Timber Talk

Newsletter of the Iowa Woodland Owners Association and Iowa Tree Farmers

September 2025 ***Editor: Steve Meyer***

IWOA FALL FIELD DAY

Thursday, October 16, 2025

At the Phil McCune Woodland
223 375th Avenue, Grinnell, IA 50112

Sponsored by: Iowa Woodland Owner's Association, Iowa DNR Foresters, ISU Extension and Outreach

Join us on Thursday, October 16 in Grinnell for our next field day. The event is being hosted by Phil McCune, President of IWOA. Phil has planted 60 Acres of seedling trees over the course of many years. He now has a "created forest" that is very impressive to say the least. Topics will include Tree Planting, Crop Tree Release, and Oak Health Issues to name a few. A catered lunch and door prize drawing will be provided for attendees!

Agenda

9:00-9:30 Registration, coffee and donuts
9:30-10:00 Introductions, History
10:00-10:30, 10:40-11:10, 11:20-11:50 Concurrent Sessions: Establishing Trees from Seedlings, Crop Tree Release, Oak Health Challenges
12:00-12:30 Expiring CRP Contracts—Where Do We Go from Here?
12:30-1:30 Catered Lunch
Land Values in Iowa, Legislative Meet-n-Greet
1:30-2:30 Q and A Session, Misc. Forestry Topics, Door Prize Drawing

Preregistration is required: Please Call ISU Poweshiek County Extension and Outreach: 641-623-5188. They will need the name, phone #, and email of each person attending. The fee is $20, payable at the event. This covers food, drink and door prizes. Registration deadline is Monday, October 13.

Please Bring a Lawn Chair!

IN THIS ISSUE

IOWA TREE FARM FIELD DAY

Oct 28, 2025 - 9:00 AM to 3:00 PM
Fairfield, IA (Jefferson Co.)

The Iowa Tree Farm Program recognizes and celebrates woodland stewardship excellence. Join us on 10/28 in beautiful Jefferson County Iowa as we recognize the 2025 Iowa Outstanding Tree Farmer of the Year at the winner's must-see woodland. The event represents an exceptional opportunity to network among Iowa's diverse forestry community!

Agenda

9:00-9:30 am: Registration
9:30-9:40 am: Welcome and event overview--Billy Beck

9:40-10 am: Property overview and history, award presentation to Tollenaere family by District Foresters and Tree Farm Committee

10-10:30 am: Travel to morning concurrent sessions. Concurrent sessions will be from 10:30-12 with each session 25 minutes and 5 minutes travel time between.

Session 1: 15 years of lessons-learned – bottomland forest management

Session 2: Erosion control in woodlands

Session 3: Pruning and thinning hardwoods

12-12:30 pm: Travel to outbuilding for lunch

12:30-1:30 pm: Lunch, door prizes

Lunch speakers (5-10 minutes each)

CWD update/resources

NRCS update

IWOA

1:30-2 pm: Travel to upland/afternoon concurrent sessions. Afternoon concurrent sessions from 2 to 3 with each session 20 minutes and 10 minutes travel time between sessions

Session 1: Understory removal (before/after)

Session 2: Early successional habitat (prairie, shrub inclusion, soft edges)

3 pm: Adjourn

To register go to: https://naturalresources.extension.iastate.edu/event/2025/iowa-outstanding-tree-farmer-year-fall-forestry-field-day for updates.

For immediate inquiries, contact Billy Beck (Iowa Tree Farm Program Chair, wjbeck@iastate.edu).

2020 DERECHO LOSSES

An Iowa DNR report reveals that the 2020 derecho killed or damaged 2.67 million trees in Iowa forests and another 4.4 million trees in urban tree canopies. The urban damage amounted to 13% of the urban tree canopy. According to the DNR, the storms damaged more than 56,800 acres of forest land in the state. Taking into account the financial benefits of trees the urban tree damage amounts to a loss of $20 million annually. In addition to tree damage, 850,000 acres of Iowa crops were damaged by the derecho. The storm was estimated to have cost the Midwest $22 billion in damages, making it the most expensive thunderstorm event in U.S. history. ***Editor***

WHITE OAK INITIATIVE DIRECTOR VISITS IOWA

By Steve Meyer, *Timber Talk* Editor

Jason Meyer, Executive Director of the White Oak Initiative (WOI) paid a visit to Iowa on August 27. His visit included two sessions. The first was a field tour with three stops showcasing the oak decline occurring in Iowa and efforts that District Foresters Mark Vitosh and Joe Herring and Andrew Huck of Linn County are undertaking to enhance oak and our Iowa Woodlands. The day concluded with a special session at the Cedar Ridge Distillery near Swisher where Meyer gave a presentation on WOI and its initiatives.

Jason Meyer

Meyer stated that he had not been exposed to anything like the extent of white oak decline we are experiencing in Iowa and that he witnessed in the Amana's, noting: "Everyone has a different interpretation of what is causing it and everybody is coming to the conclusions it is probably a mix of things that is causing it. Iowa is the first place that has come to me directly and said we think herbicide might have something to do with this. It has not been brought to my attention because my board of directors is more concerned with the regenerating white oak initiative than we are about white oak decline. I made the point to them that we definitely need to be aware of this because we are not the white oak regeneration initiative we are the white oak initiative. So I was actually a little surprise to hear a professor from Kentucky say that they are seeing the same kind of symptoms fifty miles away from agriculture fields and we think this has something to do with this." He adds: "Reports of oak mortality—especially white oak—are widespread across the Midwest, New England, the Mid-Atlantic, and even into Canada. Stressors such as drought, invasive insects, and climate variability are consistently mentioned as contributing factors. This national pattern underscores how urgent and interconnected this issue is."

Meyer provided his view on the path going forward in Iowa: "With the oak stands that you have left it is definitely going to take active management and that is the same across the entire range of the white oak. Our forests are converting to other forest types because the white oak seedlings are being shaded out by other seedlings and other types of things. So the type of management that needs to happen is opening up the canopy and letting in sunlight so white oaks can get the start they need. That is the advice we give to everybody across the range but in the sites I saw in Iowa there is a real dilemma that when you open up the canopy you not only get good white oak generation but all the invasive species take off also and then you have deer browsing the trees. So there are all of these compounding factors that make it really difficult for landowners to do the work that needs to happen for white oak seedlings to thrive to the point where other things can't beat them up or eat them. So that's where with Forest Stewardship funding being cut as much as it has, the White Oak Initiative sees our biggest impact. We're in Washington DC talking to lawmakers about funding and why money needs to be flowing down through the programs to landowners. It's a chain—without the money and the advice from forestry professionals it's awfully hard for landowners to do the work that needs to happen. We need to really push hard on forest stewardship program funding and NRCS funding. Without that nothing much happens. [See my 'At The Woodpile' column in this issue of *Timber Talk* for details on loss of Forest Stewardship Funding].

Most poignantly, Meyer had this to say about Iowa: "What struck me most was how deeply this group cares—not just about white oak, but about the overall health and future of Iowa's forests."

The White Oak Initiative is spearheaded by a diverse coalition of partners and stakeholders — from industry leaders and private landowners to academic institutions and government agencies — who are united under one common goal: the long-term sustainability of America's white oak-dominated forests. The White Oak Initiative aims to be an advocate and catalyst for sustainable oak forest management with a focus on white oak regeneration. WOI accomplishes this through convening, connecting and collaborating with stakeholders to increase the economic, social and ecological benefits of upland oak forests. WOI envisions a future in which upland oak forests are managed to ensure a sustainable white oak resource.

IS IOWA THE MOST ALTERED STATE?

By Tim Meyer, IWOA Vice-President

Is Iowa the most altered state?

According to my research the answer is "Yes". In 1850, 23.3 million Iowa acres were prairie, (that was 65% of Iowa's land mass). The other acres in 1850 were 11% wetlands and prairie potholes, 19% forests and 5% floodplains, water and backwaters. Today about 90% is farmland (about 65% is in corn and soybeans). That alteration in the last 175 years qualifies us for the "the most altered" winner in the USA.

In a recent road trip to northern Iowa for an Iowa Tree Farmer planning meeting, the two of us in the car commented to each other about the continuous, intensive agriculture we encountered. It seemed that literally every acre was corn or soybeans with almost no tree lines or even fence rows. We commented about the chemicals and fertilizer needed to grow these massive crops.

Sometimes I wonder if this is sustainable agriculture from a human health and ecological health standpoint for our land. I also wonder if, in the future, revelations about environmental impacts won't be sending off alarm systems. I do know Iowa's cancer rate is increasing. Whether there is a direct correlation between the intensive ag and higher incidence of health concerns is related, I am not smart enough to know.

When we plant trees or prairies, do TSI on our existing forests or manage for invasives I do know that we are improving water quality, air quality, recreation and general wellbeing for Iowans. As advocates for Iowa's trees and woodlands, as well as water and air quality, we should all be proud of what we are doing to improve Iowa.

"Finland is officially the world's happiest country. It is also 75 per cent forest. I believe these facts are related."

Matt Haig

FOREST RESERVE

From Paul Millice, IWOA Board Member

As you remember the Iowa Senate approved SF633 and sent it to the House late in the last Legislative session. The House did not take up SF633 and it will be listed as unfinished business in the next Legislative session. SF633 would access a $2 fee for Forest Reserve Acres if the landowner lives in that county. If the Forest Reserve acreage is located in an adjacent county, the fee will be $3 per acre. Beyond contiguous the fee would be $8 or $10 an acre.

At this point it is a crap shoot! We need to get involved and get political. We (each and every one of us) need to contact our respective State Representative and tell them that the Forest Reserve Program is Iowa's number one water Quality Program. If we continue to lose tree cover our water quality will continue to decline! Call them, email them, attend every public forum, we must let them know that Forest Reserve is top priority for us!

On the subject of communication, we are looking for suggestions. The problem is that there are 20,000 or 21,000 Forest Reserve Landowners in the state. How do we get them involved as well as all Iowans? Does anyone have public relations skills or know of any public relations group that would be a good fit for us? Shoot me an email deertreehugger@gmail.com

LOOK UP!

By Ed Kocal, IWOA Board Member

Falling trees and falling limbs are a real threat to us that work and play in and around trees. Most of us have heard of and even witnessed local incidents of people getting hurt and even killed by this type of mishap. Damage to property, although less of a concern, can be very costly and is somewhat commonly caused by this phenomenon.

The causes are many and include storm events, aging trees, lack of tree maintenance, tree diseases and prolonged flooding. Another cause that many of us woodland managers are familiar with is trees falling after being deliberately girdled.

In all, it seems that these occurrences are happening more frequently. With our changing climate we are experiencing more wind, more weather extremes in general and more catastrophic events. In Iowa, we have an aging oak population and with this comes dying and falling wood. The emerald ash borer has killed millions of ash trees in recent years and with this comes falling wood.

So what can we do to be safer around our trees? First, consider the canopy health before building any structure, trail, picnic area, placing hunting blinds or tree stands. Secondly, stay clear of hazard trees while working and hiking in your woods. Monitor the tree canopy around your home, yard and outbuildings. Wear a forestry helmet while mowing woodland trails and especially while operating a chainsaw. Keep kids away from hazard trees until they can be safely dropped or until nature drops them. Hire a professional arborist if need be to remove "widow makers". And always remember to LOOK UP!

OPENING DAYS

By Steve Lekwa

Retired Director for Story County Conservation

It was late summer of 1960, and I was getting excited. At 11, I was finally old enough to carry my dad's old single-shot .22 rifle and begin my life as a hunter. I'd been honing my skills for several years with my Daisy BB gun on house sparrows that always tried to take over the purple martin house we had on our acreage. I don't remember the exact date that year, but open season for rabbits and squirrels was always in early September. For the next 10 years or so, that day was always looked forward to with increasing anticipation. A box of fifty .22 shorts (a short .22 caliber cartridge) cost about 50 cents. A box could last quite a while with a single-shot gun, and was usually good for several squirrels and/or rabbits. I learned to skin and prepare the game for cooking, and my mom was wonderful to cook what I brought home. I'm not sure that squirrel

or rabbit were my family's favorite meal, but I was sure proud when the main course was provided by my developing hunting skills.

I'd jump off the school bus at the corner over a quarter mile from our house and could beat the bus home. We were always the last ones off if I rode the bus all the way. I can remember being on the way to the woods with rifle in hand and a pocket with a few "shorts" by the time the bus went by. I could get in nearly two hours of hunting before supper time. The woods I hunted belonged to generous neighbors. They would better be described as "timber pasture". They were so tightly grazed by cattle that it was more park-like than forest. Though I now know it wasn't a healthy forest, I could see squirrels a long distance off and devise my plan to get close enough for a shot. I can't say that I was a terribly good "stalker", but it worked often enough to occasionally bring something home. I can even recall something akin to "buck fever" when I was sure I had a squirrel treed even if it was doing its best to hide on the far side of the tree. I could feel my heart pounding as I waited for the squirrel to show itself.

The years drifted by and I began to be interested in pheasant and quail hunting. I didn't think Dad's old single-shot .410 shotgun was "enough gun" for my more advanced hunting plans. I ended up buying what I could afford, a single-shot 12 gauge shotgun. Thank goodness I had only 2 ¾ inch shot shells back then. A 3 inch magnum would probably have knocked me down. I still thought it kicked like a mule, but it did allow me to bring home my first pheasants and quail. Although I continued to hunt rabbits and squirrels for many years in my old home woods and elsewhere, the opening day for pheasant season near the first of November became the focal point of my opening day anticipation and excitement.

Some years later, a friend introduced me to waterfowl hunting. Lots of decoys and a better shotgun followed that. The big excitement became waiting for the duck opener. By that time I was on my own and not only cleaning, but cooking my own game. It was such a pleasure to share nature's bounty with family and friends. They even liked my cooking!

It's 65 years since those first rabbit and squirrel hunts in the old home woods. I don't get out after pheasants or ducks as often as I did in earlier years, but still try to get out a time or two each fall just for old time's sake. Sometimes I even get a bird. Not so many years ago, the same friend that first took me duck hunting introduced me to turkey hunting. My wife, kids, and grand kids love my grilled wild turkey breast, and that springtime hunting season is my new favorite. Maybe it's because it takes me back to the woods for quiet hours just watching wildlife like I did so many years ago. Although I'm not hunting in the old home woods, the woods where I hunt are as dear to me as the woods of my boyhood. It's where my father-in-law and I planted lots of trees and where I've been pruning and thinning walnuts and oaks for the past 40 years. I can hardly wait for turkey season and some days in those woods next spring!

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.

MEASURING BIG TREES ACCURATELY

Seminar sponsored by the Iowa Arborist Association (IAA) At the Pentacrest in the Heart of University of Iowa campus Old Capitol Museum, 21 North Clinton Street, Iowa City, Iowa 52242

Friday, October 24th, 2025--8 am to Noon

If you have ever perused the Iowa Big Tree Registry at: https://experience.arcgis.com/experience/db8a533a6ca34fc89a3df0603b6b2cb4/
you have seen one name listed as the nominator way more than any other. That name is Mark Rouw. He is the Iowa Big Tree Field Representative. He knows where many of Iowa's largest trees are, and exactly how large they are off the top of his head! We will be learning the history of Mark's life mission, and how to measure trees accurately and honestly inside the historic senate chambers in the Old Capitol. Then we will be outside measuring some of the largest and coolest trees in Iowa on the beautiful Pentacrest grounds. We will see and touch several notable trees including the largest black walnut and the second largest American elm in Iowa!

Please register on the IAA event page at https://iowaarboristassociation.org/events/
$25 for IAA Members/$75 for Non-members

DISTRICT FORESTER SPOTLIGHT

PATRICK GRIFFIN
STATE FOREST NURSERY MANAGER

By Steve Meyer, Timber Talk Editor

Patrick Griffin has been manager of the State Forest Nursery in Ames since 2020. He grew up in Fort Dodge, went to college at ISU and graduated in 2005 with a degree in Horticulture with plant science and nursery production as his area of emphasis. After college he worked in the Fort Dodge area doing landscape design before moving to Ames in 2013.

Patrick enjoys raising trees and says the most enjoyable part of his job is talking with customers who are thrilled about getting trees and then hearing how well their trees are doing when they get a few years down the road.

He describes the process used for raising trees at the nursery, noting that it varies by tree species. In general they do a lot of the seed collecting themselves, though they do purchase some seed. They acquire the seed, clean and test it so they know the viability, then they sew the seed either in the spring or fall—this varies by species also. They prefer to plant oak acorns in the springtime, that way they don't have to fight the 'critters' off all winter. They plant a lot of conifers and walnuts in the fall. They grow trees from one to three years depending upon species to get to the desired size, then harvesting seedlings in late October for fall orders. Spring orders are actually harvested in the fall also, but are kept in the freezer until pulled out to fill spring orders.

Tree that Patrick finds the most challenging to raise are the viburnum species because they require a full year of care before they even germinate. Trees they have the most demand for are black walnut, bur oak, white oak, red oak, swamp white oak, white pine and Norway spruce.

His major tips for tree care from when they leave the nursery is the sooner the trees get planted the better—once the trees leave their coolers they want to start growing. He says to make sure there is plenty of moisture in the bags the trees are in and that they are kept as cool as possible until they are planted. And, of course, water the trees in good once they are planted.

Operation of the nursery is very labor intensive. The nursery has five full-time employees and 30-35 seasonal employees college students hired in spring and fall through a partnership they have with ISU. They also get additional seasonal help from the Iowa Department of Corrections.

"We do everything we can to keep the costs of our trees low. We basically cover the costs of production to keep trees affordable and encourage tree planting," says Patrick who adds that the major challenges the nursery has is securing enough labor each year and securing enough seed to grow the trees they need.

Patrick lives in Gilbert with his wife Amy who is Principle at Gilbert Intermediate School. They have two children, son Mason (18) and daughter Mallory (13).

YOUTUBE SERIES OFFERS 31 VIDEOS SPECIFICALLY TAILORED TO IOWA WOODLAND STEWARDS

The Iowa Woodland Steward Toolkit Series is now up on YouTube! This 31-video playlist offers succinct and fun "how-to" overviews of a range of forestry techniques, topics, and resources of interest to the Iowa woodland steward. Best of all – it's tailored specifically to Iowa's unique woodland ecosystems. The Series is the brainchild of Iowa Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) District Forester Joe Herring, and was put into action via a grant from the State, Private, and Tribal Forestry organization of the USDA Forest Service. The Toolkit Series playlist (all 31 videos) may be accessed at https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLyDHx-rmZpClVwD_Sca7OVW7zVZp9k5l7. Be sure to check out the playlist and share with your fellow woodland stewards! Questions or comments on the Series should be directed to Billy Beck (ISU Extension Forestry Specialist, wjbeck@iastate.edu).

WOODLAND CRITTERS

WOOLLY BEAR CATERPILLAR

Pyrrharctia isabella

Reprinted with permission from the Wisconsin Woodland Owners Association Inc. as published in the September 15, 2025 issue of Learning Something New.

The field of Meteorology did not exist until the mid-17th century. Before that time, people relied on observations of the natural world to predict how seasonal weather events may unfold. This reliance on nature gave rise to several folklore tales and weather proverbs, some of which have carried on to this day.

From one generation to the next, woolly bear caterpillars have long been fabled as weather forecasters. Although this particular lore dates back to colonial times, it gained widespread attention in 1948 in New York City. At that time, a couple of local entomologists, along with their wives, conducted a small study on the subject. They shared their findings with a news reporter, who published an article on the front page of the New York Herald Tribune. And, well, the rest is history.

According to legend, the length of the caterpillar's black and auburn segments can indicate the severity of the upcoming winter: longer black segments suggest a harsh winter, while longer auburn segments indicate a milder one. The caterpillar has thirteen segments, which are thought to represent the thirteen weeks of winter.

Isabella Tiger Moth

Woolly bear caterpillars are the larvae of the Isabella Tiger Moth, scientifically known as Pyrrharctia isabella. Each year, there are two generations produced: one in May and another in August. Beginning in May, the moths will mate and deposit clusters of fifty or more eggs on their host plants. Once they hatch, the larvae feed on a variety of herbaceous plants, including sunflowers, clover, plantain, and nettle. Occasionally, they may also savor the leaves of birches, maples, and elms.

This first generation goes through five developmental stages, known as instars, growing up to two inches in length. During each stage, they shed their hairs (setae) causing their black segments to shorten while they develop more auburn segments. Shorter springs provide them with less time to feed, resulting in a compressed molting sequence that leads to variability in coloration. After they reach their fifth instar, they pupate and then reproduce again, giving rise to the second-generation.

As fall approaches, these little guys mosey about in search of a cozy spot to curl up and spend the winter. Ideal resting places for them include leaf litter, garden debris, and wood piles. Surely this isn't sufficient enough coverage to keep them insulated during the cold months though, is it?

Not quite! Woolly bear caterpillars require an additional layer of protection. They possess the remarkable ability to produce a form of antifreeze that protects their vital body systems, enabling them to survive temperatures as low as -90 degrees Fahrenheit! These cryogenic compounds, sorbitol and glycerol, prevent their inner cells from freezing and bursting. Those that successfully endure the winter will spin their cocoons and eventually emerge as adult moths.

Interestingly, the Arctic cousin of the Woolly bear caterpillar undergoes an even more complex transformation process. It can take up to seven years of freeze and thaw cycles for it to finally emerge as an adult and reproduce. Although they may be small, they certainly are fierce!

WOODLAND FLORA

JOE PYE WEED

Eutrochium purpureum,

Common in Iowa woodlands, known as **purple Joe-Pye weed,** is an herbaceous perennial plant in the family Asteraceae. It is native to eastern and central North America, from Ontario east to New Hampshire and south as far as Florida, Louisiana, and Oklahoma. A butterfly favorite, Joe Pye Weed matures at 4 to 7 feet in height and blooms from July to September. It has pale pink to pale purple flowers in large clusters and large leaves in whorls around the stem. Native Americans used this plant to cure fevers.

Eutrochium purpureu is a clump-forming herb that grows to 1.5–2.4 meters (4.9–7.9 ft.) tall and about 1.2 meters (3.9 feet) wide. Plants are found in full sun to part shade in mesic to wet soils. Stems are upright, thick, round, and purple, with whorls of leaves at each node. As the plant begins to bloom the stems often bend downward under the weight of the flowers. The leaves grow to 30 cm (12 in) long and have a somewhat wrinkled texture. The purplish flowers are produced in large loose, convex shaped compound corymbiform arrays. Plants bloom mid to late summer and attract much activity from insects that feed on the nectar produced by the flowers.

Eutrochium purpureum shows a high amount of variability, and up to two or three varieties are currently recognized by current botanical authorities.

Many species of butterflies, moths, bees, and flies visit the flowers. It is larval host to the eupatorium borer moth (*Carmenta bassiformis*), the red groundling moth (*Perigea xanthioides*), the ruby tiger moth (*Phragmatobia fuliginosa*), and the three-lined flower moth (*Schinia trifascia*)

LOBED OAK GALL

By Steve Meyer, *Timber Talk Editor*

I was doing some TSI work in a 4-7 year-old stand of mixed oak trees I planted on one of my properties this fall when I noticed the above "cluster" on a swamp white oak sapling. Not knowing what this was, and the first time I have

ever seen this I inquired with Mark Vitosh, my District Forester who identified this as lobed oak gall. At first look this appears to be a fungi but it is indeed caused by an insect called the lobed oak gall wasp (Andricus quercusstrobilanus). The larvae of this wasp induce a cluster of wedge-shaped galls on white oaks, including bur oak, swamp white oak, and overcup oak. The galls are irregular, cone-shaped bodies that are closely packed together, with their pointed bases attached to a common center. These wedges are hard and corky and break off very easily when the gall is dry. Each of them contains a hollow kernel with a plump, large larva inside. The galls undergo color change from pink or red to yellow and finally to brown.

Lobed oak gall wasp *(Andricus quercusstrobilanus)*

INVASIVES ALERT

WHAT IS THE ASIAN LONGHORNED BEETLE (ALB)?

By Mark J. Runkel
Forest Health Technician, Iowa DNR

Asian longhorned beetle

ALB (Anoplophora glabripennis) is an invasive wood-boring insect that targets and eventually kills maple and other hardwood trees by eating the living tissues that transport nutrients—damage from which trees cannot recover. Infested trees can pose serious safety hazards, including limb drop and tree failure, especially during storms (aphis.usda.gov).

The beetle likely entered the U.S. via untreated wood packaging material before stricter regulations were implemented. Since its first detection in Brooklyn in 1996, infestations have emerged in New York, Massachusetts, Ohio, and South Carolina.

Eradication efforts have successfully removed some infestations (e.g., Illinois, New Jersey), while others remain under active management.

Detection & Prevention

Key signs include adult beetles with distinct black-and-white banded antennae, about the size of an almond; round exit holes in trees roughly the size of a dime; sawdust-like frass around trees; and egg sites, which can ooze sap.

If you suspect ALB, report it immediately either to the federal hotline (1-866-702-9938) or through APHIS's online reporting system. Capture and freeze any specimen if possible to aid identification.

Once trees are infested, they cannot be saved. The only solution is to remove and incinerate or chip the affected trees. ALB management also involves quarantines and strict controls on moving firewood and other host materials.

What about Iowa?

Historical assessments going back to at least 2012 and 2013 consistently report that ALB has not been identified in Iowa. The most recent surveys in 2022, ALB have not been detected in Iowa. Extensive surveys (covering 12,897 maples) found no evidence of infestation such as ALB exit holes or frass. That said, Iowa's Department of Natural Resources expects survey efforts to resume, and encourages public involvement in monitoring for ALB. Iowa remains very much at risk if the beetle were introduced through firewood or other pathways. ALB threatens key hardwood species such as such as maple, willow, elm, birch, horse chestnut, and sycamore that are common in Iowa suburbs and forests. Prevention is key to preventing an infestation in Iowa. Readers are encouraged to inspect their trees, report suspicious signs, and avoid moving firewood from out-of-state can help keep Iowa ALB-free. Contact Mark Runkel at 319-327-4184 or Mark.Runkel@dnr.iowa.gov.

4TH ANNUAL SHIMEK STATE FOREST FALL FORESTRY FIELD DAY

An exceptional learning and networking opportunity

Tuesday, October 7th, 2025, 9:00 am

Join Iowa State University Extension Forestry, IA DNR Forestry, USDA NRCS and local partners for the 4th annual Shimek State Forest Fall Forestry Field Day on Tuesday, October 7th starting at 9:00 am at the White Oak Campground.

Sessions on grading standing timber, tree coppicing, mushroom identification, sawmill demo, and more will be offered. Lunch is included along with door prizes. Cost is $15 to attend and is payable the day of the event. To register call the Lee County ISU Extension Office at 319-835-5116 or email ellison1@iastate.edu by September 25th.

DIRECT SEEDING PROJECT CIRCA 2025

By Tim Meyer IWOA Vice-president

Over the years we have planted quite a few trees in several Iowa counties where we have owned land. I was particularly interested in Joe Herring's article in the June 2025 Timber Talk issue, "Fightin' in a Phone Booth". Joe talks about his experiences as a veteran Iowa DNR Forester and how he feels the most impactful things he has seen done are planting and reforesting acres that are open and returning them to tree cover, especially oaks.

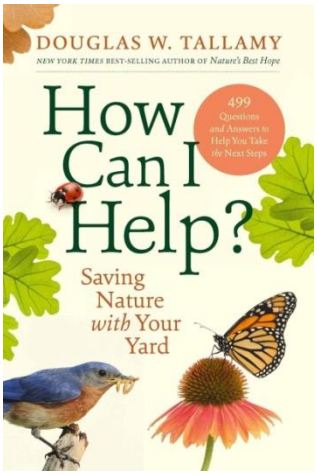
The article got me thinking and I think many of us, with much less forestry experience, would come to the same conclusion Joe has. That is--planting trees on open ground is such a positive impactful thing to do when done right.

The article motivated me and a couple friends to try a direct seeding planting of oaks and walnuts on approximately 2.5 acres of "open" land in Wapello County. We are being assisted by Zack Nie, DNR forester for Wapello County and other mentors, many of which are IWOA members.

The process is 1) Mow the grass. 2) Spray and kill the grass, maybe twice. 3) Disk the ground. 4) In October, broadcast the seed--various oaks and walnuts. 5) Disk in the seed and cultipack. 6) Possibly spray the plot in Spring 2026 before the new seedlings leaf out. We are in the process of acquiring the acorns and walnuts from various sources.

We are blessed with many great mentors in IWOA and many times our members and foresters motivate us to "get started" on a forestry project that will be impactful. Thanks Joe for motivating me to do a new planting project. When I see the fruits of my previous plantings I always feel good! One tree planting we did in Iowa County has 40 year old walnut trees!

I will keep you posted.



BOOK REVIEW

How Can I Help? Saving Nature With Your Yard

By Douglas W. Tallamy

Editor's note: This s a book by one of my favorite nature authors that I am currently reading. I find this book very insightful and revealing with a lot of great ideas!! I particularly appreciate how the author emphasizes all of the things a homeowner can do to benefit nature with the fraction of acres they own that are wasted on lawn grass. If everyone did something beneficial with that little bit it will add up to a lot!

From a New York Times bestselling author, a wildlife ecology expert and environmental advocate provides readers with the next step in their ecological journey.

In How Can I Help?, Tallamy tackles the questions commonly asked at his popular lectures and shares compelling and actionable answers that will help gardeners and homeowners take the next step in their ecological journey. Topics range from ecology, evolution, biodiversity and conservation to restoration, native plants, invasive species, pest control, and supporting wildlife at home. Tallamy keenly understands that most people want to take part in conservation efforts but often feel powerless to do so as individuals. But one person can make a difference, and How Can I Help? details how.

Whether by reducing your lawn, planting a handful of native species, or allowing leaves to sit untouched, you will be inspired and empowered to join millions of other like-minded people to become the future of backyard conservation.

WRITTEN IN THE RINGS: WHAT EASTERN RED CEDARS CAN TELL US ABOUT IOWA'S CLIMATE HISTORY

By Clara Wodny, INHF Communications Intern

Reprinted with Permission from Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation as originally printed in the Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation Magazine—Winter 2025

When you think of Eastern red cedars (Juniperus virginiana), what feelings come to mind? Many, especially those with prairies or pastures to manage, associate the species with a sense of annoyance and frustration due to their tendency to quickly spread into areas where they are not wanted, crowding out other species in the process. However, these trees have incredible stories to tell if we're willing to shift perspectives and view them with the awe and respect they deserve.

Every native species, including red cedar, has an ecological niche. That is, they have evolved to thrive under certain conditions and fill a specific role in the ecosystem. Despite their bad reputation, Eastern red cedars have been here all along — they are among the oldest living things in Iowa. Before labeling them as "invasive," it is important to understand how our changing land stewardship philosophies and practices have affected the natural world.

Eastern red cedars are incredibly tolerant of a wide variety of growing environments, including extremes of drought, temperature, wind and soil conditions, making them capable of living in some of the harshest places on the landscape. In short, they are — and always have been — able to grow almost anywhere.

In contrast to oaks, red cedars have thin bark that provides little insulation to the living tissue and wide spreading branches that make them susceptible to fire. Historically, red cedars have thrived on cliff sides, riverbanks and rocky bluffs — places where they were sheltered from passing prairie fires. However, while the landscape used to be covered in prairie and maintained with fire, it is now largely maintained by plows and machinery. Because they are no longer being culled by fire, the trees spread into more open areas, like prairies and pastures, and serve as a visible reminder of the interconnected impacts of our choices when it comes to land management.

"We've spent a long time thinking that the social and environmental systems of our world are separate," says Evan Larson, a professor and chair in the University of Wisconsin-Platteville's Department of Environmental Sciences & Society. "And it's becoming very clear that simply is not the case."

Lucky for us, red cedars are steadfast observers that physically respond to their environment, storing accurate and detailed records of their experiences in their trunks. This information is encoded as tree rings, with each ring representing one particular year. The science of dating trees and interpreting past events based on the analysis of tree rings is called dendrochronology.

Stories are written into tree rings in their own language, and dendrochronologists are skilled translators. This is certainly true of Evan Larson, his colleague James Riser and their team of undergraduate students at the University of Wisconsin-Platteville, who are currently engaged in a three-year study dedicated to expanding understanding of past drought and rain patterns across Iowa and the Great Plains. This study aims to produce a Great Plains drought reconstruction that spans the past 1,000 years, filling a noticeable gap in previous research. Funded by the National

Science Foundation, their research is headquartered at UW-Platteville's Tree-Ring, Earth, and Environmental Sciences Laboratory (TREES Lab). Projects completed through the TREES Lab are specifically designed to provide opportunities for undergraduate students to engage in authentic, meaningful research as part of their education.

Before beginning to analyze tree-ring data, dendrochronologists need to obtain core samples from both living and dead red cedars in the region. When choosing which trees to sample, they seek out the ones that have lived for several hundred years and are able to provide the longest record. If you assume that means they're looking for the biggest, tallest trees, you're in for a surprise.

"I don't care about the big, straight trees," says Riser. "It's the gnarly, twisted, weathered ones that have an amazing record and story to tell, compared to younger trees with wide rings that haven't experienced as much hardship."

When working with living trees, dendrochronologists use a special tool called an increment borer to extract a core sample — about the size of a pencil — that will cause no harm to the tree. Trees that are already dead don't require as much care, as full medallions are able to be extracted from the trunk with a saw. Still, the researchers remain conscious of protecting the landscape and do their best to source from areas that will contain the most information in the least obtrusive way.

So, where do they find these trees?

At one point in time, most stony outcrops, overlooks and bluffs would have supported a pocket of old eastern red cedar trees. On the pre-European prairie landscapes, trees were relatively rare — and timber resources so valuable — that nearly everything was cut for use. As a result, most bluff sites today host living cedars that have only sprung up in the last 150 years. However, not all is lost — these younger trees shade old, gray, weathered stumps that persist as reminders of the trees that lived there before.

Many of these stumps were already hundreds of years old when they were cut down in the 1800s. While these stumps are still able to provide valuable data, they present distinct challenges to dendrochronologists: how do they determine when the stumps were cut? How can the rings of long-dead trees provide information about the complex relationship between climate and tree growth? How can the memories of these trees, now stumps that contain hundreds of rings, be translated into a more complete understanding of our shared climate history?

One particular site included in this study, Heritage Valley, holds the key to answering many of these questions: truly ancient, still living red cedars.

Heritage Valley, a 1,200-acre INHF-owned property in Allamakee County, was purchased by INHF in 2007 with the assistance of over a thousand donors. Heritage Valley is very well-preserved, boasting some of the oldest trees in the area. The ancient ridge-top trees provide rare examples of living trees whose lives span 450 years or more, which means they can provide the necessary connection between this generation and the generation of stumps found at many other sites.

"There is no good reason to think you'll find trees in Iowa older than this," says Riser.

The hillsides at Heritage Valley face southwest and are elevated far above the moisture of the river valley, creating dry and exposed conditions. This causes the trees to be extremely sensitive to even subtle changes in precipitation and temperature, making them ideal recorders of the site's climate history as they feel and embody years of harsh conditions and drought more clearly.

Once a tree has been sampled, the team is able to visually estimate how many rings are present and get an idea of the type of data it will provide. Still, there is always room for surprises during the process of analysis.

When samples enter the lab, they must be sanded to a high polish with 400-600 grit sandpaper before the official dating and analysis can begin. This often reveals exciting treasures, such as unexpected tree-rings that are mere fractions of a millimeter in width.

Larson recalls early on in this project when they took several samples at Turkey River Mounds State Preserve along the Mississippi; though satisfied, Larson and Riser were slightly underwhelmed. Visual estimations in the field indicated the best sample only contained about 200 rings. The samples sat in the lab, unprepared, for months until a particularly ambitious student decided to sand each of them. The sample with the estimated 200 rings

ended up including over 470 rings, dating all the way back to the 1300s.

You might be wondering how exactly they know that the tree was alive in the 1300s, despite being dead for over a century. This is determined using a process called cross-dating.

The fact that tree growth is so heavily intertwined with environmental conditions means that you can tell exactly what kind of conditions a tree experienced in any given year by looking at the size and colors of the ring. In most cases, trees of a particular species in the same region will experience similar climate conditions, therefore forming rings that are comparable in width to their neighbors each year. As conditions change from year to year, so too do the width of tree rings across a region.

Given enough time, these year-to-year changes create a pattern that is as distinct as a fingerprint. By matching this temporal fingerprint from the samples collected from dead trees to those of living trees, such as the ancient red cedars at Heritage Valley, dendrochronologists can build a timeline. This comparison and cross-referencing across samples enables Larson, Riser and their students to assign the exact year of formation to each ring in each sample with absolute precision.

The cross-dating process begins with the bark of living trees, which represents the current year. Working backwards from the bark, dendrochronologists can then identify and count the rings, assigning each one to a specific year. Once this original timeline is established, they are then able to take a piece of deadwood, match up its rings with some of the living tree rings, and assign them to a year as well. After determining where the dead wood overlaps with the living wood, dendrochronologists can keep working backwards, stretching the chronology further and further back in time.

Rings are defined by the color of the wood. At the beginning of each year, trees grow lighter colored early wood made of bigger cells with thinner cell walls. As tree growth slows down and the tree starts to prepare for dormancy, the wood becomes gradually darker, with smaller cells and thicker cell walls packed closer together. The actual period of dormancy, during winter, is an invisible line between the smaller cells of latewood from the previous year and the wide cells of the early wood of the following year. No cells are formed during dormancy.

When red cedars experience optimal conditions they will grow quickly, putting on a wide ring. In non-optimal conditions, such as a lack of water or a short growing season, they can't grow as much, and the ring ends up being much narrower.

Counting tree rings might seem like a simple process, but a very high level of care and knowledge is necessary to account for anomalies and inconsistencies while maintaining precision. For example, sometimes trees will put on what appears to be more than one ring per year, called a 'false ring', while other years a tree might not grow a ring at all. Eastern red cedar, tenacious as they are and living on some of the harshest sites in the region, are notoriously tricky, sometimes foregoing numerous rings in a row on one side of the tree while surging in growth on the other. This means that many samples need to be thoroughly studied and cross-analyzed before a chronology emerges. But once this process is finished, the chronology will be an exact annual record of tree growth for that area.

"When we say there was a bad drought in 1632, where a lot of cedars literally didn't even have enough energy to put on a ring, we're not talking about anything other than 1632," says Larson "The precision that's available through these records is just unmatched."

Once tree rings are situated within the chronology, they can be further analyzed for information. Depending on the site and region where trees grow, researchers can extrapolate data such as yearly growing conditions as well as rare, dramatic events like large fires, ice storms or particularly harsh winters. This study is specifically concerned with flash drought reconstruction and telling the historical climate story of the Great Plains region. The understanding of historical climate that this reconstruction aims to provide is far more relevant to everyday life than most people realize.

In particular, Larson and Riser mention farmers and insurance companies — it's easy to ignore when things are going well, but unexpected climate events, like drought or fire, can bring about large-scale devastation.

"Knowing if a 10-year long drought happens every now and then is really good to know," says

Riser. “It will very likely happen again… you can handle a few years of drought, but can you absorb 10 years of crop failure? This data and record can help us prepare.”

Trees are the ideal tool for understanding climate history due to their long lifespan and detailed memory. Additionally, they are impartial observers of the world — tree rings don’t try to convince you of one thing or another, they simply demonstrate how hard or how easy it was to grow each year.

“Only a very few people alive now remember the dust bowl, but it was a formative drought for our nation’s history,” Larson says. “What about the droughts before then? What about the droughts over the past 500 years? Or 1000? What other events happened in the past that we can learn from to better plan for the future?”

“I would hope that [the results of the study] are used to help inform policies and human actions,” adds Riser.

From the information written into their rings to the insight that can be gleaned from observing how they grow and spread in our current landscape, red cedars have many important lessons to teach. When you are observing these old cedar trees, you are literally observing old growth forests that rival some western forests for age and longevity, which is not something we often expect in Iowa.

Perhaps the first step we can take is to acknowledge their wisdom and start paying attention to the expressions of the land.

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

FENCES, NEIGHBORS, AND WHITE-TAILED DEER: FINDING BALANCE

Submitted by IWOA President Phil McCune

“A good fence makes for better neighbors.” This old adage applies not only to human relationships but also to our relationship with white-tailed deer. Once admired as a symbol of the North American wilderness, deer have become both a treasured part of the landscape and a growing source of conflict. Today, white-tailed deer are responsible for more than $100 million in agricultural losses each year, as well as over 400 traffic-related deaths annually.

A Historical Perspective

For centuries, Indigenous peoples of the eastern woodlands lived in balance with the white-tailed deer, relying on them for food, clothing, and tools. Anthropologists estimate that before European settlement, deer populations averaged 8 to 11 animals per square mile, kept in check by natural disease and limited food sources.

That balance was disrupted when settlers arrived. Clearing forests for housing, farming, and industry drastically reduced deer habitat. By 1890, the deer population in the United States had fallen to roughly 300,000, and some areas, such as New York’s Hudson River Valley, had no deer at all.

The situation began to change when farms were abandoned and forests regrew, providing soft seedlings for food. The government also took action by banning market hunting and reintroducing predators like wolves and mountain lions in certain areas. As a result, deer numbers stabilized. Naturalist Aldo Leopold, writing more than a century ago, warned about the long-term consequences of unchecked deer populations. Few heeded his words then, but his warning has proven prescient.

Managing the Modern Herd

Today, deer populations are higher than ever in many regions, and communities are searching for solutions. Several strategies have been tried, each with benefits and drawbacks:

• Professional removal: Considered the most humane method by the American Veterinary Association, this approach involves hiring professionals to reduce deer numbers. It costs an estimated $200–$400 per deer and has at times sparked lawsuits.

• Fertility control: This method can reduce deer numbers by up to 30% over five years. However, it is costly, about $1,000 per deer, and logistically difficult to implement on a large scale.

• Predator reintroduction: Allowing wolves, mountain lions, or bears to roam freely has been attempted in limited areas. While ecologically effective, this strategy is seen as too dangerous for most populated regions and is rarely used today.

Looking Ahead

The challenge of managing deer populations is unlikely to disappear and may worsen as suburban development continues to expand into deer habitat. Aldo Leopold's words remain as relevant now as when he first wrote them: "A thing is right when it tends to preserve the integrity, stability, and beauty of the biotic community. It is wrong when it tends otherwise."

Finding the right balance with our white-tailed neighbors will require both respect for the animal and practical solutions that preserve the health of our forests, fields, and communities.

This article was inspired in part by Ashley Stimpson's piece, "Surging Deer Populations Are a Crisis for Eastern Forests," published by the National Audubon Society, Summer 2024, (https://www.audubon.org/magazine/surging-deer-populations-are-crisis-eastern-forests).

"If you walk into a forest - you hear all kinds of subtle sounds - but underneath there is an all pervasive silence."

Eckhart Tolle

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 Minutes
April 23, 2025
Amana

Meeting was called to order by President Phil McCune at 9:55 A.M. Other board members attending were Tim Meyer, Russ Glime, Paul Millice, Steve Meyer, Ed Kocal, Ray Lehn, Ruth McAndrews and Craig Semler.

Minutes from 01/23/2025 meeting--motion to approve by Lehn/ 2nd Millice Carried

Finances--"travel expense" is actually reimbursement for meals at board meetings.

Membership--the number of acres represented has dropped by 91,445. However, approximately 90 members have not yet renewed their membership. It has been pointed out that direct mail is not very cost effective in increasing membership numbers. It would most likely work better to promote ourselves through our own members or through the 986 tree farmers. T. Meyer will attempt to get a list of the tree farmers.

Spring Field Day in Fayette Co., Tuesday, May 6 --Kocal reported 45 have signed up so far. The general consensus was to go ahead with door prizes.

New apparel--Kocal pointed out some different options for shirts and jackets that could be ordered by our field day this fall.

Liability Insurance--there was discussion for the need for coverage and approximate cost. T. Meyer and S. Meyer will bring more information to the next board meeting.

Mileage Reimbursement--motion by Semler/ 2nd Lehn to reimburse Millice for 450 miles @ $0.50/mile ($225) for his IWOA-related trip to Council Bluffs. Motion carried.

It was the general consensus to get prior approval for expenses whenever practical.

Iowa Legislature--senate bill S219 (regarding forest reserve) with an amendment, has evolved to S633. Next it would go to the full senate, and if it passes, then to the house.

Purchase authorization for displays--motion by T. Meyer/ 2nd S. Meyer for Millice to purchase two tables and literature racks, not to exceed $400-500. Motion carried.

Motion by S. Meyer/ 2nd Kocal to reimburse Millice $60 for his expenses for passes at the Iowa Deer Classic. Motion carried.

S. Meyer presented a paper with guidelines for "Legacy Plantings" as a possible annual project for the IWOA in partnership with district foresters. The idea was tabled until the next meeting.

Semler volunteered to present a sample budget at the next meeting.

IWOA scholarship--R. Glime requested a volunteer to replace past board member Al Wagner on the scholarship committee. Ruth McAndrews volunteered. Motion by Millice/ 2nd T. Meyer to award a total of $1000 for one or two scholarships. Motion carried.

White Oak Initiative with Jason Meyer at Amana on August 27/28. T. Meyer obtained prior approval from board members to spend $300 toward the event.

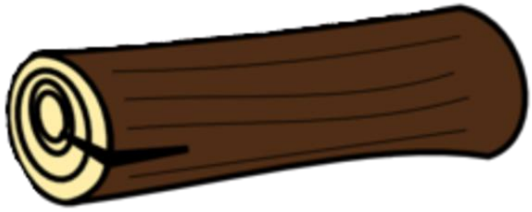
Note: P. Millice filed the biennial report for the Iowa corporation IWOA to the Iowa Secretary of State on 01/21/2025.

Motion by S. Meyer/ 2nd T. Meyer to adjourn. Motion carried. 12:00 noon

Craig Semler, secretary

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***



WHAT'S THAT TREE WORTH?

By Gretchen Cline
Forester at Geode Forestry, Inc.

In Iowa, fall is when logging begins in earnest and the best-quality trees are typically harvested. Loggers wait for cooler, less humid temperatures to prevent freshly cut logs from splitting (end checking) or staining.

The heavy rainfall of July and early August created difficult working conditions causing supply shortages for Iowa's sawmill owners and loggers. If you drive past a local sawmill, you have likely noticed that their log inventories are low. This lack of supply has driven up demand and, consequently, prices.

Despite early concerns over how tariffs might affect Midwestern hardwoods, the timber markets for species like Walnut and White Oak remain strong. In March of this year, China announced a moratorium on accepting hardwood and softwood logs from the U.S., though they continued to accept lumber. Exporters adapted by shipping logs to other countries such as Vietnam, for re-export to China or by processing the logs into lumber before shipping.

The following are woods run prices on all sizes and grades of trees standing in the forest. This range in price/board foot can vary greatly, especially in Walnut, depending on the quality of trees being sold. For an accurate assessment of a tree's value, it is best to consult with a professional forester who can properly evaluate its species, quality and potential volume.

Species Prices/Board Foot
Black Walnut $3.50-$4.50
White Oak $0.90-$1.20
Bur Oak $0.60-$.80
Sugar Maple $0.35-$0.45
Silver Maple -$0.35-$0.45
Red Oak $0.30-$0.35
Black Cherry $0.25-$0.40
Hickory $0.25-$0.35
Black Oak $0.15-$0.30
Ash $0.35-$0.45 (healthy)
Basswood $0.15-$0.25
Elm $0.15-$0.50
Hackberry $0.15-$0.25
Cottonwood $0.10-$0.20

Iowa Tree Farmers Officers
Billy Beck, Chairman
wjbeck@iastate.edu

Frances Main, Vice-Chairman
francesmain34@gmail.com

Lisa Louck, Treasurer
l.louck@yahoo.com

Sabrina Keiper, Secretary
skeiper@amanas.net

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.

DEAD WOOD IS GOOD WOOD

By Steve Meyer, *Timber Talk* Editor

I'm always a bit perplexed at why people think they need to make their woods look like a park by taking down dead trees and burning all of the brush lying about. I'll admit that in my early days as a woodland owner I was somewhat like that. That changed when I was sitting in one of my woodlots one day taking a break from TSI work I noticed all of the bird activity attracted to a brush pile I had created months before. Songbirds were sporadically flying in and hopping along the tree trunks and branches, pecking away at the wood. This was a woodpile I was about ready to set a match to. And then I heard the machine gun rattle of a woodpecker on a standing dead tree nearby that was riddled with nesting cavities pecked out by previous visitors. It

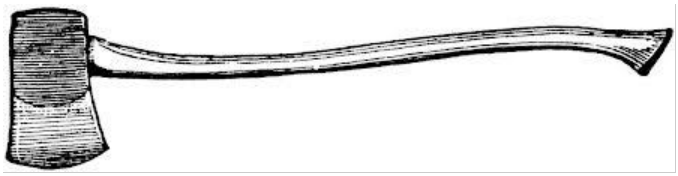
was then that I realized what a vital part dead wood plays in the life cycle of the flora and fauna of our woodlands. Douglas W. Tallamy explained this well in his book How Can I Help? where he states: "Some 85 species of North American birds are tree hole nesters, and they prefer to make their nests in deadwood. Moreover, many insects live in and help break down deadwood. In fact, the biomass of insects inside deadwood in an area is greater than the biomass of all the birds and mammals in that area combined. So, deadwood supports a substantial amount of local biodiversity, and for that reason alone it should be preserved whenever possible."

It soon became my woodlands management prerogative to leave as much deadwood as possible and to purposely create brush piles from downed trees and limbs. I was able to demonstrate why this is so good to one of my grandsons who is fascinated by insects when he was in the woods with me one day. I scaled back the flaking bark of a dead log and we marveled at all of the caterpillars and centipedes that went scurrying about. And then I rolled a decaying log on the ground over and we watched the flurry of activity as thousands of fleeing ants and detritus dwelling insects made their getaway. I also find it highly enlightening to watch as a dead tree over the years gets drilled full of holes by cavity nesters and eventually (provided it stays standing) gets whittled down to a stub. We also have all the benefits derived from the nutrients added to our forest soils as the wood decays and our detritus digesters get to work.

My advice—leave the dead wood, it is good wood. Create a brush pile and you create a songbird feeding station. Leave a dead tree standing and you create a songbird condo. Any woods that you can't walk straight through are healthy woods. It also spares a lot of work and gives you more time for living tree care when you forget about the dead stuff and leave it alone.

"I found far more answers in the woods than I ever did in the city."

Mary Davis

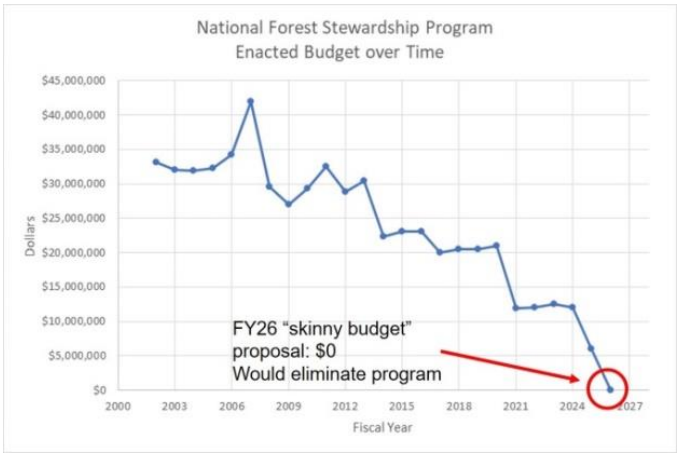


AT THE WOODPILE

FEDS ARE CUTTING DOWN FORESTRY FUNDING

By Steve Meyer, *Timber Talk* Editor

As time has slipped by us, so has a lot of funding for our forest resources, most specifically National Forest Stewardship Program funding which has dropped from the $40-$50 million per year in the '90's and mid-2000's to $6 million for the 2025 fiscal year [these figures take inflation into account]. If President Trump's "skinny budget" proposal is adopted, the program will be eliminated.



Cuts in Forest Stewardship Program impact programs that are based primarily in the USDA. As I interpret information provided to me, the new proposed cuts could eliminate or reduce agricultural, environmental and forestry applied research, eliminate forestry outreach and education including a reduction in funding for ISU extension—possibly even elimination. These are the federal programs that provide support for the real, hands-on work done at ISU that helps woodland owners, forest managers, volunteers, and communities care for our natural resources. I'm sharing this information now so that our membership is aware of what is at stake. Congress will be taking this budget and these issues up in the

coming weeks and months. It's time to contact our congressional representatives and let them know how important it is to leave this funding alone and restore it to previous levels.

IOWA WOODLAND OWNERS BY THE NUMBERS

I've heard 20,000 to 21,000 repeatedly mentioned as the number of landowners enrolled in the Forest Reserve program in Iowa. This is just a fraction of the total number of Iowa woodland owners. District Forester Joe Herring recently provided me information that places the number of Iowa landowners with 10 acres or more of woodlands at 89,000. This statistic comes from the USFS. He also states that if we go down to parcels of only one acre in size we have 138,000 woodland owners. Another statistic Joe provided is that since 1990 the number of Iowa Woodland owners has grown from 55,000 to our present number and the average parcel sized owned has dropped from 31 acres to 12 acres. This presents the challenge of delivering effective forest management to increasing numbers of private forest landowners with a decreasing staff of District Foresters. The change in numbers of woodland owners and size of parcels reflects the fragmentation of our woodlands that is occurring due to development and subdividing.

One thing I find particularly alarming is that depending on which statistic of total woodland owners you look at, with IWOA membership at around 500 only .3% to .5% of Iowa Woodland owners belong to our association. That's not a very good representation. We can do better than that.

YELLOW RIVER STATE FOREST FALL FIELD DAY

Managing Forest for the Birds & the Bats
Thursday, October 9th, 2025, 9:00 – 12:30

Join Iowa State University Extension Forestry and IA DNR Forestry for a Fall Field Day at Yellow River State Forest on Thursday, October 9th starting at 9:00 am. This will be a 2 hour walk-n-talk exploring several sites; approximately 1-mile total distance. This field day is all about habitat for birds and bats. Learn about on-going bird research and some of the findings as well as understanding and enhancing bat habitat. Registration is not required but appreciated by contacting Emma Kerns directly at 515-294-0714 or email erkerns@iastate.edu by October 8th. Don't miss this opportunity on a great subject with some timely information being shared.

TIMBER TALK CLASSIFIEDS

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 (Insured)

For sale: TimberKing 1220 sawmill with 20HP engine. Comes with portability, 6 sharp blades and 6 dull blades. Purchased new in 2007. Farm use only. Stored and used inside shed. In great condition. $7,000. Located rural Luana, IA. Ph: landline 563-539-4254 mobile 563-568-7682

IWOA members can place a free classified 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. Please be sure to state IWOA WANT ADD in the subject line.

IWOA MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION
MEMBERSHIP LEVELS—NOTE CHANGES

Please check one

O Member, $25/yr.
Woodland Owner, Voting

O Associate Member, $25/yr.
Non-woodland Owner, Non-Voting

O Contributing Member, $50/yr.
Woodland Owner, Voting

O Contributing Associate Member $50/yr
Non-Woodland Owner, Non-Voting

O Friends of IWOA $100.00

O Forest Steward $250.00 +

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

Member Information:

First Name_____
Last Name_____
Address_____
City_____
State_____
Zip_____**Home Ph.**_____
Business or Cell Ph._____
E-mail:_____

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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