



COMMUNITY FORESTRY CONNECTIONS

SPRING 2001

Forest Owner Cooperation Conference A Success!

by Isaac Nadeau, Cooperative Development Services

It is only on special occasions that you can stand in the woods and hear a group of 30 environmentally-conscious forest owners and resource managers give a cheer as a 40 year old elm tree is expertly cut down. If you attended the conference—*Forest Owner Cooperation:*

Balancing Ecology and Economics—in southern Wisconsin in mid-October, you may understand what the cheers were all about. This particular tree was felled by a logger trained in sustainable techniques as part of a management plan written by a Forest Stewardship Council-certified forester, to be taken to a cooperatively-owned sort yard where it may eventually be processed as flooring to provide a maximum return to the co-op's member landowners. Three years ago, before the onset of the sustainable forestry cooperative movement, a scenario like this would have been difficult to imagine. As representatives of several budding

forest owner co-ops and associations from around the country watched the elm fall—while the surrounding forest was left to grow in value both economically and ecologically—there was reason to cheer.

About 100 landowners, foresters, loggers, and community development professionals gathered together on Friday and Saturday, October 13 and 14, 2000 to share ideas and experiences about forest owner cooperation and determine ways in which they could work together. In just three years, over two dozen community-based groups have been formed with the intention of creating better managed, more ecologically



Field tour on a Sustainable Woods Cooperative member's land with Mike Neta.

rich and economically rewarding forests through cooperative, landowner-directed businesses and associations. Each group faces challenges, and there was some lighthearted debate among conference participants as to which group could claim to have made the most mistakes. Still, de-

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COMMUNITY FORESTRY RESOURCE CENTER

Community Forestry Connections seeks to inform and encourage the long-term health and prosperity of small, privately owned woodlots, their owners, and their communities.

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CFRC Update

CFRC Continues to Grow!



Barb Spears,
Urban Forester and Program
Assistant

Barb serves a dual role as Urban Forester and Program Assistant. As an urban forester she works to promote forestry cooperatives, land-owner associations, and the Forest Stewardship Council's certification initiatives. As Program Assistant she coordinates the administrative functions of the CFRC. Barb's career history includes 14 years with the USDA Forest Service, State and Private Forestry in St. Paul. She received her B.S. in Urban Forestry from the University of Minnesota.



Michelle Peach,
Forest Ecologist

Michelle will be helping coordinate logistics for the FSC Lake States Working Group, continuing CFRC's work to make FSC certification more practical and affordable for private landowners, and researching the links between climate change and sustainable forestry. She graduated with a biology degree from Carleton College and has since worked for several agencies doing ecological restoration and environmental education.

Cooperation Conference , from page 1

spite the challenges, interested groups of forest owners continue to pursue cooperative, sustainable alternatives to high-impact forest management. Representatives from groups in Alabama, California, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kentucky, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Nebraska, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Vermont, Virginia, Washington DC, Wisconsin, Ontario and Nova Scotia took part in the conference.

The conference began on a gorgeous fall day in Sustainable Woods Cooperative's neck of the woods. A tour of the co-op's new office, solar-powered kiln, and processing facilities in Lone Rock was followed by walks and workshops on the lands of three SWC members. In addition to the logging demonstration, these workshops included a look at growing and harvesting non-timber forest products, species identification, and philosophies and practices of sustainable woodland management. At each stop, participants were able to ask questions and compare notes on the way things are done in their local areas and ideas on how to improve on them.

The evening ended in Madison, with a discussion by Calvin Yoke

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Western Upper Peninsula Forest Improvement District A Model for Landowner Cooperation

by Richard W. Bolen, Chairman, Western U.P. Forest Improvement District

Michigan's forests have played an integral role in the development of the Midwest economy for over a century. Wood from Michigan forests helped to build its cities and towns, creating thousands of jobs for eager immigrant workers. As the need increased in the early part of this century, the vast forests of White Pine and Hemlock were depleted and the untapped hardwood forests gained the attention of the lumber barons. By the end of WW II, much of the virgin forests had been cut and many of the lumber companies had moved on to other parts of the country.

In the late 1970s, after decades of agonizing over ways to improve Michigan's forests, the Michigan Legislature commissioned a study of the State's timber resources by a consulting firm from Finland. The most novel idea that came out of the report was a recommendation to create forest improvement districts that would improve

WUPFID provides a wide array of forest management services to its members. The initial, and quite possibly the most important service a member receives, is an inventory of their property and, based on the information gathered, a forest management plan. Once the plan is developed, the most common service that a member requests is timber harvest preparation and administrative assistance. WUPFID provides additional services including: wildlife management; planning for esthetics, recreation, and protection; information on existing programs that provide opportunities for members to improve their land; advice and assistance on entering land under Michigan's Commercial Forest Act; assistance with tax preparation after a timber harvest; and professional consultation to answer questions regarding any aspect of a member's land or forestry in general.

Since 1987, when the District conducted its

Conceptually, the forest improvement district has three major functions: 1) providing forest management services to members, 2) marketing forest products harvested on members' land, and 3) developing industrial sites to utilize members' forest products.

forest resource management and utilization on non-industrial private land. The Western Upper Peninsula Forest Improvement Project (WUPFID) became a pilot project and opened a district office in 1985.

A forest improvement district is a self-governing organization of landowners, which can include non-industrial private landowners as well as public landowners such as schools and local units of government, who pool their lands to participate in a program that stimulates forest resource development. Each district is governed by a Board of Directors elected by the landowner membership. Conceptually, the forest improvement district has three major functions: 1) providing forest management services to members, 2) marketing forest products harvested on members' land, and 3) developing industrial sites to utilize members' forest products.

first timber sale for a member, over 35,000 acres have been prepared for harvest. During this period 290,000 cords and 28 million board feet of sawtimber and veneer have been harvested under direct District supervision. The District has had an average annual harvest of approximately 25,000 cord and 1.8 million feet of sawtimber and veneer from member's land since it began. Since 1987, District members have received well over five million dollars in stumpage receipts and total economic impact to the region has exceeded \$100 million, when viewed in terms of finished products. The District has an annual operation budget of \$1.5 million.

District membership has also grown substantially. At year's end in 1986, the first full year of the District, there was a total of 199 members. In December of 2000, there were over 900

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ACROSS THE FOREST LANDSCAPE:

Sustainable Woods Cooperative

CFRC is working with SWC and the GIS Working Group to test the Geographic Information System that was drafted over the past year. The goal is to provide training sessions this summer and have the GIS operational for co-op use by the end of the summer. The GIS will assist SWC and resource managers working with SWC members in tracking management planning information and ecological indicators. SWC continues to pursue marketing activities and anticipates 225,000 MBF of deliveries over the next couple of months.

Contact: SWC, P.O. box 307, Lone Rock, WI 53556; 608-583-7100; swc@mhtc.net; www.sustainablewoods.com

Residents Committee to Protect the Adirondaks

Last June, RCPA hired forester Ross Morgan to bring landowners together, upgrade their management plans, and begin a program that would eventually lead to FSC certification. In early February interested landowners met and decided to begin the certification process as soon as the snow melts and inventories and management plans can be completed. RCPA will be able to certify individual properties through SmartWood's Resource Manager's Program.

Contact: Ross Morgan, Box 27, North Creek, NY 12853; 518-251-4257; rcpa.ross@netheaven.com

Hiawatha Sustainable Woods Cooperative

HSWC's mill is up and running! HSWC is working hard to find markets for its products and has been very successful at limiting waste products. So far HSWC has primarily been processing non-certified timber, but with the help of CFRC, certified resource managers, and the umbrella certification system they hope to get more members' land certified so they can begin harvesting and processing FSC wood as well. Umbrella certification is a new model for certification based on a system of communication and accountability tracking. CFRC will work with HSWC, individual landowners, and both certified and non-certified foresters to ensure that all FSC principles are met under this system.

Contact: HSWC, 7601 State Highway 27, Sparta, WI 54656; 608-272-3223; hswc@voyager.net

Living Forest Co-Op

The Living Forest Cooperative has grown to 31 members! In response to this growth and thanks to a grant from Weyerhaeuser, the cooperative has hired Charly Ray to act as general manager. They hope to complete and approve by-laws in the near future and are excited about working with CFRC to offer certification to Living Forest Co-op members.

Contact: Charly Ray, Manager, P.O. box 1202, Bayfield, WI 54814; livfor@chequnet.net; 745-373-0663

Priarie's Edge Sustainable Woods Cooperative

The Prairie's Edge Sustainable Woods Cooperative, a forest management, processing and marketing cooperative of Northeast Iowa woodland owners, hosted the first informational membership meeting on February 20, 2001 in Calmer, Iowa. The meeting was attended by over 75 people and interest was strong. The co-op is going to continue moving towards the next step and recruiting new members. The mission of the co-op is to maximize the long-term aesthetic, ecological, and economic benefits from their woodlands by encouraging environmentally responsible forestry practices, and by cooperatively adding value to their forest products.

Contact: Scot Christianson or Andy Johnson, 34782 Littleport Rd., Edgewood, IA 53042; 319-245-2585 or 319-864-7112; scotjane@netins.net or andy.johnson@ia.usda.gov



DEVELOPMENTS IN COOPERATION

White Earth Land Recovery Project

The White Earth Land Recovery project is moving ahead with plans to become FSC certified with the help of CFRC and umbrella certification. Under the umbrella certification model, CFRC will work with WELRP and their consulting forester to ensure that all FSC principles are met. WELRP produces and sells maple syrup through its "Native Harvest" company and hopes become a producer and distributor of certified maple syrup. WELRP is exploring other marketable timber and non-timber forest product options. Staff from WELRP are benefiting by working with Mark Adams from the Cook County Sustainable Forestry Cooperative to receive horse logging training. The CFRC is helping support this peer-to-peer exchange.

Contact: White Earth Land Recovery Project, 32033 East Round Lake Road, Ponsford, MN 56575; 218-573-3448 (phone); 218-573-3444 (fax)

Wisconsin Family Forests

Wisconsin Family Forests is a state-wide organization based around community alliances. They believe that "neighbors working with neighbors to integrate forest management into their communities ultimately leads to healthier lives for people and healthier forests." In the interest of improving forest management while strengthening communities, WFF continues to organize a number of meetings, field days, and recreational activities. WFF has hired a forester, Paul Ahlen, to write forest stewardship plans and help members implement existing management plans. In February WFF, with involvement from CFRC, had an exciting meeting in which they drew up a new strategic vision. CFRC will continue to work with WFF exploring certification options.

Contact: Martin Pionke, President, Box 99, Hancock, WI 54943; 715-249-5406; www.1wosconsin.com/familyforest/

LEAF

The alliance Steering Committee chose its official name at the January meeting: Landowners Eco2 Alliance for Forestry. The double reference to "Eco" represents ecology and economics as stated in the mission which is "to work to support woodland owner groups that follow, practice, and promote ecologically sustainable, economically sound, and socially responsible forest management." Areas of activity defined as long-term goals by the group are 1) education, 2) marketing, 3) communication, and 4) business and fiscal affairs. Members of the steering committee are working on development of by-laws, budget, membership recruitment, and public relations.

Contact: Julie Zuehlke, zzuehlke@means.net; RR 4 - Box 4, Winona, MN 55987; (507) 643-6367. Chair of the steering committee is John Stettler; jstett@rconnect.com; S.2490 Schaffner Valley Rd., Fountain City, WI 54629; (608) 687-8430.

Massachusetts Family Forests

After over a year of meeting, Massachusetts Family Forests has begun the process of formally becoming a for profit, forest landowner cooperative. By-laws and articles of incorporation are being drafted. A business plan is in development. MFF hopes to be incorporated this summer with a sorting to follow.

A landowner interest survey was written in cooperation with the University of MA to evaluate the interest level in a

value added, green certified landowner cooperative in Western Massachusetts. The response to the survey reassured the all-landowner steering committee that the time was right for pursuing the cooperative approach to forest management. In the interim, MFF will likely focus on educational programs for wildlife management which was identified as a high priority by the survey.

MFF was recently featured in the February/March issue of

the *Journal of Forestry*. Paul Barten and Dave Damery professors at the University of MA and members of the MFF Resource Group were the primary authors. The article outlines MFF's formation and discusses the use of forest landowner cooperatives as a tool for implementing sustainable forestry.

Contact: MFF, c/o Paul Cantanzaro; 1048 North Rd., Westfield, MA 01085; 413-532-6872; paul.cantanzaro@state.ma.us

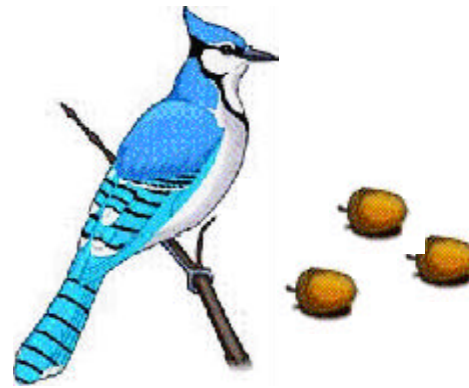


FSC: For the Birds! , from page 8

to stop and refuel. Because increasingly, such stopover habitats are being lost to land development, he encourages property owners to plant not only trees, but native shrubs, grasses, and forbs to serve as micro-habitats that songbirds can use to feed and rest in protective cover.

When forest landowner groups make the decision to become Forest Stewardship Council certified, they do so in the belief that the FSC standards provide sound guidance to landowners, foresters, and loggers working to protect and improve the long-term health of their woodlands. Such community-based ecosystem management involves a fundamental shift away from out-based or product-based approaches to one focused on the condition of the land. FSC forest management standards, with its third-party monitoring, reflect strong commitment to maintaining and restoring the health of the land, or *stewardship*. FSC certification gives us a “higher authority” in reference to land management practices.

So what about the birds? Under FSC principles, landowners, foresters, and ecologists would carefully consider the implications of a concept such as *stopover ecology* when developing a management plan for a forest. Together they would consider factors that operate not



only at the stand level, but also those that work at the microhabitat level and the landscape level. The “structure” of the forest vegetation (the density and number of vegetational layers), combined with native species “richness” would be examined in light of the dominant presettlement disturbance regime, past logging and grazing practices, the presence of exotic invasive species, available local seed sources, and so on. Understanding how timber harvest and other silvicultural treatments can affect habitat suitability over time and space can also inform specific management recommendations. Enhancing the forest community by planting native shrubs, forbs, and grasses, may tip the scale in favor of our colorful, song-filled feathered friends and, in turn, promote healthier forests.

WUPFID , from page 3

members in the District with a combined ownership of 170,000 acres.

It is clear that sound harvest programs have provided increased revenues to landowners and also tremendous economic benefits to the region’s communities. More importantly, the harvested forestland is now in excellent condition and growing higher quality trees and will produce continued periodic harvest of high valued timber. Well-designed timber sales also promote and enhance wildlife, fisheries, and recreational opportunities for District members and the public in general. In the final analysis it will not be the number of landowners that are in WUPFID that will tell its story; it will be what was done to help these landowners improve their land and pass on a legacy of sustainable forest stewardship to their children and future generations.

When the District began, the early designers knew that a program of this nature would need financial help during its formative years. That help was provided by the legislature through

1991. Since then the District has moved rapidly into becoming an independent business enterprise. It’s long term potential is predicated on becoming a self supporting member of the region’s forest business community. The steps taken to cut costs and capture additional revenue while still providing the best possible service to its membership have completely moved the District into self-sufficiency.

The future looks extremely bright for the District with planned boundary expansions and additional business ventures. WUPFID can continue to provide sound, long-term land stewardship. It is truly a shining example of how a group of people can band together for a common goal. Margaret Mead, the American anthropologist, once said, “never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.” Whatever the future holds for the Forest Improvement District, we believe our small group has made a difference in how land can be managed and, in the end, through this collective effort, we will ensure that the land will helpthetterthanwefoundit

Conference , from page 2

of Woodmizer Products, Inc., on the ins and outs of cooperative decision making and some business advice for the budding forestry co-ops. Depending on what table you were sitting at over dinner, you may have been involved with discussions on the benefits of fire as a management tool with a forester from Wisconsin; the market potential for aspen siding with a co-op member from Minnesota; the underlying importance of re-connecting with the land with a logger from Vermont; or attempting to find a working definition of sustainability with a Californian and a Canadian.

Saturday was filled with lively conversation centered around several issues related to sustainable forestry cooperatives. The conference included approximately 40 presenters and 20 sessions.

Topics covered included:

- Forming a Forestry Co-op
- Community Forestry Options
- Introduction to Woodland Management Planning
- Introduction to FSC Certification
- Small Scale Wood Processing
- Approaches to Landscape Level Management
- Low-impact Logging

- Developing the Vision & Mission for Forestry Co-ops
- Cooperation Among Community Forestry Groups
- Cooperating in Landscape Management at the Property Level
- Marketing Sustainable Wood Products
- Growing and Marketing Non-timber Forest Products
- Preparing a Forestry Co-op Business Plan

The conference ended with a closing discussion in which everyone in attendance was given a chance to share what they had learned, and particularly their ideas about the direction in which the sustainable forest owner cooperative movement should go. The overwhelming sentiment among the group was that communication and collaboration among the groups involved should continue. There was general agreement about the tremendous potential in working together to create economically profitable, and ecologically sustainable forests. Preliminary ideas for a future meeting were discussed, as participants realized that the day may well be coming when it won't be so uncommon to hear, in small woodlands throughout the country, the sound of cheering.



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FSC Certification: For the Birds!

by Gigi La Budde

Birds are one of the best indicators of the health and productivity of our woodlands. The forest belt that extends from the Maritime Provinces of Canada and New England States west through the Great Lakes and across northern Minnesota supports a greater diversity of breeding birds than anywhere else in North America. Birds serve as highly effective seed dispersal agents. Blue Jays, for example, are considered one of the most important mechanisms for oak dispersal and oak forest succession. Possessing an elastic esophagus that allows it to carry several acorns at a time, a jay can distribute acorns over a far wider range than squirrels, voles, and mice.

In Minnesota, there are 32 species of forest birds dependant on cavity trees and snags for feeding and nesting. Feeding activities of wood-

peckers serve in hastening the decay of dead trees, thus contributing to nutrient recycling in the forest. The role of birds as predators of forest insects, many of which are leaf-chewing larvae of butterflies and moths, has been well-documented. Biologists and foresters agree: birds serve a vital role in the functioning of forest ecosystems.

Radar studies show that the magnitude of small bird migration across the Gulf of Mexico was, in the 1980s, only half of what it had been in the 1960s. Writing in the Sept/Oct issue of the *Wild Ones Journal*, author, ornithologist, and conservationist Donald Hientzelman says, "within roughly the last decade, a new branch of ecology has developed called stopover ecology." By this he means that songbirds, on their migratory journeys, north and south, need safe places

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