

IOWA WOODLAND OWNERS ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

Winter, 1994

Summary, January 1994 Board Meeting

The IWOA Board of Directors met at Marshalltown, IA January 8, 1994.

Present were Directors Frye, Gnewikow, Grimes, Hansen, Manning, Mensinger and Ritter.

Secretary Frye reported that as of this date, 180 members had paid 1994 dues, and two members have paid 1995 dues. There are 96 who have not yet paid 1994 dues. These, plus 22 complimentary subscriptions to the Newsletter total a mailing list of 300.

Treasurer Mensinger reported that IWOA lost \$174.12 on the September 1993 Annual Meeting, and that current IWOA assets totalled \$6459.52. Treasurer authorized to pull the existing CD (approximately \$1,301.61) from United Federal upon its maturing and to reinvest it at his discretion.

Membership Committee (Manning, Ch) reported on its activities. Manning has investigated placing member recruiting ads in several publications. After discussion, authorized him to place a two column-inch ad, four times over a 16 week period in the Farm Bureau's SPOKESMAN publication, for a total cost of \$311.36. Frye has obtained mailing addresses of graduates of the Iowa Master Woodland Managers training program, and can print out address labels as required. Manning, Hansen and Frye directed to work up a letter and kit of membership recruitment materials to be sent out to the MWMP graduates before the next Board meeting. Frye reported that 48 current IWOA members are graduates of this program.

Mensingher directed to organize, but not necessarily chair, a 1994 Annual Meeting activity.

President Hansen is to attend a State Fair Exhibitors meeting scheduled for February to gather information on which a decision regarding IWOA participation in the 1994 State Fair can be made.

Ritter brought up possibility of an IWOA "Outstanding Woodland Owner of the Year" award to one of its members. President directed Ritter and Gnewikow to investigate and report at the next Board meeting.

Gnewikow reported on several pieces of legislation and/or regulation that he believes will affect Iowa woodland owners. (These will be reported in the Newsletter as details become available)

It was generally agreed that the columns on various tree subjects by IWOA member Dr. Ed Gross that have appeared in recent issues of the Newsletter are interesting and informative and should be continued.

Discussed the proposed dormant deciduous tree identification handbook being worked on by Frye and Dr. Gross. It was agreed that a pocket-sized handbook suitable for field use would be valuable to many IWOA members. Frye and Gross were encouraged to continue the effort, and to submit sample pages to the Board.

An IWOA member requested that IWOA mailing addresses be made available to him and to other vendors for marketing purposes. The Board felt that it would be inappropriate to release member lists for commercial ventures, but recognized that many IWOA members have a need for information on vendors of various woodland services and products. Board authorized creation of a list of woodland-related services and products to insert in an upcoming issue of the Newsletter.

Mensingher reported that he believes flood-related repairs will probably take a priority over other projects in this year's REAP funding. He encouraged IWOA members to attend the annual REAP Regional Assembly Meetings which will start this spring, and urges IWOA members to contact their legislators directly on matters affecting Iowa woodland owners.

The next meeting of the IWOA Board is scheduled for 10:00am Saturday, March 26 at Marshalltown.

Deer Depredation Documented

The November/December 1993 issue of AMERICAN FORESTS magazine contains an excellent article, "Whitetails are Changing Our Woodlands", which presents an in-depth view of the effects of overpopulation of deer on affected woodlands. A

study by U. S. Forest Service researchers have found that where deer density exceeds 20 per square mile, plants such as sugar maple, white ash, yellow poplar, hemlock, pin cherry, oak and aspen are eliminated. Excessive deer populations have been found to limit the species in a woodland substantially, and to retard the growth of many tree types. Additionally, excessive deer populations reduce the habitat for songbirds from the ground to about 25 feet above ground, and can denude all ground vegetation, including threatened and endangered species.

At least in Eastern forests, the deer density at which serious effects are observed is in the neighborhood of 20 deer per square mile. Some protected areas in the East experience more than 50 deer per square mile.

The article concludes that while the stopgap measures of fencing, tree shelters, habitat management, etc. can provide some temporary relief, the long-term solution lies in bringing the herd under control by hunting.

IWOA members have made sure that top Iowa Department of Natural Resources are aware of this article.

The WALL STREET JOURNAL of January 7, 1994 contained an article on the effects of a severe deer overpopulation on the city of Irondequoit, NY, and the controversies about means of controlling the deer population. While this community finds that the present deer population is unacceptably high, battle lines have been drawn between those who would use hunting to control the deer and those who prefer some form of birth control. Apparently contraceptive vaccines are being developed in which one shot will render a deer sterile for a year, with present vaccines two shots per year are required.

These two articles indicate a growing realization by many that uncontrolled deer populations are not only undesirable, but can be downright destructive. We can expect a considerable amount of disagreement about how to handle the situation.

Forest and Shade Trees of Iowa

Iowa State University Press has released the second edition of "Forest and Shade Trees of Iowa". The publication contains detailed descriptions of the major forest and shade trees in Iowa plus information on the environmental conditions preferred by each. It also includes "Keys" for identifying Iowa's trees both in leaf and in the dormant state. This is an excellent reference publication for Iowa woodland owners.

The book is available from Iowa State University Press, 2121 S. State Ave., Ames, IA 50010, for \$22.95 plus 6% sales tax and \$5.00 shipping and handling charges.

Acres for Woodlands Available

Approximately 25 acres of bottomland with some standing timber near the Sutliff, IA area are available for purchase. The present owner prefers to sell the parcel to those who would restore it to woodland status. For further information, contact:

Norman Barnes
2119 Blake Blvd., SE
Cedar Rapids, IA 52403
Phone 319-365-3454

Electric Utilities Studying Wood as Fuel Source

The December 2 issue of THE WALL STREET JOURNAL reports that a number of electric utility companies, especially in the eastern United States, are investing in power generating facilities utilizing wood as the primary fuel. Studies have shown that wood competes very favorably with wind and solar power on an economic basis, with the added advantage that wood power is available when solar and wind generated power are not.

A few utilities are even converting coal-fired plants to wood.

The main fuelwoods used are poplar, maple or willow cultivars or hybrids, which have extremely high growth rates. This is in addition to waste wood from other sources.

Some experts estimate that within 20 years, wood may capture as much as 15% of the market for power generation fuel, as opposed to about 1% today.

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2735 14th. Ave.
Marion, IA 52302-1848

1994 Dues are Overdue!

If you have not yet paid your 1994 IWOA dues, a reminder notice with a membership renewal form is enclosed with this newsletter. Please fill in the form completely, and mail, along with your check to the address indicated on the form. Dues remain at \$10 per year. Many thanks to those who have already sent in their dues.

Ecosystem Management - A Voluntary Initiative

With increasing attacks on property rights, especially in California, New York and Massachusetts, the National Woodland Owners Association has endorsed the concept of voluntary participation of woodland owners in "Ecosystem Management" practices. Simply stated, Ecosystem Management is sound, sensitive forestry with less emphasis on economic returns. Driven by what some view as the overriding demands of the Endangered Species Act, it is an attempt by the forestry profession to resolve conflicts before they occur.

Some Oaks of Iowa

Genus "oak", our State Tree, is important to Iowans in many ways, as van der Linden and Farrar tell us in their 1993 edition of "Forest and Shade Trees of Iowa." No doubt about it, oaks touch all of our lives in every county of the state; especially the lives of woodland owners. For fear of slighting one species or another, members of the 1961 Iowa Legislature designated the genus oak as our number one tree. That is a dozen or more species, but it was a great political move since now any Iowan can honor an oak, whether they live in Lyon or Lee, and whether that oak is a bur, shingle, white or red.

While certain oaks have played a larger role than others in the development and economy of our state, all species have an important part in the ecosystem(s) of Iowa, be they large or small, scattered or contiguous, forest or prairie. Numbers of oak species parallels increasing precipitation from northwest to southeast. While many oaks prefer dry sites, low precipitation and available soil water limits their spread further west into the Great Plains.

Bur oak, present in forest and prairie, is the only species that takes in the entire state, even having a namesake town in Winneshiek County. Preferring dry sites and prairies, bur has been an important contributor to Iowa's ecosystems both in prehistoric and historic times. White oak, present almost everywhere, has been used for food and shelter for thousands of years and for furniture, farm wagons, barrel staves, building construction, toys, fence posts and flooring for a couple hundred years. Shingle oak, on the other hand, while little known except in southeast Iowa and with little economic value except for some early shakes and shingles, is an important cog in our forest ecosystems, especially to the turkey and bear. Swamp white oak, growing on the floodplains, has also been a major contributor to the diet of deer, bear, turkey and wood duck among others. Chinkapin oak, while not very common, is present over much of Iowa. It loves those dry soils of the limestone bluffs above Harpers Ferry, where it provides little to our economy but keeps the squirrels in grub when other acorn crops fail. Pin oak, native to southern and Eastern Iowa, has been used widely for landscaping, where it often has problems growing in alkaline lawn soils. Red oak, equal in economic importance to white oak, has been supplying mast to the wild critters for thousands of years. It is distributed widely across the state except for a few northwestern counties. Red, along with white

oak, figured big in my growing up years in northeastern Iowa where I carried "slabs" and boards at the local sawmill. Hill's oak, formerly northern pin oak, is also a major mast producer in much of northern and eastern Iowa. We don't think about it very often, but it is there. Black oak, the most common upland oak of southeastern Iowa, prefers will-drained soils. While not as important as red and white oaks in the economic order, it nevertheless produces great crops of acorns that have fueled the critters of our forests for thousands of years. Post oak, which just touches Iowa's southeastern counties, was used for posts in the old days, but prior to that and since then it has supplied acorns for the wild critters. Blackjack, a common oak of southeastern United States also just touches the southern Iowa counties. A small tree of dry soils, blackjack is not a lumber producer, but does provide large quantities of acorns across its range from Texas to New Jersey.

Diversity is a name that could be given to the oaks of Iowa. Occupying wet to dry sites, acid to basic soils, thriving in prairies as well as in swamp forests, oaks have affected our lives as no other tree, and also profoundly affected the lives of Native Americans. Oaks are diverse in that when the acorn crop of one fails, another will bear. They are diverse in occupying every niche of habitat from droughty prairies to floodplain forests. They are diverse in supplying home and food for many birds. We are ignorant of the regeneration needs of some species, which has led to reduced populations. We have cut some forests without replanting, allowing entry of early successional species. We have made the trade-off of forests for cropland. In spite of our treatment and the adversity they face, many oaks continue to thrive, are regenerated and occupy an important spot in Iowa. Similarly, nationwide, a greater emphasis on trees and forests, especially those of urban areas bodes well for the oaks of Iowa.

Contributed by IWOA member Dr. Ed Gross

The President's Corner

A creek forms part of the west boundary of our timber. Cruising an adjacent stand of Walnut and Cottonwood after the 500-year floods of 1993, my neighbor and I found fine sand deposits over a foot deep, leaning and fallen trees over eroded creek banks, and in the middle of the stream a number of used car tires.

Trees which were lost were pole-sized Walnut and Hackberry. The tree loss was minor, but the extent to which the creek bank eroded was disturbing. The neighbor's creek bank had little of any damage. Someday I want to ask a hydraulic engineer why our creek banks eroded and not the neighbor's.

Old tires had been carried several miles on the flood to the present resting place. Used tires are increasingly tossed into a stream or along a vacant stretch of road. Some people do not want to pay the extra fee for proper disposal and transfer the problem to an unfortunate landowner.

These tires are an example of environmental regulations which have a good purpose, but which can have some bad results.

The tires illustrate the importance to owners of woodlands to be aware of regulations and laws which affect them. It also is important that we encourage friends and neighbors to join with IWOA so that their interests too are promoted in legislative and governmental matters where more is at stake than just tires.

Joe Hansen, President, IWOA