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Partners News

Partners In Forestry Landowner Cooperative Newsletter Issue 4 2008

With the coming of September we have received some drought relief in the north land, though some areas continue to be exceptionally dry. This was the fourth consecutive growing season of serious water deficits, and, as we have previously touched on, the forests and lakes are in rough shape.

We have had a busy stretch over the past weeks. On August 13 PIF and the Northwoods Land Trust sponsored a meeting with the Secretary of Agriculture, Ron Nilsestuan, to discuss the working lands initiative and lobby for working forest lands to be recognized as agriculture lands. The Secretary was very down to earth, as he arrived at our place in rural Conover. About eighteen of us sat on the deck and talked for approximately 90 minutes. From the picture he gave us, here is real hope for a working lands initiative to be included in the next state budget. Fortunately this Governor seems to recognize the importance of working lands and their conservation in sustaining rural economies.

On September 13, I traveled to Antigo in the early morning with Evan McDonald from the Keweenaw Land Trust. We were scheduled to give the keynote speech at the Kretz Lumber Co. Forest Field Day. The title of our presentation was "Saving Our Productive Forest Lands: A discussion of the effects of forest fragmentation and development." I talked for 15 minutes on the causes, trends and impacts of fragmentation. A transcript of my talk is provided here, except for the spontaneous comments I used to stress points; for example I defined fragmentation as you can read, and then redefined it as "the piece meal destruction of the northern forest landscape to make way for development." Evan followed for about equal time, offering solutions and hope, similar to what we celebrated with a nice cross section of our membership in the last issue.

Sept. 13th was also the date of a PIF workshop, and we arrived at Monahan Forest in the afternoon to find a wonderful turn out for the field day. Monahan is truly enchanting, and for those that missed it, we are already talking of another tour there next year, in part because the rain and because time constraints left many areas yet unexplored. See photos from the workshop here and on page 7.

I hope to see a many of you at the upcoming annual meeting (WHEN?). We need and look forward to your participation in your co-op, in events and in this newsletter, and on the board.

Joe



Monahan Forest Tour Report by Rod Sharka

Although Saturday, September 13th turned out to be a cloudy, dreary day, the weather did not dampen the spirits or enthusiasm of over 30 PIF members and guests who came out for Ed Drager's tour of his Monahan Forest. As an introduction to the tour, Ed gave a fascinating account of how his father came to purchase the 360 acre parcel in 1932 for \$92.00 in back taxes. What a deal! Ed also explained the forest management history of the property, as well as how in the mid-90's, he and his sister wrote and established a conservation easement on the property...one of the first conservation easements in the area. (You can learn more about his conservation easement story in the previous issue of Partners News.)

Although Ed had planned to tour everyone around the property by vehicle, the forest and trails were so beautiful that everyone opted to hike instead. After hiking through various coniferous forest sections ranging from magnificent red pine to black spruce swamps, we returned to his cabin area to view the lovely Little Tamarack Creek running through the property.

Having seen only half of what Ed planned to show in the two hours allotted for the tour, we finally did pile into cars and trucks to drive to the still active DNR fire tower that has been situated on Ed's land since 1934 because of its advantageous elevation. Unfortunately, it started raining just as we arrived at the tower, but that did not stop most folks from climbing at least some of the 118 steps to get a better view.

As a side note, I have learned that there are a dozen functional fire towers in our fire control district covering Vilas, Oneida, Forest, Lincoln, and Langlade Counties, and many more throughout the state that are still used by the DNR during high fire risk periods – mostly in the spring of the year. They are manned by a dedicated group of folks employed part time by the DNR. Russ Osterburg, a retired, veteran "fire spotter" who once manned the Monahan Tower joined us for the tour on Saturday. In talking with him, it was obvious that he took great pride in the many long hours he spent in that little box in the clouds, and the many trips he made up and down the 118 stairs. Thank you, Russ, for your dedicated service in keeping our beautiful Northwoods safe. I also learned that Keith Posto, another local resident, has had the responsibility of manning the Monahan Tower for the last 17 years. If you know Keith, be sure to thank him as well for his dedication. As I was the only one in the group that I know of who actually climbed all the way to the top and admittedly peeked into the 6 X 6 foot "box", all I can say is the folks who man these towers are a special lot indeed.

Following the visit to the fire tower, we all returned to Ed's modest but cozy cabin. Since plans for a campfire in his yard were dampened by the steady rain, the group "invaded" Ed's cabin for refreshments and continued conversation. (Sorry about that Ed. We hope your cabin recovers.)

In summary, it was a wonderful, fascinating, and informative tour of a magnificent tract of land. We all owe Ed a huge THANK YOU for his generous hospitality, as well as for his and his family's outstanding stewardship of their tract of land during the last 76 years, as well as into perpetuity.

See photos from this event on the cover and on page 7.

SPEAKER NAMED FOR ANNUAL MEETING

Bob Simeone will be the guest speaker at PIF's Annual Meeting October 29. Bob, a forester with 30 years international forestry experience will describe his involvement in sustainable forestry and his hope for the future of natural forests. His topic is "Wood for a World of Difference", reflections on global forest losses and the strategy of preserving forest through benefits to local communities. Bob is completing his second term on the Board of Directors of PIF.

Partners in Forestry



7th ANNUAL MEETING

Wednesday, October 29, 2008

5:30 Social; 6:30 Dinner & Meeting
at the

WHITE SPRUCE INN

The selections below will include our house salad, a vegetable garnish, dessert, coffee or tea, tax and tip. Cocktails will be available in our lounge. Choose your selection(s) on the RSVP form below and return with your payment to June Wedell, 4319 Chain O' Lakes Rd, Eagle River, WI 54521-8851.

PH: (715) 479-4068

1 SIRLOIN FILLET (1/2#) Seasoned and Char-Broiled. Baked potato served.

3 CHICKEN POLO Chicken tossed with artichoke hearts, sun dried tomatoes and roasted red peppers

2 SHRIMP SCAMPI Sautéed in olive oil, butter and garlic. Served over pasta.

4 PORK SCHITZEL 2 hand cut loins covered with a light seasoned breading. Baked potato served.

For your records: Total Dinners Selected: #1 ___ #2 ___ #3 ___ #4 ___ Paid: ___ / ___ /08 Check No: _____

Street address: 419 N. Railroad St (Hwy 45N), EAGLE RIVER, WI 54521 Phone: (715) 479-1400

..... CUT HERE—MAIL TO JUNE WEDELL

Make your check payable to PARTNERS IN FORESTRY

Today's Date: ___ / ___ / 2008

NAME (please print) _____

PHONE: (____) _____ - _____

Number of People: _____

DINNER SELECTIONS: (ENTER QUANTITIES) #1: ___ #2: ___ #3: ___ #4: ___

TOTAL DINNERS (includes tax and tip): _____ x \$ 21.00 = _____ (AMOUNT ENCLOSED) CK #: _____

Please mail your RSVP to: **JUNE WEDELL** (715) 479-4068
4319 Chain O' Lakes Rd.
Eagle River, WI 54521-8851

PARTNERS IN FORESTRY 7TH ANNUAL MEETING
October 29, 2008

ELECTION OF BOARD OF DIRECTORS

PIF has a 9 member Board of Directors. Each member agrees to a three-year term. If someone is unable to complete his/her term, The President appoints someone to fill the term until elections occur. This year four Board positions are open. Nominations will be accepted from the floor, however, the person must agree to serve.

THE CANDIDATES

JOHN GWYN

John, a native of Canada, has resided in Land O' Lakes for the past 17 years with his wife, Ann, and their three children: Kristopher 19, Megan 16 and Katy 10. Sugar Bush Farm is a family owned property with five generations still enjoying its forest.

As a young man he worked in Alaska on thinning projects for the forest service and logging in Maine, Ontario and Quebec. Presently, he operates a business called Pro-North Contracting working as a carpenter & woodworker remodeling and restoring boathouses and piers. He also is a caretaker of property and sells firewood. He is glad to be associated with PIF and "let's all keep up the good work".

CHARLES MITCHELL

Charlie grew up in NY, graduated from U. of Maine in Mechanical Engineering. In 1965 he moved to Milwaukee where he designed/developed fuel cell power systems for spacecraft. From 1969 until 1984 he worked for a manufacturer of control valves for water softeners, then went into business for himself.

In 2000, he was the lead founder of Citizens for a Scenic WI, whose objective was to protect the landscape of WI. He was its Executive Director, built it to 600 members and lobbied to "reign in legislation that would have allowed billboards to further clutter our highways".

He has had a life-long interest in trees and forestry, believes that the environment is an important issue of our times, and keeping it healthy is good stewardship of our forests. While he owns "only 12 acres of woods, he believes smaller, non-commercial landowners should take stewardship seriously and understand the role each plot has in the greater ecology".

BALLOT

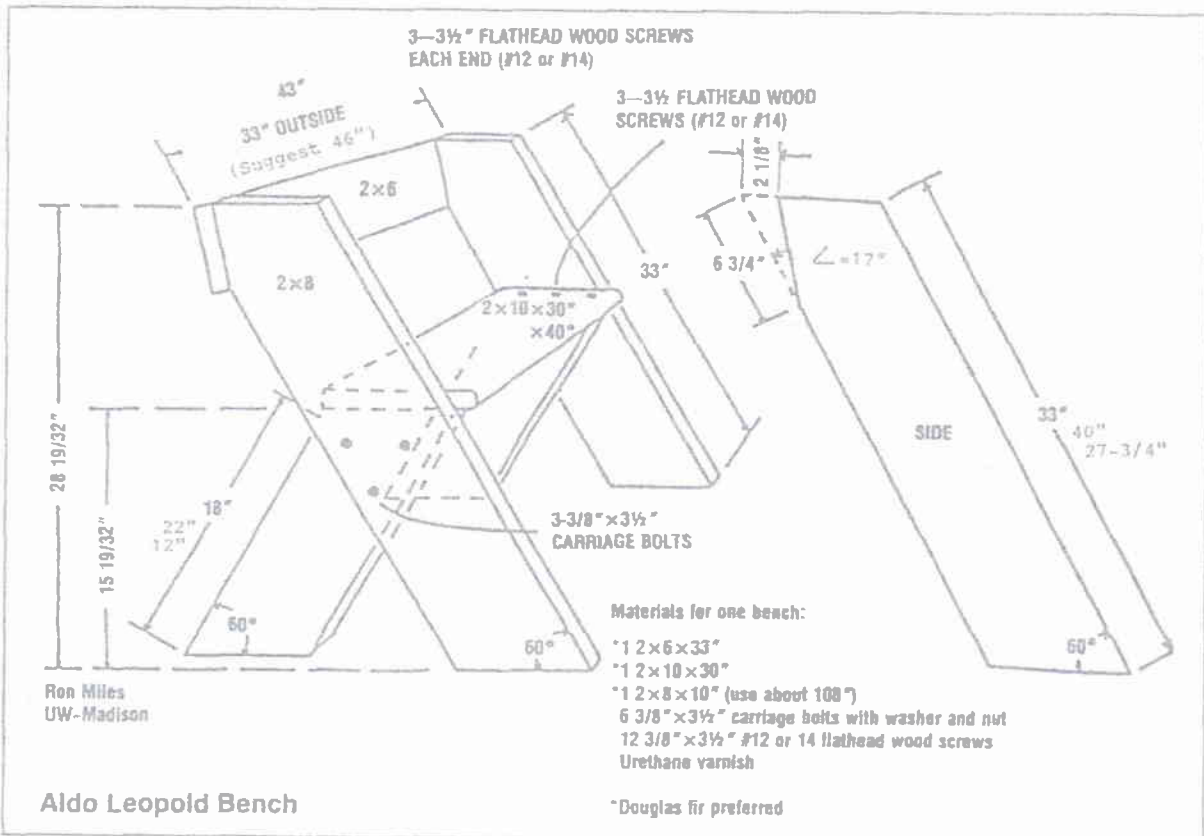
VOTE FOR 4

_____ **John Gwyn** _____

_____ **Charlie Mitchell** _____

(If unable to attend the Annual Meeting, send ballot to PIF, 6063 Baker Lake Rd., Conover, WI 54519)

NED SAYS "BUILD YOURSELF A LEOPOLD BENCH"
 (Plans from *Woodland Management* Spring 2004)



Originally presented at the Kretz Lumber Co. Forest Family Field Day Sept 13 2008
By Joe Hovel, with input from John Schwarzmann and Rachel Hovel.

A few months ago while on a field tour of a woodland in Vilas County, the owner pulled out a letter from a disgruntled neighbor. The quote was striking as I read "we are not building a million dollar home here to live in the middle of a tree farm." Now, WHAT is wrong with this? This family practices sustainable forest management to be belittled by a new neighbor in an adjoining subdivision.

My brother is a dairy farmer in central Wis. and had a similar experience when a new adjoining neighbor complained of how the farm smells. Some thing does smell here, but not the farm. These incidents are a part of the impacts of fragmentation. Forest fragmentation is commonly defined as "a reduction in the forest stand size and loss of larger stands of forested acreage".

Across the landscape, fragmentation creates a patchwork of small forested stands and habitat patches and as a result forest types become diluted or lost. Extreme examples are seen when lots are sold down to an acre or less in size, and when waterfront parcels are marketed with only 100 feet of frontage. As troubling as this small-lot fragmentation is, the division of full 640 acre sections of PRODUCTIVE Industrial forest lands into 40 acre parcels is most substantial and worthy of concern to the timber industry.

Fragmentation at any level lends suburban character to the landscape. Smaller lot sizes through parcelization most often result in a permanent land use change, altering the character and land use options of a region.

[Note: We brought with us these density maps of Wisconsin which vividly display the dramatic rate of land use change. (See www.silvis.forest.wisc.edu.)]

When discussing fragmentation or parcelization, there are several relevant factors.

Roads for example. Fragmentation leads to more roads, which in turn leads to further fragmentation as the network of roads facilitates more development. Zoning and Government are big factors. Zoning might be designed to limit sprawl, but it may also encourage it. New septic system regulations allow development in areas previously considered off bounds.

Property taxes often encourage fragmentation, as assessment is based on highest and best use. This may penalize landowners who have no intention of changing land use. Not all landowners may be comfortable with the MFL or CFR, which are the only real programs to manage high forest property taxes. The ESTATE tax can also contribute to fragmentation.

Local units of government often leap at the lure of further tax dollars, ignoring the future costs to the community by the demand for services. Many studies on the cost of community services demonstrate that over time these rural developments are a fiscal drain to communities, as more roads need plowing and maintenance, and school busing, ambulance, police costs etc. expand to a degree never imagined.

Forestry Practices are sometimes debatable. Some forestry practices are often cited as the equivalent to fragmentation. For example, short rotation aspen clear cuts often offend the onlooker who has little or no knowledge of silviculture. It is important to note however, that forestry practices, no matter how controversial, are not a permanent landscape change, as is development. At the same time, we must also realize that these types of forestry practices often require more roads, which in turn can contribute to development or invasive plants. I often state that the final crop of trees is cut when you prepare for development; from there on you witness a landscape with a very different purpose.

(continued on next page)

In short, as these maps display, fragmentation has seriously altered the Northwoods region. An influx of people coming to the north to vacation and recreate along with the financial boom of the 90's and the eagerness of realtors and sellers to "liquidate for the quick buck" has taken its toll. Lands of substantial size were purchased at reasonable prices, fragmented into smaller parcels and sold for extravagant profits. A select few received windfall financial reward while working folks lost the original integrity and character of their landscape, and often their hunting grounds as well.

What are the IMPACTS of all this..... There may be Economic Stress:

LOSS of PRODUCTIVE TIMBERLANDS results in a lower scale of economics. Smaller tracts cause a loss in the overall scale of forest economics, resulting in lower stumpage prices. Adjusting to the high fuel costs of today will require vibrant local economies and wise utilization with a value added emphasis. Modern forestry machinery requires large tracts to operate profitably.

Rural subdivisions lead to resource management conflicts and complaints over logging aesthetics. The factors of more neighbors, more traffic, more trespass conflicts (often requiring legal intervention) and a great concern of invasive species being introduced further threaten productive forest management.

We see an Increase of Forest Edge Habitat:

(Edge habitats are where two very different land uses come together so that there is generally a big difference in size and age of neighboring stands or between trees and suburb or farm field. Edges tend to be hotter, dryer, sunnier and have more young stems so deer browse is higher and deer numbers are higher. Interior forest conditions tend to be about 100-300 feet from an edge and are shady, cool, and more moist and tend to have fewer young stems and less browse.)

More edge habitat results in a loss of interior habitat for wildlife, which can be destructive to many species. For example raptors such as the Goshawk and Red Shouldered Hawk suffer. The Fischer and Pine Marten also require an interior landscape. Development leads to house cats, a serious threat to many song birds. Raccoons and skunks thrive in edge habitat and commonly prey on bird and reptile eggs.

An increase in weedy species and deer densities, in turn results in region-wide failure of tree regeneration. Canada Yew, Cedar, Hemlocks and Yellow Birch are all vulnerable to deer density stress. Deer density contributes to the near epidemic proportion of Lyme Disease and other Spirocetal infections. Non-Native invasive plant species such as Garlic Mustard get root in areas of landscape disturbance. This plant has the ability to thrive in the shade of a canopy and literally choke out native plants and forest regeneration.

(continued on page 8)



Fragmentation is a Threat to Recreation: Hunting areas are lost!

Forest Fragmentation condenses more people into fewer acres and often threatens habitat for game and non-game wildlife. In turn Hunting and Fishing areas are lost, and most areas experience an increase in trespass and related conflicts. These conflicts in turn result in more government control, with more regulations and more costs to the community. Trail networks, both motorized and non-motorized, can be lost or become more costly. One unwilling landowner can close a trail system, and numerous land owners increase the numbers of leases and easements and the cost of obtaining them. Tourism is a highly compatible partner to sustainable forest management and requires large tracts of intact forests to attract visitors.

BIODIVERSITY Concerns

If the best examples of natural habitat remain only on public lands because of fragmentation of private lands, conflicts will increase over the protection of biodiversity, especially T&E. Public resource managers have a mandate to manage for more than timber, so this in turn further hampers the timber economy. *

In short, the impacts on the communities, the environment and local economies are tremendous. Environmental impacts can be very obvious, often drawing attention. Habitats are lost or degraded and fragile ecosystems are compromised when houses are built, roads are created, and density of population increases. Water quality can be hampered as not all land users follow BMP's, and development often concentrates near shorelines. Local economies suffer. As earlier stated, the increase in tax revenue is often outweighed by the costs of providing amenities to these rural developments. Local industries may also suffer, especially those related to forest products, as the productive forest base erodes. It becomes obvious that the smaller the land parcels the less chance an owner will practice forest management. When the opportunity to practice forest management is threatened, then goes the income opportunities, which in turn can snowball into more ownership fragmentation.

[Note: If you are interested in reading the transcripts from Even McDonald's presentation at the same event, please visit http://www.northwoodalliance.org/Evan_Kretz_presentation.htm]

* According to UW researcher Roger Hammer, "The growth of housing in northern Wis. is undeniable and has the potential to isolate public lands, which are at risk of becoming islands in a sea of human domination and are likely to suffer local extinctions and biodiversity loss."

PIF T-shirts and books will be available at the annual meeting.

T-shirts are \$10 and sweatshirts are \$15 each.

Tree identification books titled Tree Finder and Winter Tree Finder, both by May Watts are \$4 each

THANK YOU to Bill Klase, UW-Extension Basin Educator for being our guest editor.

THANK YOU to the White Spruce Inn for printing our menus.

PIF members contributing were: John Gwyn, Joe Hovel, Rod Sharka, Ned and Barb Loar, and June Wedell. Photos by Rod Sharka and Ned Loar.

A CALL FOR VOLUNTEERS for an invasive honeysuckle pull

Invasive exotic shrub honeysuckles are native to Asia and Western Europe. They were introduced into North America as ornamentals in the mid-18th and 19th centuries due to their showy flowers and fruit. They were also used for wildlife food and cover, and soil erosion control. However, it has since been discovered that these exotic species are NOT beneficial to wildlife or habitat for a number of reasons.

Threats: Invasive exotic shrub honeysuckles

- Displace native understory vegetation;
- Form an impenetrable understory layer;
- Degrade wildlife habitat;
- Cause long-term decline of forests by shading out other woody and herbaceous plants;
- Compete with native plants for pollinators, reducing seed set of native plants;
- Do not serve as a source of high-fat, nutrient-rich fruits for migrating birds. In fact, the fruits have a laxative effect on birds and animals.

The Board of Commissioner's of Public Lands, working in partnership with The Nature Conservancy, is in need of a few volunteers to participate in a local honeysuckle eradication project in north-central Vilas County on October 9th and 10th (rain dates Oct. 16th and 17th). Anyone available on these dates who would like to learn more about this invasive shrub and participate in helping with the eradication of a serious infestation at the TNC Tenderfoot Reserve and nearby BCPL and private forest lands should contact Rod Sharka at 715-547-6493 or rsharka@nnex.net





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6063 Baker Lake Road
Conover, WI 54519



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A Landowner Cooperative Serving The Northwoods & Beyond

PIF Membership application

Partners In Forestry
6063 Baker Lake Road
Conover, WI 54519
Fax: 715-479-8528
E-mail: logcabin@nnex.net

_____ \$25 Voting member (owns or manages
10 acres or more)

_____ \$25 Supporting member (owner of less
than 10 acres or organization)

Name

Mailing address

Daytime Phone #



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Treasurer: Ron Parkinson
Alvin Hogenmiller
Rod Sharka
Robert Simeone
June Wedell

IN THIS ISSUE

Joe's Comments	Page 1
Monahan Tour	Pages 2
Annual Meeting	Page 3
Elections to Board	Page 4
Build A Bench	Page 5
Joe's Kretz Talk	Page 6-8
PIF Merchandise	Page 8
Call for Volunteers	Page 9