and we can now comment further.

The seminar was a detailed update on the Emerald Ash Borer situation in Ontario and the threat to ash trees in Grey County. The speakers also provided information on other local health issues in woodlots. The session was conducted by Carl Sadler of the Grey Sauble Conservation Authority who also spoke to one of the topics. We invited members of the press and also ran advertisements to welcome non-members to learn about this important insect problem.

Doug Kramer, of the Canadian Food Inspection Agency and Director of the Emerald Ash Borer Group, was the main speaker and provided a very comprehensive review of the situation and the likely consequences in Grey County. Examples of the insect and the damage it causes were displayed. It was reported that, following intense efforts to control the insect earlier by means of destruction of infected trees, the current mandate is control only. This insect is on its way to Grey County. Efforts must continue to slow the spread and mitigate the damage.

The insect is spread primarily through the movement of infected firewood. The speaker emphasized the danger in moving firewood and the need to get the message to the general public. Logs from southern Ontario are being delivered to a dozen sawmills in Grey and Bruce counties now under strict guidelines and these locations are routinely monitored. Woodlot owners are asked to be on the lookout for signs of the insect and to report suspected sightings.

Jason Ritchie of the Ministry of Natural Resources provided an update on the project to help protect the endangered butternut tree. Efforts are being made to try to find possible resistant specimens. Woodlot members with healthy butternut trees on their property are encouraged to report their presence as a possible seed source.

The Owen Sound Sun Times carried a full report of the meeting on the front page of the October 18 issue. Non-members attending the meeting were asked to consider membership in the GCWA. About 40 people attended the seminar and there were many questions from the audience.

The Forest Festival, in its first year, was very well organized and in my opinion a great success. I thank those GCWA members who served as volunteers, our Board who agreed to provide funds and Director Jim McLachlan for

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(Chair's Corner, continued from page 1)

representing our Association on the organizing committee. He also demonstrated the sawing of logs into lumber at one of the activity centres.

The Saugeen Valley Conservation Authority was the instigator of this event which was held at its Allan Park site. It operated on a budget of about \$50,000, provided by volunteer organizations. More than 900 grade seven students from the two counties took part in one of the three days of the event, accompanied by their teachers who decided in which of the 30 activity sites their class would participate. The activity sites were operated by volunteer high school students and these volunteers were trained on site by volunteer Stewards and Coaches. My wife and I served in these latter roles for the three days and worked as a team, with responsibility for six activity sites.

I was impressed with the competency and enthusiasm of the high school volunteers and the obvious enjoyment and keen competitiveness of the grade school students. For the most part, the sites were designed for active student participation. It was interesting to see the range of interest and competency among the various schools. This event was held entirely outdoors with the exception of lunch which was served in a tent. The weather was cold and on the last day, wet.

The Coordinator, working on an event contract, did an outstanding job to pull the whole thing together and the SVCA is commended for undertaking this complex and very worthwhile ecological educational event for grade school children.

The Ontario Woodlot Association has advised that as of mid November, 123 of our 152 members have renewed their membership for the 2010/ 2011 dues year. I thank those members for their ongoing support and I urge those who have not yet paid to renew their membership soon. OWA mailed reminders early in December. OWA has also made it easier for members to renew by means of a new secure on-line payment feature on their web site:

[www.ont-woodlotassoc.org/membership](http://www.ont-woodlotassoc.org/membership) using Pay Pal, MasterCard or Visa. Of course, payment may also be made by mailing a cheque or by telephone using MasterCard or Visa at 1 888 791 1103 ext. 221.

I hope you all had a joyous Festive Season and wish you all the best for 2011

## *Wind Farms; some comments*

Those traveling to/from Toronto via Shelburne have seen the wind farm near there. Similar projects are established or underway in both Huron and Bruce Counties; Grey County, also affected by persistent westerly winds, is in line for similar developments with land-holders being approached about locating one or more wind turbines on their properties. The corporations seek an easement to locate their turbine(s) with a roadway to it (them).

In a contract I saw, those who sign would receive \$1,000 on signing and \$1,000 a year for the next 3 years or until road or turbine construction begins and. \$5,000 would be paid for the first year of the easement and, thereafter, a rental payment of either \$7,500/year or an annual percentage rental paid by the corporation for the net purchase of generated electrical energy transmitted to a distributing or transmitting system. The initial contract would run for 21 years with option to renewal for a similar term.

The community is split about current proposals; some are pleased by opportunity to contribute to green energy and what seem attractive financial terms that allow a diversification of income from the land, others express concerns about aesthetics; health; safety; ecological effects and adjacent property values. The tower of some turbines would be 100 m tall with rotating vanes each 60 m long. Not a bad sight from afar but perhaps not so nice close-up with the machine's concomitant, rotational, noise.

On health matters the study of the effects of wind turbines on human health is an emerging and much debated science. While some scientists have not linked wind turbines with any health effects, Dr. Nina Pierpont of Malone says low-frequency noise and vibrations from wind turbines can affect the inner ear, triggering a variety of symptoms ranging from headaches and difficulty sleeping to learning and mood disorders, irritability and panic attacks.

Blade throw (ice shedding), fire, tower collapse, shadow flicker (which may cause a strobe-like effect and trigger epilepsy in a small percentage of the population), lightning strike, vandalism and trespass are all issues of public safety.

Reports indicate that turbines have adverse effects on wildlife, especially bats and birds. Dead bats are turning up beneath wind turbines all over the world. The animals are not killed by contact with turbines – rather, the moving blades create a vortex of lower pressure air around their tips, similar to the vortex at the tip of an air-

(Wind Turbines - continued from page 2)

plane wing. This makes the delicate lungs of bats suddenly expand, bursting the tissue's blood vessels; this barotrauma is well-known to scuba divers. Birds do not suffer the same fate as bats – they are killed by direct contact with the blades. However new turbine models have fewer blades that spin more slowly and at higher elevations; many experts believe they should reduce bird fatalities.

Landholders considering a proposal should consider all of these matters; become informed; attend one of the town hall meetings called to discuss a proposal and seek legal advice before signing a contract. Some companies offer to defray part of the cost of legal advice.

*These comments were prepared by Malcolm Silver and do not necessarily reflect the policy of GCWA.*

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**Wood Biomass as Fuel; Recent Developments**

Nova Scotia Power will proceed with plans to burn wood and generate electricity at a new power plant in Port Hawkesbury, says the utility's vice-president of sustainability Robin McAdam. The 60-megawatt power plant is expected to create 150 new jobs in northern Nova Scotia, primarily in the forestry industry. It would burn stem wood and won't include tree tops, stumps and branches from the forest floor all needed to restore nutrients to the soil so new trees can grow. McAdam said the biomass is wood that has no other commercial use, that needs to be removed from the forest so higher-value tree can grow and would consist of diseased, crooked and knotty trees. "Still, it's evident that there is a lot of public concern about using biomass as fuel for electricity. We certainly have not had our head in the sand as these concerns have been raised," said McAdam. The utility has no interest in using a fuel source that isn't sustainable. "We fully appreciate the value of Nova Scotia's forest from an environmental, recreational and economic perspective. Using biomass for electricity doesn't conflict with these values."

Source Nova Scotia Chronicle Herald November 02, 2010

**Development in Ontario.**

Ontario Power Generation (OPG) is confident it can switch the Atikokan Generating Station to biomass well before the province's December 31, 2014, deadline for coal-fired generation. OPG has outlined an eight-step process for the conversion, of which three have been completed: developing the engineering concept, starting the search for wood pellet fuel, and securing provincial

approval for going ahead with the switch (the Ministry of Energy directive gave the Ontario Power Authority permission to negotiate a power purchase agreement with OPG). The negotiations with the Ontario Power Authority are now on-going. Once the power purchase agreement in complete (step four), the company will start developing contracts for the purchase of fuel and of the modifications needed at the plant (step five) and bring them to the OPG board for approval (step six). At this point, it looks as if plant modifications (step seven) will start sometime in 2012 and will take about 18 months to complete. The final step will be accepting the first fuel delivery. The plant modifications involve two major projects: building a new biomass handling and storage facility, and retrofitting the plant's burners, fuel pulverizers, and other facilities, to fire biomass. It will be cheaper to convert the Atikokan station to biomass than to build a new natural gas-fired generating station.

All electricity production will halt while the in-plant modifications take place. Biomass has a lower ignition threshold than coal & requires a new fuel handling system. Biomass fuel will greatly reduce the greenhouse gas impact of the generating station. Burning wood pellets does release carbon dioxide, a greenhouse gas, but it comes from existing carbon stores – our sustainable forests. (All OPG's wood pellet suppliers will be required to have third-party certification that their wood fibre comes from sustainable sources.) Wood pellets have been identified as a renewable fuel by the United Nations' Framework Convention on Climate Change. They have other environmental advantages as well; emissions of acid rain causing gases will be reduced significantly: oxides of sulphur will be almost completely eliminated, while nitrous oxide emissions will be cut about 60%. The Atikokan station's role as a 'peaking' plant within the region's electrical system will be maintained. Its presence provides flexibility in the region's energy system, and is particularly vital in low-water years.

Source Atikokan Progress November 2, 2010

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**Wanted, European Buckthorns, preferably dead than alive.**

Common buckthorn (*Rhamnus cathartica*) and glossy buckthorn (*Rhamnus frangula*) hale from Eurasia. They were introduced into Canada as ornamentals and commonly used for hedges; subsequently they invaded various natural areas and have become pests.

Generally, they grow in small tree or large shrub form (6-7 m) with a few or several stems and have a wide-

(Buckthorn continued from page 3)

spreading and loosely-branched crown. Common buckthorn is both drought and shade tolerant and can grow in a variety of habitats, if preferring neutral alkaline soils. Glossy buckthorn prefers wetter, less shaded areas and has become a problem at wetland sites. Common buckthorns have ovoid, finely-toothed, dark green, leaves oppositely arranged on a twig; they have distinct veins curving towards a leaf's tip. (see illustration) Their twigs often end in pointed stout thorns that are very sharp when the twig dies. The glossy buckthorn leaf is oval, smooth edged and alternately arranged on a twig that has no thorn at its tip. Both species leaf early in the spring and stay green late into the fall. Their bark is gray to brown with prominent, often elongate, lighter-colored lenticels. The buckthorns share a very distinctive winter appearance having naked, hairy terminal buds and gracefully curving, or arched, twigs with closely-spaced, prominent leaf scars that give the twigs a warty or bumpy silhouette.



Cutting a branch of either species exposes yellow sapwood and a pinkish to orange heartwood. Both types of buckthorn are distinctive enough they can be distinguished from other native species at all times of the year.

Glossy buckthorn bushes are her-

maphroditic while the common buckthorn is dioecious. Pollinated flowers ripen by late summer into clusters of plump, shiny, black berries that persist on the bush until late winter. If tasted or eaten the fruits have a severe laxative effect. Birds, especially robins and cedar waxwings, and mice will eat the berries; again, their purgative effect on these creatures helps spread buckthorns. The first few individuals established in a natural area are usually from seeds transported by birds. Subsequently most fruit falls directly beneath a parent plant creating a dense thicket. Seeds can remain viable up to 5 years. The plants secrete toxins into the soil that discourage the growth of other species.

#### Control

Prescribed burns in early spring and fall may kill seedlings (especially in the first year of growth), larger stems, and top-killed mature buckthorns, although this method

produces mixed results. Burning is preferable for fire-shaped communities, but should not be used if it adversely affects a community. Burning annually or biannually to control buckthorns may have to be continued several years depending on the extent of establishment and the seedbank. It is difficult to burn in dense buckthorn stands as the understory is typically well-shaded, allowing little fuel build-up.

In high quality natural areas where the use of chemicals is a concern, small patches of plants up to one cm diameter can be pulled when the soil is moist. Larger plants .5 cm to 1.25 cm diameters can be dug or pulled using a weed wrench. Disturbed soil will result from these techniques, and should be tamped down to minimize seeding.

Girdling or cutting stems between December and March may not be very effective unless followed by an application of glyphosate herbicide. Pull-up small trees (less than 2 cm) by hand. They do not have strong roots. Because small trees are also easily overlooked, they are a recurring problem, but one you can control with a little effort.

Remove seedlings with a hoe. By cutting down the seed-producing trees, you will eventually eliminate this problem.

Chemical control methods are best used during the fall when most native plants are dormant yet buckthorns are still actively growing. This lessens the risk of affecting non-target plants. The buckthorns' green leaves will provide easy recognition and allow for a thorough treatment. Control methods are also effective in the growing season, but there is more risk of affecting non-target plants, and the effectiveness of the treatment is lower. Winter application of chemicals has proven successful and further lessens the risk of damaging non-target species.

During the growing season, cutting stems off near ground level and treating them with glyphosate successfully curbs sprouting. Immediately after cutting, a 20%-25% active ingredient (a.i.) glyphosate should be applied to the stumps. Resprouts should be cut and treated again, or sprayed with a hand sprayer of 1.5% a.i. glyphosate (approved for use over water) solution to the foliage. Foliar applications over non-water sites can also use 2% triclopyr solution or 2 oz. Escort® and surfactant mix. Foliar application of herbicides using a backpack sprayer is effective, but less selective.

For severely disturbed sites, a 25-50% a.i. triclopyr solution diluted in water can be sprayed with a low pressure hand sprayer, a spray bottle, or sponge applicator to freshly cut stumps. A 12.5% a.i. triclopyr (formulated for oil dilution) solution is also effective as a cut stump treatment. Basal bark application of 6% a.i. triclopyr



(Forest Health continued from page 5)

damage. As a result the crowns of hardwood trees were thin and browned throughout the growing season and fall colors were less significant and leaf drop occurred.

**Forest Tent Caterpillar, *Malacosoma disstria* Hbn.**

Just as people were beginning to understand the weather phenomena, it was obvious that populations of forest tent caterpillar were exploding, taking everyone by surprise. Aerial surveys in mid June mapped 60,400 hectares of moderate to severe damage in southern Ontario including Grey County. Ground checks revealed that hosts included sugar maple, beech, basswood, poplar, white ash, and white birch. Egg band surveys will be done by forest health staff in December to determine populations for 2011. The last outbreak of forest tent caterpillar in Grey County occurred in 2001 with a collapse in 2004.

**Butternut Insects, *Acrobasis* spp.**

Barb Boysen, Rose Fleugal and Madelaine Danby, all key players in the butternut recovery program in Ontario identified suitable butternut trees for cloning in 2009. These scions, sent to the Ferguson Forestry Centre in Kemptville, were grafted to walnut stock over the winter and were developing in the greenhouse along with grafts from eastern Ontario. In May damage from several insects became apparent and through lab identifications it was determined that leaf tiers, *Acrobasis* spp. had overwintered on the scions from Midhurst District. *Acrobasis stigmella* begins to mine the tender bud destroying it and turning it black. *Acrobasis juglandis* creates a tube and defoliates newly emerged leaves. *Cercopidae* sp., a spittle bug punctures the tissues and sucks fluids from the buds. In the greenhouse surroundings Butternut Recovery Technician Rose Fleguel, was able to control populations with most stems thriving.

**Septoria leaf spot, *Septoria musiva*; Poplar Hemlock Rust, *Melampsora abietis-canadensis***

Poplars throughout Grey county showed signs of leaf spot and rust this summer. These fungal pathogens have been prevalent over the past three years with the increase of rain, and cooler temperatures overall. As the season wore on only the leaves at the top of trees remained, they being farthest away from spores overwintering on the ground from last year's infected leaves,.

**Tar Spot, *Rhytisma acerinum***

Tar spot was seen in several urban areas because the common host is Norway maple, which in our area is a planted species and not often found growing on the rural landscape. The spots which are fungal growths, overwinter in leaf litter and infect young leaves in the spring. By August leaves had been consumed, were brown and falling. Raking and disposing of leaves helps reduce disease spread the following year.

**Board Member Bios**



**Carl Sadler**

Born and raised in Eganville in the middle of the Valley, "Ottawa Valley" that is. Graduated from Algonquin College at Pembroke in Forest Technician program. Worked 24.5 years with MNR at Achray in Algonquin Park, Owen Sound District and Kenora. Three years in private consulting before coming to Grey Sauble Conservation, his present position. Since 2005 Carl has been contracted by the County of Grey to do their forest management and By-Law Enforcement. During off-hours he enjoys outside activities, with cross country skiing being a favorite. Since 2000 he's been a member of the Events Planning Committee for GCWA.



**Jason Ritchie**

Jason Ritchie holds an ecology degree from the University of Guelph. In the past he held positions with Ducks Unlimited, Ontario Parks, and the Ministry of Natural Resources Wildlife Research Division working across Southern Ontario in different fish and wildlife positions. For the last five years he has been Stewardship Coordinator in Grey County for the MNR. In this he works closely with landowners and local resource volunteer groups such as the woodlot association. Jason lives in Meaford with his wife and two children.