



Grey County WOODLOT

Association ...ON THE LEADING EDGE

A CHAPTER OF THE ONTARIO WOODLOT ASSOCIATION

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CHAIR'S CORNER

Our major event since the last Newsletter was the Grey-Bruce Woodlot Conference which was held in Elmwood; the meeting on March 26 and the woodlot tour the following day. This is an annual event and a joint project with our partners having a stake in the welfare of our woodlots. The theme for this year was 'Expanding the Forest Landscape'. This was again a most educational and interesting series of presentations and as in previous years, we had a very good turnout of our members. The organizers are to be commended for a very good selection of speakers and topics.

I would like to use my space in this issue to encourage members to take part in a special three-part, hands on, in-the-bush event being held soon and running into July. Each session deals with a separate topic and covers important information for management of our woodlots. I believe you will find them useful.

The first session is on Saturday June 18 and runs from 10:00 am to 3:00 pm. We meet at the Grey Sauble Administration Centre near Owen Sound, be dressed for the outdoors and expect to encounter

insects. *To register call Carl Sadler at 519 376-3076, ext 231 by June 13.* This workshop is on tree marking and although we can't become tree markers in one session, the idea is to provide members with the basics of so we have a better understanding of what to look for when it comes time to do some selecting in our own woodlots. There are times, such as in gathering firewood, when it would be helpful to know what to look for and the factors to consider before we start sawing.

We will start with a short session on tree identification and go on to look at trees that are diseased or defective and that should be removed. The importance of the proper stand density will be reviewed and how that is measured in terms of basal area and how that will be reflected on thinning decisions we make. We will then work in teams of two people to mark sample plots with paint or flagging tape and when that is finished we'll go through the plots again to audit some or all of the plots, depending on the number of people who participate and time available.

Other workshops will be on harvesting and a cut inspection to ass-

(Chair's Corner continued)

ess damage to the remaining stand following a harvest operation. (Details of these two workshops, which may be conjoined or held independently, will be communicated separately, closer to the event(s).

This is the time of year to inspect our woodlots for invasive plant species. On a recent trip from Durham to London Ontario I was amazed to see the number of woodlots along the highway infested with garlic mustard. These were heavy infestations clearly visible from the road. This weed has become a major problem in many woodlots in a very short time. We need to keep a close watch each year and act quickly at the first sign of infestation. This is also the time to spot wild chervil, another invasive plant that is spreading on roadsides and fields in Grey County. The plant has fern-like leaves with white flowers having 5 petals clustered in the shape of an umbrella. Work is underway to try to find a suitable control method. In the meantime, frequent mowing is recommended to prevent seed distribution.

I hope to see a good turnout at our summer workshops.

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Is the Ontario MNR planning to administer MFTIP? by Jeff Muzzi.

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In the wake of the e-health fiasco, the Province's Ministry of Finance apparently conducted a review of its procurement policies with an eye to avoiding the pitfalls of sole-source contracting. The Ministry's knee-jerk, short-sighted reaction - one size fits all - is, as can be expected, killing programs where taxpayers were getting great value for their money.

Case in point is the way funds are allocated to administer the Managed Forest Tax Incentive Plan (MFTIP). For years, MNR has essentially "sole-sourced" through a partnership agreement the administration of the program to two organizations; the Ontario Woodlot Association (OWA) and the Ontario Forestry Association (OFA). These grassroots organizations handle all administrative functions of MFTIP, including processing plans, handling notifications, linking plan approvers with landowners, etc. For years MNR has paid a pittance to both OWA

and OFA to do this, with occasional increases to reflect increased costs. At one time, the partnership agreements were multiyear arrangements, which allowed these organizations to plan and develop programs for landowners. MNR has not committed to any long term funding for either organization, and appears ready to assume the administration of the program directly.

MFTIP was created along the lines of the farm tax reduction program; if you properly manage a private woodlot, you get a 75% reduction in your taxes. It is a relatively painless program that has encouraged good stewardship of private woodlots, and has attracted around 10,000 landowners who have registered 1.6 million acres in the program. Well-managed private woodlots benefit all Ontarians for all the obvious reasons, such as providing a wealth of ecological goods and services.

I have a good deal of familiarity with the OWA, as I was an elected member of its board for several years, so I will concentrate on its past performance and what I think the future holds for OWA. The OWA has grown from 900 members in 2003 in 10 chapters, to its current membership of 1650 in 19 chapters. This growth has been attributable to the excellent work of the OWA's Director, Wade Knight, and the OWA's Administrative Manager, Rhonda Roantree. OWA provides virtually "same day" service to landowners seeking information; publishes the S&W Report, an excellent and popular newsletter covering forestry related topics; maintains an extensive and effective website; initiated many publications such as "A Landowners Guide to Selling Standing Timber", and "A Landowners Guide to Careful Logging"; advocates on behalf of private woodlot owners; sits on numerous committees and associations to represent the interests of woodlot owners; makes dozens of public appearances annually all over the province to promote good private land stewardship; and the list goes on.

The OWA's annual budget is what you would expect in the private sector for a two-staff, highly efficient organization; the withdrawal of Provincial funding could, at worst, spell the end of this effective association. At best, a drastic reduction in services rendered to all rural woodlot owners (not just association members) can be expected. And to what purpose? Why risk a minimal-cost partnership with

the OWA & OFA that benefits all Ontarians to a province that is running a \$16 billion dollar deficit? Right now, there is full accountability; the way the MFTIP program is administered by OWA is fully transparent and measureable. Would that be the case if MNR took the program "in-house"? I think we all know that if MNR took over, the efficiencies of OWA would vanish; an effective staff of two would become a bloated bureaucracy of - what? - 12 MNR staff? And where would the S&W Report, same-day service, outreach programs, etc. go? So, to save what amounts to small change, MNR will likely spend upwards of \$750,000; good service and the additional value OWA provides would vanish; accountability would disappear...

Are there options? Sure, lots of them. The MFTIP program could take the steps the Farm Tax Incentive Program took several years ago, where if you wanted the tax reduction you had to join one of the farm organizations such as the Ontario Federation of Agriculture. The additional membership fees fund the umbrella agricultural organizations, and this could work just as effectively for MFTIP. Currently, only about 20% of woodlot owners in the MFTIP program are members of OWA or OFA. MNR also has the option of being courageous, and saying, "The partnerships with the OWA and OFA are the means to deliver the MFTIP program; we are getting good value for the taxpayers' dollars". But MNR has never publically supported good forest management, even on Crown lands, so that's an unlikely scenario.

There have been rumors that MNR will ensure the survival of both the OWA and the OFA through some form of grant to cover costs. This is simply not acceptable. For those of us that have run our own businesses, you know that you need to project revenue in order to plan activities; you can't do this on "maybe" money.

There is a provincial election coming up next October. I would urge private landowners enrolled in the MFTIP program to question their slate of candidates on where they stand on MNR taking the administration of MFTIP "in-house". The OWA cannot survive a loss of over half its revenue, and there is no magic wand they can wave to make up the shortfall. And I will go out on a limb here, and predict that if MNR does take it over, it will be an unmitigated disaster, and end up costing taxpayers hundreds of thousands more dollars. Wait a minute, maybe I'm not going out on a limb...

News related to tree diseases - some encouraging, some not.

Dutch elm disease

For more than 80 years it was accepted that American elms (*Ulmus americana*) are tetraploids, trees with four copies of each chromosome. But there have also been persistent but dismissed rumors of trees that were triploids (three copies of chromosomes), or diploids (two copies). Now botanist Alan T. Whittemore and geneticist Richard T. Olsen have proven beyond question that diploid American elms exist as a subset in the wild.

Elms are still an important tree crop for the nursery industry, especially since the introduction of a very few new trees with some tolerance to Dutch elm disease. American elms remain popular because of their stately beauty, rapid leaf litter decay and their ability to stand up to city air pollution.

It was one of the disease-tolerant elm trees - Jefferson, released 2005 - that put Whittemore and Olsen on the trail of the diploid. "Jefferson" is a triploid. To get a triploid elm, we thought there must be a diploid parent out there somewhere in the wild that had crossed with a tetraploid," said Whittemore. To settle the question, the two scientists tested elm trees from across the species' eastern and central U.S. range. About 21 percent of wild elms sampled were diploid; some grew in stands with tetraploids, while others were larger groupings of diploids. The small amount of genetic data now available suggests that at least some tetraploid and diploid elm populations have diverged significantly from one another, which strengthens the possibility that diploid trees have genes for disease resistance that tetraploids don't.

Reference: Whittemore A T and Olsen RT; *Ulmus Americana* (*Ulmaceae*) is a polyploid complex. American Journal of Botany, April 2011

1000 cankers disease of black walnuts.

Our eastern black walnut (*Juglans nigra*) may face a future threat. Thousands have been killed by a beetle *Pityophthorus juglandis*, transmitting a fungus. Colorado State University plant pathologist Ned Tisserat, who placed the fungus in the genus, *Geosmithia* (now called *Geosmithia morbida*) and named the disease, "Thousand Cankers," said "it is a really a scary disease; as bad as butternut canker". The beetle/disease complex has affected black walnuts in 8 western US states and Tennessee. It kills trees within 2-3 years of infestation and was first noted by scientists in California in 2008. More information about it

(Trees - Continued from page 3)

can be found at the following web sites.

www.ext.colostate.edu/pubs/insect/0812_alert.pdf

[USDA Forest Service Pest Alert on Thousand Cankers Disease of Walnut \(targeting eastern U.S. region\)](#). (May 2010)

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Forthcoming events

June

18th 1000-1500 Tree Marking Seminar
Grey Sauble Administrative Center
237897 Inglis Falls Road, Owen Sound
Pre register with Carl Sadler [519-270-3976 ext 231](tel:519-270-3976) by June 13th.

Seminar(s) on harvesting and a cut inspection to assess damage to the remaining stand following a harvest operation. Date(s) and details to be forwarded

25th Emerald Ash Borer Workshop, Bruce County Woodlot Assoc.
Indoor session: 9:30 to noon Kincardine Municipal Office at 610 Durham St.
Outdoor session: 1:30 to 4:00 (Stoney Island Conservation Area, north of Kincardine on County Road 23

August

26-28th Monarch Butterfly festival
[Bruce Peninsula Visitor Centre](#) and the Escarpment Biosphere Conservancy (EBC) Alvar Bay Reserve. The EBC, a group that seeks to protect the Niagara Escarpment World Biosphere Reserve and has created 100 nature reserves protecting 8,107 acres along the Niagara Escarpment will sponsor this festival. It will feature butterfly tagging, nature walks, film on Monarchs and a concert on the Saturday night with music from the wintering grounds of the Monarchs. Further details at www.facebook.com/ESCARPMENTBIOSPHERECONSERVANCY

September

10th annual BBQ and Tour
Location and details will be forwarded

October

Fall technical Seminar
Topics and speakers to be forwarded

October 18th, 20th, & 21st. 2011 BRUCE GREY FOREST FESTIVAL

The Bruce Grey Forest Festival is a three day event open to Grade 7 students across Bruce and Grey Counties. Activities are focused within the broad categories of forest ecosystems and interactions, forest resource management and sustainability, biodiversity and species at risk, climate change and stewardship and conservation.. The first annual Festival held at Allan Park Management Unit October 19, 20 & 21, 2010 had approximately 1000 elementary & secondary school students and volunteers participate with students' opportunity to learn of the importance of forest resources, the environment and of their interdependence.

The Forest Festival has 32 hands-on, interactive activity centers that are educational and fun for elementary school students. The goal is for students to enjoy themselves using cross-curricular skills to learn about our forest resources and the interconnections with the environment in an actual forest setting. The festival will motivate students to become forest stewards within their home environment and community. By combining hands-on, interactive activities with messages relevant to their daily lives, students will develop an understanding of the need to manage our forest resources sustainably and for the long-term benefit of our citizens and the stewardship of our environment. With this information, students will become aware of the value of conserving and protecting forests. Plus, all activities have been designed to readily integrate with the year-round classroom curriculum.

Activity Centers are:

- Interactive, interesting and entertaining for students
- Designed with the New Ontario Curriculum learning expectations in mind
- Delivering specific messages which are clearly relevant to and easily identifiable by students
- Activities that bridge the gap between scientific and environmental issues, daily routines and objects
- Designed to optimize student learning by ensuring low facilitator to student ratios (1:10)

Key Themes include:

- Forest Ecosystems and Interactions
 - Forest Resources
 - Biodiversity and Species at Risk
 - Stewardship and Conservation
- Volunteers will be requested from the GCWA Membership

(Opinions expressed in articles are those of the author(s) and are not necessarily those of the GCWA Board.)