



Partners News

January 2010

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This pileated woodpecker appeared outside a Northwoods window the day after Christmas.



The PIF logo is clearly displayed on this sign as a supporting participant in the Pilgrim River Watershed Project. See page 3 for more information.



Photo: Bill and Ioanie Green

The PIF annual meeting included social time and a meal, seen in this glimpse after dinner. For more information see page 4.

From the Director: Joe's Comments



Hovel stands by an impressive yellow birch near the Pilgrim River, with Evan McDonald of the Keweenaw Land Trust.

Since our last issue, and a well attended annual meeting, I have been busy preparing and scoping management guidelines for our new property, which is a 1031 replacement parcel to our sale to the State of Wisconsin. As we share some photos of the Pilgrim River Project in this issue, I especially think of your lands, your goals and your

management needs. We are very much interested in your satisfactory achievement of the goals you have for your property. Please let us hear from you. Send us something to share, a photo of your favorite tree, your best spot on your land, or of what concerns you have for your land. This is your COOP, we need your energy, your participation

and your passion to succeed. We have board openings, we need help with newsletters, whatever you can offer is much appreciated. Our board is very dedicated, but being solely volunteer deals with the same time constraints we all face, so we need your help. We meet on January 9, please try to make it if you are in the area.

Thoughts on Sustainable Forestry, Local Economies, and Community Values

PIF's mission has been closely linked to local communities and all the values which are necessary to make a community vibrant within the reaches of sustainable forestry. In my talks with members and non-members alike throughout the region, I really wish to get your ideas of just what is necessary to make our local economies stronger in relation to forestry. Here I print two ideas, and I ask for your input. We are working with Cooperative Development Services in planning a workshop for this summer, stressing local economies. If you have anything to offer to this discussion please contact us, or better yet attend our January 9 meeting.

“Aspire to a new, greater level of forest certification, linked directly to the land and all of its benefits: environmental, economic, social and public values. A plan further enhanced by perpetual conservation of the forest land, in turn increasing the value of its products. For local forest based economies to thrive we must explore and develop ‘value added’ wood processing. Caring for the environment, sustaining our forests and satisfying public needs will require retaining a maximum possible value of these forest products in the community of origin.”

“To keep jobs and retain forests and economic infrastructure in communities will require challenging thought and idea provoking discussion. In this era of financial conglomerates, a model thought may be local publicly owned banks, willing to provide credit directly to the community they serve. A new, publicly owned bank would have a new set of books-untainted by scandal and the Wall St. addiction to gambling in unstable derivatives- and its profits returned to the local community and the local government, rather than being siphoned off in exorbitant salaries, bonuses and dividends. A bank funneling credit where it is needed most, directly into the local economy!”



PIF Participates in Pilgrim River Watershed Project

The following news bulletin appears on the Keweenaw Land Trust website (www.keweenawlandtrust.org). Please visit the KLT website or www.northwoodalliance.org for more information on the project and how you can help.



A diverse forest provides partial shade to the exceptional trout habitat of the Pilgrim.

A recent change in ownership of a 1360 acre commercial forest property in the Pilgrim River watershed has created the opportunity for a project supporting sustainable forestry, watershed protection, public recreation and education. The property includes over 2 miles of the Pilgrim River, a good portion of the River's headwaters, and the land is enrolled in the Michigan Commercial Forest program and enjoyed by the public for hunting and fishing. The new owners support these goals for forestry, conservation and expanded public recreation and encourage the community to develop approaches to accomplish a project that permanently achieves these land uses. Several local groups have come together to form the Pilgrim River Watershed Steering Group to gather information, engage the broader community, and explore options to accomplish a successful project. Initial Steering Group members include representatives from: *Keweenaw Land Trust*

*Western Upper Peninsula Planning & Development Region
Copper Country Chapter of Trout Unlimited
Keweenaw Trails Alliance
Houghton-Keweenaw Conservation District
Center for Water and Society – Michigan Technological University
Copper Country Audubon
Northwood Alliance
Partners in Forestry*



PIF member Tom Church poses by a cascade on a feeder stream of the Pilgrim.

Portage Township is invited to join the Steering Group to bring the ideas and concerns of local residents. Area hunting and angling clubs are encouraged to participate in the Steering Group and pursue the interests of hunters and anglers. Several neighboring landowners who are interested in the project have been participating, including some who are considering conservation opportunities for their own land as a way to contribute to the larger project. We welcome all individuals and groups who would like to participate in this effort!

The Steering Group is currently working to identify funding sources, both public and private, to support this project and to explore different

strategies to accomplish our goals. A current priority for the Steering Group is to contact local landowners in the Pilgrim River Watershed to inform them about this project and learn their ideas and concerns to develop the most effective and positive project strategy.

A website for the Pilgrim River Watershed Project is in development and will be launched in early 2010 as a public information source and communication tool for the Steering Group.



Much of the Pilgrim property features a mix of northern hardwoods. Hard maple regeneration and Canada yew are much of the under-story.



The Project includes a significant portion of the Pilgrim River watershed, south of Houghton.

PIF 2009 Annual Meeting Report

With contributions from Joanie Green



Mealtime included good food and conversation.

Our annual Partners in Forestry dinner took place Saturday, October 10 at Big Bear Hideaway in Boulder Junction and was a huge success. Social hour with cocktails and wonderful hors d'oeuvres were enjoyed in the main lodge. Tours were conducted of the premises, which included visiting the room where Johnny Depp stayed while in town shooting the film *Public Enemy*. Horse and buggy rides



Maddie Indermuehle selects a name for the door prize drawing.

were available for hearty souls – it was unseasonably chilly that Saturday.

We adjourned to another lodge for a delicious dinner. If anyone went away hungry, it was their own fault! Thanks to all who helped prepare, set up and serve the dinner. We enjoyed a yummy cake after dinner. Little 6-year old Maddie Indermuehle out-foxed a grandpa (Bill Green) who insisted on sharing her dessert. She merely excused herself and returned with another dessert for the grandpa so she could enjoy her own.

With much of the evening being social in nature, we also held a short, focused discussion on forestry issues at hand in the legislature, lead by State Senator Jim Holperin. Continuing concerns were once again raised about the direction of MFL; how volatile this program has become in recent years!

Long time PIF member Brian Logan finally made an an-



Tours of the grounds and buildings took place before dinner.

nual meeting, and was it ever worth his while. Brian left with a new handcrafted heavy plank bench, which has become a staple for lead door prizes at our functions.

We really also need to thank the young ones who attended. From their energy in leading happy birthday wishes for a PIF member to their energetic love of life, their presence just made the evening more fulfilling, and gave us a reminder of why we are concerned about the future of our forests.



Senator Jim Holperin joined us for a conversation on forestry issues in state legislature.

Further Considerations for Purchasing Woodlands

By Darrell Ruechel

In our last issue, Darrell shared his experiences with his attempts to complete a 1031 Like-kind Exchange. Here, we print a follow-up to that story where Darrell offers some points to consider while looking at potential parcels. Certainly, this is good information for anyone considering a woodlands purchase.

Darrell's questions for woodland buyers:

🌲 If you were in my situation and decided to purchase another wooded property, how far would you be willing to travel?

🌲 Some properties have extremely old buildings and other junk that would need to be cleaned up. Would that make a difference?

🌲 Do you hunt? Fish?

🌲 How about a nice stream on the property that is inaccessible unless you go through a swamp?

🌲 Would you mind if the stream on the property dries up during parts of the year?

🌲 Would it make a difference if the property was in MFL and was either open or closed?

🌲 Would it make a difference if the neighboring properties were public property or in MFL open?

🌲 What about a woodland that was previously grazed by cattle?

🌲 Would a snowmobile or ATV trail going through your property or adjacent to it bother you?

🌲 Would you mind if there were fields on the property rather than just trees?

🌲 Some properties are not nice and neat squares or rectangles. Would it bother you if they are overly chopped up with property lines going in all directions? (There are lots of properties that have very jagged property lines).

🌲 Would it bother you to have an easement to the property rather than direct access?

🌲 How about an easement road that goes next to your property but is on the land of someone else, and other adjacent property owners use the same easement?

🌲 What if the property was not well taken care of, including logging that had been done that left only an even-aged stand of trees?

🌲 Would it bother you if the property owner used an vehicle that had left deep ruts in the trail system?

🌲 Does it matter if the property is relatively flat or swampy or hilly?

🌲 Does it make a difference if the property is on a gravel road or a dead-end road?

🌲 Would it bother you if neighbors had tree stands right up to the property line and their line of sight was evidently onto the property you were considering?

🌲 What about old tree stands on the property that are nailed to various trees?

🌲 How about a big pine plantation that had been planted in an old field in the front of the property so all you saw as you drove in was the one kind of pine?

🌲 How about a property with a lot of invasive species or presence of some tree disease such as oak wilt?

🌲 Would you prefer to see an existing trail system into the property?

🌲 How about as you are walking on the property a neighbor on an ATV is seen driving on the property you are interested in?

So just in case you are in my situation and are considering purchasing another wooded property, learn as much as you can in the meantime so you too know what you are doing!

Native Plants for Wildlife Diversity

by John Bates (reprinted with permission by the author)

Autumn is a great time of year to plant perennial trees, shrubs, and herbaceous species. The question is always what to plant, and I think I've finally found the book with the answers – Douglas Thallamy's "Bringing Nature Home: How You Can Sustain Wildlife with Native Plants."

Thallamy's thesis is that there are not enough native plants left in the "wild" to support the diversity of wildlife most of us would like to see survive. He argues that our natural areas have become increasingly unnatural islands prone to high rates of native species extinction and alien species invasion.

Thallamy makes a very bold prediction: "Unless we modify the places we live, work, and play to meet not only our needs but the needs of other species as well, nearly all species of wildlife native to the U.S. will disappear." However, he quickly notes that the predictions of such mass extinctions are based on the assumption that plants and animals and

humans can't coexist, which he emphasizes is not true. The point of his book is that most species could do well if most of their ecological needs were met. We need "reconciliation ecology" – the redesign of human habitats to



include the lives of other species.

Thallamy, a professional entomologist, argues for the vital role of planting suburban yards and gardens with native plants as the means of saving wildlife. Native plants are the key notion here. Our native insect fauna cannot, or will not, use alien plants for food, thus insect populations in areas with non-native plants are much smaller than areas with all native species. In-

sects are very good at converting plant tissues to insect tissue, which is used by higher animals. In fact, a large percentage of the world's fauna depends entirely on insects to access the energy stored in plants. Birds

are a great example – 96 percent, or nearly all of the terrestrial bird species in North America, rely on protein-rich insects to feed their young.

Some 50,000 alien plants have colonized the U.S., though not all are invasive, or at least not yet. The problem is that 90% of insects are specialists – most insects can only eat vegetation from plants with which they share an evolutionary history. Non-native

plants that support huge numbers of insects in their native countries support almost none here. An example is common reed grass (*Phragmites australis*), which has taken over huge expanses of wetlands in Wisconsin. In Eurasia, *Phragmites* supports 170 species of insects, but in the U.S., only five species.

Native insects typically don't eat alien plants because they haven't co-evolved. Insects must evolve the ability to find a host species amid thousands of other plants, and then to synchronize their life cycle with the appearance of needed parts of their hosts. This includes food for the larvae and the adults, cover for laying eggs, etc. Leaf chemistry of non-native plants is simply too hard to overcome for native insects. Each plant species has a unique taste, digestibility, and toxicity.

Our own inability to eat many plants is a good analogy – how many leaves of trees and shrubs can we eat?

Many of the crops we eat today were toxic to us originally but had those chemicals removed through plant breeding – lima beans are an example.

Insects suffer the same constraints. Most are only adapted to eating a few plants that they have been exposed to over thousands of generations.

Thallamy compared the diversity and biomass of four of the most common native woody species in his yard in Pennsylvania (black oak, black cherry, black walnut and fox grape) with the insect diversity and biomass on the five most common alien plants (autumn olive,

mile-a-minute weed, oriental bittersweet, multiflora rose, and Japanese honeysuckle). He found that the native species produced four times more herbivore biomass than alien species, and 3.2 times as many species. When he compared the production of moths and butterflies and sawfly caterpillars – the larg-

est diet component of insectivorous birds – he found 35 times more biomass! Thus 35 times less food was available for birds in habitats dominated by alien plants.

About 10 percent of insects are generalists and can eat a number of species.



Native Canada yew (*Taxus canadensis*) in the Pilgrim River forest. Whitetail deer target this species for browse, and have reduced its range across the Northwoods.

Thallamy found twice as many generalist insects on native plants than on alien plants – so generalists did not prefer to eat aliens as one might expect or hope.

Another study in field habitats compared six herbaceous aliens (lambquarters, cocklebur, velvetleaf, jimsonweed, pigweed,

and cosmos) with six herbaceous natives (eastern nightshade, blackeyed Susan, devil's beggarticks, ragweed, horseweed, and gold-erod). Native plants produced 6 times as much biomass of insects as the aliens.

So, do alien plants harm insect-

eating bird populations? Very few studies have been done due to the complexity of sorting out all the variables, but two are convincing. The first study compared two bird communities in 200-hectare plots in south Texas rangeland. One habitat was native grasses and forbs, the other was two alien grasses intro-

duced to restore rangeland (which now replace millions of acres of native grasses). The researchers found 60 percent more insects and spiders, and 32 percent more insectivorous birds in the native community. Thus, by restructuring the grassland communities, humans have restructured the insect communities, and by consequence, all the species further up the food web.

Oaks support 534 species of moths and butterflies. Willows support 456 species. Cherries and plums support 456 species. Birches support 413 species. Poplars, cottonwood in particular, support 368 species.

Editor's note from Rod Sharka: If anyone needs further convincing of the importance of eradicating and preventing the spread of non-native, terrestrial invasive plants, I would encourage them to obtain a copy of Thallamy's book and read it.

Diplodia Infection of Red Pine, Cause of Shoot Blight

Contributed by John Schwarzmann

After five consecutive years of drought in the north, and with the continuing unpredictable future of climate stability, issues of forest health are at the front and foremost of any management considerations. PIF is committed to keeping you apprised of issues of forest health, as we had displayed at our two early summer workshops in 2008. If you have a specific issue related to forest health, which you either wish to share or learn more about, please contact us.



This mature red pine has begun to demonstrate an alarming degree of crown die-off on the outer margins of its branches.

What is Diplodia?

Diplodia (*Diplodia pinea*) is a fungal disease in Wisconsin that most commonly affects Austrian pine, Jack pine, Red pine and Scotch pine.

Signs & Symptoms

On **mature red pine**, the outer 6-12 inches of branches die in the crown. Often, symptoms are more prevalent closer to the ground.

On **young red pine**, the outer 6-12 inches of branches die. Cankers kill the conductive tissue just under the bark, and tree death may occur if cankers are on main stem.

Diplodia shows itself a few months after infection as black bumps protruding from the base of needles or from cone scales. These black structures produce spores, which are blown by the wind or splashed by rainfall from an infected branch onto other branches or nearby trees.

How is it Able to Attack My Tree?

Diplodia invades wounds on conifers in wet weather when temperatures are above 53° F. We commonly

see symptoms following hail storms when the fungus is able to access the tree through wounds caused by the hail. Symptoms are also commonly seen on pines that suffered from drought the previous year which weakens the trees defenses and allows the fungus to thrive.

What else could it be?

It's important to properly identify the problem before you take action. The following are other agents that cause symptoms similar those of Diplodia:

- Hail
- Drought
- Bark beetles
- Other canker-causing fungi
- Feeding by adult Pales Weevil
- Sirococcus shoot blight

What You Should Do

For **infected mature red pine** that has been recently thinned or with thinning in progress: Monitor infected stands over the next 2 years for bark beetles. These beetles may attack the trees that are under stress from Diplodia infections. If you notice trees browning-up, promptly salvage if infested by



Photo: WI DNR

Magnified view of Diplodia's spore-producing structures. Here, they are seen on the base of a needle stalk.

bark beetles.

Harvest, when possible, between the months of October and the end of February. If harvesting at other times of the year, all materials larger than 3 inches in diameter should be removed from the stand within 3 weeks of being cut to avoid further infection. After harvest, destroy infected slash or remove it from the site.

Do not leave infected red pines as seed trees or wildlife trees following a clearcut.

For **infected mature red pine** stands scheduled for

thinning:

Follow the above recommendations during harvest. Thin a year or two after a drought year. Remove all trees with the following attributes: (1) suppressed and intermediate trees, (2) trees with more than 50% of their crown showing browning from Diplodia, and (3) trees in which the terminal leader has died back 3 feet or more.

For **infected young red pine** in new plantations and sapling, and seedling sized trees:

Trees that lose more than 50%

of their branches will be under significant stress. If additional stress occurs (drought, etc), you should expect mortality in these trees. Young trees that have not yet experienced die-off can be sprayed with a preventative fungicide before forecasted precipitation when temperatures are above 53°F.

For **infected red pine yard trees**:

If more than 50% of the crown is brown from Diplodia, consider removing the entire tree.

Also, remove those trees whose leader (the top of the tree) has died back 3 feet or more.

If there are healthy red pines in your yard, consider removing infected pines before temperatures reach 50° F to protect the healthy pines. All

material resulting from removing infected trees that is larger than three inches in diameter should be destroyed (burned, buried, or chipped) or removed from the site and disposed of. If you decide to burn the materials, be sure to contact the DNR for a burn permit.

Do not fertilize trees. Water trees at the dripline for 1-2 hours, once per week, during dry times.

For more information about Diplodia shoot blight, please contact your local forest health specialist at <http://dnr.wi.gov/>



Photo: Rod Sharka

The PIF board poses on the grounds of the Big Bear Hide-away in Boulder Junction. Clockwise from front row are John Schawrzmann, June Jones, Rod Sharka, Joe Hovel, and Jeff Niese. Missing from the photo are Alvin Hogenmiller, Charlie Mitchell, and Joe Koehler.



ITEMS FOR SALE:

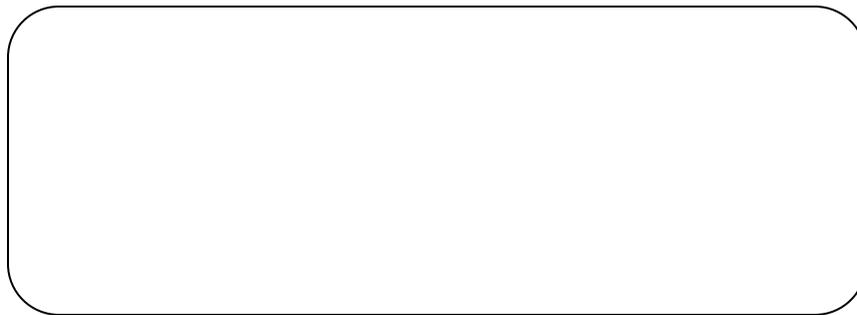
If you plan to be planting trees in the spring, PIF has been working with Lodholz Nurseries in Tomahawk. Contact John Schwarzmann at jschwarzmann@charter.net for details. With enough interest, PIF may be coordinating a group pickup of trees.

As a service to PIF members, contact Joe for special pricing on your needs for:

- Napoleon wood stoves
- wood finishes and preservatives
- garden and tree amendments
- grass seed for trails.



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Protecting your wooded land for the future is essential to clean water, clean air, wildlife habitat, sustainable wood supply...all things that are necessary to society and health, and that are gone forever if the land is developed.