

Kickapoo Sustainable Post

Newsletter of the Kickapoo Woods Cooperative

New KWC Website

Almost a year ago the Board made a decision to upgrade our website and registered a new domain at www.kickapoowoods.org but lacked the expertise to move ahead on the project. A few months ago new member Becky Comeau attended a KWC workshop and could sense a need for more communication tools for members. Fortunately for us, she is a web developer with Rising Technologies and offered her services to rebuild our site and add a wiki component, which we hope will become an information crossroads for members in the future.

Member Arthur Bernstein had hosted our old site for several years, thank you Arthur. The new site is at www.kickapoowoods.org and is the start page for the general public with basic information about the Co-op. One can download our newly revised brochure and membership form there, as well as find contact information. You can also choose to be redirected to our Communication Website for events and current information. Our Communication site is at www.kickapooop-jot.com and is a wiki site, which means, it is collaborative and certain elements can be edited by users, like the popular site wikipedia.org. Jotspot is our wiki host, powered by google, which provides the framework for Becky's customization to meet our needs.

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Speak Out: Member Survey

by Mark Rickenbach
UW-Madison Dept. of Forest Ecology

In the next few weeks, KWC members should receive a questionnaire from the UW-Madison. PLEASE RESPOND!



People gathered to learn about forestry tools January 20. More on page 6.

The KWC has grown in the last few years. The survey findings will give the Board a better understanding of how the membership has changed and how member's expectations are being met or not. As a researcher, the results will help me and others better understand how a successful landowner cooperative works.

PLEASE ANSWER ALL THE QUESTIONS!

Some may seem odd or unrelated, but we have carefully considered each question so as to under-

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Chainsaw Sharpening and Chainsharps

By KWC member Bruce Richardson

First, we get our Chainsharps from Kickapoo Woods Cooperative or Bailey's. They only cost about \$17 each and I'll explain below why you'll want two!

As you use your chainsaw, sharpening your chain is just one of the regular required maintenance events. Here at Richwood Timber, we have used four methods of chain sharpening:

- * Paying a chainsaw shop to sharpen with a grinder
- * Freehand filing--with and without guides
- * Clamp on filing jig
- * Chainsharps by Pferd

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The public menu there covers Forest Management, our Educational Opportunities, past newsletters, info about our Forestry Store, membership, and forestry related links. Member login gives access to Bylaws, Minutes, and the Member Forum where questions can be posted and information shared among members. The Board has access to a Board Forum for working discussions. Like any new application the Jotsite has a few things to be learned to be fully useful, but we think it will be worth the effort.

The wealth of knowledge shared by KWC members is tremendous and varied. You now have a new way to share by posting your questions and comments. The Board is excited about Becky's assistance in setting up the new site, and we invite everyone to visit, participate, and watch as they help the site evolve.

Website developer is a New Member

Becky and Bob Comeau are in transition from Minneapolis to rural LaFarge. An interest in managing their new woodlot brought them to KWC, and Becky has shared her programming expertise with the Co-op by designing our new website. Becky is an avid gardener and is taking the MasterGardner UWEx class. Her interest in law and order keep her involved in scheduling a youth soccer program for 1150 rowdy youths even though her own children have gone on to new pursuits. She is armed and ready to identify and subdue invasives anywhere she sees a threat.



Grinder:

- Pro: Achieves uniform sharpness with little effort.
- Con: Costs \$5 per chain (at your sharpener guy).
- Con: Grinds all teeth to the dimensions of the smallest tooth--unnecessary.
- Con: Heats each tooth to the point of discoloration and losing temper--chips more easily.
- Con: Sharpener guy says "I'll file the rakers (depth gauges) every 2nd or 3rd sharpening."

“ Freehand:

- Pro: Simple.
- Con: Must develop smooth, consistent stroke (guides help here).
- Con: Rakers/depth gauges must be addressed with separate file and guide.

Clamp-on Filing Jig:

- Pro: Very consistent stroke--good uniformity.
- Con: Fiddle factor for clamping on jig.
- Con: Must address rakers/depth gauges with separate file and guide.

Chainsharps:

- Con: Must develop consistent stroke--alignment guides help.
- Pro: Simple.
- Pro: Maintains proper depth gauge WITH EVERY SHARPENING! It's this last point that was the kicker for us! The Pferd Chainsharps keep the depth gauge at the perfect height for the amount of wear on the cutter tooth. That way the size of the chip is always "just right".

Chain Teeth - Cutters and Rakers

Take a look at a new and a well-worn chain. Notice on the new chain how long the cutter tooth is. Also note the bump of metal in the lower part of the gullet. That bump appears to be a remnant from the manufacturing process. Unfortunately, regardless of the sharpening method used, that metal must be removed (by the proper size file) in your initial sharpening. As the tooth gets “trained”, the round file sits at the proper depth and strikes the gullet and the top cutter at the proper depth and angle.

I find that, barring any other problems with a dull tooth, it takes about 10 strokes per tooth on the first sharpening or so. Then, once the chain is “trained”, it only takes about 5 strokes per tooth to dress them up.

Well-worn chains have four attributes--two good and two (potentially) bad. First, a well-worn chain has been through enough heating and cooling cycles that it won't stretch much anymore. That means fewer adjustments for chain tension. Next, you'll notice that a well-worn chain cuts WELL! The distance between the raker and the top cutter is increasing and the depth gauge is having less effect. As a result, the tooth cuts lots of wood all the time. You'll seem to rip through logs. One downside to a well-worn chain also stems from this increasing gap between the raker and the top cutter. You'll notice much more kickback and chatter when trying to bore cut. Kickback is dangerous! So, if it's annoying, throw away your old chain and put on a new one. Also, as your chain becomes well-worn, the cutter tooth becomes very small and may break-off or chip. That would be another signal that it's time to put on a new chain.

Buy TWO Chainsharps!

Here at Richwood Timber we have some tips to share with you:

* Buy some RED Sharpie markers. Mark your starting tooth with the marker and it will be obvious when you've worked your way around the chain. Black markers don't stand out enough. Keep a red marker with your Chainsharps.

* Buy two Chainsharps! Chainsharps come with instructions on how to flip the round file

and the flat file around from “left” to “right” configuration. The only problem is, since one file fits in the top and the other in the bottom, it is EASY to drop one of the files in the snow during the reconfiguration. The EASY and BETTER solution is to buy TWO Chainsharps and leave one set-up for “right” and the other for “left”. Mark them clearly “L” and “R”! At about \$17/each, it's a small price to pay to have two and avoid having to reconfigure the Chainsharps.

* Have ample stock of round files on hand. At about a buck apiece, pitch a worn round file and pop in a fresh one. You'll be more efficient.

Files

Chainsharps come with either a 7/32” or 3/16” round file (depending on what you order). Plus, they come with a flat bar file that works on the rakers. This flat bar file only files in one direction. The file has two sides so you get two sides to wear out. I went two seasons before I changed the flat bar files (about 100+ sharpenings). Buy a spare set of these flat bar files and have them ready to go.

Round files: I get about 7-8 sharpenings when I'm “training” or “breaking-in” a new chain. This means 10 to 12 strokes per tooth. Once I have a

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Member Survey, continued from page 1

stand the perspective of members and how the cooperative functions. Your responses will be completely confidential, except when you specifically allow us to provide the answers to a few questions to the KWC Board. We provide confidentiality so you can be completely honest.

Every landowning member of the KWC will receive a questionnaire. When you respond, your voice and opinion will be added to that of other members to help shape the direction of your cooperative. If you have questions or concerns related to this survey, please contact me (mgrickenbach@wisc.edu; 608-262-0134). I look forward to seeing what you have to say.

'07 Timber Markets for the Kickapoo Region

by Paul Bader

The declining housing market is playing a key role in the lumber prices of regionally important species and probably will affect the stumpage and log prices received by landowners in the near

and maybe long term. Red oak and hard maple are affected most and they are the species most abundant here. Red oak lumber prices peaked a few years ago and have suffered as the “fashion” changed to fine grained white woods like hard maple. The emphasis on harvesting switched to maple from oak and demand pushed prices for maple up just before the housing market’s bubble burst, resulting in a glut of higher grade lumber in the “pipeline”. Saw mills can still sell industrial lumber (pallet, RR ties, etc.), there being a strong demand for this low grade material. Most local sawmills however produce industrial grade lumber at an overall loss and rely on the high grade that develops for their profit. Prices for “tie” logs of all species are low but stable. The local demand for aspen saw logs remains strong at stable prices. Given the state of the current lumber market and many other factors, like the globalization of markets, timber and log prices of our most abundant species must come down for the mills to stay competitive. Log and lumber export is another part of the picture and there are some bright spots there.

Chainsharp, continued from page 3

trained chain, I get 10 or more sharpenings out of the round files because I’m only doing about 5 strokes per tooth to dress them up. Above all, I don’t hesitate to pull a worn set of round files (and send them to the metal recycling bin). I’m much more productive with fresh round files. A new round file just feels GOOD!

I’ve noticed a difference between brands of round files. While I like most Woodsman Pro products, I’ve noticed that their round files aren’t particularly straight (true). Notice the daylight gap that varies while I roll the Woodsman Pro round file in position. These microns of difference contribute to a lack of uniformity. I’ve noticed that the Pferd brand round files tend to be more true and straight.

Richwood Timber LLC richwoodtimberllc

Walnut, cherry and white oak veneer logs and processed lumber have a strong export market, bringing near record prices. Unfortunately cherry is of better quality and more abundant in the Eastern US, mature walnut is not very abundant and large high quality white oak trees are more abundant further south. So these markets are not very significant here except for the fortunate few. There is a growing export market for red oak and maple but not at the historic prices that we have been accustomed to, especially if we have to ship logs and lumber to China to get the lowest cost conversion for our furniture.

By this summer we will have a much better picture of the trend in the housing market and what timber and log prices will do in the short term. We have several harvests in the works this spring and the bids on those sales will tell us more.

Custom Bird Surveys Available

The days are getting longer which means migratory birds will soon be passing through or nesting in our local woods. The Mississippi River corridor is crucial to the migration of many of North America's bird species and this habitat just happens to be near where we live (or we happen to be by it – no need to split hairs). This provides the residents of this region with opportunities to be able to witness (see and hear) many unique birds. The forested areas left in the Driftless Area, with its steep bluffs and associated small streams and rivers, provide some of these exceptional birds places to live and reproduce throughout the spring and summer months.

The songs and sights of the birds are much appreciated by people as it is a recognized occasion of the change of seasons and it seems that only these small animals know just the right notes and rhythms to their songs. It is not uncommon for people to go on bird hikes in local forests during this season, whether by yourself or with a group, but it is a great opportunity when an experienced birder is willing to walk with you. This year the



Kickapoo Woods Cooperative is offering its membership a chance to get to know the birds that live or travel through their own woods...that's right, in your own woods. KWC has contracted with a skilled and practiced bird surveyor to provide this service to its membership. The cost of this service will be \$22.50 per hour plus mileage. Bird surveys could last anywhere from two hours to five hours depending on the amount of acreage and desire of the landowner. Contact Paul Bader at 625-2515 or domehome@mwt.net if you are interested in this service. Each landowner will be provided with a list of birds heard or seen on their land, given advice on how to improve their bird interactions &

necessary tools, and of course invited to come along on the bird survey to learn the tricks of the trade. If you are eager to discover the diversity and variety of birds living or traveling through your land (surveys are done at different times to find out if they are traveling or homesteading) please contact Paul and then a survey time can be scheduled.

Forestry Tools Workshop

A cold winter day found more than 30 intrepid souls gathered to learn about forestry tools last January 20. The day began in the garage with some background information on the Kickapoo Woods Cooperative and the basic ideas of sustainable forestry. After this, we adjourned to the great outdoors, where KWC Board member Paul Richardson demonstrated the use of the Chainsharp and Stump Vise for chain saw sharpening. Paul and his son Bruce do the forestry management work on his hundreds of acres near Hillsboro, and he shared the lessons of his experience and some of the secrets of chain saw sharpening. Bruce's article in this issue also shares the technical aspects of this process.

The next demonstration was pruning, so we followed Brian to a patch of young walnut trees with more than enough branches. The Japanese style hand saw is

cleverly designed to facilitate effective pruning, and is easy to use, even with such a long handle.

The next demonstration involved cutting down two trees and provided opportunities to see several tools in action. Paul Bader showed how two measuring devices help foresters to estimate a tree's height and how much timber it will yield. This led to discussions of the lengths and value of logs of different species. The first tree was cut using directional felling chainsaw techniques and wedges, and landed up the hill as planned. The second tree was first lassoed with a rope, then attached to a large come-along up the hill to keep tension on the tree and get it to land up hill, which it did. The

Member Profile: Dick O'Gara

by Patrick Dayton

"We've spent decades clearing the land for farming and now he's planting trees." Dick O'Gara has heard this comment from his late father, other family members, and even neighbors since he took over his family farm in 1990 and transitioned from traditional farming to forestry by planting agriculture cropland to mixed hardwoods and pines and then managing the timber resources. Dick and his wife, Carolyn, live in New Richmond but own a 110-acre farm in the Town of Wellington in Monroe County. Having the farm in his family since 1859 (great grandparents - Patrick and Mary O'Gara) Dick grew up working on the farm until he entered the navy after high school. Out of military service, he received a bachelor's degree in earth science and math from UW- La Crosse and then a master's degree in earth science from the University of Houston. Dick taught these subjects to junior high students at North Crawford and New Richmond for over thirty years.



Paul Richardson demonstrated chainsaw sharpening.

continued on next page

logs were cut and then pulled out of the woods with a winch with a long cable, the type of winch that is available for sale or for rent through the woods co-op. The logs were scaled on the ground as well, revealing that the estimates given by the tools were reasonably accurate, a bit high.

Back at the garage, hot coffee, cookies, and cheese and crackers were enjoyed, and some chose to purchase some of the tools demonstrated that day.

Everybody learned things that day, not only about using the tools, but also about forestry, and it was great to see some people who are experienced with the tools explain and show how they are used.

The O’Gara property includes upland oaks and hickories, oak and walnut pole-size plantings, farmland, pine plantations, springs, a small creek, Christmas trees, and native white pines that tower close to 100 feet tall. Some of the forested land is in the Managed Forest Law program with the state and some of it is not. Dick is currently successfully managing a Christmas tree plantation but plans on eventually transforming it to a natural forest. Along with the managing the Christmas trees, he has planted native trees throughout his property, pruned trees, hired timber stand improvement (TSI) labor to cut/spray boxelder, completed TSI himself, conducted timber harvests, and hosted a landowner field day on his land. Of special note from his forestry work, Dick undertook a project this year of planting trees in farm fields on both sides of his driveway. The unique aspect of this planting is that one side was direct seeded (planted acorns and walnuts) and the other side was planted with seedlings. This allowed him to plant in fall and spring and will offer him an opportunity in the future to investigate and compare both styles of reforestation. Dick owns a variety of forestry tools and equipment such as chainsaws, tractors, and mowers to conduct the forestry work on his property. The entire family loves to hunt turkeys and deer on the farm and his children (two daughters and a son) also help with tree planting and the Christmas tree harvests.

Dick has been a Kickapoo Wood Cooperative member since 2003. He enjoys the opportunities to journey into other people’s wood-

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lands and discuss forest related topics and the forestry assistance the Co-op offers. Along with being a member of the Kickapoo Woods Cooperative, Dick belongs to the Bad Axe chapter of WWOA (Wisconsin Woodland Owners Association), the Walnut Council, the and the Wisconsin Christmas Tree Producers Association and this past summer, he participated in the Wisconsin Master Woodland

Member profile, continued on page 8

Become a member and enjoy:

- Free woods walk to evaluate your forest
- Information, support and education.

Thank You!

I want to join the Kickapoo Woods Co-op.

- Enclosed is \$100. for
- Voting Membership
 - Associate membership

In addition, I would like to:

- Make a donation of \$ _____
- Work on a committee
- Offer a skill to support the co-op's work:

Please print.

Name _____

Address _____

City State Zip _____

Phone _____

Email _____

Total acres _____ Forested acres _____

County _____

Township _____ Section _____

Do you have a management plan?

Yes: MFL__ Stewardship__ Other__

No: I need one__ What is it? _____

*Member profile, continued from page 7***Events Coming Up**

These events are in the planning stages for the months ahead. Watch for more information in the local papers, on our website or from our email list.

April 21 - Shiitake mushroom and maple syrup production.

May 12 - Chainsaw Safety. Send \$50 to KWC to register.

July 14 - Kickapoo Woods Cooperative Annual Meeting, Soldiers Grove Park Lions Shelter.

Steward program, which was held in the Ashland area. He has also done his fair share of reading forestry literature.

There are future opportunities on the land for planting more trees, doing stream habitat work, and possibly planting a prairie all of which Dick looks forward to. Dick and Carolyn eventually plan on moving to the land so they can tend the trees and the land more closely. They enjoy the property and understand their responsibility as good land stewards. As Dick explains it: "I've certainly made some mistakes, especially in the early years of our ownership of the farm. However, now I am a strong believer that in the process of silviculture, which is the art and science of growing forests for timber and other values, a good management plan is a must. The utilization of professional foresters in the writing and carrying out of a plan is very important. I firmly believe that with a professionally written management plan our woodlands are much healthier and much more productive than they otherwise would be. Over the past ten years or so of attending forestry events throughout Wisconsin, I've seen plenty of evidence for this. A sustainable approach to managing woodlands is very much positive impact forestry."

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.

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