

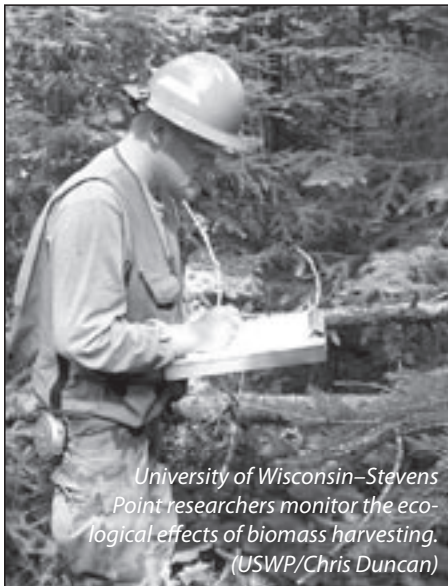
COMMUNITY FORESTRY Connections

From the Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy's Community Forestry Resource Center

Initiatives in Sustainable Woody Biomass

By Don Arnosti

The Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy is working to create conditions for sustainable use of non-cultivated woody biomass in Minnesota and Wisconsin. Our efforts are designed to put into practical implementation the principles of sustainability involving economic, ecological and community considerations. We believe that the development of markets for sustainably-produced, low value products such as biomass will help landowners implement their forest management plans, while reinvesting for a better forest tomorrow. Here are some initiatives we are working on.



University of Wisconsin–Stevens Point researchers monitor the ecological effects of biomass harvesting. (USWP/Chris Duncan)

Defining Sustainable

IATP facilitated the passage of a Minnesota statute in 2005 requiring (and funding) the Minnesota Forest Resources Council and the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources to develop “best management practices” for biomass harvesting in forests and brush lands by July 1, 2007. The legislation requires:

- ▶ Two northern Minnesota municipal utilities to assure implementation of these standards by harvesters supplying them with biomass with a third-party audit system.
- ▶ No biomass harvest will occur in identified high value native plant communities.
- ▶ Peer review and public comment on proposed guidelines before adoption.

Certification of most public forestlands in Minnesota under both FSC and Sustainable Forestry Initiative standards, comprising nearly 7 million acres, assures that these voluntary guidelines will be widely implemented.

Answering Practical Questions


IATP assembled diverse partners to address questions about economic costs and environmental impacts of biomass harvests in the forest. Partners including the Universities of Minnesota and



The district energy plant in Virginia, Minn., is being converted to burn woody biomass.

Wisconsin–Stevens Point, Superior National Forest, Forest Management Systems Loggers Cooperative, the cities of Virginia and Hibbing, Minn., and IATP are conducting 11 test harvests under a variety of forest conditions with various combinations of equipment, with results due early in 2007.

Developing Markets

IATP is working with partners in St. Paul, Virginia and Hibbing, Minn., to assist them in developing woody biomass fuel supplies from surrounding public and private lands practicing sustainable forest management. Test harvests and development of model economic relationships are planned. 

To read more about the test harvests in the Superior National Forest, visit forestrycenter.org/biomassproject.cfm

Cook County Sustainable Forestry Cooperative



Marco Good and horses Betsy and Julie skid aspen logs over to the sawmill. (CCSFC/Jack Corey)

By **Katie Marshall**

On a sunlit July day, a group of 30 people of all ages assembled at the farm of Mark Adams, just outside of Hovland, Minn. They had gathered to learn about the local forestry cooperative and watch sustainable forest management in action.

Co-op president Mark Adams demonstrated his hand-felling technique on a tall, aging aspen that came down with a crash—just inches short of its target landing spot. Grand Marais-based horse logger Marco Good took over the skidding of the sizable log with his team of draft horses. Rounding out the day's showcase of small-scale forestry, Adams ran the log through his portable sawmill and displayed some of the tools the co-op owns that are available for members' use in the management of their woods.

The power and efficiency of the horses and the light-on-the-land logging methods make it easy to see why this type of forest work is appealing—especially for private landowners with small woodlots. But in the days of \$500,000 logging equipment and international timber markets this kind of forestry is unusual.



Co-op president Mark Adams explains directional felling. (CCSFC/Jack Corey)

The Cook County Sustainable Forestry Cooperative (CCSFC) is one of several innovative groups of forest landowners in the Midwest that have joined together to share resources and knowledge. Members benefit from ideas and methods that put the long-term health of the forest first.

Fifteen of CCSFC's 21 members have their land certified to Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) standards through the Community Forestry Resource Center's "umbrella" certificate.

"Our greatest success has been getting our members FSC certified land management plans for their land," said John Peterson, CCSFC board member. "The challenge now is to get to the point where the Co-op can help those members implement their plans."

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COMMUNITY FORESTRY Connections

Community Forestry Connections is published by the Community Forestry Resource Center, a program of the Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy.

CFRC works to promote responsible forest management by encouraging the long-term health and prosperity of small, privately-owned woodlots, their owners and their communities.

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Across the Forest Landscape

Headwaters

Forestry Cooperative

Recently HFC held its fall work and fun day. Twelve members and eight guests with their families attended. The work for the day included helping member Todd Borgstrom construct a log cabin on his property using certified aspen 6 x 6 ft. logs harvested and dried from HFC members' woodlots. Attendees also pruned a 15-year-old stand of red pine. The fun included walks on the woodland trails and rides on a buckboard wagon constructed with certified red oak. The next membership gathering is scheduled for spring 2007.

The HFC wood drying and warehouse facility has a FSC chain of custody through the Upper Mississippi Certified Forest Products Group based in Aitkin County. The facility has the capacity to dry 24,000 board feet and warehouse more than 60,000 board feet. The co-op's hope is to help members with their woodlot management by giving them the opportunity to add value and market their products through HFC. Demand for FSC certified products is increasing with the most recent sale being certified basswood carving blocks to Brooklyn, N.Y. 🍃

For more information, contact Bob Krause at (320) 732-3664 or i1bobk@rea-alp.com

Hiawatha Sustainable Woods Cooperative

Since revisiting and updating our mission statement we have focused on education through workshops and field trips with a small but dedicated group of members

and non-members. We also combined information and attendance at events with other organizations with similar objectives for rural landowners, in particular the Minnesota Forestry Association where we are represented on their board. This year we have not sponsored any events but are available as a resource for information about our mission. Our board of directors is in place for the purpose of connecting with future members and activities as interests or landowner issues arise. 🍃

For more information contact John Stettler at (608) 687-8430 or jstett@rconnect.com

Living Forest Cooperative

LFC is continuing in its work helping landowner members sustainably and profitably manage their forests—co-op members have a combined total of over 13,000 acres in northwest Wisconsin. LFC staff work with the Community Forestry Resource Center to provide FSC-certified management plans for members, ensuring the highest standards of forest management are applied. The co-op is exploring ways to support the local community through value-added processing of wood products. A recent pine thinning resulted in locally processed paneling that was sold by LFC for use in local homes, which keeps the value of high quality, well-managed local wood in the community. In addition, LFC continues to promote member education and hands-on experience through field days offered throughout the year. 🍃

For more information contact Charly Ray at (715) 682-0007 or info@livingforestcoop.com

Prairie's Edge Sustainable Woods Cooperative

On Nov. 11 at 1 p.m., Prairie's Edge Sustainable Woods Cooperative and the Upper Mississippi Refuge managers are hosting a woods and wetlands walk on the Reno Bottoms area of the refuge, north of New Albin, Iowa. The meeting will start at the Millstone Landing, just off Highway 26. Topics are forests of the floodplain, other plant communities, history and problems associated with maintaining and improving forest cover. 🍃

For more information contact Rob Bolson at (563) 382-2409 or rbolson@netins.net

Other Midwest Forest Cooperatives and Landowner Associations

- ▶ **Kickapoo Woods Cooperative**
Paul Bader, (608) 625-2515
domehome@mwt.net
kickapoowoodsco-op.org
- ▶ **Northwoods Forestry Cooperative**
Gary Bradford, (218) 927-4599
NFC_Coop@hotmail.com
- ▶ **Prairie Ridge Forest Stewardship Cooperative**, Luke Saunders
(715) 455-1614
lukets@chibardun.net
- ▶ **Wisconsin Family Forests**
wisconsinfamilyforests.org
- ▶ **Minnesota Forestry Association**
mnforest.com
- ▶ **Wisconsin Woodland Owners Association**
wisconsinwoodlands.org

Cook County Cooperative

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While information on working in the woods and finding markets for their products is readily available, the co-op is finding it difficult to get the financial support and expertise they need for the business side of their organization.

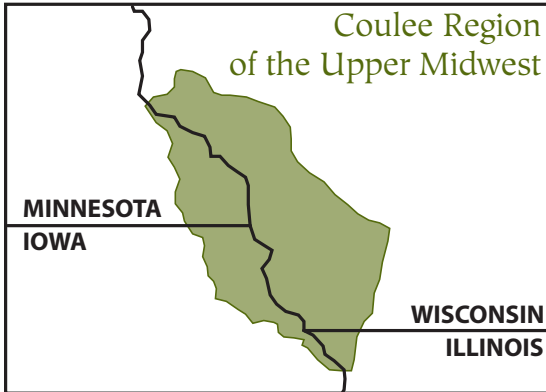
Cook County Co-op members have a combined total of 1,248 acres of land. Last year, they raised money for the co-op's work by making wreaths out of balsam boughs that members harvested from their forests as part of their Firewise fuel reduction efforts. This year, the co-op is again selling these wreaths, marketing them through the Whole Foods Co-op in Duluth, Minn., and other outlets. 🍃

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For more information on the Cook County Sustainable Forestry Cooperative, contact John Peterson at (218) 475-2621 or ccsfc@boreal.org

Promoting Sustainable Wood Products in the Coulee Region

By Katie Marshall



Consumers express different values when they purchase a product. Value is sometimes defined by price—with lower cost representing a better economic value. However, some consumers look beyond price to consider other factors when they shop. These sustainable shoppers evaluate not only price, but also social and environmental features of what they buy. Many even seek out products that are ecologically and environmentally sound and support local communities.

The market for wood products is no exception. The “big box” retailers focus primarily on the price and economic value of their wood products—regardless of whether their production benefits or harms communities, was harvested and processed in an environmentally sound manner, or possesses other measures of quality.

While some efforts exist to promote sustainable wood products, and efforts such as the “green building” movement have given responsibly harvested wood a higher profile, the market for these goods is still not well defined. The expansion of forest certification in the U.S. provides a growing supply of certified material. However, market recognition for the products that come from these certified forests is often lacking.

CFRC has joined with Ray Cox of Northfield Construction to bring together stakeholders to create a web of supportive local relationships to expand the market for sustainable wood products in the Upper Mississippi Coulee Region.

In early October, a group that included forest landowners, wood processors and retailers, foresters, loggers, builders, ar-

chitects and furniture makers assembled in Northfield, Minn., to find ways of building this network. This introductory meeting brought to light some of the barriers facing producers and suppliers of sustainable wood—including the complexity of forest certification and both the lack of a market for timber on one end and the lack of a consistent supply on the other.

Finding ways to market certified wood products to both consumers and retailers and construct a reliable supply chain that works for everyone from landowner to end user were two of the goals that emerged from the meeting. “With my involvement in the building construction industry as well as state government, I am particularly interested in working to develop sustainable wood harvesting and wood products,” said Ray Cox. “We are all better served if products are handled in a responsible manner.”

A meeting is scheduled for Nov. 13 to continue the discussion and determine the next, tangible steps to take for this network. 🌿

Anyone interested in supplying, processing, utilizing or promoting sustainable wood products in the Coulee Region is invited to join the discussion. To attend the Nov. 13 meeting or to be added to future communications on this subject, contact Katie Marshall at (612) 870-3407 or kmarshall@iatp.org.

Photos (clockwise from upper right): Valiree Green from Minnesota DNR and Rob Bolson of Prairie's Edge Sustainable Woods Co-op consider the needs of private landowners. Jon Wigen and Russ Sirek of Lamperts discuss supplying “green” products with Peter Schmelzer of Vivus Architecture. Regional stakeholders in the sustainable wood products market gathered in October (courtesy Ray Cox).

Sustainable Woods Network

The Sustainable Woods Network is a new online tool for buyers and sellers of wood products from responsibly managed forests. Over 4,000 landowners with 900,000 combined acres are represented on the network.

"We are delighted the Sustainable Woods Network has grown

to more than 20 woodland owner groups across North America," said Warren Gas-kill, project manager for development of the Web portal. "Its purpose is to make it easier for consumers and landowners to locate sources of thoughtfully sourced wood products and services. At the same time, the network helps these groups connect with consumers."

Find products and more information or join the network online at sustainablewoods.net



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Ecologically-Based Forestry in the Coulee Region: Part 2

The Harvest



By Jedd Ungrodt

In the Spring 2006 edition of *Connections*, we introduced Greg Erickson, a forest landowner in the Lower Kinnickinnic River Valley of Pierce County, Wis. About two years ago Greg came to CFRC with a set of concerns typical to landowners in the Coulee Region of southwest Wisconsin. He was facing a Managed Forest Law (MFL) mandatory timber harvest, but was concerned that a harvest would conflict with his primary interests in the land: wildlife habitat, aesthetics, ecological restoration and protection from development.

CFRC recognized an opportunity to partner with the Erickson family; the Kinnickinnic River Land Trust (KRLT), which holds conservation easements on much of the Erickson's land; and the Wisconsin DNR to demonstrate how active forest management in the Coulee Region can provide diverse economic, ecological and social benefits.

All too often, the term "forest management" in this area means harvesting the best mature

trees, skidding out the best logs and leaving the inferior trees and topwood in the woods. What the Ericksons needed on their mandatory harvest area was the opposite approach: Leaving the best trees behind for seed and partial shade and removing the rest. As part of achieving FSC certification, CFRC worked with the Ericksons to create a long-term vision for the stand. It calls for restoration of a park-like, fire-adapted oak woodland, similar to those that dominated the area prior to European settlement.

Standing between the Ericksons and this vision was a dense understory of buckthorn and stunted, twisted, non-oak hardwoods. To make the plan come to life three more partners were needed: (1) a contractor to attack the buckthorn, (2) a forest products company to buy the poor-quality timber and (3) a skilled logger to remove the wood, create a seedbed for oak regeneration and

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This page: The Ponsse forwarder loads on logs.

Previous page: Logger Jace Luedtke, Eric Forward of the Kinnickinnic River Land Trust and IATP forester Jedd Ungrodt discuss the progress of the Erickson harvest.

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prepare the site for prescribed burning. Troy Meacham, owner-operator of LandCraft Seed and Services in Emerald, Wis., stepped up to the first task. Wisconsin Rapids-based pulp and paper giant Stora Enso North America (SENA) filled the second role. And Luedtke and Krizak Forestry of Amery, Wis., the third.

In February Troy Meacham used chainsaws and backpack sprayers to cut and stump-treat buckthorn on the 10-acre demonstration site. The work was done in the winter prior to the harvest, when the plants were easy to find and the ground undisturbed, making the risk of herbicide injury to non-target plants minimal.

In early October when the ground was dry and the acorn crop on the ground, Jace Luedtke and Joe Krizak—loggers with a long-term contract to produce pulpwood exclusively for SEN A—began harvest operations. Step one was to stir up the soil surface to work in the acorns and reduce the brush layer with a small dozer. Next, they fired up their state-of-the-art pair of Finnish logging machines. With the Ponsse Ergo harvester, Luedtke is able to fell and buck logs or pulp sticks from any tree—from a four-inch boxelder to a two-foot diameter oak—in a matter of seconds. The cutting head dangles on the end of a 30-foot boom that allows a skilled operator to carefully direct each tree's fall, eliminating damage to the crowns of valuable seed trees.

Krizak picks up any piece of wood at least three inches in diameter and 100 inches long with the Ponsse Buffalo Dual forwarder, carrying six cords of wood in one trip out to the landing. Both machines run on high-floatation rubber tires that cause minimal ground disturbance, have on-board computers to

maximize utilization and efficiency and are powered by quiet, efficient Mercedes-Benz diesels. But like any machines, they are only as good as their operators, and Luedtke and Krizak have built their business on understanding the needs of small private forest landowners.

To reduce the fuel load in preparation for prescribed burning, the loggers were also hired to carry slash off the site with the forwarder. The work created a roughly 75-ton pile of biomass that CFRC is hoping to market as fuel to District Energy's cogeneration plant in St. Paul, along with similar piles in the area created by oak savanna restoration.

In the end the demonstration produced work for skilled contractors and raw material for one of the state's most important industries. But perhaps most importantly it resulted in a new set of forest conditions that will provide long-term benefits not only to the Erickson family, but to the whole community of creatures—including humans—that depend on the oak woodlands of the Lower Kinni. 🌿

Woody Biomass Project

Find out about CFRC's woody biomass harvesting and utilization project in northern Minnesota's Superior National Forest

forestrycenter.org

Invaders of Minnesota's Forests

By **Katie Marshall**

Over the past decade, invasive plants have spread through Minnesota woodlands with increasing speed—taking root in forests recently cleared by logging operations, along roadsides, and in vulnerable or transitioning ecosystems. These species have become economic and ecological threats to some of the most valuable and productive forests in Minnesota by changing the composition and structure of natural forest communities and displacing native plants and wildlife.

While programs to monitor, manage and control aquatic invasive plants such as Eurasian watermilfoil are well-developed and publicized, Minnesota has not developed a comprehensive strategy for dealing with terrestrial invasive plants that pose major threats to forest integrity and productivity.

The nature of these invasive threats requires both cooperation among adjoining landowners to slow the spread and reduce the impact of these species in the forest and early detection to make invasive control efforts economically and ecologically feasible. Foresters, loggers and other professionals that work with private landowners are a natural source of information about invasive species. However, to provide assistance, they need education and specific strategies to effectively confront these problem species.

Based on the success of invasive species trainings in Wisconsin and two pilot workshops offered in Minnesota in the fall of 2005, CFRC's ecologist and educator Gigi La Budde has teamed up with Luke Skinner and Ann Pierce of the Minnesota Department of Natural

Resources to put together workshops designed to "train the trainers"—teach-



Top: CFRC's Gigi La Budde teaches identification of invasive species.

A forest infested with garlic mustard. (Natural Area Consultants/Victoria Nuzzo)

ing natural resource professionals and community educators how to deliver effective trainings on invasive species management.

The first two workshops in this series will be offered in November—one in Grand Rapids, Minn., that focuses on invasives of the northern forest region and one in Rochester, Minn., that incorporates the invasive species that frequent both forests and fields. Additional workshops will be offered in the coming months by the individuals trained at these initial sessions.

The workshops will provide the future trainers with all-season field identification skills of the most common and destructive invasive species and methods for reducing the spread of these plants and managing established infestations. Participants will also learn how to develop their own teaching style, where to locate good field sites, and what resource materials and supporting organizations are available.

Launching a comprehensive invasives program in Minnesota addresses the problem of invasive species in a consistent, wide-ranging and sustainable

Know your invasives Exotic honeysuckle



Exotic honeysuckles were introduced to the U.S. as ornamental shrubs and pose a serious threat to native forest shrubs. Their early leaf-out and low branches allow them to shade out ground cover and deplete soil moisture. Honeysuckles range from a few feet up to 15 feet tall with May and June blooms that are white, red and, most commonly, pink. The red or yellow fruits are situated in pairs and leaves are oval and untoothed. 🌿

For tips on eradicating exotic honeysuckles and other invasive species, check out:

- ▶ **Invasive Plants Association of Wisconsin**
ipaw.org
- ▶ **Minnesota DNR Invasives Program**
dnr.state.mn.us/invasives

Above photo: Japanese honeysuckle (The University of Georgia/Chuck Barger)

manner. The success of similar workshops and education efforts in Wisconsin combined with the expansion of this work in Minnesota will improve the managing of invasive species throughout the Midwest. 🌿

Fall Sustainable Forestry Collaborative: Dec. 1–2, 2006

A forestry improvement collaborative meeting for representatives of private woodland owner groups will be held Dec. 1–2 in Washburn, Wis. Hosted by the Living Forest Cooperative, the meeting will feature presentations and discussions about ways to build markets for wood products coming from sustainably managed privately-owned woodlands.

The meeting—beginning Friday at 6 p.m. and ending Saturday at 3 p.m.—will be at the Woodnote Lodge in Washburn. There is no fee for the conference, but participants will have to cover lodging. The meeting is sponsored by Cooperative Development Services and the Community Forestry Resource Center. Contact Warren Gaskill at (608) 767-2906 or wgaskill@rapid-improvement.com if interested in attending. Space is limited.

The new look of forestrycenter.org

If you've never been to our Web site, or if you visit every day, you'll want to check out the new look—and new features—of CFRC online. At forestrycenter.org you can browse the wide range of publications available to download, check out the updated calendar of events, read the latest forestry news, and find more information about important topics related to sustainable community forestry.

For more information about CFRC as a program of the Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy, visit

iatp.org/forestry.

And don't forget CFRC's weekly email listserv—a collection of headlines, events, informational tools and resources, and recent publications related to community forestry. Visit forestrycenter.org to sign up and view past issues.



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