

# Timber Talk

*Newsletter of the Iowa Woodland Owners Association  
and Iowa Tree Farmers*

**March 2025**

**Editor: Steve Meyer**



## **IWOA SPRING FIELD DAY TO BE HELD MAY 6**

The next IWOA Field Day will be Tuesday May 6, 2025 in NE Iowa. Louis Christen will be the host. Louis has worked tirelessly over many years to manage and conserve his Fayette County property. Some of you may have been to a previous field day there that he has hosted. He has the distinction of being a Tree Farmer of the Year.

An agenda is being finalized and separate email/mailing will be sent out. Those in attendance will be treated to a full day of woodland topics some of which will center around his large standing walnut trees, his native, artsy wood products workshop, and his work in direct seeding and natural regeneration. A beekeeping operation exists utilizing basswood tree flowers. A catered lunch will be provided. We are very excited to have a field day at this location and look forward to a great turnout!

Ed Kocal, IWOA Board of Directors



### **URGENT!**

#### **FOREST RESERVE ACT LEGISLATION**

From IWOA Board Member Paul Millice

Wednesday 2/19 was scheduled as Environmental Advocacy Day at the Capitol 12:30-5 and IWOA was there talking with anyone that would listen. Craig Semler and I got to talk with my State Representative Heather Hora. We had our display adorned with some new posters and a copy, the Cedar Rapids Gazette featuring yours truly. As an icebreaker I was giving out walnut discs touting Walnuts value and suggestion to everyone to invest in Iowa and to plant a tree!

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As a side note 2/19 was also Farm Bureau's first of two days scheduled at the Capitol. Just coincidentally SJR6 was introduced. It is designed to change the Constitutional amendment approved by 61% if Iowans back in 2010. This is a very bad effort to subvert the will of the people. The Farm Bureau had the Committee room packed with their loyalists. It will now go on to the Senate Governmental Affairs Committee.

This misguided effort by the Iowa Farm Bureau was quickly recognized as a mistake and was promptly defeated.

*"Forests are like churches, hallowed places. There's a stillness about them, a sort of reverence."* - Sabrina Elkins

## MARCH 14 FOREST RESERVE LEGISLATION UPDATE

As of March 14 there are 5 bills before the Iowa Legislature that will affect/change or eliminate the Forest Reserve Act of 1906.

Please note that these bills have been assigned to Ways and Means Committees and as such are not subject to any funnel restrictions.

3/7 was the first funnel and lawmakers were working feverously ahead of these funnels to keep other bills alive.

Of the 5 Forest Reserve Bills two of these bills have a look-alike bill in the opposite chamber and one can only guess that is the help expedite the approval process between the two chambers.

When these bills get scheduled in subcommittees, we will only get 24-hour notice and I have been told that it is a professional courtesy to pass the bill on to the full chamber.

Having said that the **BALL IS IN YOUR COURT, YOU, ME, WE ALL NEED LET OUR LEGISLATORS KNOW WHAT WE THINK!**



IWOA Board Members Craig Semler (L) and Paul Millice with State Representative Heather Hora

## TRI-STATE FOREST STEWARDSHIP CONFERENCE HELD MARCH 1 IN DUBUQUE

Around 315 people attended the Tri-State Forest Stewardship Conference that was held on Saturday, March 1 in Dubuque. This included 280 participants and 30+ speakers, students, and vendors. The annual conference is hosted by Illinois, Iowa, and Wisconsin Extensions and this year was Iowa's turn to host. Attendees were able to attend a variety of informational sessions. Presentations from the 15 sessions offered can be accessed at <https://go.illinois.edu/2025TriStateForestHandouts>.

## IOWA FOREST & FOREST RESERVE FACTS

From Tim Meyer, IWOA Vice-president

### Forest Facts

- Iowa has approximately 36,000,000 acres
- Almost 30,000,000 acres are farmland or pastureland
- Today Iowa has approximately 3,000,000 acres of woodland. In 1800 we had 7,000,000 acres of woodland
- Approximately 87% of Iowa's woodland is privately held
- About 7% of Forest land in Iowa is owned by non-residents
- The Forest and Fruit Tree Exemption was enacted in 1906
- Most of Iowa's woodlands are along streams (riparian), or on heavily sloped land
- In 2024 there were 840,000 acres enrolled in Forest Reserve (28% of Iowa's woodlands)

### Woodland Benefits to Iowa

- Improves water quality and reduces flooding
- Better air quality
- Recreational improvement
- Quality of life issues
- Supports Iowa's world class hunting

### Forest Reserve Facts

- Enacted 1906
- 840,000 acres out of Iowa's 36,000,000 are in Forest Reserve (2.3 % of the state's land is in Forest Reserve)
- There are about 61,000 parcels in Forest Reserve
- 21,000 Iowa landowners have land in Forest Reserve
- The average parcel size in Forest Reserve is about 14 acres
- 7% of land in Iowa is owned by non-residents
- Approximately 70% of land in Iowa is owned by people who live in the county where their Forest Reserve acres are, or the county next to that
- 23% of Forest Reserve acres are owned by people that don't live in the county or the adjacent county of their Forest Reserve acres
- The 3 Bills proposed would raise between an estimated \$1,000,000 to \$8,000,000 out of Iowa's 9 Billion dollar budget

## IWOA AND POLK COUNTY CONSERVATION TO HONOR PAST PRESIDENT DAVE BARTEMES

By Steve Meyer, *Timber Talk* Editor

The IWOA and Polk County Conservation will honor Past-IWOA President Dave Bartemes with a Legacy Planting in April of 2025. This effort will involve the planting of 375 trees along the High Trestle Trail at NW 126<sup>th</sup> Avenue in Polk County.



Dave Bartemes

Dave Bartemes served on the IWOA board and as President of the IWOA. He lived in Urbandale and died on October 11, 2023. Born in the Green Hills of West Virginia in 1938, Dave was a man of action who always had a project spinning in his head. His lifelong passion was planting trees which he had done in West Virginia, Pennsylvania and finally on his dream farm, Dave's Hardwood Trees in southern Iowa (Wayne County), where he had planted 30,000 hard wood trees to preserve the land and bless the future. An accomplished woodworker, he made many cedar chests, clocks, tables, chairs and cutting boards for his family members and items for his church.

Dave also served in the US Army in Germany and ministered to the women and men at Mitchellville and Newton Correctional facilities in Iowa. He was an avid bicycle rider who frequently rode the High Trestle Trail.

Dave and his wife Cora were married for 62 years and had three sons: Kevin, Paul and Brian; nine grandchildren and two great-grandchildren. He retired as a branch manager for a division of Honeywell in Des Moines. His life ambition was to be a farmer but he was never able to until he purchased his 60 acre farm in Wayne County in 1999. In addition to planting trees on his farm, he did a lot of timber stand improvement work (TSI) work and established a native prairie on his land. He achieved a State of Iowa Master Woodland Steward degree and strove to be an educated forest owner who managed his woodlands scientifically—this is what led him to membership in the IWOA.

Any member of the IWOA who wishes to assist with the planting is welcome to do so. Dates and times of the planting will be: Tuesday, April 15: 9:00 AM – 12:00 PM & 1:00 - 4:00 PM, Wednesday, April 16: 9:00 AM - 12:00 PM and Thursday, April 17: 9:00 AM – 12:00 PM & 1:00 - 3:00 PM. Polk County Conservations asks that volunteers helping with the planting register so they can communicate details and information to everyone about the event in addition to tracking volunteer hours. Sign up at the link: <https://polkcountyiowa.volunteermatters.org/project-catalog/118>.



## SAVANNA RESTORATION PART II

By Ed Kocal, IWOA Board Member

In a previous *Timber Talk* article I wrote about my one-acre oak savanna restoration. In summary, I partnered with the US Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) and received planning assistance and cost share funding for this project. Starting in early 2023, I cut and sprayed all the woody shrubs and vines that existed on the site, which is a steep SW facing overlook. I then followed with having the all the trees felled and roughly piled with the exception of a few bur oaks which I kept, and some marketable walnuts which I sold. That is where I left off.

In year two, I was able to get help for a day from a few FWS employees. We were able to cut the many large logs and felled trees into smaller logs

and make 10 or so burn piles on the site. Due to the steepness of the slope and all the tree stumps, this exhausting job had to be done without the help of any tractor or other machine. I was very grateful for this additional help. I was then able to burn the piles using a little diesel fuel to get them started. A breeze was helpful in keeping the fires going. Each time I burned, the piles got smaller and so I had to re-pile before I started each time. A few small piles were left for reptile and amphibian habitat.

On at least 3 occasions during the growing season, I walked and foliar sprayed a 3% solution of glyphosate on any woody plants that sprang up as well as a dozen or so patches of invasive Japanese hops that we found. The hops seemed to like the edges of burn piles.

Finally in December of 2024, Scott James, FWS Biologist and I we were able to frost seed by hand. We first divided the site into fourths. We then each took a partial sack of the seed mixture in one arm and spreading handfuls of it with the other, walking in a back-and-forth grid pattern. The mixture that was provided by FWS is very diverse. It has many species of prairie forbs and grasses, with emphasis on savanna species. I am now looking forward to what comes up this year and in subsequent years! I will still continue to patrol, with loppers and spray, to check any unwanted guests before they get out of hand! The project took longer and was harder to do than expected, but then again this is typical in my personal experiences with forestry.



## KEEPING TRACK OF LASTS

By Steve Lekwa

Retired Director for Story County Conservation

Late winter and early spring is a time of anticipation. We await the first blooming crocus in our flower garden, the first robin song, and the first woodland wildflowers. These are definitely a spirit up-lifter and worth waiting for. It's also a season of lasts, and these are often harder to notice and keep track of. Here's a challenge for you: while you wait for all those wonderful firsts, become more aware, and take note of the lasts this season offers.

It was probably sometime in October when you noticed the first quiet little gray and white dark-eyed junco visit your bird feeder. These little finches regularly spend their winters with us, but return to their Boreal pine forests up north to nest each spring. Sometimes a few stay long enough that we even get to hear their simple trilled spring song. Pine siskins are little streaked goldfinch cousins that don't always make it this far south for winter. A few are usually seen at winter feeders here and there around Iowa, though. Another winter irregular visitor is the striking purple finch. Deeper raspberry red than our local house finches, purple finches don't come south in numbers every year, but a few are usually around. Purple finches sometimes don't even show up until late winter. See if you can notice and remember the last time you see one of these Iowa winter visitors in the weeks ahead.



Pine siskin (*Spinus pinus*)

Winter sparrows are another group of birds that may appear in mixed flocks around Iowa during the winter. They, too, will head back north for nesting before spring is very far advanced. Keep an eye (and ear) out for white-throated sparrows. Most sparrows love thickets, tall weeds, and brush. As days lengthen you may get to hear a white-throated sparrow's high little song that's been described as "sam peabody, peabody, peabody" with the last notes higher than the first. White-crowned sparrows have distinct black and white stripes over the top of their heads. Harris sparrow males sport black face masks and bibs with pink bills. American tree sparrows wear a rusty colored cap and a small black "stick pin" mark on their breasts. The latter three return all the way to the Arctic to nest. Winter sparrows will visit feeders, but often stay out in their preferred thickets where they're harder to spot.



White throated sparrow (*Zonotrichia albicollis*)

Those of us near areas of open water are probably very familiar with winter flocks of Canada geese. The wintering flocks are not the same birds we see nesting here in the summer, though. Thousands wintering Canada geese are mostly a mid-sized race that are truly from Canada. They will return there to nest all across the prairies and tundra west of Hudson Bay. A few of the wintering geese are a smaller race now known as cackling geese. See if you notice when the last wintering flocks leave. It may seem like they're here today and gone tomorrow. They'll push north as far as they can find open water in their rush to get to the breeding grounds. When they're gone, all we'll have is scattered pairs of our local giant Canada goose staking out nesting sites.

There are a few other lasts we're probably looking forward to. How about the last below zero night, the last snow, and the last frost? We may regret other lasts. I'm always a bit sad to see the last hepatica bloom when only a few weeks before, the first one brought such joy. Keeping track of lasts is another way to challenge ourselves to be more observant as we keep track of "nature's time". In the process we become more attuned to the flow of the seasons just like our ancestors were before the days of printed calendars.

Steve Lekwa is a Story City native who graduated from ISU in 1971 with a degree in Fisheries and Wildlife Biology. He retired after 38 years with Story County Conservation in 2011, but continues to pursue a variety of outdoor activities (among them outdoor writing). He is married to Susan, a retired music teacher. They have two grown children and three grandchildren.

## HOW DEAD TREES HELP WILDLIFE

By Riggs Wilson

*Editor's Note: This article appeared in the February 14 issue of Iowa DNR Wildlife Diversity News provided by the Iowa DNR's Wildlife Diversity Program. It is republished here with permission of the Iowa DNR. This article is right in line with my observation that every standing dead snag is a songbird condo and every brush pile is a songbird feeding station.*

Trees are important features of a backyard or property, providing shade and a place for wildlife to live. Trees often live for decades or even centuries so it may come as a surprise if have a tree die on your property. Trees die for many reasons, and you may currently have a dead standing tree on your property or a few cut logs from a downed tree piled in a back corner.

Many people see dead trees or downed logs and think they look untidy and need to be "cleaned up." However, many wildlife species benefit from dead trees and downed logs and see a place to live and find food. There is often more "life" in a dead tree than when it was living. Sometimes embracing the "mess" in your yard can benefit wildlife.

Countless wildlife species utilize dead standing trees in many ways. In Iowa, all of our seven woodpecker species utilize both living and dead trees to forage for food and excavate nest cavities, with many of them preferring to construct nest cavities in dead trees.

Over 30 species of birds in Iowa use cavities for nesting, though more than half of these species can't build their own cavities and rely on natural holes or those made by woodpeckers. Common cavity nesting birds besides woodpeckers include Wood Ducks, White-breasted Nuthatches, House Wrens, Eastern Bluebirds, Black-capped Chickadees, Eastern Screech-owls, and Tree Swallows. Only a thin outer layer of a tree is living, with the inner part of the tree made up of non-living wood. If a tree gets an injury, this inner wood often rots away, leaving an open cavity inside the tree. Open cavities inside both living and dead standing trees and downed logs provide shelter for countless species of wildlife including squirrels, chipmunks, foxes, striped skunks, bats, Virginia opossums, snakes, tree frogs, and raccoons to name just a few! Hollow fallen logs and dead standing trees provide

locations for species such as chipmunks and squirrels to cache food resources like acorns for later use.

Dead trees and downed logs are also really important for many detritivore species, which feed on dead plants and animals. There is a wide diversity of detritivores, including insects like carpenter ants or millipedes, and other animals such as earthworms and snails. Many of these detritivores are at the base of the food chain, providing nutrients to many other wildlife. Decomposers such as fungi also help break down dead plants and animals and eventually turn them into soil nutrients.

Fallen logs provide cover for wildlife and create a cooler and moister microclimate underneath. Salamanders, snakes, toads, small rodents, and many insects use logs for cover. In winter, fallen logs provide a higher surface for wildlife such as chipmunks, squirrels, mice, and raccoons to move easier in deep snow.

Even with all the benefits of standing dead trees or downed logs, safety should be your number one priority. Only leave standing dead trees if they do not pose safety risks to people or animals or a hazard to property. If you are unsure about whether it is safe to leave a dead standing tree, consult with a tree professional or your local Iowa DNR district forester before deciding whether to leave the dead tree. If you do need a tree removed from your yard, you may be able to ask a tree professional to leave the lower portion of a dead tree trunk in your yard after they remove the crown portions of the tree if they determine it won't be a hazard.

While it may not always be possible to leave all the dead trees or logs in your yard, even taking a small step such as leaving a few branches or pieces of wood can be beneficial to wildlife like insects and birds that eat insects. When safe to do so, leaving standing dead trees and fallen logs in your yard is one of the most cost-effective ways to benefit wildlife and attract them to your yard. So, the next time you see a dead standing tree or downed log, don't think of it as an eyesore, but rather as a "condo and restaurant" for countless wildlife species.

## INVASIVE ALERT!!!

### WHITE MULBERRY (*MORUS ALBA*)

By Tim Meyer, IWOA Vice President

I always thought the hundreds of mulberry trees in our Iowa county woodland were desirable. In 2022 we did a Forest Stewardship Plan on our property with Mark Vitosh, Iowa District Forester. The primary purpose was to remove honeysuckle, which was starting to become highly invasive.

We did remove the honeysuckle, but Mark also recommended we take out the white mulberry. We now have over 200 dead mulberry trees which were frilled and are standing. Those trees range from small to very large and the good news is they are great firewood. We have cut and split much of the white mulberry and have been burning it all winter in our wood stove in the house.

If you have a lot of white mulberry you might want to consider removing it. Red mulberry (*Morus rubra*) is a native tree to Iowa and more desirable. White mulberry was brought over from China for possible silkworm production centuries ago, and was spread prolifically by birds.

Removing the white mulberry is probably a great management plan for your woodlands because it will hopefully allow something more desirable to grow in the sunlight you have created by its removal. As an additional benefit, we have enough white mulberry firewood to supply ourselves and several friends for many years.

*Editor's note: I've probably eradicated more white mulberry over the years than most people have seen. According to Mark Vitosh, red mulberry is quite uncommon. Distinguishing between red and white mulberry can be difficult. The leaves are shaped the same but White mulberry leaves are shiny and smooth and red mulberry leaves are more dull and a little hairy. The tip of each white mulberry bud is short and needle sharp, and each bud scale has a brown band which is not necessarily on the margin. There is usually a color difference in the twigs of the two species as well. Red mulberry twigs are very pale tan, while those of white mulberry tend to be pinkish-brown. A good tutorial on telling the difference can be viewed on Utube at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zRXFtlNEjPg>*



## WOODLAND CRITTERS

### PILEATED WOODPECKER (*DRYOCOPUS PILEATUS*)



The Pileated Woodpecker is one of the biggest, most striking forest birds on the continent. It's nearly the size of a crow, black with bold white stripes down the neck and a flaming-red crest. Look (and listen) for Pileated Woodpeckers whacking at dead trees and fallen logs in search of their main prey, carpenter ants, leaving unique rectangular holes in the wood. The nest holes of these birds offer crucial shelter to many species including swifts, owls, ducks, bats, and pine martens.

The pileated woodpecker inhabits [deciduous](#) forests in eastern North America, the [Great Lakes](#), the [boreal forests of Canada](#), and parts of the [Pacific Coast](#). It is the largest confirmed extant woodpecker species in North America. Adults are 16 to 19 inches long, span 26 to 30 inches across the wings, and weigh 8 to 14 ounces. Adult males have a red line from the bill to the throat; in adult females the lines are black.

This bird favors mature forests and heavily wooded parks. They specifically prefer [mesic habitats](#) with large, mature hardwood trees, often being found in large tracts of forest. However, they also inhabit smaller woodlots as long as they have a scattering of tall trees. Efforts to restore woodland by removing invasive [honeysuckle](#) and [buckthorn](#) seem to benefit them, as the removal of brush and shrubbery facilitates their foraging on the ground and in the lower stratum. They mainly eat insects, especially [carpenter ants](#) and wood-boring beetle larvae. They also eat fruits, nuts, and berries, including [poison ivy](#) berries.

Pileated woodpeckers often chip out large and roughly rectangular holes in trees while searching out insects, especially ant colonies. They also lap up ants by reaching with their long tongues into crevices. They are self-assured on the vertical surfaces of large trees, but can seem awkward while feeding on small branches and vines. They may also forage on or near the ground, especially around fallen, dead trees, which can contain a variety of insect life. They may forage around the sides of human homes or even cars, and can be observed feeding at suet-type feeders.

Usually, pileated woodpeckers excavate their large nests in the cavities of dead trees. Woodpeckers make such large holes in dead trees that the holes can cause a small tree to break in half. The roost of a pileated woodpecker usually has multiple entrance holes. In April, the hole made by the male attracts a female for mating and raising their young. Both parents incubate three to five eggs for 12 to 16 days. The average clutch size is four per nest. The young may take a month to fledge. Once the brood is raised, the birds abandon the hole and do not use it the next year. When abandoned, these holes—made similarly by all woodpeckers—provide good homes in future years for many forest songbirds and a wide variety of other animals. Owls and tree-nesting ducks may largely rely on holes

made by pileateds to lay their nests. Even mammals such as raccoons may use them. Other woodpeckers and smaller birds, such as wrens, may be attracted to pileated holes to feed on the insects found in them. Ecologically, the entire woodpecker family is important to the well-being of many other bird species.

A pileated woodpecker pair stays together on its territory all year round and is not migratory. They defend the territory in all seasons, but tolerate floaters during the winter. When clashing with conspecifics, they engage in much chasing, calling, striking with the wings, and jabbing with the bill. Drumming is most common during courtship and to proclaim territory.

From 1966 to 2015 the population of pileated woodpecker has, on average, increased by greater than 1.5% per year throughout the northeastern U.S.



## DISTRICT FORESTER SPOTLIGHT

### BECKY LEE—DISTRICT 6 FORESTRY SPECIALIST



Becky Lee started here position as a Forestry Specialist in District 6 in January of this year. She hit the ground running and within the first two

weeks had already completed 10 forest management plans. Though not officially the District 6 Forester, she is the forester covering District 6. Her official job title is a Forestry Specialist which is a joint position hosted by the Wildlife Management Institute (WMI) and the Iowa DNR. District 6 covers Washington, Jefferson, Van Buren and Davis Counties. Reflecting on her position, Becky says: "This job is really important to me because I am a Washington and Jefferson County native so I am back in my home community helping the landowners I grew up with."

Becky decided upon a natural resources career at a very young age. In seventh grade she decided she wanted a natural resources career to help landowners in her community better manage their land and the resources on their land: "In my current role that is exactly what I am doing every single day—I'm talking to them and providing them advice about what are the best management practices they can use." She grew up on a farm and spent a lot of her time exploring creeks and natural areas and the wildlife that inhabited the areas. She attended high school at WACO. After graduating she worked for a farm store and then started College at ISU with Major in Forestry and a minor in Insect Science. She graduated in December 2023. After College she worked for the US Geological Survey for a little over a year, then for the Wapello County Commissioner Board where she was the Cedar Creek Watershed Coordinator until January 13 of 2025 when she started her current position.

Due to her interest in insects she is very interested in pollinators and helping people understand their vital role in our environment. One example she points out is Prickly Ash and how swallowtail butterflies are so reliant upon them for their life cycle. She would like to do what she can to increase knowledge and understanding among landowners about plant species like Prickly Ash and other plants that are critical to pollinators. "I really like insects because they play so many roles in our natural resources and it's important to understand all of the dynamics of the ecosystems they are a part of and how they influence them. So learning about insects and how they interact with other plants and animals is important."

Becky has a lot of personal experience that helps her in this position. She is helping manage her family's farm 300 acre farm and timber resources as

she says: "This gives me a unique perspective to relate with other land owners because I am also engaged directly in management of my own land. I know how hard timber stand improvement and invasive control can be. So I have a connection to owning land and managing land and the sweat equity that goes into it. I understand the relationship people develop with their woods and how hard it can be to separate your emotional values from the management practices we sometimes need to undertake." She adds that they are also livestock producers.

### YOUR IWOA MEMBERSHIP

- MEMBER--woodland owner (voting) \$25
- ASSOCIATE MEMBER--non-woodland owner (nonvoting) \$25
- CONTRIBUTING MEMBER--woodland owner (voting) \$50
- CONTRIBUTING ASSOCIATE MEMBER--non-woodland owner (nonvoting) \$50
- FRIENDS OF IWOA-- (nonvoting) \$100
- IWOA FOREST STEWARD-- (nonvoting) \$250

All memberships are for the calendar year. Please look for the appropriate category to check in your 2024 dues notice. Our website has a Paypal option for those who wish to join electronically. All members wanting a print copy of the newsletter add \$5.



### PRESIDENTS COLUMN

IWOA President Phil McCune asked that we publish the following bulletin titled *Restoring Sustainability for White Oak and Upland Communities: an Assessment and Conservation Plan* for the Presidents Column. The bulletin is from November, 2021 and is from the White Oak Initiative and is part of a larger report. I am providing only excerpts from the bulletin.—Editor

### WHITE OAK FACTS

- American white oak is a foundational tree species, currently occupying more than 10.4

million acres of public and private forestland across much of the eastern and central United States—including a strong presence in Alabama, Arkansas, Georgia, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kentucky, Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Pennsylvania, North Carolina, Ohio, Tennessee, Virginia, West Virginia and Wisconsin.

- White oak forests support extensive plant and animal diversity, providing a critical food source for a variety of wildlife species and serving an important role in maintaining our diverse forest ecosystem.
- Forest sector economic reports from central region states (where white oak predominates) clearly indicate the importance of oak resources, which generate billions of dollars annually.
- White oaks are the most commercially important timber oak—necessary for industries such as furniture, flooring, cabinetry, and wine and spirits.

### CURRENT STATE OF AMERICA'S WHITE OAK

#### *Overall Report Findings*

- Due to shifts in land management and ecological changes, an increasing amount of competing tree species have been establishing themselves in the understories of America's white oak forests.
- Competing species, most notably maples and beech, are shading out white oak trees and preventing them from regenerating.
- As a result, older white oak trees are not being replaced by younger white oak trees at a pace that will support long-term sustainability.
- About 75% of all white oak trees across the eastern United States can be classified as "mature," while populations of young white oak trees are limited.
- Challenges such as climate change, invasive insects and diseases, and behavior change are also impacting white oak sustainability.
- Without intervention today, the American white oak population will begin to decline

significantly within the next 10 to 15 years, with more extreme declines over the next several decades.

Restoring the Long-Term sustainability of America's White Oak is Possible. In order to restore the long-term sustainability of America's white oak forests, and maintain the economic, social and environmental benefits they provide, we need active, cross boundary collaboration, participation and support from industry, resource professionals, policymakers, landowners and others who can align knowledge and resources behind the report's 10 recommended forest management practices, before it's too late.

**Founded in 1987, the Iowa Woodland Owners Association is a private non-profit organization that welcomes anyone with an interest in woodlands to join our membership ranks. IWOA is committed to advancing the interests of woodland owners, developing public appreciation for their importance, encouraging wise use and management of woodlands and related resources in Iowa, and promoting both conservation of natural resources as well as the practice of sustainable forestry.**

## IWOA AT DEER CLASSIC



IWOA had a booth at the Iowa Deer Classic March 7-9 in Des Moines. Shown at the booth L-R are IWOA board members Paul Millice, Craig Semler and Steve Meyer.

## IWOA MEETING MINUTES 012/4/2024 AMANA, IOWA

Meeting was called to order by President Phil McCune at 10:05 A.M. Other board members in attendance were Tim Meyer, Russ Glime, Paul Millice, Al Wagner, Ed Kocal, Craig Semler and newly elected members, Ruth McAndrews and Ray Lehn.

Minutes- motion by Millice / 2nd Kocal to approve 07/10/2024 minutes as written. Motion carried.

Finances- all transactions from the first of 2024 up until December 1 were presented. Motion by Semler / 2nd T. Meyer to continue with a short term CD (6 month) when the current one matures on January 12, 2025. Motion carried with one vote against.

Membership- currently at 478. Motion by Millice / 2nd Kocal to give all State DNR Foresters complimentary IWOA memberships which includes the newsletter Timber Talk via email. Motion carried.

Motion followed on how to increase membership. Kocal suggested a marketing consultant. T. Meyer will contact a consultant with whom he is familiar.

Scholarship- Glime and Wagner reported two applications had been received. Motion by Millice/2nd T. Meyer to award Linus Dyer and Lilly Otter each \$500 scholarships. Motion carried

501c3- Semler reported progress to date and current status. The plan is to continue to pursue next spring, provided that is the board's wish.

BOI (Beneficial Ownership Information form) - as no one has submitted the information, Semler volunteered to file it by the end of 2024.

Forest Reserve Land Owners- Millice reported reserve landowners are listed among all the Iowa landowners in each of the 99 counties. He will send the EXCEL file to McAndrews per

her request with the attempt to glean the reserve owners from the entire list.

Kocal and T. Meyer met with State Senator Mike Klamish yesterday regarding the possible change to the Forest Reserve. Senator Klamish presented proposals. Kocal and Meyer will present the views of the IWOA board, which includes, but not limited to, the removal of the plan to assess a greater tax to out-of-county and out-of-state residents.

Field Day at Loess Hills- Kocal reported a very successful day with approximately 45 in attendance.

Spring Field Day- Kocal said it is tentatively scheduled in NE Iowa sometime in April or May.

Iowa Deer Classic- Millice said he has not heard back

Capitol Tree Day at Des Moines- information to be received later

Tri State Symposium will be held in Iowa next year and the general consensus was we should have a booth/display.

Tree Planting in Des Moines--it is hoped that we can have another tree planting in Polk Co. next year.

Motion by Millice / 2nd T. Meyer to reimburse McCune \$250 as he paid for half the cost of a booth recently. Motion carried.

Kocal reported there is a Fire Workshop scheduled in Montrose on 02/13/2025.

Al Wagner was recognized for his many years as a very active board member with a beautiful plaque.

The next meeting is tentatively scheduled for 01/22/2025 in Amana.

Meeting adjourned at 12:15 P.M.

Craig Semler, IWOA secretary

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## NEW BOARD MEMBER RUTH MCANDREWS

By Steve Meyer, Editor

Ruth McAndrews was elected to the IWOA Board of Directors in December. Ruth is a retired optometrist in Davenport, Iowa. She grew up in rural Van Buren County in southern Iowa, where “the woods” was always a special place to her. When she became a woodland owner of it a few years ago, she felt I needed to learn how to be a responsible steward of the property. Her husband John and her had already been involved in other conservation projects including riparian buffer,

CRP, pollinator habitat, and had taken a master conservationist course. She also describes themselves as state park, national park, and rails-to-trails aficionados. She joined IWOA and began attending as many field days and educational events as time allowed. "I was especially impressed with IWOA's passionate priorities of education and legislative advocacy. These and public awareness are the real keys to the future of our woodlands," says Ruth.

Ruth says they own 70 acres of woodland in Van Buren County out of 200 acres of her home place there. In addition to the woodlands she says they have some hay, some prairie planting in progress and 29 acres in switchgrass for biofuel at the Ottumwa power plant. They also own 80 acres of CRP and riparian buffer in Clinton County and 30 acres of CRP in Jefferson County.



Ruth McAndrews

### IWOA SCHOLARSHIP CHANGES

The IWOA Directors have changed their Annual Scholarship Program. Iowa students may seek a Scholarship of \$1,000 in September 2024 directly from the IWOA. Potential applicants must be in a Conservation or Forestry program at any Iowa college. Parents should be a member of the IWOA and the student applicant should attend potential workshops when possible. An application can be sent to [r.glime634@gmail.com](mailto:r.glime634@gmail.com)

### IWOA AWARDS TWO SCHOLARSHIPS

By Steve Meyer, *Timber Talk* Editor

In December 2024 the Iowa Woodland Owners Association granted two \$500.00 scholarships to Iowa State University students Lilly Otter and Linus Dyer. Linus is a third year student and first year Forestry Major. Lilly is a freshman majoring in Animal Ecology and Statistics.

Lilly Otter attended Prairie High School in Cedar Rapids, Iowa. She says that after she finishes her undergrad work at ISU she would like to attend graduate school to continue to further her education as well as continue to conduct studies in conservation. Ultimately, she would like to work in the conservation field, focusing on research and data and using those studies to better our understanding of how an ecosystem or species is doing, then taking that analysis to others and educating them on the happenings of the natural world.

Career-wise, Lilly says she would love to work for the National Park Service, the National Forest Service, a state agency, or at an institution where she can lead research in conservation. "I really love visiting public lands and want to use my knowledge to keep the lands healthy and intact for future generations. Whatever institution I end up working for, I just want to be able to get into the field and learn by doing as well as applying my knowledge and ideas to better our environment," says Lilly, who adds: "I have been an IWOA member for about ten years. In that time I've accompanied my dad on a few field days, the most recent one being the fall field day in 2022 at the Larry Krotz Tree Farm. Having been to the field days, my dad and I took things we learned back to our own woodland property. I spent a lot of time working with my dad (Mike Otter) to manage invasive species with a goal to restore our eight acre property in Linn County to a oak/hickory woodland and enhance available habitat for wildlife. Although after the derecho in August of 2020, our focus shifted from invasive species to clean up and restoration. We spent about three years working to cut down trees that had fallen or were hanging on other live trees to make the woodland usable again not just for us, but for the wildlife in the area. In that time, I used

knowledge from field days and applied it to our situation and property.”

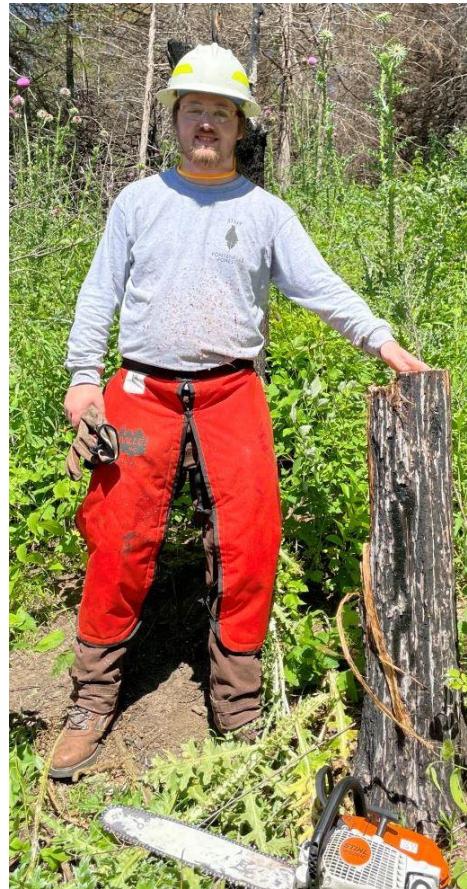


Lilly Otter

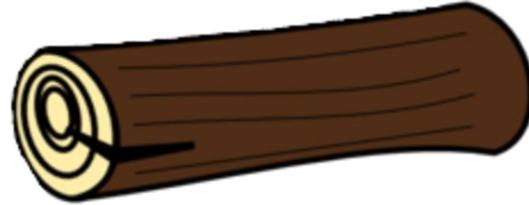
Linus Dyer grew up in Omaha, NE and attended Omaha Central High School. His interest in Forestry has always been connected to his love of the outdoors. He spent a large part of his life in natural environments ranging from summer camps to backpacking trips with his dad, to working at Platte River State Park and an outdoor ropes course located in a forest for summer jobs.

He says that a significant influence in fostering his passion for forestry has been the time he spent at his Grandpa Pete Tollenaere's property. He's had the privilege of assisting him with various forestry activities, including managing his tree nursery and implementing prescribed burns--experiences that provided him with a unique opportunity to observe firsthand and actively participate in responsible land management practices aimed at ensuring sustainability for future generations. “Grandpa Pete served as a model of best practices in applying the principles and ethics I have been studying in forestry, and he has directly imparted valuable knowledge on land stewardship and forest management,” says Linus. He adds that one of the most influential experiences and significant milestones in his forestry journey was his role as a Land Steward Intern at Fontenelle Forest in Bellevue, Nebraska last summer. During the internship, he was actively engaged in a variety of land management practices, including trail maintenance, invasive species control, sawyer

operations, prescribed burns, and other ecological stewardship tasks. The Land Steward internship enhanced his technical skills and broadened his understanding of what a career in Forestry entails.



Linus Dyer



## WHAT'S THAT TREE WORTH?

By Gretchen Cline  
Forester at Geode Forestry, Inc.

There are no stumpage prices included in this month's column. That is because of the recent news from China, and prices are in a state of flux and unknown at this time.

On March 4, Chinese customs authorities announced a suspension of log imports from the US, effective immediately. This followed an

announcement by President Trump on March 1 that he ordered a trade investigation on imported lumber, and came a day after Trump increased tariffs on Chinese goods by another 10%, bringing the total tariff on Chinese goods to 20%. China said recent inspections found bark beetles and longhorn beetles on imported U.S. logs, and the suspension will safeguard China's agricultural and forestry sectors. In 2024 China imported \$612 million worth of US hardwood logs. So far there has been no mention of restrictions on hardwood lumber or finished products, just logs.

So, what does that mean for us in Iowa? It has had an immediate impact on our loggers and sawmills. Hardwood log exports, particularly Walnut, are a major source of income for both. One logger we spoke with said he has been told to hold off cutting any more Walnut for the time being. And there are mills and loggers with cut logs that they were planning on exporting to China that they now have to find another market for if this does not get resolved soon. While they may still be able to move them domestically or to other destinations, it will be at a reduced price, as there are going to be a lot of logs on the market that were previously destined for export to China.

Whether this will be reflected on stumpage prices remains to be seen; it will mainly be dependent on how long this drags out. But if it is a prolonged standoff there will undoubtedly be a negative impact on standing timber prices.

#### Iowa Tree Farmers Officers

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The Iowa Tree farm system is affiliated with the American Tree Farm System and recognizes the efforts and accomplishments of individuals as related to their woodlands. If interested in becoming a Tree Farmer please contact your Iowa DNR District Forester for more information, help with creating a management plan, and filing an application to join.

## WOODLAND FLORA

### SWAMP WHITE OAK (*Quercus bicolor*)

One of my favorite trees is the White Oak family. Over the years I have planted many swamp white oaks and have come to value their many great qualities.

They can live up to 300 years and obtain height of 60-80 feet. They make an excellent shade tree and their acorns are highly sought after by wildlife of all types. They are considered intermediate on the shade tolerance spectrum.

Years ago we bare root planted literally thousands of swamp white oaks in Davis County, Iowa without tree shelters. Much to our surprise most survived even with very high deer population. (I have read there is something in the trees taste that deer don't like.

I have read that swamp white oak acorns are some of the most sought after by critters.

You might want to consider this tree for your spring planting. They have always exceeded my expectations and the best tree to plant a tree was—20 years ago!

Tim Meyer, IWOA Vice President



Swamp white oak leaves



Swamp white oak bark

## WOODLAND FLORA

### Bloodroot (*Sanguinaria Canadensis*)

By Steve Meyer, *Timber Talk* Editor

Here's a woodland plant that to me signals the arrival of spring. The white flower of bloodroot (*Sanguinaria Canadensis*) and its distinctive lobed leaves are among the first wildflowers to emerge in the spring and are very noticeable. Bloodroot is a perennial that is native to eastern North America. It is the only species in the genus *Sanguinaria* which includes the poppy family Papaveraceae.

Bloodroot grows from to 20 inches tall. It has one large basal leaf, up to 10 inches across, with five to seven lobes. The leaves and flowers sprout from a reddish rhizome with bright orange to red sap. The color of the sap is the reason for the genus name *Sanguinaria*, from Latin *sanguinarius* "bloody." The rhizomes grow longer each year, and branch to form colonies. Plants start to bloom before the foliage unfolds in early spring. After blooming, the leaves unfurl to their full size. Plants go dormant in mid to late summer, later than some other spring ephemerals. The flowers bloom from March to May. They have 8–12 delicate white petals, many yellow stamens, and two sepals below the petals, which fall off after the flowers open. Each flower stem is clasped by a leaf as it emerges from the ground. The flowers open when they are in sunlight and close at night. The seeds are round and black to orange-red when ripe.

Although there are laboratory studies indicating that bloodroot may have potential in cancer therapy, clinical studies are lacking, and its use is discouraged due to significant toxicity. Bloodroot sap is red and poisonous though the plant is a medicinal herb that has some market value. Products made from bloodroot extracts, such as black salve can cause permanent disfiguring if applied to the skin.



**Bloodroot (*Sanguinaria Canadensis*)**

## CLASSIFIEDS

### TIMBER TALK WANT ADS

#### INVASIVE TREE REMOVAL SERVICE

**I will do removal of Invasive/Unwanted species. I will cut, pile and treat. Contact Luke's Brush Management for an estimate at 641-330-6675, or email: [lucassis@live.com](mailto:lucassis@live.com) (Insured)**

Due to a death in the family I have a Norwood Lumbermate 2000 sawmill with Kohler 15 horse engine. Comes with 5 new blades, books and DVDs. Purchased new in 2008. Personal use only. Not commercial. Works great. Last used fall of last year/2023. She's looking for a good home. \$4,000 obo. Located in rural State Center. Ph 641-493-2729 or cell 641-751-5676

IWOA members can place a free want ad in Timber Talk for tree/timber related items. These want ads will be limited to business card size and must not be for commercial or business purposes. One should email your requested want ad to Steve Meyer 60 days before the publish date. We currently are publishing three times a year. April 1, Aug 1 and Dec 15th. Please note there are no guarantees on this free offer, if there is not space your request may have to wait for the next issue. Send want adds to the IWOA editor at [gfdchief@netins.net](mailto:gfdchief@netins.net). Please be sure to state IWOA WANT ADD in the subject line.

## IWOA MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION MEMBERSHIP LEVELS—NOTE CHANGES

### Please check one

- Member, \$25/yr.  
Woodland Owner, Voting
- Associate Member, \$25/yr.  
Non-woodland Owner, Non-Voting
- Contributing Member, \$50/yr.  
Woodland Owner, Voting
- Contributing Associate Member \$50/yr  
Non-Woodland Owner, Non-Voting
- Friends of IWOA \$100.00
- Forest Steward \$250.00 +

*All members wanting a printed copy of the newsletter add \$5.00*

### Member Information:

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IWOA Website: [www.iowawoodlandowners.org](http://www.iowawoodlandowners.org)

Timber Talk is published March, June, Sept. and Dec.  
to serve members of the Iowa Woodland Owners Association  
and Iowa Tree Farmer's

Total Forest Acres Owned \_\_\_\_\_  
Acres in Forest Reserve \_\_\_\_\_  
Which county Forest Reserves located?

County that you vote in? \_\_\_\_\_  
Are you a Certified Tree Farm? YES-NO  
Are you a member of the Iowa Tree Farmers? YES--NO  
Are you a member of the National Tree Farmers?  
YES-NO  
Have you taken a Master Woodland Manager  
(MWM) course? YES--NO  
Year completed MWM course \_\_\_\_\_  
Would you prefer to receive our newsletter via e-mail? YES--NO

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