

TIMBER TALK

Newsletter of the Iowa Woodland Owners Association

Winter, 2002

Phone 319-266-4228

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e-mail ulfers@cfu.net

Summary, December 8, 2001 Board Meeting

The IWOA Board of Directors met at Marion, IA, December 8, 2001. The meeting was called to order by President Jim Ahrens at 10:00 am, with Ahrens, McClain, Sparks, Twedt, Kemp-Ulfers, Wilkie-Tomes, guests John Walkowiak (DNR), Doris Woodruff, and Gene Frye in attendance. To get acquainted, each attendee shared personal background information and interests.

Treasurer's Report: Mensinger's report was presented and approved. There was a year-end (9/30) balance of \$11,155 on hand, compared to \$9,163 a year ago. Net income for 2000/2001 was \$1,992, compared to \$1,467 a year ago. Current (12/03) assets are \$12,590.

Secretary's Report: A new IWOA letterhead has been developed. New tree finder books have been ordered as well as 500 new IWOA brochures. Confirmation was received on our not having to file tax forms even with for-profit status. Filing was completed with the Iowa Secretary of State for our change in official mailing address and our new secretary contact. Letters from three members and information on the Dan Cooper Scholarship were shared. A guideline budget for next year was distributed.

Reports:

- **Membership:** Membership Secretary Cathy Wilkie-Tomes reported a growth of 35 new members to 464. Most of the new members are from the recent master woodlands program graduates. Only 180 have not paid current dues. Secretary Wilkie-Tomes suggested we send "miss you" letters to those who have not kept current on dues. A motion was also approved to authorize the membership secretary to make personal phone calls to unpaid members a month after the April newsletter is mailed. A life membership status was discussed with no action. This was Cathy's first meeting with us. She proved to be a good addition to the group as shown by her complete and thoughtful report.
- **Iowa DNR:** John Walkowiak of the Iowa DNR attended and presented our lending library with several manuals and books. He distributed a handout with details of the DNR reorganization that had been announced the previous day. It appears the forestry aspects are well preserved and represented. Help is needed on the Big Tree program. We found there was high public interest in the program at our state fair booth. A draft of the new Forest Legacy book was shared. Board members will get copies when they are finalized and available.
- **September Annual Meeting:** A chairman and location, probably central Iowa, will be appointed at the March meeting. Another thanks to McClain and Frye for a good meeting last September. No comments were received on eliminating the evening portion.
- **Lending Library:** Kemp-Ulfers reported that a list will be given again in the April newsletter. This always solicits interest in the materials. Thanks to John Walkowiak from the DNR for donating items to the library.
- **Newsletter:** Editor Kemp-Ulfers is looking at ways to reduce mailing costs for this important communication to members. There is always a need for articles and information to include in the newsletter.
- **Field Days:** Twedt and Sparks will arrange these for approximately July and September. Dates for the field days will be announced at our March meeting.
- **Legislative Updates:** It was noted at our annual meeting that communication regarding legislative matters is a priority with members. The IWOA Secretary will be the contact for the DNR which will allow for prompt Board and member communication. Action on changes in the Forest Reserve program will be watched. A contribution will be made to the East Central Iowa Forestry Group which is active in this area.

New Business:

- A request made by Al Manning to fund a deer depredation study was tabled until President Ahrens reviews the proposal and is given more details.

- A request to again fund the FFA Woodland Recognition program with an increase to \$200 was approved.
- A one-time request for \$200 to fund the East Central Iowa Forestry Group chaired by Gary Mensinger was approved.
- Our financial reserve will be discussed at the March meeting.
- Information was distributed, but no action was taken, on establishing a web site.

The next IWOA Board meeting will be held on March 9, 2002, with an alternate date of March 16, in Marion, Iowa.

Non-Native Tree of the Quarter

Black (or European) Alder *Alnus Glutinosa*

I had heard of Alders, but wouldn't have known one if it had bitten me until on my first visit to the Iowa Arboretum. I found a tree near the pond covered with small "cones". Some were green and unopened and others were dark brown and opened.

Since I wasn't sure what was what, I picked some of each to take home and plant. From those seeds I planted 7 or 8 years ago, I have three 15 foot trees that turned out to be Black Alders. Despite the cones (actually called strobiles), Alders are deciduous broadleaved trees.

Black Alders have simple alternate leaves that are dark, glossy green. They are more or less round or somewhat heart-shaped and 3 or 4 inches in diameter. The heart-shaped leaves have the "point" of the heart facing the stem. The edge of the leaves have coarse teeth. There is no fall color. The leaves usually fall while green.

The young stems are smooth green-brown changing to brown. Older bark is a polished brown that reminds me of some cherry trees I've seen.

As it turned out, I wasted my time picking the brown "cones". The fruit is a small winged nutlet that is released as the cone dries. The cones persist over the winter.

Black Alder will grow to 50 feet or more by half as wide. They're weakly, pyramidal when young, but more irregular as they age. They tend to be multistemmed unless trained. This can be attractive if you have the room.

The tree likes water and can take poor soil since its roots fix nitrogen.

If you came to see my trees right now, in addition to the brown cones, you would see that they are covered with male flowers that are formed in the fall and persist all winter waiting for the spring female flowers. These male flowers are 2-4 inches hanging catkins that are reddish-brown. This gives the tree a rather handsome winter appearance.

This tree is fully hardy in Iowa and came through last winter unscathed. It would make a good choice where you might otherwise plant willow or poplar.

Tom Brady, Member, IWOA

Forest Landowners' Guide to Federal Income Tax

A limited number of free copies of the Forest Landowners' Guide to Income Tax are available to IWOA members. This USDA Forest Service publication provides information for analyzing forest management investments, tax planning, and federal income tax considerations for forest land.. John Walkowiak of the Iowa DNR donated the publications to our group and suggested that members may want to give one to their accountants. To request a copy, please contact Jane Kemp-Ulfers, IWOA Librarian, at 2301 Hawthorne Dr., Cedar Falls, IA 50613, or by e-mail at ulfers@cfu.net.

The Forest Reserve : A program that benefits Iowa

At the time of European settlement in 1850, Iowa possessed over 6.7 million acres of forestland (17% of the total land cover). By the turn of the 20th century, over 60% of the forest had been cleared for agriculture. As agriculture became mechanized during the early 1900's, the pressure of additional forest loss was mounting.

Since the majority of the forests in Iowa were privately owned at that time – and public funds to purchase forestland were lacking – early conservationists and political leaders came up with an incentive effort. This incentive became known as the “Forest and Fruit Tree Reservation Act”, that was passed by the Iowa Legislature in 1906. The intention of the Forest and Fruit Tree Reserve Act was to “reduce or eliminate property taxes to induce landowners to hold their poorer lands in timber not only as a source of farm income but also for erosion control, watershed protection and game cover”. The reservation program was met with indifference in many of better agricultural areas of the state but was met with much enthusiasm in some of the more. In 1907, the year after passage of the act 1,535 reservations (parcels) were on record totaling 12,140 acres. heavily timbered sections.

By 1922, as rapidly increasing land values occurred, the interest in the forest-fruit tree reservations increased the total number of acres to 16,273. Planted tree groves originally made up an appreciable part of the total acreage reported, but as time went along the percentage that new tree plantings comprise became negligible.

To enroll in the Forest and Fruit Tree Reservation Act (Chapter 427C of the Code of Iowa) or as it is known to most people the “Forest Reserve” and be exempt from property taxes the private forestland must be:

- ❑ At least 2 contiguous acres in size and generally not less than 66 feet wide, or a fruit tree reservation not less than one nor more than 10 acres in total area,
- ❑ Each forest reservation shall not contain less than 200 growing trees, on a fruit tree reservation at least 40 apple trees per acres and other fruit tree reservations at least 70 trees per acre,
- ❑ Forest trees are defined as ash, black cherry, black walnut, butternut, catalpa, honeylocust, Norway and Carolina poplars, mulberry, the oaks, sugar maple, cottonwood, soft maple, osage orange, basswood, black locust, European larch and other coniferous trees, and all other forest trees introduced into the state for experimental purposes,
- ❑ In forest reservations which are artificial groves, willows, boxelders and other poplars shall be included when protecting borders not exceeding two rows in width around a forest reservation or when used as nurse trees not to exceed 100 on each acre,
- ❑ No cattle, mules, horses, sheep, goats or hogs are permitted on forest reservations, and
- ❑ Not more than 1/5 of the total number of trees in the forest reservation may be removed in any single year unless the trees die of natural causes. When the number of trees falls below 200 trees on each acre, the owner shall within one year restore the number of trees to not less than 200 trees.

Private land owners interested in enrolling their forest or fruit trees into reservations must make an application with the county assessor's office prior to April 15th of the year for which they are claiming exemption. Once the application is approved, the area shall continue to receive tax exemption during each year that the area is maintained as a forest reservation without having the owner refile. This tax exempt status is transferred with the property as long as it qualifies.

The county conservation board or the assessor's office to determine if it is still maintained as a forest or fruit tree reservation may inspect the reservation. If the area is not maintained or is used for economic gain other than a forest reservation for any of the exemption years and any of the five years following the exemption years, the assessor shall assess the property for taxation. Taxation will be at its fair market value as of January 1st of that year. In addition, the area shall be subject to a recapture tax for those years up to 5 years. The area shall not be subject to recapture tax if the owners have owned the area for more than 10 years.

The county assessors shall keep a record of all forest and fruit tree reservations in the county and report to the Department of Natural Resources not later than June 15th of each year.

As of September 2001, a total of 558, 584.83 acres on 38,760 parcels were enrolled in forest reservations in all 99 Iowa counties. The total number of acres in forest reservations runs from 12.37 acres in Sioux County (NW Iowa) to 46,277 acres in Clayton County (NE IOWA). The number of acres in forest reservations accounts for 27% of the total number of acres of forestland in Iowa (2.1 million acres).

What benefits does the forest reserve have for Iowa? Since private forestland owners' control 92% of Iowa's forests, maintaining these lands in forests provides:

- ❑ Habitat for game and non game species of wildlife that depend upon forests for all or part of their life (deer, turkey, etc.), plus the economic activity for rural communities that cater to hunters and fishermen each year – over \$1.1 billion in 1999,
- ❑ Watershed protection for Iowa's stream and rivers, reducing sediment – Iowa's number one water pollutant, since 50% of Iowa's forests are on slopes greater than 10% and the other 50% are right along floodplain areas,
- ❑ Economic development in terms of the timber that is harvested, in 2000 that involved over \$14 million paid to landowners, and over \$1 billion in economic activity in harvesting and processing the timber into wood,
- ❑ Air quality enhancement as the standing and living trees absorb toxic carbon and other pollutants,
- ❑ Outdoor recreation for property owners, neighbors, and visitors to our state, as Fall color viewing in NE Iowa alone brings in over \$5.9 million to local economies.

If the early Iowa conservationists who drafted the Forest and Fruit Tree Reservation Act came back would they say they it was meeting its goals “to induce landowners to hold their poorer lands in timber not only as a source of farm income but also for erosion control, watershed protection and game cover”? I believe the answer would be yes! Has and is it now a benefit to Iowa in terms of lost property taxes? Most foresters and forestland owners would answer yes! But how do others feel? It is our responsibility to inform them of the benefits of the Forest and Fruit Tree Reservation Act and that its need now and into the future is just as great as it was in 1906.

John Walkowiak, Chief – Forestry Services,
Iowa Department of Natural Resources
john.walkowiak@dnr.state.ia.us
515-242-5966

IWOA Lending Library Update

Several items have been contributed to the IWOA library. Thanks to IWOA President Jim Ahrens and John Walkowiak of the Iowa DNR for donating new books and pamphlets.

Among the latest materials is a book by Laurence C. Walker entitled Forests: A Naturalist's Guide to Woodland Trees. According to Jim, the “Afterword” is worth the price of the book! One reviewer describes the work as “a hands-on guidebook for non-professionals, written to give concerned citizens an understanding of the ecological basis for decision-making by foresters.” Included in the book are projects for amateur naturalists, reading lists and an excellent glossary. Walker also covers many different kinds of trees and the effects of climate, biology, and soils on the growth of these trees.

Street Trees: Factsheets is a publication of the Municipal Tree Restoration Program. The volume begins with an Index of Tree Names and Characteristics which is an overview of all of the factsheets. The index lists the tree's common name, scientific name, cultivar name, and information regarding each tree's characteristics. The index can be used to make simple comparisons between species. The individual factsheets provide more detailed information and color photographs.

Other new library materials include a 2001 Iowa Forest Products Directory; Going Native: A Prairie Planting Guide, published by the Polk County Conservation Board; and a poster entitled Tree Pests of the Midwest.

The IWOA lending library is maintained for member use. If you are interested in any of the new items, please contact Jane Kemp-Ulfers, IWOA Librarian, 2301 Hawthorne Dr. IWOA will pay for the postage to send the item, the borrower is responsible for return postage. In a future newsletter a complete list of library items will be included.

IWOA Members Leonard & Mildred Grimes Receive Iowa State Horticultural Society Award

Leonard and Mildred Grimes of Marshalltown received the 2001 Certificate of Merit Award at the Iowa State Horticultural Society's annual awards and business meeting.

The Certificate of Merit Award is presented to individuals for notable contributions to Iowa horticulture. The Grimes were recognized for practicing, demonstrating, and teaching good horticultural and conservation practices.

Mildred and Leonard purchased a 160-acre farm southwest of Marshalltown in 1964. They began to employ conservation practices, and Mildred, a teacher, saw this as a perfect "outdoor learning laboratory opportunity" and established the Close Encounter with Nature Program on their farm. For 30 years about 15,000 student experienced a day on the Grimes farm with outdoor conservation activities.

Leonard and Mildred are currently certified as Tree Farmers under the American Tree Farm System sponsored by the American Forest Foundation. They currently have 166 acres certified. In 1982 they were recognized as Iowa Woodland Owners of the Year, and in 1985 they were the Tree Farmers of the Year. Leonard is a Master Woodland Manager, and Mildred is a Master Gardener.

The Grimes apply modern conservation practices on their farms including waterways, terracing, planting prairies, no-till farming, woodland restoration, planting riparian buffer strips, and tiling of wetlands. Over the years they have planted over 200,000 trees on their property. A leader in conservation, Leonard was one of the first to experiment with hybrid poplars and trials with tree shelters. Currently he is doing the field work on a 5-year project with Iowa State University and DNR Forestry to measure growth response of young trees to sod disturbance by disking.

The Grimes' vision to foster future generations through education in horticulture, conservation, and environmental practices, along with recreation, is seen in their generous gift in 1991 of 160 acres to the Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation. The County Conservation Board has installed wetlands, prairie plantings, a shelter house, and a parking area on 22 acres of this endowment. Future plans include the development of a nature center.

Congratulations to Leonard and Mildred Grimes.

Information provided by the Iowa Horticultural Society
Photo courtesy of Gene Frye



Leonard (left) and Mildred Grimes (center) received 2001 Merit Awards at the annual awards meeting of the Iowa State Horticultural Society. They are pictured with Eugene Frye (right) of the Iowa Woodlands Owners Association who introduced them.

Forestry Web Sites

With long winter evenings ahead, now may be the perfect time to check out some web sites of interest to woodland owners. The list below is only a sample of the sites available on-line. Members who have visited other sites of interest are encouraged to send the address for inclusion in a future newsletter.

- **Iowa Department of Natural Resources**
www.state.ia.us/dnr/organiza/forest/
The Forest and Prairies Division section of the Iowa

Department of Natural Resources Home Page includes links to a variety of forestry related information. Of particular interest is the link to the Big Trees project. A listing of Iowa's big trees is available. Also included within the Big Trees link is the criteria for ranking trees and instructions on how to nominate a big tree for consideration. In addition you can use the site to order seedlings from the state nursery and review some of the division's publications.

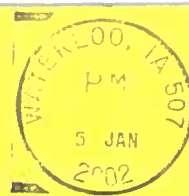
- **Iowa State University Forestry Extension Service**
www.ag.iastate.edu/departments/forestry/ext/ext.html
Forestry extension topics of special interest, timber tax laws and forms, extension staff information and e-mail addresses, and extension publications are just some of the items found at the ISU Forestry Extension Service web site. The site also provides an interactive tree identification key to help identify the most common trees in Iowa.
- **National Woodlands Owners Association**
www.woodlandowners.org/nwoa/nwoa.asp
The NWOA web site features a section on the top ten issues affecting non-industrial private forestry. Some of the issues addressed are private property rights, landowner liability, and forestry extension education. A list of affiliated organizations (IWOA is an affiliate) and links to some of the affiliates can also be found at this site.
- **Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation**
www.inhf.org
Do you need a list of Iowa conservation/recreation trails? Are you interested in a county by county listing of INHF land projects? Do you need a quick link to your county's conservation board? Check out this site and find that and much more. The Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation's mission is to protect, preserve, and enhance Iowa's natural heritage. This site specifically addresses issues related to conservation and environmental protection in the state of Iowa.
- **American Forests**
www.americanforests.org
American Forests is a national conservation organization which promotes projects such as GlobalReLeaf and an historic tree nursery. The organization maintains a national registry of big trees. Follow the more resources link on the home page to access big tree information. You can also sign up for a free e-mail newsletter.
- **Forest Landowners Tax Council**
www.fltc.org
The Forest Landowners Tax Council (FLTC) is an independent, national non-profit organization dedicated to providing an effective and unified voice for non-industrial, private forest (NIPF) landowners on federal tax issues. The site links to position papers regarding the top six tax policies concerns of FLTC members.
- **USDA Forest Service National Headquarters**
www.fs.fed.us/textonly.htm
Explore what the Forest Service has to offer at their web site. By clicking on the State & Private Forestry link then the Cooperative Forestry button, you can find information on landowner assistance programs, urban and community forestry programs, and economic action programs. The Conservation Education link connects to curricular resources, environmental education links, and even links to Smokey the Bear and Woodsy Owl. A highlight of the Forest Service site is an interactive map of national forests, national grasslands, and national parks. It is worth a visit just to look at this link.

Remember to send addresses and reviews of any sites you may have visited and found helpful. Your suggestions for web sites can be sent to Jane Kemp-Ulfers at ulfers@cfu.net.



2301 Hawthorne Dr.
Cedar Falls, IA 50613

Winter, 2002



Mr. Thomas Brady
199 NE 80th. St.,
Runnels, IA 50237-2128

50237/2128



FORESTRY FIELD DAY

The Iowa Chapter of the Walnut Council is planning a Forestry Field Day to be held on April 20, 2002, at the GRIMES FARM located southwest of the city limits of Marshalltown between highways 30 and 330 and just off Highland Acres Road. GRIMES FARM is a public park and brown public park signs are on both 30 and 330.

Further instructions see www.grimesfarm.com. IWOA MEMBERS ARE INVITED TO ATTEND.

Tentatively the program includes: 1) Herbicides: How to Use—How Effective—Cost—Calibrating Equipment—and Much, Much, More; 2) Organizing Basic Woodland Information; 3) Soils—The Right Site for Walnuts; 4) Walnuts, An Historical Perspective; and 5) What About Disking?

The program emphasis will be on the effectiveness of disking in tree growth. As you may know, Calvin Gatch of Cascade Forestry has been a longtime proponent and disciple of disking between the rows. He has an interesting story to tell.

In 1998 Bob Hibbs, District Forester for District 3, and the Grimes began a disking project designed to furnish a scientific basis to confirm or refute the claims made for between-row disking. Eighteen walnut plots on an 1993 planting and the same number of oak plots on a 1994 planting were randomly selected. Nine plots of each were disked and nine plots were left undisked. Girth and height measurements have been taken each fall. The project was originally expected to last 5 years. Let Bob show you and tell you what the results are so far.

For registration or other information: Call the Grimes at 641/752-0033, write to the Grimes at 2353 233rd St., Marshalltown, IA 50158, or email at llgrimes@adiis.net.

Leonard Grimes, Member, IWOA

A Breeze in the Branches: The President's Corner

This is my first column as president of the Board of Directors of the IWOA. My wife, Elizabeth, and I have been members of the IWOA for a number of years and have enjoyed meeting and getting to know other members.

At the annual meeting in September, several people commented that they have been members for some time, but this was the first meeting or event of the IWOA they had been able to attend. I do understand that most of us are extremely busy with family and work, but I would like to encourage you to attend the summer field day and/or annual meeting. If you do, I think I can guarantee you will meet people who have many varied interest in the multiple aspects of woodland ownership and stewardship.

Anytime there is a break in the "formal" program at one of our events you will find groups of people engaged in animated conversations. The subjects may range from veneer walnut logs to wildflowers to tax policy. I have always found IWOA members very willing to share what they know about woodlands. Well, they may not tell you where their favorite mushroom hunting area is!

Part of the goal of the IWOA is "to advance the interests of woodland owners." In light of that aspect, please communicate with me or other board members any topics you would like to see highlighted and/or any site you think would be interesting to tour during a field day or annual meeting.

I would like to add an occasional item to the IWOA newsletter. If you or someone you know has tried something unique in regards to woodland management, would you write a short note about what was tried and how it worked (negative results are as important as positive ones). We will try to include it in the newsletter so others can learn from your experiences.

I hope that in the coming months you will all have an opportunity to enjoy your woodlands. At least from me personally, in times of stress or trial, I find one of the best therapies to be "a walk in woods."

Jim Ahrens, President, IWOA

Available from Forestry Extension

A number of resources are available from the Forestry Extension of Iowa State University. The service provides information for landowners regarding tree planting, woodlands management, and marketing of resources.

Forestry Extension publishes a free newsletter, Woodland Owners Newsletter. To get on the mailing list contact your county extension office or contact them on the web at www.ag.iastate.edu/departments/forestry/ext/ext.html.

IWOA Membership Report

Current Members: 464

Total Forest Acres Owned by IWOA Members:

40,342 acres

Forest Reserve:

59% of IWOA members have indicated that they have land in forest reserve.

Certified Tree Farmers:

31% of IWOA members have indicated that they are certified tree farmers.

Membership has grown by 35 members since September 2001. Please remember to keep your membership current. Membership renewals should be sent to Cathy Wilkie-Tomes, 3407 Willow Dr., North Liberty, IA 52317.

Statistics provided by Cathy Wilkie-Tomes, IWOA Membership Secretary