

Kickapoo Sustainable Post

Newsletter of the Kickapoo Woods Cooperative

Aliens in the Forest

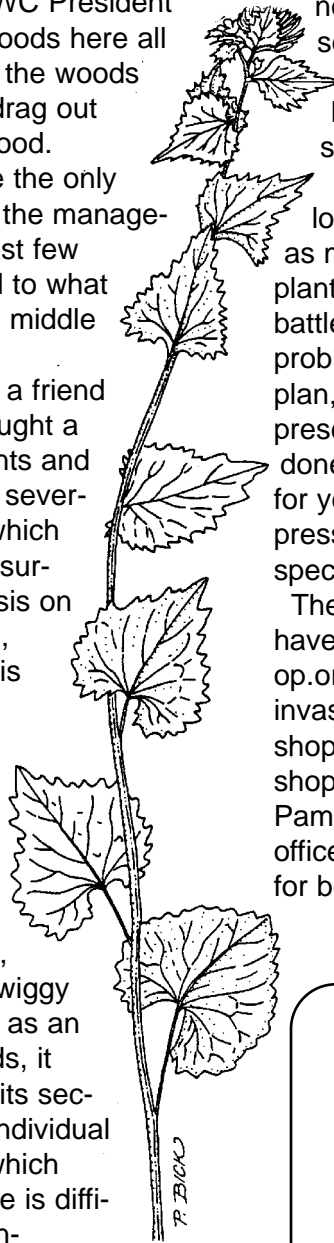
Invasive Species in the Midwest

by Ben Hansen, KWC President

I have been walking around in the woods here all my life. My first memories of being in the woods were out with my Dad, watching him drag out dead trees and left over tops for firewood. Logging and firewood harvesting were the only things that we had to think about with the management of the woodlot then. Over the last few years, I have become more sensitized to what is happening out there. We are in the middle of an alien invasion.

Several days ago, I was speaking to a friend who lives in town, as they had just bought a house, they were thinking of what plants and trees to put in their yard. I suggested several species as good yard candidates, which were also native species. They were surprised that I would place such emphasis on selecting native plants for a town yard, and asked what possible difference this could make. They were probably surprised when I responded that while plants and trees stay where they are planted, their seeds do not.

The red maple in my woodlot today is a descendant of a yard tree, and is competing with my hard maple. The honeysuckle bush was an ornamental, now it flows through the forest like a twigggy waterfall. Garlic mustard was planted as an herb in gardens, when it hits the woods, it becomes a solid blanket of green. In its second year, it shoots a seed stalk, and individual plants can put out millions of seeds, which remain viable for years. Multiflora rose is difficult to deal with, this is as close to concertina wire as it gets. There are many invasive species coming our way, its a long scary list. Many of these species are



Garlic Mustard
obliterates native
wildflowers

not only incredibly prolific, they often have some nasty defensive tricks as well: toxins and thorns give real reasons to avoid these plants. Multiflora rose hooks make blackberry briars seem friendly.

This invasion must be faced, and managed long term, by all of us. The urban forest is just as much a part of the forest as is my woodlot, plants do not recognize human boundaries. The battle begins with education and recognition of the problem, its documentation in your management plan, landscape plan, and the application of the prescribed treatment. The treatments are often done seasonally, and will usually have to be done for years, with continued monitoring due to seed pressure and the sheer number of invasive species.

The KWC will be a resource in this effort, we will have links on our website, www.kickapoowoodscoop.org, as well as providing written literature, and invasive species field days, and hands on workshops. The KWC is planning a hands-on workshop on invasives for this May (see page 6). Pamphlets are available at your county forester's office with good pictures and descriptions. Look for books at your local library or bookstore such as

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From the Coordinator

It has been a very busy fall for our volunteers and me with lots of workshops, speaking engagements, new member woods walks and the start of management work. As of today we have 85 members (a 31% increase since July) and they own approximately 10,000 acres of woodland. The unprecedented growth experienced during the last couple of months seems to be driven by several factors: Co-op credibility, State property tax policy and our educational programs. The Co-op seems to be entering a transition period in its development.

From the start, the coordination and administration of the Co-op has been handled by a core group of volunteers and grant-supported personnel. The Kickapoo Valley Reforestation Fund (The Nuzum's Fund) has been our main source of funding along with several other small grants. These grants and the work of our volunteers have brought our co-op to this point and it is our intention to continue to apply for additional grant money to further us through this transition.

The startup has been characterized by the development of the organization, membership and educational services. This new phase of co-op development will be characterized by the development of our management and marketing services so that the co-op can function as a self-sustaining forest service organization. I see several needs to accomplish this goal.

The first need is to continue to recruit new members and to continue educational programs. More members with management plans will bring more of the income-producing management work we will need to make the transition. We have used woods walks and workshops as the primary tool for recruiting new members and I believe that we need to continue these services with a greater emphasis on the practical aspects of forestry so that members have the information they need to proceed with the management of their forest land. Member management plan development is a critical need. Management plans and particularly MFL plans dictate practices, some that require services

KWC can provide. Currently we are handling the administrative and management workload with contractors. The administrative workload is getting to the point where part time help is needed. As members require more management services from the co-op we will need to add a resource manager as well. Employees will require office space with all the overhead that will entail. Funding educational programs with grant \$ is ongoing but funding operations will have to be done with money gained through management services sold to members. Overhead and administration costs are very difficult, if not impossible to fund with

grant money. The Co-op's embryonic tool rental and sales program is another business with income-producing potential that was launched this summer with the co-op purchasing a "Farmi" logging winch, power pole saw, two hand pole saws, two loppers and several other forestry measuring tools.

KWC's development and stability is totally dependent upon its membership. All members have expressed at least an interest in the sustainable management of their woodlands and it will become imperative that the membership convert that interest into action to secure the Co-op's future.

If you need assistance with your woodlot management please do not hesitate to contact me.

I am at your service,
Paul Bader
KWC Coordinator

KWC Board of Directors

Ben Hansen	Jack Knight
Greg Welsh	Phil Gudgeon
Paul Bader	Lila Marmel
George Wilbur	

Invasive Species, continued from page 1

Wisconsin Manual of Control Recommendations for Ecologically Invasive Plants from the Bureau of Endangered Resources of the DNR (PO Box 7921, Madison WI 53707; 608-267-5066), edited by Randy Hoffman and Kelly Kearns. (This is the source of the drawing of Garlic Mustard on page 1.) Everyone in the forestry community is willing to help on this, if you're in the MFL program, you may qualify for some funding to help with your program.

Here are some websites dealing with invasive

Complete Your Management Plan

The second and final article in a series began in the Summer, 2003 Kickapoo Sustainable Post

Once you have established your objectives for each stand in your woodlot, the landowner's most essential task is done. You can then proceed to have measurements and assessments made, and to have a plan prepared, once your goals are clearly established. In the previous article, "Begin Your Management Plan," many questions involved in goal-setting were reviewed. Here, the remaining steps in creating a management plan are described, in sum: data collection, assessment, prescriptions, methods, and maps must be laid out in a format that meets the specifications of the type of plan you wish to create. There are several types of plans, depending on how the plan will be used. For your own personal use, you may choose how much detail to include as long as it gives you the information you need to reach your goals. Plans written to receive reductions in property taxes are some of the more demanding in terms of details required, and they are the only plans that may include mandated practices—things you might be required to agree to do in your woods in order to be eligible for the tax benefit.

Management
Plan
Workshop
Jan. 17
See page 6

Assessment: Inventories and Maps

Every stand is measured and details recorded on age and species of trees, names of understory species, wildlife conditions, soil type, slope, and all the features that describe the woods as it is. This

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plants:

[Www.weedcenter.org](http://www.weedcenter.org)

A coalition of agencies, organizations, and individuals interested in managing invasive plants.

[Www.nps.gov/plants/alien](http://www.nps.gov/plants/alien)

Weeds gone wild, web based project of the plant conservation alliance's alien plant working group.

[Www.usex.edu/ces/ipaw](http://www.usex.edu/ces/ipaw)

Invasive plants association of Wisconsin.

This is a serious management issue, and we must all do what we can to protect our natural heritage for generations to come.

is best accomplished by a professional forester, especially on large or diverse tracts, but the landowner can effectively do some of this work. The woods co-op offers workshops on the use of the tools and techniques used to measure volume, stocking level, site index, and average DBH.

Volume refers to the amount of usable wood in the forest and is generally recorded in cords per acre (for pulpwood) and/or board feet per acre (for sawtimber and veneerwood). **Stocking level** refers to the basal area or number of trees per acre. Optimal levels vary depending on the type of stand, whether multi-aged or even-aged, plantation or natural stand, and size of the trees.

Site index measures the site's ability to grow trees well. It generally reflects soil type and moisture, and is calculated from the height and age of a tree with a dominant crown position and of the dominant species. Age calculation necessitates either a core sample or felling a tree to count the rings. A site index of 60 and above generally indicates a good site, below is generally considered a poorer site. Site index is not a required calculation for many management plans, but it is required in a Wisconsin Managed Forest Law (MFL) plan.

Average DBH refers to the trunk diameter at breast height of the dominant species in its primary size range. Breast height is considered to be about four and-a-half feet high.

Some types of plans require little more than a verbal description of the forest condition, without so many specific measurements and calculations.

A map showing the boundaries of each stand gives a good overview of your property and makes it easier to see wind and seeding patterns.

Management Goals

Although your general goals are stated at the beginning of the plan, you should also state what you are managing for in each stand. This is followed by the prescriptions that are designed to accomplish those objectives.

Management Plan, continued on page 4

Management Plan, continued from page 3

Prescriptions and Methods

The prescriptions describe what practices must be done, how, and when, to direct the development of each stand from its current condition—described in the forest inventory—toward your stated objective. Some practices may be self-evident, such as a timber stand improvement cut or plantation thinning. But the bigger or more diverse your holdings and the more complex your goals, the more critical is the expertise of a knowledgeable forestry professional. Figuring out which practices will accomplish your goals will take a lot of self-education, and your forests may be best off if you work with someone who has taken the time to get the education and who is keeping up with current trends in the field. If you would like to learn about prescriptive practices, start attending Kickapoo Woods Co-op workshops, and look into the publications available through the University of Wisconsin Extension and USDA Forest Service, DNR, and other resources.

Certain silvicultural methods are sometimes specified to accomplish the goals in each stand. For example, girdling may be specified instead of cutting down the trees in order to provide wildlife habitat, or to prevent damage to other trees caused by felling.

Those are the basic elements of a forestry management plan. If your plan is strictly for your own use, this may be all you need. But management plans that entitle you to tax benefits, cost sharing to fund forestry practices, or certification / special designation for marketing purposes each have their own requirements.

Managed Forest Law (MFL) Plans

A plan to enroll property in the Managed Forest Law, which offers reductions in property taxes as well as cost-sharing grants for executing forest practices, must be written on DNR forms and requires a detailed forest inventory. You must have at least 10 acres of contiguous land in forest cover, and you should be willing to manage timber there and not use the enrolled acreage for crops or pasture. Up to 80 acres of an owner's forest land (per municipality) can be designated as "Closed," but beyond that, enrolled acreage is designated as "Open" and is accessible to

the public for hunting, fishing, hiking, sightseeing and cross country skiing. Open MFL lands are currently taxed at 83¢ per acre; closed MFL lands at \$1.95 per acre. Applications for MFL designation are currently due by January 31 for enrollment the following January first. If you apply without the plan, an approvable management plan must be submitted by July 1. Bear in mind that the landowner also currently pays a 5% yield tax on any timber harvest, except for firewood for personal use.

A Plan to Reach Your Goals

A Wisconsin Forest Stewardship Plan includes the same elements as a MFL plan, but includes no required practices and yields no tax benefits. It can, however, make you eligible for cost-sharing grants for forestry practices.

Other sources of funding to accomplish certain goals in the woods, including funds to write a plan, are available through programs like WHIP (Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program), WFLGP (Wisconsin Forest Landowner Grant Program), CRP (Conservation Reserve Program), EQIP (Environmental Quality Incentives Program), CREP (Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program), WRP (Wetland Reserve Program) and others. Ask your County DNR Forester or Natural Resource Conservation Service specialist for information on programs that meet your needs.

The basics of a management plan include your goals for your woods, an assessment of what they're like when you begin, and the practices you

will perform, when and how, to achieve your goals. Aside from entitling you to government assistance, the planning process helps to clarify your vision of the future, and what it will take to get you there. Forests change slowly, so it takes some thought and focus to understand the potential we have to affect the future of our woods. Once undertaken, the rewards can continue for decades, even centuries, to come.



Prepare for Spring Tree-Planting

by Jack Knight

Though the ground is frozen and April is a distant month, now is the time to order tree seedlings and plan for planting in the spring.

While natural regeneration is one of the key goals of sustainable forestry, there are a number of situations that merit direct transplanting of seedlings. The most obvious is the conversion of open land to forest. While this occurs on its own in the Driftless Area, the time frames involved and species composition may be less than our own desires and plans for growing trees. Open areas with full sunlight are excellent for establishing oaks and walnuts. Crucial to success in old fields, pastures and meadows is control of grassy weeds adjacent to the new seedlings by some combination of herbicide, mulch, and mechanical control. There are products and methods of applying herbicide before, after, or at planting time.

Another situation that may call for transplanting seedlings is following a harvest to help ensure that the species most desirable and adaptable to that site becomes established. Factors to consider would be the presence or absence of seedlings and seed trees on the site and the adaptability of your choice of species to that site.

Yet another situation to consider tree planting is to upgrade or diversify areas that are dominated by "weed" trees such as dying elms, box elders, or invasive shrubs to shift that forest cover to higher value, wildlife and native species.

Success in establishing seedlings is really a simple formula—dormant nursery stock, planted at

the proper depth, roots consistently moist (before and after planting)—but not soaked. These along with proper site preparation to ensure weed control and adequate sunlight is usually the most labor-intensive part of the formula, though with good placement of the tree seedlings taking advantages of natural openings in the canopy, this can be kept to a minimum. This is an extremely concise discussion of tree planting in our area. Those of you with questions can direct them to the state foresters and to me.

An extensive listing of tree nurseries was published in the Autumn 2002 edition of the Kickapoo Sustainable Post.

Jack Knight has planted trees professionally for 17 years and manages a woodlot in northeast Iowa. He is currently serving on the KWC Board and Education Committee and can be contacted on his cell phone at 583-380-3180.

Become a member and enjoy:

- Free woods walk to evaluate your forest (\$50 value)
- Information, support and education.

Thank You!

I want to join the Kickapoo Woods Co-op.

Enclosed is my gift of:

_____ \$100. Lifetime Member

_____ \$_____ Other donation

Name _____

Address _____

City State Zip _____

Phone/email _____

Email _____

Total acres: _____

Forested acres: _____

County _____ Township _____

Section _____

I am interested in KWC because:

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Calendar

For more information or to preregister for any of these events, please contact Kickapoo Woods Cooperative Coordinator Paul Bader at domehome@mwt.net or 608-625-2515.

January 17 - Writing a Land Management Plan, Soldiers Grove Community Room, 10:00 AM. Professional foresters Chuck Brooks and Jeff Christie will provide instruction.

February 26-28 - Upper Midwest Organic Farming Conference, LaCrosse Center. KWC will be an exhibitor.

March 13 - Timber Stand Improvement Hike, Paul Bader's land near La Farge. 10:00 AM.

April 10 - Non-Timber Forest Products Workshop on the land of maple syrup and shiitake mushroom producer Dan Badtke west of La Farge. \$10 for nonmembers, \$5 for members. Participants will inoculate logs with shiitake spawn and take them home.

April 24 - Chainsaw Safety with FISTA trainers. Only \$20 due to grant subsidies. Pre-registration is required.

May 8 - Spring Flora Woods Walk.

May 22 Invasive Species Identification and Control.

The mission of the Kickapoo Wood Cooperative is to provide sustainable forestry education, management and marketing services to residents of the Kickapoo Valley and neighboring watersheds.

Kickapoo Woods Cooperative
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La Farge WI 54639