

# Kickapoo Sustainable Post

Newsletter of the Kickapoo Woods Cooperative

## Cross-Boundary Cooperation:

Looking for opportunities across property lines

by Mark Rickenbach and Rebecca Gass

*Editor's note: The KWC is helping with a UW-Madison research project that could lead to important benefits particularly to landowners with smaller woodlots of 40 acres or less. The Kickapoo Valley Reserve is co-sponsoring by hosting our free lunch public meeting at the Reserve Visitor Center on December 10, 2005.*

The dictionary defines cooperation as "the state of having shared interests or efforts". The boundaries we're referring to are the property lines that separate and divide land ownership. So cross-boundary cooperation is when landowners coordinate forest practices on their individual properties to mutual benefit. Research and practice indicate that landowners and foresters do coordinate forest practices, particularly timber sales, across several ownerships. For example, in 2002, KWC Forestry Management Coordinator Paul Bader coordinated pine thinnings on the properties of several neighbors, reducing costs to the logger, who could spend less time and money on transporting machinery. However, such cooperation is not widespread. In this article, we share what we see as the potential benefits and challenges of cross-boundary cooperation and briefly describe the joint UW-Madison / KWC study to better understand it.

### Benefits

Cross-boundary cooperation might allow forest practices to be completed that might not otherwise occur. That is, there is a financial benefit for

**Cooperation**, continued on page 2

## When Forestry Feels Like Art

By Patrick Dayton, KWC Forester

On my recent vacation to Montana and Wyoming I noticed many hillsides of dead trees while driving on the highways. Out west they have an assortment of conifer stands made up of trees such as lodgepole pine, ponderosa pine, Douglas-fir, cedars, spruce, and firs. Whole mountainsides would be filled with trees killed by fire, insects, or disease. Seeing this made me think of the forests of Wisconsin and the stewardship plans I write. I commonly justify planning timber harvests with the fact that if we don't manage the amount of trees in the woods, nature will. While "natural management," or letting trees get old and die might be appropriate in national parks and for some landowners in Wisconsin, harvesting timber can be another appropriate management tool for others. In either system, there can be a shocking change in tree numbers/sizes and the visual appearance of the woods within a short period. People generally believe that if the forest is left to take care of itself some trees will die and others will replace them. This is a possible scenario within the life of a forest but a major disturbance (insects, disease, wind, and even fire in Wisconsin) can drastically alter a landowner's

**Forestry as Art**, continued on page 2

### In this Issue . . .



Cross Boundary Cooperation, p. 1

Forestry is Art p. 1


KWC is Growing, p. 3

Calendar, p. 4



**Forestry as Art**, continued from page 1

woods and cause a large-scale change. Similarly, harvesting timber on a property can have subtle effects or can alter a forest dramatically depending on what forest cover exists and what type of harvest is planned. A forester does not

prepare a timber harvest to cut all the good (big) trees in a forest but instead will plan for a harvest that increases the growth and health of existing trees, starts a new generation of trees, or both. Many times trees that are big and healthy can be left after a timber harvest while a smaller one that is less healthy is taken. This principle of taking the worst trees-first does not always maximize the short-term profit of the land but it does increase the long-term gain, both economically and ecologically. There is a science to harvesting timber but it is not exact and differs from property to property (everyone's land is unique in some way). In my workings with landowners in the Kickapoo Woods Cooperative so far I have found a range of attitudes towards timber harvesting. I have written plans with no harvests scheduled and I have written plans with many harvests planned, just a reminder - the basic purpose of Wisconsin DNR's Managed Forest Land (MFL) program is managing the forest for future forest crops and commercial use through sound forestry practices. I am always open to learning from each landowner and willing to give suggestions to those who want them. As a friend of mine once said to me: applying proper forestry can enable us to create scientifically-informed land art. Caring for your land is the first step to proper forestry, planning for the management of your land is the second, and carrying out your plan is the third step. 

**KWC Board of Directors**

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

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

Daniel Arnold  
S3566 B Cty Rd S  
Viroqua WI 54665  
634-3890  
darnold@frontiernet.net

**Cooperation**, continued from page 1

cooperating. If you own a small property and have tried to sell timber, you may have found it difficult. Due to "economies of scale", large sales or projects are more profitable than smaller ones. For example, by harvesting on larger sales, a logger does not have to move his equipment as often. Hence, he spends less in transportation costs and can spend more time and energy cutting trees (i.e., making money). However, most owners don't have large parcels. The US Forest Service estimates the average family forest ownership in Wisconsin to be just under 40 acres. A recent survey of Wisconsin loggers indicates that roughly three-quarters of timber sales are over 20 acres--about half the average parcel size. For small ownerships, coordinating forest practices will likely make them more attractive to potential bidders.

The benefits are not solely economic, but are ecological as well. Consider the landowner who removes all the invasive buckthorn from her property. If her neighbors also have buckthorn, she'll likely find herself removing buckthorn again in the near future. Property lines apply to humans only. Animals, plants, water, and fungi will go where they will. Landowners can manage their property to encourage or deter a certain species, but without some knowledge of the practices in the surrounding area, the management may not achieve the desired result. We are not suggesting "lock-step" management where everyone does the same thing. However, we do see cross-boundary cooperation as a way to look for opportunities and to coordinate forest practices when they are mutually beneficial.

**Challenges**

If the benefits are so great, why isn't everybody doing it? There are many reasons, but we'll describe two we see as important. First, coordination takes time and effort

**Cooperation**, continued on page 4

## KWC is Growing

In the four years since it was established, the KWC has grown to include 120 members. This has enabled us to begin providing forestry management services and access to education as well as tools and safety equipment. The KWC has set a goal to increase our membership base enough to support a full-time forestry management professional from the proceeds of work for our members. To that end, we have set a goal to double our membership to 240 by May of 2007. You can help us reach this goal by encouraging your neighbors, friends and relations in the area to consider joining or attending our educational events. Membership is particularly helpful for landowners who are planning a harvest or who have mandatory practices coming due in woodlots under the Managed forest Law (MFL) program. We can help design the harvest, provide contracts with the landowner's interests in mind, get bids, and suggest contractors trained in sustainable forestry methods. Our one-time membership fee with no annual dues makes it easy to join.

### Join in on committee work

To further support these goals, the Board decided to activate a Marketing Committee to help us educate the public about the benefits of membership in the KWC. Our Education Committee has been the most active up to now and has helped our co-op to grow, now it's time to expand this effort. The Education Committee has consisted entirely of Board members, but now we need members at large to join the Education and Marketing Committees. The committees meet monthly for one hour before Board of Director meetings, but can be rescheduled to suit committee members. If you might be interested in joining a KWC committee, or have questions about committee service, please contact Education Outreach Coordinator Lila Marmel, sunmoon@mwt.net, 608-624-5269.

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.

### Why You Should Belong to the Kickapoo Woods Cooperative

#### *Membership provides you with:*

- The education you need to properly manage your woodlands;
- Assistance in obtaining your woodland management plan;
- Services you need to implement your woodland management plan;

#### *Membership connects you to:*

- Markets for your woodland products;
- A network of more than a hundred fellow KWC woodland owners in this area.

#### *Membership entitles you to:*

- Substantial discounts on equipment you need for forest management;
- A "woods walk" of your property with forestry professional.

One time membership fee. No Annual Dues

### Join Now:

Kickapoo Woods Cooperative needs you because a larger Cooperative will be more effective and efficient.

You need KWC membership to be more effective and efficient managing your woodlands.

### 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. Founding Associate

\_\_\_\_\_ \$\_\_\_\_\_ Other donation

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City State Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone/email \_\_\_\_\_

I am interested in KWC because:

**Cooperation, continued from page 2**

that has an unknown relationship to the benefits. Someone needs to contact people, learn what they are doing on their land, and figure out how people might coordinate their management practices, if possible. Who is that person and for whom do they work? Should landowners do it themselves (like the co-op)? Should a forester do it? Even more important, who should pay? The U.S. doesn't have a strong history of cooperation in forestry and that makes it difficult to identify the models that might work.

Second, most landowners don't have management plans. KWC is working hard to provide members with management plans, but most forest owners in Wisconsin and the U.S. don't have one. Without some guides to the forest practices that may be occurring over time, information sharing and coordination are nearly impossible to achieve without substantial investment. The difficulty at this point is that no one knows what the opportunities are. If someone could look at the variety of practices coming due and the various landowner objectives, they could begin to assess whether it makes sense to organize landowner cooperation. Clearly, certain landowner objectives are mutually exclusive, but there is likely more compatibility than not.

**The Study in Brief**

Working with the KWC, Iowa State University, WI DNR, and the U.S. Forest Service, we are beginning to answer the questions raised

**Calendar**

Oct 7-8 - Light on the Land Forestry Field Day, Black Hawk Wildlife Area, Sauk City, Wisconsin; 8:30am to 5:00 pm each day. Free admission, workshops, demonstrations, Exhibitors. It's just off Hwy 78, 3 miles south of Sauk City, or 6 miles north of Mazomanie, watch for signs. 608-723-6377 ex 136.

Oct 22 - Chainsaw Safety, cosponsored by Kickapoo Valley Reserve at their Visitor Center. Send \$20 to KWC to register.

Dec 10 - Cross Boundary Cooperation meeting at Kickapoo Valley Reserve Visitor Center. \$5. members, \$10 nonmembers includes noon meal. See article, page 1.

January 14 - Timber Stand Improvement hike. Details to be announced.

above. At four study sites (one in the Kickapoo), we have collected forest management plans that will allow us to predict forest practices into the future. These data should help us understand the opportunities for cross-boundary cooperation. We will also be completing focus group interviews with landowners from these study sites to understand their interest and willingness to participate in such cooperation. These studies should yield important insights into thinking differently about forestry and the fence line.

**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

