

Maine Tree Farm NEWSLETTER

Fall 2014

A publication of the Maine Tree Farm Committee

Issue No. 3



Tree Farm and SWOAM Host Another Successful Annual Field Day

September 6th marked the roll out of another excellent field day event honoring Maine's Outstanding Tree Farmers of the Year, Bambi Jones and Tracy Moskovitz. This year's event drew several hundred people to the Hidden Valley Nature Center (HVNC) in Jefferson, where they were greeted by more than two dozen vendors and exhibitors, as well as a full schedule of educational talks and tours.

At the main event area, located near HVNC's brand new pavilion, attendees interacted with exhibitors and listened to talks on subjects ranging from conservation easements to non-timber forest products. Younger attendees enjoyed games, crafts, and face painting, hosted by Project Learning Tree. Visitors also had the opportunity to hear from a number of experts on over a half-dozen guided forest walks.



Attendees listen to the keynote address at the HVNC pavilion..

vice), including HVNC's low impact approach, horse logging, and cut-to-length harvesting.

When lunch finally rolled around, visitors took their pick between two tasty food options – egg rolls and crab rangoons or pulled pork sandwiches – and enjoyed their meals while listening to a lunch-time speaker series that began with a legislative sentiment delivered by State Senator Chris Johnson. Dick Morse (Maine Tree Farm Committee Chair) formally presented the 2014 Outstanding Tree Farmer award, followed by remarks from Rich Merk (SWOAM President) and Tom Martin (American Forest Foundation CEO). The keynote address, "Perspectives on Woodlands," was given by John Piotti (Maine Farmland Trust President and CEO).



Presentation of the Outstanding Tree Farmer award.

Many thanks are due to all the volunteers from Tree Farm, SWOAM, and HVNC who made this event possible, and thanks to all of the visitors who made it such a vibrant and well-attended event. We look forward to seeing everyone at next year's field day!



Clockwise from upper left: Guided tours about mushrooms, BMPs/trail construction, wildflowers, and forestry.

Beyond the main event area, a bustling equipment demo section included the Unity College woodsmen team, and down at the south gate there were three different live harvesting demonstrations going on throughout the day (accessed via shuttles provided by the Maine Forest Ser-

View more field day photos in the on-line version of this newsletter at: www.mainetreefarm.org/newsletter.html

Tree Farm Standard Highlight

Standard 5: Fish, Wildlife, and Biodiversity

Forest management activities contribute to the conservation of biodiversity.

Performance Measure 5.3—Forest owner should make practical efforts to prevent, eradicate, or otherwise control invasive species.

Indicator 5.3.1—Forest owner should make practical efforts to prevent, eradicate, or otherwise control invasive species using a range of integrated pest management methods.



ATFS Standard 5 states: “Forest management activities contribute to the conservation of biodiversity.” Some of the associated measures and indicators deal with threatened or endangered species that may, but usually do not occur on Tree Farm woodlands. One particular facet of this standard is the consideration of “integrated pest management” or IPM. This term may be off-putting to some; it’s really just shorthand for a common-sense approach to dealing with unwanted plants or insects.

The IPM indicator says that Tree Farmers should make *practical* efforts to prevent, eradicate, or otherwise control invasive species using a range of integrated pest management methods. The emphasis is on the word “practical.” Remember, the entire Tree Farm standard is built around the idea of activities that are “**appropriate to the scale and intensity of the situation**” on any given woodlot.

IPM is an environmentally sound approach to managing pests such as insects, weeds, plant pathogens, and unwanted wildlife. It works on farms and in the woods, in communities and in homes. IPM relies on proper pest identification, monitoring, and combinations of pest avoidance and management strategies that protect people, crops, and the environment while minimizing pesticide use.

IPM boils down to these elements:

Know what you have to deal with. Identify the actual plant (s), bug(s), plant disease or critter(s) that are causing problems. You may need professional assistance to identify the particular invasive species that you’re dealing with.

Determine actual extent of problem. Document and quantify as appropriate. For example, determine the number of acres in your woods where non-native honeysuckle is preventing tree seedlings from establishing, as well as the likely areas where it’s not a problem yet but could be in the future.

Devise a treatment strategy, using the least toxic alternative that is economically feasible. This is essentially a cost/benefit analysis, taking into account alternate treatments (possibly chemical vs. mechanical) and the resources available to you (financial, time and ability to do-it-yourself vs. contracting with a professional.)

For help in identifying invasive threats to your woods and trees, you can use this online form: www.maine.gov/dacf/mfs/forest_health/tree_ailment.html. You can also call The Maine Forest Service Forest Health Division at (207) 287-2431 or 1-800-367-0223 (in State). Check out their website at www.maine.gov/dacf/mfs/forest_health/index.htm. The physical location is 50 Hospital Street, Augusta, ME 04333-0168.

For more information on IPM, take a look at the Integrated Pest Management Council web page¹. You can also contact Kathy Murray, IPM Entomologist; Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry, 28 State House Station, Augusta, ME 04333; 207-287-7616.

The full ATFS Standards, Performance Measures and Indicators can be seen at: www.treefarmsystem.org/standards-for-tree-farm-certification.

¹ http://www.maine.gov/dacf/php/integrated_pest_management/ipm_council.shtml

Big Choices Ahead for the Maine Tree Farm Program

The Maine Tree Farm Committee is faced with making an important decision during the coming year and we want to take this opportunity to introduce you, our members to this latest update. We will be asking for your opinion on the matter described below, so please take a minute to read the information carefully.

Third-Party Certification and the American Tree Farm System

As many of you know, the American Tree Farm System is a third-party certification system that has been recognized internationally by the Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification (PEFC). This means that an independent third-party has assessed the Tree Farm System and can attest that its members are successfully implementing the ATFS Standards of Sustainability on the ground. As a member of the Tree Farm program, this means that your land is also third-party certified. On a large scale, this type of forest certification is important because it gives consumers assurance that products they purchase originate from sustainably managed forests that protect economic, social and environmental benefits.

Continued from page 2

Certification also provides credibility to the Tree Farm program, recognition for the good forest stewardship practiced by all of its members, and objective feedback about how the program is operating. In some regions, landowners also receive more money for their timber because it is third-party certified. This increased value has not been realized in Maine, but Tree Farmers have reported that being certified has occasionally helped them gain market access, e.g. a mill will take their wood even when they are not accepting deliveries from non-certified sources.

However, as with many things, certification comes with both benefits and costs. While it has always been free to join the Tree Farm program, and still is, there are significant financial costs associated with the level of third-party certification that Tree Farm members now enjoy. These costs have primarily been covered by American Forest Foundation (AFF). However, these costs have continued to increase, even as some state Tree Farm programs have expressed a lack of interest in certification, particularly when it involves



Tree Farm Profile

By: Ed McGrath, Trustee; Kyle Burdick, Forester

The Musquash Farm in Grand Lake Stream Plantation, Washington County, Maine owned by the McGrath Family Real Estate Trust, is once again a “small” woodlot, after an interval as timber company property from 1926 until 2001.

Ed McGrath, and his wife Jill acquired the property in 2002, as conservation owners, when information circulated in the community that then current owner was contemplating extensive harvesting, gravel extraction and conversion to multiple building lots.. Ed and Jill hired a forester, Roger Milligan who developed a comprehensive management plan. With the plan in hand, they enrolled in available Federal and State conservation programs. American Tree Farm certification was then pursued and obtained.

Kyle Burdick, licensed forester and qualified Tree Farm inspector, has developed a new comprehensive forest management plan for the next 10 years. Kyle is also the Community Forest Manager for the Downeast Lakes Land Trust.

devoting limited organizational resources to certification in regions where there is no perceived financial benefit to the Tree Farmer.

The Big Question: Should the Maine Tree Farm Program Stay Third-Party Certified?

In response to all of this, the national office has now given each State Tree Farm Program the opportunity to decide whether or not they want to remain third-party certified in the future. By the end of 2015, the Maine Tree Farm program will need to choose between two pathways: Certified or Recognition. The first would keep our state program third-party certified and the second would return the Tree Farm program to a recognition program, similar to what it was when it began. For more information, you can download a helpful 1-page overview from the national office at www.mainetreelfarm.org/forestrylinks.html.

What's Next?

During the next year, you can expect to receive more communication from the Maine Tree Farm Committee on this subject, including more details about the pros and cons of the Certified Pathway and the Recognition Pathway. We will do our best to make it clear exactly what the costs and benefits are for each pathway, both to you as a Tree Farmer and to the state program as a whole. We also want to hear from you, so please reach out with questions and comments.

The most recent harvest was an intensive thinning operation, unlike most on the downeast landscape. The goal of the harvest was to strike a balance between a pre-commercial or subsidized thinning and a commercial harvest.

Balanced Forestry, an aptly named cut-to-length harvesting company owned and run by Brian Bell of Edmunds Maine, contracted to do the job. Balanced Forestry emphasizes per acre and per tree utilization, while still providing the landowner exactly what he or she wants in a residual stand. Significantly more time is spent grooming the harvest area, somewhat lowering the number of cords produced per day. The result is a sliding scale stumpage, rather than a one price (or one cut) fits all approach. This method creates improvement opportunities on woodlots where no opportunities would otherwise exist.

The most impressive aspect of this opera-



Continued from page 3

tion is the machinery, or rather the machine, that does the job. Mr. Bell uses one machine that switches, or transforms if you will, from a processor to a forwarder. This enables the operator to take full advantage of fair weather to forward heavy loads, shifting to lower impact tree processing on days with inclement weather. This complements the already low impact nature of high floatation tires and over tire tracks typical of most eight wheeled forwarders.

The harvest is approximately 2/3rds complete, once finished the forest growth rates will likely increase significantly, without unproductive "voids" in tree cover. The woodlot will be assessed for subsequent harvesting in 2023 when the next management planning period begins.

Reminder: Switching to an electronic version will help us save on printing and postage costs, and stretch our limited budget even further. You can access the online version and subscribe today at: www.mainetreefarm.org/newsletter.html

2014 Maine Tree Farm Committee

Chair

Dick Morse, South China, ME

Vice Chair

Paul Larrivee, Sappi Fine Paper

Secretary

Patty Cormier, Maine Forest Service

Treasurer

Dan Mahns, American Forest Management

You can find contact information for the entire Tree Farm Committee, including your County Chair, at the Maine Tree Farm website: www.mainetreefarm.org

We want to hear from you!

Have questions about the management of your woodlot or a story about your Tree Farm that you would like to share? Submit stories, photos, and questions to info@mainetreefarm.org or 207-221-2512.

Maine Tree Farm Committee
American Tree Farm System
PO Box 5470
Augusta, ME 04332
The American Tree Farm System is a
program of the American Forest Foundation

