

Kickapoo Sustainable Post

Newsletter of the Kickapoo Woods Cooperative

Grant brings us a Forester and Highlights wildlife Habitat Issues

This past winter the Kickapoo Woods Cooperative was approved for a grant from a USDA fund designed to improve habitat for certain migrating birds whose chances are improved with the increased diversity found on land with a management plan. Participants are not required to set goals for improving bird habitat under the program. Many thanks to Southwest Badger RC&D, who helped us secure and administer the grant.

Long Distance Migrant Birds Need Habitat

by Maggie Jones, KWC Member and Bird Enthusiast

Have you ever, like me, heard the ethereal flutelike call of the wood thrush from the trees on the hillside, and had an inner rush of warmth and wonder? In Spring each year, I listen for my favorite song birds' arrivals, announced by their beautiful songs. The cuckoos, the thrushes, the warblers, kinglets, and more, all set up breeding territories in our woods and begin their task of raising their next generation before fall beckons them to head south.

Have you ever wondered what you could do to make that woodland habitat even more conducive to their success?

We now have a wonderful opportunity in conjunction with the Kickapoo Woods Coop and a grant from the USDA Forest Service to draw up management plans that will help to address neotropical migrant birds' needs. And they do need our help. As a group these small songbirds are declining due in large part to forest fragmentation, which allows easier access by common edge species nest predators.

To further explain, I quote from an article by the Illinois Audubon Society;

Where extensive hardwood stands dominated by oaks, hickories and maples once grew, now small woodlots are intermin-

Bird Habitat, continued on page 2

Meet Our Forester

Patrick Dayton has been hired to write forestry plans for KWC members to fulfill the grant written by the Southwest Badger RC&D. He



completed his degree in forest management and urban forestry at UW-Stevens Point in 2000 and has done forestry work in Utah, Alaska, and northern Wisconsin since then. He was born and raised in LaCrosse and is living there now. He has been out in the field in LaCrosse,

Vernon and Crawford County getting to know more about our woods. He can write Stewardship or MFL plans and has been contacting landowners according to the postcards returned from our letter to members this past winter. Patrick's office is in the Natural Resource Conservation Service building at the north end of Viroqua. Contact him at pdayton@vernoncounty.org or 608-637-5479.

In This Issue . . .



- Migrant Birds Need Habitat, p. 1
- Meet Our Forester, p. 1
- KWC Board of Directors, p. 2
- Annual Meeting Announcement, p. 2
- What is a Cooperative? p. 4
- Work Parties are Getting Things Done, p. 3
- Calendar, p. 6

Bird Habitat, continued from page 1

gled with agricultural fields and suburban landscapes.

The result is far less forest interior and far more forest edge. This dramatic increase in edge effect has in turn benefited several animal species that adversely affect the nesting success of forest songbirds.

First, nest predators, like raccoons, opossums, skunks and some snakes, frequent these forest edges and find a greater percentage of the songbird nests, eating both eggs and young. Re-nesting efforts, if attempted, are failing to offset previous reproductive losses. Second, brown-headed cowbirds, historically birds of the prairies and plains, have become more "edge" dwellers that feed in open fields, but enter the woodlots to lay their eggs in the nests of other "host" species. The nestling wood thrushes, vireos, warblers and tanagers are no match for a young cowbird. The cowbird hatches first, monopolizes the food offered by its host parents and soon overwhelms its nest mates.

If you look at a satellite photo of southern Wisconsin, you will see that there is only one large area of unbroken forest, and that is our precious Baraboo Hills (including Devils Lake State Park). Because of the tough quartzite rock underlayer there, the hills have been too difficult to farm and to drill wells, and thus the forest has remained somewhat continuous. In these hills breed some of the most endangered of our Wisconsin forest song birds.

KWC Board of Directors

President Phil Gudgeon
E8533 Cherry Grove Rd
Viroqua WI 54665
637-3886
fstcapag@mwt.net

Vice President Ben Hansen
S5030 Hansen Ln
Viroqua WI 54665
689-2585
ben@mwt.net

Treasurer Paul Richardson
16616 Grimm Road
Hillsboro WI 54634
489-3709
paul@mwt.net

Secretary Lila Marmel
14150 State Hwy 131
Soldiers Grove WI 54655
624-5269
sunmoon@mwt.net

Paul Bader
S3711 Green Hollow Road
La Farge WI 54639
625-2515
domehome@mwt.net

George Wilbur
E 13121 E Kettle Road
La Farge WI 54639
625-4430 (office)
wilbur@mwt.net

Dan Badtke
S 4953 Groves Lane
Viroqua WI 54665
637-3256

Annual Meeting July 9

Set aside the afternoon to elect board members and have a picnic in the park. If you are interested in serving on the board, please contact Paul Bader, 625-2515; domehome@mwt.net. We will learn about cooperatives, especially landowner forestry cooperatives worldwide. Sweden, Finland, and Canada have well-established forestry cooperatives, and maybe we can learn from them.

We, in the southwest area of the state, have many acres of woods and we must work to stop and reverse relentless fragmentation now. We have an opportunity to manage our lands and keep the forest birds we have returning year after year. Studies have shown that there is higher bird diversity on forests that are managed than in forests that are not managed.

Some of the goals of good management for forest interior breeding birds are, again from the Illinois Audubon society;

... protecting the few remaining tracts of extensive forest stands against logging clearcuts, new roads and utility rights-of-way, because all these activities create openings and increase total forest edge with its resulting problems. It means reforesting adjacent marginal land with the intent of eventually returning the tracts to mature forest. It also calls for a strong commitment by concerned citizens to restore and maintain natural ecosystems.

Participating with the co-op and making use of this fine grant gives us new opportunities in making positive changes that will last well beyond our lifetimes. Managed Forest Law also has opportunities to manage with neotropical migrants' benefit as a main



Bird Habitat, continued from page 2

objective of the plan, so we can even find a financial tax advantage to participating in this program. I urge you to contact Lila Marmel or Paul Bader to get started. There's no time like the present!

The grant cites studies showing that bird populations are more diverse on tracts of land with a management plan. So just getting a management plan written is a good start, and you are free to include bird habitat as one of your objectives. Ask the forester what this would mean on your property when he comes to survey your woodlands for the plan.

A 44-page booklet about neotropical migrant birds is available free from the Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation. It's called "A Bird's Eye View; A Guide to Managing and Protecting Your Land for Neotropical Migratory Birds in the Upper Mississippi River Blufflands," by Marlene Ehresman. Call them to request one at 515-288-

Work Parties are getting things Done

Several KWC members have joined the Work Party group and have been gathering at each others' properties to tackle the the jobs that are too much for one or two. Invasive species have been the focus of two work parties, eliminating Autumn Olive at John and Rita Hoffman's, and Buckthorn at Jim and Judy Oestreich's. The Hoffmans also burned a 2-acre plot for prairie restoration. Participants find it's fun to get out there and do the work with others, and the hosts provide a meal afterward, rounding out an enjoyable day in the woods.

Pictured above after a morning of buckthorn removal are, in the back, Paul Bader and Ecologist Gigi LaBudde, in front: Jim and Judy Oestreich and John and Rita Hoffman.

Cooperative Members have the Power

by Kimberly Zeuli, Assistant Professor,
Agricultural and Applied Economics, University of
Wisconsin – Madison

Most co-op members belong to more than one cooperative. If you live in a state like Wisconsin, with almost 800 cooperatives in every conceivable sector of the economy, this is even more likely to be true. Yet surprisingly, although members may visit a co-op on a weekly basis, many never stop and really think about why cooperatives are truly a unique business form. Could you actually define the term cooperative to a friend? Hopefully after reading this brief article you will be able to tell that friend more than they really wanted to know!

What is a cooperative?

No single, universally accepted definition of a cooperative exists. Two definitions, however, are commonly used. According to the International Co-operative Alliance (ICA)—a non-governmental organization with over 230 member organizations from over 100 countries:

a cooperative is an autonomous association of persons united voluntarily to meet their common economic, social, and cultural needs and aspirations through a jointly owned and democratically controlled enterprise.

The ICA definition recognizes the essential element of cooperatives: membership is voluntary. True cooperation with others arises from a belief in mutual help; it can't be coerced. In authentic cooperatives, people join voluntarily and have the freedom to quit the cooperative at any point in time. Therefore, the forced collectives prevalent in the former Soviet Union, for example, were not true cooperatives.

Another widely accepted cooperative definition is the one adopted by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) in 1987:

a cooperative is a user-owned, user-controlled business that distributes benefits on the basis of use.

This definition captures what are generally considered the three hallmarks of cooperatives: user-ownership, user-control, and proportional distribution of benefits. The “user-owner” principle implies that the people who use the co-op (members) help finance the co-op and therefore, own the co-op. Members are responsible for providing at least some of the cooperative's capital.

The “user-control” concept means that members of the co-op govern the business directly by voting on significant business decisions and indirectly through their representatives on the board of directors. Cooperative state statutes and bylaws usually dictate that only active co-op members (those who use the co-op) are eligible to become voting directors, although non-members sometime serve on boards in a non-voting, advisory capacity. Only co-op members can vote to elect board of directors and on other cooperative actions.

Voting rights are generally tied to membership status, usually one-member, one-vote, and not to the level of investment in or patronage of the cooperative. Cooperative law in a number of states in the US and in other countries, however, also permits proportional voting. Instead of one vote per member, voting rights are based on the volume of business the member transacted the previous year with the cooperative.

Member control in a cooperative should not, however, extend into daily operations of the business. In most cooperatives, the board of directors hires a manager to take care of business. It is essential that the board understands the manager's (or management team's) responsibilities and does not try to micro-manage the business. The manager, the only employee that answers directly to the board, is responsible for carrying out the mission and vision of the cooperative, as established by the

board of directors.

“Distribution of benefits on the basis of use,” is another key foundation for cooperatives. Members should share the benefits, costs, and risks of doing business in equal proportion to their patronage. The proportional basis is fair, easily explained (transparent), and entirely

feasible from an operational standpoint. To do otherwise distorts the individual contributions of members and diminishes their incentives to join and patronize the cooperative.

Co-op benefits may include better prices for goods and services, improved services, and dependable sources of inputs and markets for outputs. Most cooperatives also realize annual net profits, all or part of which are returned to members in proportion to their patronage (thus, they are aptly called patronage refunds). Cooperatives can also return a portion of their profits as dividends on investment. In the US, however, federal and most state statutes set an eight-percent maximum on annual dividend payments.

Cooperative principles

Unlike other business models, cooperatives have a guiding set of principles they may choose to follow. The ICA promotes seven cooperative principles:

1. voluntary and open membership
2. democratic member control
3. members contribute equally to the capital of their cooperative
4. autonomy and independence from governments and other organizations
5. member education, training, and information
6. cooperation among cooperatives
7. concern for community

For more information on the cooperative principles, you can visit the ICA’s website: <http://www.coop.org>. For more information on the cooperative business model stay tuned to future newsletters! You may also visit the University of Wisconsin Center for Cooperatives website: <http://www.wisc.edu/uwcc>.

The Kickapoo Sustainable Post is produced on an occasional basis approximately 4 times per year. Subscriptions are free to members. Kickapoo Woods Cooperative, PO Box 71, La Farge WI 54639. Forestry Management Coordinator is Paul Bader, 608-625-2515; domehome@mwt.net. Editing design, and layout by Education Outreach Coordinator Lila Marmel, sunmoon@mwt.net; 14150 State Hwy 131, Soldiers Grove WI 54655; 608-624-5269.

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:

_____ \$100. Founding Associate

_____ \$_____ Other donation

Name _____

Address _____

City State Zip _____

Phone/email _____

I am interested in KWC because:

Calendar

June 11 - Forested Flyways - Field tour and speakerson wildlife habitat in forests and savanna. Dan Bohlin farm, 10854 Robin Lane, Stitzer WI. Pre-register by June 7. Contact steve.bertjens@wi.usda.gov or 608-723-6377 ext 136.

June 25 - Rope Techniques in the Woods. Arborist Brian Graham will teach knots and demonstrate using ropes for controlled felling. 10 am at Action Tree Service, 19320 Gobin Lane. Take Highway 61 10 miles north of Boscobel or 9 miles south of Soldiers Grove and go east on Highway S toward Excelsior. Go 2 miles to the bottom of the hill, turn left onto Sleepy Hollow Road by going straight as S curves sharply right down the valley. Gobin Lane is the first right turn one mile north, take it one mile to the first place on the right and park in the field. Bring rope for learning knots and your hardhat if you want to help with the demonstration. Phone on site, 872-2285; or Lila Marmel, 624-5269.

Wanted: Birch Trees

We use birch bark in our business and need to harvest during June and July. Will pay \$30.00 per tree 8" diameter and larger. We need approximately 15 trees to harvest, and more to select from. We like to incorporate woods management practices and would like to work with KWC members. Prefer trees on North slope away from woods edge with long trunks.

For more information contact Ken and Michelle Workowski, 608-627-1952

July 9 - Annual Meeting at Sidie Hollow Park west of Viroqua. Meeting, 4:00, Potluck picnic at 5:00. Info packet coming in June.

August 26-28 - Coverts Wildlife Habitat Workshop, Kemp UW Research Station, Woodruff, Wisconsin. Sessions on ruffed grouse, deer, wolves, songbirds, reptiles, invasive species, and monitoring. <http://wildlife.wisc.edu/extension/wicovertsproject.html>; Jamie Nack, 608-265-8264.

September 17 - Introductory Woods Walk at Paul and Marcia Bader's near La Farge

October 7-8 - Light on the Land Logging Field Day, 9am-5pm both days, Black Hawk Wildlife Area between Sauk City and Mazomanie on Hwy 78. Equipment demonstrations, workshops, and exhibitors with an emphasis on small-scale logging and low-impact forestry. call 608-723-6377 ext 135; swbadger.com **To help on-site with KWC, contact Paul Bader, 625-2515.**

October 22 - Chainsaw Safety Workshop

December 3 - Cross-Boundary Cooperation in forest management.

Managing for Wildlife Habitat - TBA this winter

Game of Logging: 3 days of advanced chainsaw training. Contact Paul or Lila if you are interested.

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
PO Box 71
La Farge WI 54639

