The Exquisite Beauty of Winter

The frozen landscape offers almost no end to eye-popping beauty. Much of it is accessible by car and a short walk. And other spectacles may take a bit of effort and resolve. Those who snowshoe several miles through deep powder will no longer attach the words “recreation” or “fun” to the activity.

Many times, those colder-than-hoped-for days are actually the best times to go. There really isn’t any such thing as cold weather, only poorly-dressed people! However, knowing the right clothing combinations for conditions can take practice. Layers are usually a good idea, especially if physical activity can be expected.

Upper left: Laughing Whitefish Falls.
Upper right: Water-washed “black ice” along the shores of Lake Superior on Mother’s Day.
Lower left: Munising Falls spreading its apron.
Lower right: Eben Ice Caves.

“Number one selling brand” is based on syndicated Irwin Broh Research (commercial landscapers) as well as independent consumer research of 2009-2013 U.S. sales and market share data for the gasoline-powered handheld outdoor power equipment category combined sales to consumers and commercial landscapers.
Management assistance is the theme of this winter issue. Of course, many MFA members already manage their woodlands and some have used one or more of the services highlighted within these pages. Many thanks to the foresters who wrote the articles for this issue. They are all busy people that took some time to share a bit about their part of the forestry profession.

Families, partners, and individuals own about 8.5 million acres of forest in Michigan. Those are parcels of at least ten acres. As an ownership definition, this block of forest is larger than both state and national forests, combined. Its importance to the life and economy of Michigan is immense. According to Bill Botti, MFA members own about a half-million acres but we represent a small fraction of the 200,000 owners.

There are many things to consider as a forest owner and, sometimes, the alternatives can become complicated. Even something seemingly simple as tree planting or a timber sale can be daunting. For instance, how is the tax man going to view timber sale revenue?

There are many reasons to own a piece of forest. Management works to serve those reasons. Nature alone, or benign neglect, seldom will. A lack of management leaves a forest more vulnerable to several forest health risks, not to mention a loss in revenue potential. A well-managed, vigorous forest is the best hedge against risk. Although, it is not a guarantee. Exotic pests are examples of serious game-changers.

Environments are always changing; economic, natural, and socio-cultural. Circumstances vary with geographical location, seasons, weather events, and many more factors. Then, there are a range of ownership goals and these, too, can change over time. Who will inherit or buy your forest? When? And, forests themselves can be complicated biological systems. Forestry is more than just growing or cutting a bunch of trees. Really.

Foresters are the experts in helping to pull all these pieces together for a forest owner. Skill sets will vary from forester to forester, so finding the right one might take a little time. That’s OK. We’re talking about a relationship that may last for decades. You can’t pick your family, but you can pick a forester, to borrow an old phrase.

It’s now mid-winter. There’s time to think about what kind of management might be good for you and your forest in 2015. Some of these programs have deadlines, eligibilities, and requirements. Others are less cyclic. Regardless, keep in mind that the responsibility for your forest is yours. Good forest management doesn’t need assistance programs, but a good forester can help you through the maze to learn what might fit.

And yes, that’s a snowbank in the background of my picture. I love snowy and cold winters. ♠
Greetings! By the time you read this the holidays will be over. I hope each of you had a blessed Christmas and hope your new year is full of promise. I know that from my perspective the MFA/MFF have a very bright future in 2015 and the years to come.

I’m going to keep my column short because we have so much material for this issue. It’s a nice problem to have and shows the progress we have made under the editorial leadership of Bill Cook.

Let me update you on the potential donation to the MFA/MFF of the wooded parcels by Forests For the Future. The reason the process is moving so slowly is that both parties have to understand all of the tax and legal implications for each party. We are in regular conversations and meetings to finalize the transaction. We have to be patient and realize important projects can take longer than we all would like.

The second important project consuming considerable time is our website update. It too is progressing and I’m convinced you will be very pleased when it is completed. It will have a very modern look and will make it very easy for anyone to join the association, pay dues, register for the annual meeting, make donations, and keep informed. I believe that it will allow non-members to learn much about sustainable forestry and hopefully they will join the MFA.

Enjoy our beautiful forests in their winter garb, and we will communicate again in my next column.

MICHIGAN FOREST FOUNDATION
BOARD OF DIRECTORS (12/16/14)
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ABOUT THE COVER:
A brave soul explores under the stalactite ice canopy at Tahquamenon Falls, which nearly froze completely across by February 2014.
The 2014 US Capitol Christmas Tree was an 88-foot, 88-year-old, 13,000-pound white spruce originally cut in Chippewa National Forest in Minnesota and then loaded onto a long trailer. Before finally making its way to Washington, D.C., the tree made a number of stops. One of stops was the East Lansing campus of MSU. At the request of Dr. Rich Kobe (Department of Forestry, Chair), the Wanigan forestry education trailer managed by the MFF was made available at the Capitol Christmas Tree event held in front of MSU Auditorium building. This was a star-studded event attended by Dr. Fred Poston (Dean of the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources), Senator Debbie Stabenow, and State Representative Tom Cochran. The last section of the trailer was constructed of see-through glass so that visitors could view the ornamented tree. Other activities targeted elementary school children (approximately 350 K-8 students visited) where they learned the fun basics of potting a tree seedling that they could take home with them. The graduate students in my lab (Kaelyn Finley and Christal Johnson) did an excellent job as Wanigan interpreters fielding forestry-related questions from the public. A number of individuals were very helpful in handling the logistics of moving the Wanigan trailer: Bill Botti, Peter Klink, Paul Bloese, Randy Klevickas, and Mary Slevin. Given the importance of the tree and visiting dignitaries, the event was under high security and received extensive media coverage. For further information and photos of this event, please check out this following web-link: http://statenews.com/gallery/u-s-capitol-christmas-tree.

The MFF board was successful in its search for another board member. I am excited to welcome Mike Smalligan who was unanimously confirmed onto the MFF Board of Directors at our December board meeting. Mike Smalligan is currently the Forest Stewardship Coordinator for the Michigan DNR. Prior to that, Mike has experience with his own forestry consulting company, and as a research assistant in the MSU Department of Forestry where he acquired a lot of international forestry experience. Mike is an MSU alumnus where he completed Master’s and Bachelor’s Degrees. On behalf of other board members, we are all excited to have him on-board and look forward to his insight on forestry issues.

I am happy to report recent funding decisions made at the December MFF board meeting. Ethan Bell who is a senior in the School of Forest Resources and Environment...
PRIVATE FOREST OWNER OPPORTUNITIES
By Rick A. Lucas, CF
CD Forester

With my last article, I made mention of revisiting the “Prime Timberlands” Project that was completed in 1982 but have since decided to go there another time. I’ve decided it’s timelier to revisit some of the current opportunities available to the private forest owner. In my opinion, these are exciting times for this ownership category. Last year’s revisions to the Qualified Forest Program (QFP) appear to have hit the mark in creating a more user-friendly incentive than the version it replaced. Along with those changes, came an increased need for management plans, technical assistance, referrals to private sector service providers, and visibility and responsibility of Michigan’s Conservation Districts.

Encouraging more private forest owners to develop a written management plan specific to their ownership objectives remains a high priority in the state. The percentage of private forest owners having and utilizing a written certified management plan to aid them in their management decisions remains relatively low. However, it’s expected that those numbers will look significantly different a couple years from now, due to increased participation in the QFP.

Management plans come in a few different shapes and forms. Some of the earliest plans written in the state came as a result of participation in the American Tree Farm Program. Later, the 1990 Farm Bill created the Forest Stewardship Program (FSP) and more recently, USDA’s Natural Resource Conservation Service created Conservation Activity Plans or CAP 106s. Landowners looking to participate in the QFP will need a certified plan prior to enrollment. All three of these programs can be utilized to meet that requirement once the plan has passed certification criteria. As one would expect, each plan has an associated preparation cost. Both the FSP and CAP plans provide cost-share assistance incentives. Interested participants should compare the requirements of each prior to making a final decision on which one they choose.

The latest environmental risk reduction assessment tool to enter the picture is the Forest*A*Syst Program or more properly identified as the Forest, Wetlands and Habitat*A*Syst. The associated acronym is FWH*A*Syst. The bill that led to the creation of this tool was one of several that passed into law in what was referred to as the package of forestry bills that went through the Legislature last year. The FWH*A*Syst took its first form and came to print in October of 2014 and will likely be in application by the time you read this article. In a nutshell, it will look to address the forest, wetland, and habitat risk reduction needs of any farmstead or other private ownership lands not covered by any other of the risk reduction categories covered in the Michigan Agriculture Environmental Assurance Program-verified systems. Risk question number one in the verification form asks: is the forest owner implementing a forest management plan? To meet the conformance level required for environmental assurance verification (MAEAP verification) a participant would, at a minimum, need to have an up-to-date forest management plan and be making a reasonable effort to follow the implementation schedule.

Among the many risk reduction questions, one major emphasis with the FWH*A*Syst tool will include dealing with exotic invasive species present. One has to look no further than present day status to see the impact invasives are having on our natural resources. Take a moment and try to imagine what things will look like in 20, 30, or 40 years from now if we don’t step up our game in the battle against invasives. Look for the FWH*A*Syst tool to hit the ground running in 2015.

Forestry Assistance Program (FAP) foresters and MAEAP Technicians will play major roles in implementing a portion of the FWH*A*Syst tool. On the FAP side of the equation, beginning 1 October 2014, twenty CD foresters are expected to be in place. They will be responsible for assisting approximately 50 CDs in the state with the delivery of numerous programs and technical assistance to private landowners, schools, and townships. The goal of the program remains to provide and increase the active management of non-industrial private forest (NIPF) landowner outreach and technical assistance through collaboration and cooperation. Additionally, the purpose of the program is to assist Conservation Districts in their efforts to help Michigan citizens better understand, plan, manage, protect, and utilize their forest resources. More FAP information can be found by “googling” Michigan Forestry Assistance Program. In addition, most of the CDs with FAP foresters now have a forestry page in their websites.

Lastly, all FAP programs are continually working to refine the referral process by which they (1) help identify the service needs of individual private forest owners, (2) discuss options for carrying out recommended needs, and (3) notify qualified private sector service providers of the opportunity to service the needs. Since this process was set in motion a couple years ago, the list of services requested by private forest owners continues to grow. Timber sale assistance, road construction contractors, tree care specialists, surveyors, tax preparers, estate planning, tree planters,

(See "At Your Service", p. 15)
MFA Report

by
BILL BOTTI
Executive Director

Christmas is fast approaching as I sit down to write this column. I am continually struck by people’s generosity - especially at this time of year. MFA and our Foundation have been on the receiving end of some of that generosity. Both have received gifts totaling thousands of dollars. It’s heartening and humbling at the same time. We are grateful for your gifts and for your confidence in us to provide worthwhile services to you and our forests. We hope and pray we don’t disappoint you.

The board of directors met at Hartwick Pines in November. Among other actions taken by the board was adoption of a budget for the coming year. It’s a little under $53,000; one long-time board member remarked that this is the largest budget in our history. (See the above paragraph.) Things we hope to accomplish this year include a teacher workshop at Higgins Lake in June, launch of a revised website, enhancement of the “wood chip” thumb drive with forestry information for MFA members and local field days. With many willing volunteers, we are able to accomplish quite a lot with a limited budget.

I mentioned local field days above. MFA board member and consulting forester Pete Klink is good at these. On November 1 Pete led a field day at a family farm near Vicksburg. This farm has a 25-acre stand of hard maple and beech and a small stand of squirrel-seeded walnut that shows promise. Pete has marked the maple stand for cutting that will take place this winter. He will host another field day in the spring so we can see what it looks like immediately after the cut. The owner, Gary Sherman, gave us a brief history of the Sherman family’s ownership of the property since the 1950s. Here are some of Mr. Sherman’s observations and closing thoughts:

• Owning a woodlot is not a “Static” proposition. You can’t pause the movie and preserve this asset as it is on a given date.

There are many moving parts that require constant attention.
• The marketplace is full of “wolves” waiting to take advantage of woodlot owner “sheep”.
• It is a great help in most cases to have a professional sounding-board and objective mentor when making woodlot decisions. Pete Klink has become a valued advisor to keep me focused on management practices that are consistent with my long-term objectives.
• I liked the results from horses log-skidding in two harvests. It left minimal footprint on paths and less damage to smaller trees surrounding harvested timber. Obviously it’s not a practical solution in many cases and injects another variable in the harvesting equation, but I liked the way the woods looked after using horses to retrieve logs.

Watch for the date of the spring visit to the Sherman woods. This will surely be a good time to talk about what they did and why they did it.

Two new board members will take office January 1. Kathy Worst, of Coldwater, is the executive director of the Branch County Conservation District. She is well versed in the needs and interests of landowners and, being the wife of a consulting forester, she understands much of the forestry business as well. Lisa Parker, of Lansing, is a professional forester working with the Clinton Trail Forestry Consultants in Eaton Rapids. Lisa, too, understands forests and forestry and landowner interests. We welcome both these ladies to the MFA board.

MFA will offer a week-long teacher workshop in June at the R.A.MacMullan conference center on Higgins Lake. We will put a more concerted effort into promotion this year. Tell your favorite teacher to look for this. Dates will be June 22 - 26, starting and ending with lunch.

Best wishes to all for a safe and happy holiday season. ♠

Michigan Forests, Winter 2015
NRCS Program Opportunities for Forest Owners
by Andy Henriksen

The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) has been working with private landowners since 1935 to improve soil and water quality, wildlife habitat, crop productivity, and address other related natural resources. Despite this rich history, many forest owners are not aware of the many opportunities for technical and financial assistance available through the NRCS. The following is an overview of some of the key programs that are currently available to forest owners.

 Conservation Technical Assistance (CTA)
CTA is the backbone of the NRCS mission: “Helping People Help the Land.” By working with the NRCS through the conservation planning process, landowners can better understand risks to soil, water, air, plant and animal resources, and learn of opportunities for improvement and to create a more sustainable environment.

Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)
The EQIP provides financial assistance to eligible landowners for a wide range of conservation practices to address natural resource problems. Available conservation practices include tree/shrub establishment, forest stand improvement, riparian forest buffers, various invasive species management practices, prescribed burning, and many more. Payment rates vary depending on the type of work required. For example, forest stand improvement rates range from $46 to $398.

Interested forest owners work with the NRCS to complete an EQIP application, which includes an assessment of the positive impacts of the proposed EQIP activities. Those with more significant natural resource improvement are prioritized for funding.

While most family forest owners can apply to the EQIP, there are a few eligibility requirements that must be met, including having a forest management plan prior to application. Eligible plans include current Tree Farm plans and Forest Stewardship plans.

Additionally, a special initiative is available, through EQIP itself, to help forest owners develop a forest management plan. These plans are written by NRCS-certified consulting foresters. These plan-only EQIP applications are automatically ranked as “high priority” with a very high likelihood of funding. Since this initiative started in 2009, over 1,000 landowners in Michigan have developed forest management plans through the EQIP.

The EQIP applications are accepted year-round, but funding selections are made at specific times. The next EQIP funding cut-off date is 20 February 2015.

Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)
The CSP provides annual payments to enrollees for 5 years, with the potential to re-enroll. Participants earn CSP payments for conservation performance, the higher the performance, the higher the payment.

Applicants must meet certain stewardship thresholds for at least two priority resource concerns at the time of application, and one additional priority resource concern at the end of the 5-year contract. On forest land in Michigan, these priorities are air quality, animals, plants, soil erosion, and water quality.

The CSP application dates for 2015 have not yet been announced but are expected soon, with a likely sign-up cutoff in late winter/early spring.

Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP)
The ACEP is new under the 2014 Farm Bill. It provides opportunities for landowners to develop conservation easements on their land. The NRCS provides technical and financial assistance to private landowners to restore, protect, and enhance wetlands through the purchase of a Wetland Reserve Easement (WRE). This program replaces the Wetlands Reserve Program from previous Farm Bills. These easements are available to owners of farmland containing converted wetlands that can be restored to the previous condition through alteration of hydrology and vegetation. Certain associated upland areas can also be enrolled in the ACEP-WRE program.

While many don’t think of a wetland restoration as a forestry practice, many of Michigan’s wetlands prior to European settlement were once forested, and WRE aims to restore them to their pre-settlement forested condition, where possible.

Landowners can select between a 30-year and a permanent conservation easement, with the latter providing a larger easement payment. Funds for restoration are also available.

The NRCS will be accepting ACEP applications through 6 April 2015.

Additional Information
With many programs available to Michigan landowners, knowing what’s best for a particular situation can be difficult. Fortunately, the NRCS has well over 100 field staff available in its 53 Michigan field offices to help landowners with programs and navigate the application process. The first step is scheduling an appointment with the local conservationist to find out what is the best fit with your ownership objectives and natural resource needs.

County NRCS offices can be found at www.mi.nrcs.usda.gov. From there, simply click on “Contact Us.” From the NRCS website, you can also follow links to more program information. Alternatively, you can call the NRCS State Office at 517-324-5270 to be directed to your local service center.

Andy Henriksen is the NRCS State Forester. As part of the Ecological Sciences Staff, he provides technical support and training to NRCS field staff and partners. ✪

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BASE CAMP
Forest area in Michigan ranks 9th in the nation with almost 20 million acres, covering 55 percent of the state. Public agencies manage 7 million acres. Corporations own about 3 million acres of forest land, mostly in the Upper Peninsula. However, Michigan’s 400,000 family forest owners are the largest group of forest owners with more than 9 million acres of forest land. Many family forest owners do not utilize professional foresters to help them manage their land. The Forest Stewardship Program seeks to connect professional forest managers with forest owners to help them identify and meet their personal forest goals.

The Forest Stewardship Program (FSP), started in 1991, is a partnership between the U.S. Forest Service (USFS), the Department of Natural Resources (DNR), and consulting foresters to offer professional planning and technical assistance to forest landowners. The FSP helps forest owners to develop and implement a Forest Stewardship Plan. Most forest owners participating in the program have forests between 40 and 80 acres. More than 5,000 landowners in Michigan have used a Forest Stewardship Plan to help them manage, protect, and enjoy their forest.

Each Forest Stewardship Plan is custom-made for the forest owners and their forest resources. DNR Service Foresters train private sector foresters and wildlife biologists to write Forest Stewardship Plans yet, comprehensive plan. There are 80 certified plan-writers covering every county in Michigan. The DNR Service Foresters review Forest Stewardship Plans to ensure that the plans meet program standards.

The Michigan FSP also provides financial assistance to lower the cost of a Forest Stewardship Plan. Partial cost-share ($200 per plan plus $0.50 per acre up to $2,500) is available throughout the year. The cost-share is paid through grants to the certified plan-writers to minimize the application and payment process for landowners. Fees for developing a Forest Stewardship Plan vary among plan-writers. Forest owners should contact two or three plan-writers about their fees, common plan contents, their management philosophy, and time schedule.

The process for developing a Forest Stewardship Plan is simple, but may take a few months. Call a DNR Service Forester for a list of plan-writers who work in your county. After you hire your selected plan-writer, fill out the short application form with your plan-writer, who will send the form to the DNR. After a discussion about your forest goals, preferably while walking through your forest together, the plan-writer will do an assessment to gather additional information about your forest. When ready, read over the draft plan, ask lots of questions, and suggest modifications. When both you and your plan-writer are satisfied with your Forest Stewardship Plan, the plan-writer will submit it to the DNR for review and approval. After your plan is approved, the DNR will pay the cost-share payment to the plan-writer. At the end of the year, the DNR will send you a “Stewardship Forest” sign.

Investing in a Forest Stewardship Plan produces both economic and ecological benefits. You may use your plan to help meet requirements for either the Commercial Forest Program or the Qualified Forest Program to lower your property taxes. Note that the property tax law programs require that forest owners comply with their forest management plan in exchange for a reduced property tax. The U.S. Natural Resources Conservation Service also accepts Forest Stewardship Plans when a forest owner applies for financial assistance for certain conservation practices recommended in the plan. You could also use your Forest Stewardship Plan to enroll in the American Tree Farm System to certify the sustainable management of your forest land. These plans also guide timber harvesting in a sustainable manner, improve the condition of your forest, and optimize current and future income.

Municipal forest owners (schools, counties, townships) and other private groups may be eligible for an Outreach and Education grant to develop a Forest Stewardship Plan or a Demonstration Project. These grants are for public land or land open to the public and must include educational opportunities for private landowners.

For more information, please contact a nearby DNR Service Forester or the Forest Stewardship Coordinator. A sample Forest Stewardship Plan is available on the Program website at www.michigan.gov/foreststewardship.

**DNR Service Foresters**

Western Upper Peninsula - Gary Willis, Baraga, (906) 353 - 6651, willisp2@michigan.gov

Eastern Upper Peninsula - Ernie Houghton, Escanaba, (906) 786 - 2351, houghtone@michigan.gov

Northern Lower Peninsula - Mike Hanley, Haslet, (517) 243 - 2028, hanleyvm@michigan.gov

**DNR Forest Stewardship Coordinator**

Southern Lower Peninsula - Mike Smalligan, Lansing, (517) 284-5884, smalliganm@michigan.gov

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**Acreage Classes for Forest Stewardship Plans**

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*Michigan Forests, Winter 2015*
Conservation Easements:
A Long-term Approach to Caring for Your Land
Mike Mang

You have seen it all over. You’ve seen it on the outskirts of cities. You’ve seen it on the outskirts of small towns. You’ve seen it on farmlands. You’ve seen land transformed from a more rural use to an urban use. Such transformation is often justified and, indeed, good. Businesses are expanding, employment is increasing, and communities are growing. But where that expansion happens is key.

If not properly sited, such expansion can greatly impact rural economies, rural ways of life, management of forests for timber, scenic and hunting recreation, and the habitats of forest-dependent species like ovenbirds and scarlet tanagers, and large home-range species like bears, wolves, and bobcats. Expansion of homesites into the woods can bring additional noise, pollution, avenues for invasive species as well as disruption of the functioning of more natural ecosystem processes.

As a member of MFA your land is important to you. Maybe it has been in the family for several generations. Maybe it was recently acquired. You use your land for hunting, for bird-watching, for timber management, for solitude. Deer camp is a time for rejuvenating friendships and telling stories of hunts past. Walks along the trails are opportunities to thrill at the sight of a pileated woodpecker, or the shout of a hawk, or to interpret tracks in the snow, or marvel at how well new growth is responding to the timber sale you had five years ago.

Sometimes these thoughts are conscious but, rather, they might manifest themselves in only an inner satisfaction and quiet appreciation of the land. Your land is important to you and your family, but it is also important in the broader picture where it serves to provide habitat, usually in conjunction with the surrounding landscape. Meanwhile loss of manageable wild spaces through ownership parcelization continues.

Then it hits you. Your life is not forever. You’ve seen many changes in your lifetime. The farm down the road is now a strip mall, the “eighty” a mile away was cut into five and ten acre chunks, each with its own new house. What fate awaits your forestland and what legacy do you want to leave? Our time here is a mere blink of the eye. Yet the land will remain. What will it be like?

The land has been good to you. It has brought pleasure and perhaps a little revenue. In a somewhat natural state, it functions without excessive impediments. You would like that to be your legacy, no matter who may own the property in the future. A conservation easement on your land is one method of ensuring that it will remain intact. Conservation easements can ensure protection of land values. They do this primarily through limiting parcelization of the land.

What are conservation easements? What do they allow a landowner to do and not do?

A conservation easement is a recorded document and runs with the title for the land. They are usually donated to a land conservancy or local unit of government, which has legal responsibility to hold or own conservation easements for the purpose of protecting specified conservation values.

In talking with many landowners, the preservation of forest, farm, or landscape is the driving influence behind placing a conservation easement on their land. These easements are tools used to permanently conserve land on private ownership. Landowners (and future landowners) must abide by the wording of the easement. Otherwise, owners have full use of their property, including occupancy and restriction of use or entry by others. Owners may pass land on to heirs or sell it to others.

Easements are negotiated documents. Each parcel of land is unique. Each potential donor is unique. While certain activities are strictly prohibited (let’s say open mining as an example) others reflect the desires of the owner and the impact of a certain use on that particular landscape. For example, use by ATVs may be appropriate on trails on one ownership, but not on another.

Depending on size of the parcel and desires of the easement donor, building envelopes can be specified in an easement. These are small, size-specified sites where a house or cabin currently exists, or sites the donor may want to reserve for future building.

Conservation easements are not “set-asides”. In most cases, they allow landowners to manage for timber or wildlife through management plans written by a professional forester or wildlife biologist.

Easement donors may qualify for certain tax benefits with the IRS, depending on the donor’s particular circumstance. Under current Michigan law, a buyer of property with a conservation easement is exempt from the “pop-up” property tax increase, potentially saving the buyer considerable money in the years to come.

Landowners interested in learning more about conservation easements should contact the local regional land conservancy serving the area where their property is located. Many areas are served by more than one conservancy. See http://www.heartofthelakes.org for maps and contact information.

Mike Mang is a retired DNR forester and MFA member. Since retirement he has been a volunteer with the HeadWaters Land Conservancy headquartered in Gaylord, serving on its Land Protection Committee and Board of Directors. ♠

MICHIGAN TREE FARM PROGRAM
Scott Robbins
The American Tree Farm System® (ATFS) is a national program sponsored by the American Forest Foundation, a 501c3 non-profit organization promoting the sustainable management of forests through education and outreach to private forest owners. Founded in 1941, ATFS is the oldest and largest forest conservation, certification, and advocacy program in the United States. America’s Tree Farmers are committed to excellence in forest stewardship. For more information, visit ATFS at www.treefarm.org. (See "Michigan Tree Farm", p. 16)
Climate Change, Snow and the Subnivium

Jonathan N. Pauli and Benjamin Zuckerberg
Department of Forest and Wildlife Ecology, University of Wisconsin-Madison

There is little doubt – the climate is changing rapidly from human activities. Over the past century, global mean surface temperatures have increased by nearly 1°C, and within the United States, much of this increase has occurred in the last 25 years. Such continental and global temperature trends are often reported and discussed, but they ignore important geographic and seasonal differences of climate change. One striking example is in the warming of inland areas at northerly latitudes, especially during the winter and spring. The impact of climate change is predicted to be particularly strong in the Great Lakes Region, where snow has, at least historically, been a seasonally important feature.

Winter warming has already altered the snow season in many areas. Widespread reductions in snow depth have been observed throughout Canada and the United States, many of these at the tail-end of winter. Since 1970, North American snow cover has declined by about 200 million acres per decade for the months of March and April.

The duration of the snow season has declined by over five days per decade since the 1970s. Because the greatest loss in snow cover has been in spring, the month of maximum snow cover has shifted from February to January, and spring melt is occurring almost two weeks earlier. In parts of the Great Lakes Region, the snow season is projected to be more than 1.5 months shorter by the end of this century.

The portion of annual precipitation that falls as snow is declining, and overall density of the snowpack is likely to increase. In general, modern climate change has reduced the extent and duration of the snowpack.

Underneath the snow lies a winter refuge, the subnivium (sub = below, nivi = snow), which provides predictably warmer and more stable conditions for a host of organisms. The subnivium is formed by a water transport system, in which warm air rising from the soil melts the snow and carries the water vapor vertically into the snowpack, creating a loose granular base layer at the soil-snow interface. Under a blanket of deep and low-density snow, the subnivium is well-insulated by the snowpack and temperatures are warmer and more stable than ambient ones. Because of these less hostile conditions, a diverse community of organisms – microbes, freeze-tolerant invertebrates and frogs and reptiles, hibernating mammals, foraging furbearers, and upland fowl – depend on the subnivium for overwintering.

A range of ecological activities also play out in the subnivium, with photosynthesis occurring among winter-adapted plants, and high rates of microbial activity. Reduced insulation of the snowpack because of shallower, late arriving, and denser snow cover are predicted to create a colder and more fragile subnivium. Some of this has already been observed. As winter air temperatures have increased in parts of the United States, soil temperatures have decreased. The number of freeze-thaw cycles at the soil surface is predicted to increase during winter.

Altered snow conditions can have important implications for wildlife that make a living on the snow surface. For example, a shorter snow season has created problems for some animals, like the snowshoe hare that changes their winter fur to white. With shorter snow seasons, there are more mismatches between fur color and background color. A white hare on a brown forest floor has strong implications for their vulnerability to predation.

For other wildlife, changing winters have created new opportunities. For example, some large-bodied wildlife with relatively small feet, such as deer or coyotes, will follow shallow, dense, and compacted snow more often, and for longer distances. Increasingly dense and shallow snow could contribute to range expansion of some of these species, especially coyotes, because they can move into previously inaccessible snowy environments.

For species that are specially adapted to warm and stable subnivium conditions, increasingly variable conditions could simply exceed their physiological capacity. For example yellow-cedar has been in decline across the coastal rain forest of the Pacific Northwest since the late 1800s. Research has revealed that the loss of this valuable tree is caused by warming climates, reduced snowpack, and increasingly variable subnivium temperatures that damage the relatively shallow root system. Similarly, declines in the small mammal (mice and voles) prey base, and the erosion of prey cycling, have been linked to subnivium changes due to warming winter conditions.

The subnivium provides a thermally stable seasonal refugium for a diversity of wildlife. Yet, its quality is being diminished because warming winters are changing the depth, duration, density, and extent of the snow season. This widespread loss of a traditionally normal winter environment represents one of the most overlooked sources of habitat destruction in the Northern Hemisphere. We are just now beginning to acknowledge the impact that changing
A consulting forester is a degreed and trained professional forester that independently provides a wide range of forestry services (for a fee) to private landowners, land managers, industry, and governmental agencies. In addition, many of them provide forestry services for financial, legal, and accounting professionals associated with property management.

Consulting foresters are qualified professionals that work for the best interest of the client. Some of the basic principles and credentials are a Bachelor of Science (B.S.) degree (or higher) in forestry from an accredited university program, are typically active members in one or more professional organizations that are dedicated to the practice of forestry, are often professionally certified, licensed, and/or registered (requirements vary by the state), and are not engaged in the buying (procurement) of timber products. It is important to note that while some sawmills, paper mills, and loggers employ experienced and reputable professional foresters to procure timber, those foresters are not “consulting foresters” as they represent their employer and not the landowner.

Consulting foresters are often overlooked in Michigan. They are not funded through tax dollars and their work is often the result of client/colleague referrals rather than major marketing campaigns. There are approximately 120 consulting foresters in Michigan. Consulting forestry firms typically range in size from 1 to 8 foresters and may also employ part-time or seasonal foresters/forestry interns.

Some of the common services provided by consulting foresters include: forest management plan preparation, timber sale assistance, general forestry consultation, forest inventories and appraisals, timber marking/timber stand improvement marking (TSI), GPS/GIS mapping, timber trespass assistance/expert witness testimony, timber tax assistance, property inspection services, staff training programs, urban forestry assistance, tree planting, forestland real estate, habitat management, and road and trail layout. While the actual services that each consulting forester provides varies by the company, forest management plan preparation and timber sale assistance are the most commonly provided services.

A 2012 survey of consulting foresters in Michigan showed that, in 2011, consulting foresters serviced a total of 2,750 landowners, completed a total of 540 forest management plans that covered 202,930 acres, and provided timber sale assistance to 1,250 landowners that totaled 60,480 acres. In addition to private landowner assistance, consulting foresters also provide timber sale, forest inventory, and forest research assistance to the MDNR and US Forest Service.

The fee structure of consulting forester services varies depending on the type and scope of the project. Projects may be billed by the project, the acreage, hourly, or on a commission in the case of timber sale assistance. It is important that the landowner understands what services will be provided by the consulting forester and the fee structure. The details of the services provided and fee structure should be included in a written contract. Sometimes, there are grants available for landowners to help offset consulting forester fees. There are often debates within the profession regarding pricing structures. However, in the end it comes down to choosing a consulting forester that will best fit your forestry needs.

Research from a number of states shows that landowners that hire a consulting forester to assist with timber sales receive higher timber sale returns, are left with higher quality and more valuable residual stands, and have less environmental damage than landowners that do not hire consulting foresters. The consultant’s fee is frequently more than offset by these higher values. The consulting forester will have experience with preparing contracts, ensuring payment for timber products, acceptable harvesting practices/results, and choosing reputable loggers.

There are several forestry, natural resource, and sportsman organizations that consulting foresters may be affiliated with. Two of the most common and respected professional organizations, with missions of the advancing of the forestry profession, are the Society of American Foresters (SAF) and the Association of Consulting Foresters (ACF). Consulting foresters providing urban forestry services may be members of the International Society of Arboriculture (ISA) and/or the Arboriculture Society of Michigan.

SAF has a rigorous Certified Forester (CF) program and ACF has rigorous membership standards. The ISA has its own Certified Arborist certification. Michigan also has a Registered Forester (RF) designation.

(See "Consulting Foresters", p. 18)
Although the price of fuel has temporarily dropped, the cost of most everything else has not. That causes some folks to look for bargains. For a private forest owner, property tax reductions from the Qualified Forest Program (QFP) or the Commercial Forest Program (CFP) might be a bargain of interest.

To begin with, it is helpful to understand why these programs were enacted by the state legislature. The rules and qualifications may be easier to comprehend.

In 1925, the Commercial Forest Act was crafted to help ensure long-term timber production and public access for hunting and fishing. There have been modifications to the act since that time. In 2006, the legislature enacted the Qualified Forest Program which was designed to treat forestland similarly to agricultural land. Both programs are intended to help ensure the sustainable flow of wood products from private forestland.

If you pay property taxes on forestland that is not your primary residence and has no other tax exemption on it, you might qualify for the CFP or QFP. Like any program, the more you are willing to surrender, the bigger the reduction in taxes.

Forest that qualifies for the CFP has the greatest tax reduction by removing the land from the ad valorem tax rolls. The landowner pays a specific annual tax to the township, which the state matches from the general fund. Currently, that tax rate is $1.25 per acre per year.

Requirements for the CFP include: property must be 40 acres or larger, public foot access for hunting and fishing must be maintained, buildings or structures (other than those used exclusively for forest management) are not allowed, and a certified forest management plan must be in place. There are a few prohibitions; such as the land cannot be used for agriculture, Christmas tree production, grazing, commercial purposes, or developed recreation. It is important to note that permanent hunting blinds are considered prohibited structures under the CFP.

Timber harvesting according to the management plan is required, with prior notification to the DNR. This gives them time to verify that the harvest matches the plan.

Rules for the QFP are not as restrictive as the CFP but the tax reduction is less. Enrolled property is exempt from the school operating millage (up to 18 mills) and the taxable value remains capped with an ownership change.

QFP eligibility varies with the number of parcel acres. For 20 to 39.9 acres, the parcel must be 80% stocked with timber. Parcels that are 40 to 640 acres must maintain 50% stocking. An owner may have up to 640 acres per taxing unit but there is no limit on the number of taxing units in which you can enroll. For instance, you might have property that spans two or more townships. You can enroll up to 640 acres in each township (taxing unit). While you can combine parcels up to 640 acres, each parcel must individually meet eligibility requirements.

A certified forest management plan is also required for the QFP. Forest management practices must be completed within three years according to the plan schedule. Once the harvest has occurred, it must be reported to the Department of Agriculture & Rural Development (MDARD). The QFP also differs from the CFP in that public access is not required and structures are allowed but receive no tax reduction.

These programs have helped some folks during tough economic situations. Before you enroll however, it is important to know what you’re getting into. There are commitments. Enrollments are intended to last forever. Penalties for withdrawal exist in both programs.

(See "Looking for a Bargain", p. 15)
Hi,

I read your article with interest. [Newspaper article about the role of forest industry in forest health] I sort of have the opposite problem of what you describe. We have about 4 acres of planted conifer woods, planted in the 1950s and 1960s. All of it is made up of non-native Austrian and Scots pines and some Colorado spruces. Worried about all the problems affecting the non-native conifers, we hired a forester to come consult with us. He said that our trees were mostly in good health, however, it would be beneficial to thin them.

He told us that he had had no luck in trying to get logging companies to come to thin other woodlands, e.g. the University of Michigan’s Saginaw Forest. So, since then I have asked local tree guys and even emailed all the timber home builders in the state that I could locate on-line. They have all said the same thing. It is not worth their expense and effort to come take conifers (even if they are free). A man who buys timber told me that if our land was in northern Michigan (we are near Chelsea), we might be able to sell to pulp buyers. The price for that is so low that it is simply not cost effective to cut the wood here and take it there.

So, we could certainly pay someone to thin the woods for us, but we haven’t won the lottery yet. So, that isn’t going to happen.

Anyway, I just thought I would present the other side. We’d love to cut those trees!

Susan

Hello Susan;

What you describe is common in southern Michigan, largely due to the lack of diversity in the forest industry. You have first-hand experience in understanding that a healthy forest is directly related to a healthy forest industry. This is counter-intuitive to many. There is, indeed, a lack of markets for low quality forest products, which makes management nearly impossible. If there are wood biomass boilers within about 25 miles of your woods, you might find a chipper contractor to take the trees. One more reason to advocate for wood-chip biomass district energy facilities.

Thanks for writing!

Cheers,

Bill

CONSERVATION DISTRICTS DELIVER

Steve Shine

The Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (MDARD), working through Michigan’s local conservation districts, delivers assistance to private forest owners. Michigan’s forest resource is vast, 20 million acres and nearly 50% of it is owned by private forest owners.

The Forestry Assistance Program (FAP) has been developed in response to the need to engage private forest owners in active management of their forest resource. The program is designed to place technical assistance (foresters) in field offices in counties that have significant private forest acreages.

Each forester works closely with the private sector in their service area: consulting foresters, procurement foresters, loggers, sawmills, wildlife organizations, and private forest owners. Each forester assembles an advisory committee, which helps develop an annual plan of work and set goals. FAP foresters host a variety of workshops and field days of interest to forest owners. These events highlight the value of sound forest management and create the foundation of a relationship in the community.

The FAP foresters are available for site visits. These visits allow for a conversation with the forest owner to help distill forest goals and establish some objectives to meet those goals. The FAP forester is tasked with helping the forest owner make connections to the appropriate resources in the public or private sector. Each forester has developed a referral system. The system utilizes websites and email.

Currently, the program funds 20 foresters covering 49 counties across the state. The foresters have hosted nearly 300 workshops and field days on a wide variety of topics. They have been well received by forest owners and have generated the opportunity for many individual site visits. During the last program year, over 1,800 site visits were completed. These site visits generated over 1,800 referrals for projects; everything from management plans to timber harvests. During the 2014 program year, over $6.0 million of projects were referred for action.

Would you consider a tax incentive to encourage the active management of your forestland? The Qualified Forest Program (QFP) was recently amended to make it more attractive for enrollment. Eligible forest property can receive a 16 mill reduction on property taxes for agreeing to actively manage the forest and follow an approved forest management plan. Contact your local conservation district through www.macd.org. Additional FAP information can be found at www.michigan.gov/mifap.

Finally, the FAP has developed a relationship with the Michigan Tree Farm and the Michigan Agriculture Environmental Districts Deliver (See "Conservation District", p. 16)
**LOOKING FOR A BARGAIN**  
Continued from page 13.

A side-by-side comparison of the two programs can be found at [www.oscodacdc.org](http://www.oscodacdc.org) on the forestry page. Don’t forget that Conservation District foresters can help with enrollment information.

To find a Forestry Assistance Program forester call 517-284-5607 or visit [www.michigan.gov/MIFAP](http://www.michigan.gov/MIFAP).

Shirley Businski is the Commercial Forest Program Leader for the DNR-Forest Resources Division and can provide guidance about CFP enrollment. You can contact her at 517-284-5849 or businski@ inhibis@michigan.gov. The DNR maintains CFP information on the web at [www.michigan.gov/QFP](http://www.michigan.gov/QFP).

The MDARD maintains QFP information, applications, and forms at [www.michigan.gov/QFP](http://www.michigan.gov/QFP). I highly recommend reading the frequently-asked-questions to better understand the eligibilities, benefits, and withdrawal penalties. Scott Zeeb can help you with QFP questions at 517-284-5630 or zeebs@michigan.gov.

Lora Freer is a Forestry Assistance Program forester for the Ogemaw & Osoda Conservation Districts, with an office in Mio. Lora has been providing forestry assistance since 1996.

**AT YOUR SERVICE**  
Continued from page 6.

plan writers, and legal assistance are just a few of the services requested.

If you own property in a county currently covered by an FAP forester, and you are having trouble locating a service provider to meet your needs, contact the local CD forester. She/he will be more than happy to assist you in locating a qualified service provider to get the project done.

**CLIMATE CHANGE**  
Continued from page 11.

winter conditions will have. However, management strategies aimed at mitigating these consequences have been largely ignored. Conservation needs to be implemented at local scales. Maintaining snow cover can be encouraged through forest management practices and the careful planning of winter recreational activities. Although there is much we don’t know about how these activities impact the subnivium, it is clear that land use changes resulting in fragmented forests can alter the microclimates necessary for maintenance of snow cover. Great Lakes region projections are characterized by shorter and more variable winters. Natural resource managers and landowners need to begin conversations about practices that can protect and maintain sensitive winter environments.

### A Comparison of the Commercial Forest Program and the Qualified Forest Program

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>COMMERCIAL FOREST PROGRAM</strong></th>
<th><strong>QUALIFIED FOREST PROGRAM</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Maximum Acreage</strong></td>
<td><strong>Maximum Acreage</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No maximum acres.</td>
<td>Up to 640 acres per ownership tax unit (township)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Minimum Acreage</strong></td>
<td><strong>Minimum Acreage</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Must be at least 40 contiguous acres; At least 50% productive acres; Of the productive acres, at least 75% stocked</td>
<td>Must be at least 20 acres.  When 20 to 39.9 acres, 80% stocked in productive forest. When 40 to 640 acres, 50% stocked in productive forest. (Productive forest is defined as forestland that can produce 20 cubic feet per acre per year.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Forest Management Plan Required</strong></td>
<td><strong>Forest Management Plan Required</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plan must be written by a Registered Forester or a natural resource professional recognized by the DNR. Plan must prescribe measures to optimize production, utilization and regeneration of forest resources. Plan must describe the objectives of the landowner and be appropriate for the forest cover types.</td>
<td>Plan must be written by a “Qualified Forester” registered with MDARD. Plan must include measures to optimize production, utilization and regeneration of forest resources.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Application Deadline</strong></td>
<td><strong>Application Deadline</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 1 for benefits in the following tax year.</td>
<td>September 1 for benefits in the following year.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Application Fee</strong></td>
<td><strong>Application Fee</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$50.00 per Forest Management Plan</td>
<td>$50.00 per Forestry Assistance Program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tax Benefits</strong></td>
<td><strong>Tax Benefits</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Exempt from ad valorem general property tax.</td>
<td>1. Exempt from up to 18 mills of the local school operation tax: see fee to participate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Landowner pays a specific tax to the township annually (currently $1.25/acre/year).</td>
<td>2. Taxable value remains capped.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. State of Michigan annually pays an amount equal to the specific tax rate to the County Treasurers on behalf of the landowner. Payment is from the state’s general fund.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Repayment Upon Withdrawal</strong></td>
<td><strong>Repayment Upon Withdrawal</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A withdrawal penalty must be paid to the Township Treasurer upon withdrawal from the program. The DNR calculates the withdrawal penalty based on the formula in the CF statute. The following factors are multiplied to determine the penalty amount: a) average land value for the county, b) average county millage rate c) a county factor (in statute), d) the number of years in CF (maximum of 7), e) number of acres withdrawn, f) b) average county millage rate times c) a county factor times d) the number of years in CF. If the withdrawal penalty is $50,000 or less, the repayment is multiplied by 2. If the withdrawal penalty is over $50,000, the repayment is multiplied by 7.</td>
<td>1. From the School Tax Affidavit. If a school tax affidavit was executed and the land is removed from the program due to a change in use, the landowner would repay up to 16 mills, depending on the mills exempted under the program, times 7 years. If a harvest has not occurred the repayment is multiplied by 2. 2. Repayment Upon Release from the program. “Release” means the landowner would repay the amount of taxes they would have paid had the taxable value not remained capped for up to the previous 10 years.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Notification of Harvests</strong></td>
<td><strong>Notification of Harvests</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The landowner must notify the DNR at least 30 days prior to the start of any harvesting activity.</td>
<td>The landowner must report to MDARD any forest management practices and harvests at the end of the year that they occur.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Program Administration</strong></td>
<td><strong>Program Administration</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michigan Department of Natural Resources 1. New List Applications</td>
<td>Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development 1. Enrollment applications and Forest Management Plans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Withdrawal Applications</td>
<td>2. Tax Affidavit preparation for approved applications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Ownership Changes</td>
<td>3. Monitoring scheduled forest management practices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Compliance with statute including management plans, harvest notifications and public access</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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TIES AND TAXES

Timber sale taxes and inheritance issues are aspects of forest ownership that frequently aren’t thought about until late in the game. For many, thinking and acting ahead of time can make these processes both easier and cheaper. Professional financial advice is always a good idea.

Timber Sale Income Taxes

The federal government has special rules and forms that apply to timber sale income. Following the protocols can save forest owners a substantial amount of money. You’ll want to obtain “Form T”, most easily found on-line.

First, filing as capital gains rather than ordinary income can make huge difference, assuming the sale is eligible for capital gains.

Second, knowing the value of the timber on the land, at the time of acquisition, is called the “timber basis”. All or part of that basis value can be subtracted from the gross timber sale income, depending upon what proportion of the standing timber was harvested.

Lastly, any expenses incurred for the timber sale are deductible. Questionable expenses are best run past a tax accountant that is familiar with the treatment of timber sale income. A good website for information is https://www.timbertax.org.

Family Forest Succession

For family owned forests, the issues surrounding inheritance, or succession, can be difficult to talk about. However, it’s best to start the discussion early, with the family. Who will inherit? Or, buy? Family? Friends? Associates? Equal among family members isn’t always fair. How do different family members value the forest? Who will make management decisions? Often, engaging younger family members earlier will help keep the forest intact and keep it in the family working as a family resource.

There are a variety of transfer “vehicles” to consider; trusts, conservation easements, LLCs, corporations, wills, joint ownerships, partnerships, etc. Making the correct choices for the family best comes after family discussion, goal setting, and decision-making. Here is where engaging a financial advisor can help.

The most common route for forest disposal is probate, parcelization, sale, and cash distribution. Across the United States, millions of acres are facing ownership changes over the next decade. Unfortunately, most of that land will follow the usual route. These are not only diminished family resources, but parcelization also tends to result in forest fragmentation, reduced ecological services, less management potential, and increased economic stressors.

The national “Ties to the Land” program addresses these forest succession issues and has been offered several times around Michigan. More information can be found at http://tiestotheplanet.org/.

CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Assurance Program (MAEAP). An assessment tool has been developed by a diverse group of resource professionals to evaluate the condition of the forest, wetland, and habitat resource on individual ownerships. Essentially, the assessment tool asks; “What do you have?”, “What is its condition?”, “What do you want to do with it,” and “What programs are out there to help achieve the objective”? The tool is known as the Forest, Wetlands, and Habitat (A*Syst or FWH*A*Syst). A forest owner completing the assessment and addressing all required issues will receive recognition in their community.

Who will be your heirs?

Who will be your heirs? That is a question that most people don’t think about until it’s too late. The most common route for forest disposal is probate, parcelization, sale, and cash distribution. Across the United States, millions of acres are facing ownership changes over the next decade. Unfortunately, most of that land will follow the usual route. These are not only diminished family resources, but parcelization also tends to result in forest fragmentation, reduced ecological services, less management potential, and increased economic stressors.

The national “Ties to the Land” program addresses these forest succession issues and has been offered several times around Michigan. More information can be found at http://tiestotheplanet.org/.

Tree Farm Requirements

1) Own a minimum of 10 contiguous acres and not more than 10,000 acres.
2) Non-industrial private forest land with manageable forest species growing and capable of producing timber crops.
3) Property must be inspected and certified by a Tree Farm Inspector (professional foresters including industry foresters, Conservation District foresters, and consulting foresters). The Forest Stewardship Plan Writer may also be a Tree Farm Inspector, but please contact Tree Farm for a list of Inspecting Foresters in your area. A Tree Farm Inspector will then visit with you on your property to see if you, your plan, your activities, and your forest meet the eight Standards of Sustainability (www.treefarmsystem.org/standards-for-tree-farm-certification). They will fill out an inspection report form that indicates whether or not your land qualifies as a certified Tree Farm.
4) Must have a current written forest management plan that meets the ATFS standards. Please bring your Forest Stewardship Plan with you to show the Inspecting Forester during your Tree Farm Inspection.
5) Once approved, you will receive a certificate, a Tree Farm sign that you can display (note that the sign always remains the property of the American Tree Farm System), and one free issue of the Tree Farm magazine. You are always welcome and invited to attend Tree Farm meetings and workshops held throughout Michigan.
6) The property will be re-inspected periodically to ensure conformance to the ATFS standards. This usually occurs every five years, but may occur more frequently if your forest is randomly selected for inspection.

Tree Farm Advantages

Throughout this publication are advertisements for various products and services. While we hold our advertisers in high regard, we cannot, and do not, guarantee customer satisfaction.
We willingly subject ourselves to some very studious oversight. As a leading producer of lightweight and ultra-lightweight coated papers, Verso and environmentally sound practices extends throughout the procurement, manufacturing and reclamation processes. Participation in Tree Farm demonstrates active management. The property may be eligible for certain federal income tax deductions. Please consult with your income tax professional. Participation in Tree Farm does not provide a property tax reduction but the State of Michigan does offer the Qualified Forest Program and the Commercial Forest Program (described in an article by Lora Freer).

Scott Robbins, long-time forester, is the Michigan Tree Farm Committee Administrator. He can contacted at either 517-853-8880 (office) or 906-250-5027 (cell). ♣

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As a leading producer of lightweight and ultra-lightweight coated papers, Verso’s commitment to sustainability and environmentally sound practices extends throughout the procurement, manufacturing and reclamation processes. We work diligently with concerned environmental groups, landowners and loggers to develop and implement methods of properly managing our renewable forests. On the other end, we help divert used paper from landfills by supporting coated paper recycling programs in a number of municipalities across the nation. We recognize and embrace our social and economic obligation – as an employer, as a critical link in the information chain, and as a trusted steward of the bountiful natural resources our customers rely on. Not because someone might be watching, but because it’s the right thing to do.

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Email: timbermen1972@gmail.com
ignation which has undergone scrutiny in recent years and is expected to be modified in the upcoming year. The education and experience requirements vary for each of the certifications/registrations, and continuing education credits may or may not be required. However, each of the certifications/registrations include high ethical standards.

Additional information on SAF can be found at: www.safnet.org. Additional information on ACF and a list of ACF members can be found at: www.acf-foresters.org.

Paul Drysdale is owner of Drysdale Forestry & Consulting in Cadillac and current president (2014-2016) of the Michigan Chapter of the Association of Consulting Foresters (MACF).

**MFA NEW MEMBERS**
John Genord, Chester
Rick Heuvelman, Wyoming
Roy Hivala, Escanaba
Terry Calhoun, Ann Arbor
Bill Ziegler, Crystal
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**EVERGREENS**

<table>
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<th>NORWAY SPRUCE</th>
<th>Age</th>
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<td>8-12&quot; Seedlings</td>
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<td>83.00</td>
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<td>16-24&quot; Transplants</td>
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<td>75.00</td>
<td>500.00</td>
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