

# Living Forest NEWS

WINTER 2004

A Publication of the **Living Forest Cooperative**

## Meet our members: Michael and Wendy Wethington

### BIRCH BEND ON LAKE NAMAKAGON

For over fifteen years Michael and Wendy Wethington had a dream to acquire Birch Bend and return it as much as possible to its pre-settlement condition. The property on Lake Namakagon was unified from several parcels by environmentally aware Judson Bemus. It is now the largest parcel (33 acres) of continuous shoreline property (almost 3,000 feet) on the lake. Birch Bend is on the western shore of Lake Namakagon, within the Upper Namakagon River Watershed, and is part of the floodplain that exists between the river and Namakagon Lake. Its management can be critical to the water quality of the lake. In 2001 the Wethingtons were able to realize part of their dream and acquire the property.

#### Developing a plan

Then began work on the second part of their dream: the long-term vision for the property—restoration. The Wethingtons worked with Sarah Boles of Northern Native Plantscapes in restoration landscaping around the structures planting native forbs and shrubs. In looking for resources Michael and Wendy were referred to the Living Forest Cooperative. Charly Ray, LFC manager and forest ecologist, in consultation with the Wethingtons developed a Forest Restoration and Stewardship Plan for Birch Bend. Eleven acres were entered in the Managed Forest Law program working with Brian Klobucher of WDNR. Bids were solicited for Phase One of the plan and Jay Cablk (LFC board member) of Jay's Tree Care was chosen as the contract logger for the project.

Owners previous to Bemus and the Wethingtons had exploited timber re-grown after the 19th and early 20th century logging. This left a low-quality red

maple forest and an aspen clear-cut planted with white spruce. The general restoration goal for the Birch Bend property is to transition the red maple and cut-over aspen stands into mixtures of long-lived conifer and hardwood species such as white pine, hemlock, white cedar, white spruce, tamarack, yellow birch, and sugar maple, species typical of the pre-settlement period. Because Michael and Wendy use the property for recreation and appreciate its aesthetic beauty one of the management objectives is to make the transition with minimal site disturbance.

#### Phase One—Summer '04

Phase One on about ten acres is complete and Michael reports that he is pleased with the result and appreciated Jay's careful, neat work. During cutting, standing trees were not damaged; slash and stumps were kept low to preserve the aesthetics of the area. Sarah undertook a plant inventory of the property to help determine the appropriate mix of seedlings. 660 trees were planted. Because of the deer browse problem many of the seedlings were planted in exclosures, tube protectors, or cages.

#### The future

Michael comments that the Living Forest Cooperative "is an incredible asset for northwest Wisconsin," that the talent of the staff and LFC's goals enhanced the Wethingtons own goals of giving back to the environment and the area. While Michael and Wendy may never see the long-term results of their efforts, they find enjoyment in doing the work and leaving this legacy to future generations.



**The previous owner clearcut the aspen, but also planted white spruce. The Coop will release the spruce from competition with aspen, raspberry, ironwood, and hazel next spring. Take a look at our computer forest projection on page x**

# Board Report

Since our Fall newsletter the LFC Board of Directors has met three times, two official board meetings and a planning meeting. Board work falls generally into two categories: (1) assessing present LFC viability and strategic planning to strengthen our future, and (2) addressing membership services.

At our October planning meeting we focused on our business plan. The business plan, developed in conjunction with USDA Value-Added grant funding, includes a value-added component. However, while that may be feasible in the long-term, the current emphasis is on member services.

It is important to increase the land under LFC management plans. This will provide the best return to members on sales, and facilitate the move to value-added products which eventually will bring more revenue for the individual landowner.

## To New LFC Members

First, a hearty welcome! We're happy to have you as a member of the cooperative.

Have you looked over your packet of new member materials and completed your questionnaire? Your questionnaire will help you think through and clarify your woodland plans.

Some of you may not be familiar with the options you have to manage your land. You may have general ideas that you want your woods to be beautiful; a source of income; or perhaps you sense some type of active restoration is necessary. Put these thoughts on your questionnaire. LFC's forest ecologists Charly, General Manager, and Jason, Assistant Manager, can help you work through your ideas and determine how to best achieve your goals.

Planning for your woodland is a challenging and exciting endeavor. Each owner and property make a unique combination. Each owner approaches his or her property with a personal vision. The services of-

One mailing to potential new members was completed and will be followed up with a second mailing. As of November 17 there were 15 new members. The goal is to reach 20,000 acres under management and various recruitment efforts will continue. This goal is a priority.

Reaching a sustainable number of billable hours per month, recruitment of a contract forester, and forest certification options are on-going concerns.

Membership services include planning field days (see the information on the up-coming FISTA workshop in this issue), maintaining the web site, and, for the staff, working with members on woodland plans, sale preparation and monitoring.

fered by LFC are tailored to each owner/property combination with the goal of practicing sustainable forestry. Becoming more knowledgeable throughout this process, we deepen our relationship with and appreciation for our forests.

And, don't forget to take advantage of the membership benefit woods-walk with Charly or Jason. At least, let them know now that you would like to do it; they will schedule your walk for the spring. The woods-walk will give you an overview of the total ecological condition of your woodland.



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# happenings

## Staff Promotion

Jason Fischbach, who provides solid forestry services and has good relationship skills with members, was promoted to full-time staff in September. Charly Ray and he are continuing their fine work which brings respect to the Co-op and provides members with exceptional woodland management services.

## Sustainable Forestry Collaborative December 3-4

Charly, Jason, Kent, and Karen attended the collaborative which was held at the Audubon Center of the Northwoods in Sandstone, Minnesota. This collaborative's topic was "Strengthening the Path to Profitability inn 2005." Sessions included building cash flow without grants, the new Master Logger Program, and marketing character wood.

The collaborative emphasizes learning from each other -- what we're doing, how we're doing it, and what works and doesn't work. We had the opportunity to network with people from the northwest to Maine, from organizations just getting started to others well-established.

The collaborative is sponsored by the Community Forestry Resource Center, Cooperative Development Services, Rapid Improvement Associates LLC, and The Home Depot Foundation.



## Working with the Nature Conservancy

The Living Forest Cooperative is proud to be working with the Nature Conservancy to assist with their management of the beautiful Caroline Lake Reserve which protects the headwaters of the Bad River. This 1,000 acre property was purchased by the Conservancy as part of their regional focus on the Bad River Watershed and enrolled in the state Managed forrest Law (MFL) program, in part, to demonstrate sustainable forestry. The Cooperative is assisting with the set up of a timber sale covering 220 acres of the property. The following article is primarily about a protective water quality designation on the property, but mentions the Cooperative's work.

## Legal protections planned for Caroline Lake

Timber harvesting to occur near protected area

By ANDREW BROMAN

Most of the Bad River headwater, Caroline Lake, would receive permanent legal protection from development under a state Department of Natural Resources proposal.

"Lakes that don't have a bunch of homes around them are becoming quite rare in Northern Wisconsin," said Thomas Meyer, a biologist with the DNR. "(This is) a keystone to protecting this larger region."

The Nature Conservancy owns the 325 acres that would qualify for legal protection, known as articles of dedication. The land encompasses most of Caroline Lake and East and West Lakes, extending about 250 feet from the lakes' edge, according to Matt Dallman of the conservancy.

The conservancy intends to harvest timber within another 723 acres it owns alongside the spot proposed for dedication, Dallman said. The goal is to harvest timber without harming the area's ecology, he said.

The Living Forest Cooperative intends to work with the conservancy to mark trees and help to decide where and when to cut. The plan for harvesting would consider factors such as tree ages, types and quality, Dallman said.

The conservancy bought most of the land surrounding Caroline Lake in 1997 realizing that protecting the Bad River's headwaters was necessary to protect Chequamegon Bay water quality, Dallman said.

The conservancy matched a \$292,000 grant from the state's Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Program to purchase the land from Georgia-Pacific, a paper company.

Caroline Lake is one of 410 natural areas around the state. About a third of those sites have articles of dedication, which includes protection from development and condemnation for other uses, such as pipeline and road construction, Meyer said. Nine natural areas are in Ashland County.

Several threatened species of insects and animals are at the lake, including two butterflies, dorcas copper and freija fritillary and three birds, the yellow-bellied flycatcher, the bald eagle and the osprey.

*Reprinted with permission from the Nov. 19, 2004 Ashland Daily Press.*

## wanted

### NEW MEMBERS

LFC is actively recruiting new members. If you have a friend or neighbor you think might be interested, please put us in contact or have them call us. Word of mouth is our best source of advertising!

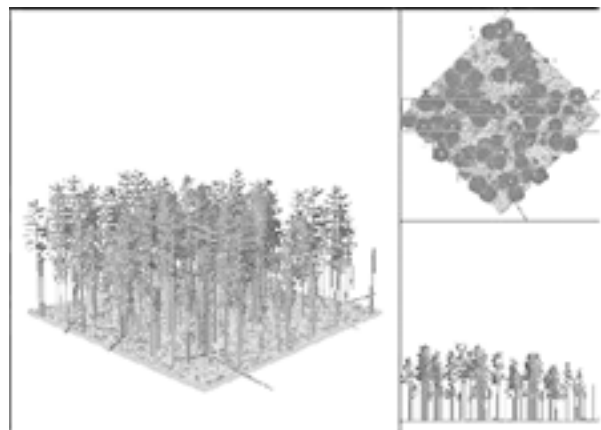
Wishing Your  
Family, Forest, and  
Friends a Peaceful  
and Prosperous  
New Year

*Charly & Jason*



## Computer modeling

The Cooperative used computer modeling to provide Micael and Wendy Wethington a 100 year vision of what their forest would look like with the forest restoration plan. The increase in diversity of trees, age classes, and conifers is clear in this image of the anticipated future forest. *See related story on page 1.*



# Forest Stewardship News

## Exotics and Deer Impact Our Forest Diversity

As we work through our woodland management plans and come to reforestation and restoration, we inevitably must deal with the high deer population. How do we keep deer from browsing our tree seedlings? We know deer inhibit natural regrowth, and if we plant seedlings without protection, deer treat them as free lunch.

A study reported in The Daily Press recently confirms woodland owners' experience and details damage caused by over-browsing. The following are excerpts from the report.

### Study says deer, exotic plants hurt forest diversity

The forests of northern Wisconsin have had significant losses of native plant species in the past 50 years, a new study concludes.

The study blames an oversize deer herd and the arrival of exotic plants as key factors in the changes, which were not found on tribal forests where deer numbers are kept lower and development is closely controlled.

Scientists at the University of Wisconsin-Madison did the comparative study by returning to forest tracts mapped in the early 1950s by the late John T. Curtis, author of "The Vegetation of Wisconsin," and fellow US botanist Grant Cottam.

The work done by the two gives Wisconsin an ecological baseline that exists in few other places in the world.

Researchers noted that when deer feed on plants, the plants that replace them tend to be the so-called "generalists" such as ferns, sedges and grasses, as well as invasive species such as orange hawkweed, Kentucky bluegrass and hemp nettle.

Thomas Rooney, a senior scientist at the UW-Madison and one of the study's authors, said the changes can make places less favorable for tree seedlings to germinate and for some insects, birds and animals to live.

For example, removing a plant such as wild sasparilla takes away a valuable food source for the wood thrush and hermit thrush. . . [The researchers] found that plant diversity was lowest where

deer numbers were highest and there was little or no hunting pressure.

But parcels on tribal lands, where development is more tightly controlled and deer herds are smaller due to year-round hunting, had an increase in native species.

On the Menominee Indian reservation, deer numbers total about 10.4 deer per square mile, according to Don Reiter, fish and wildlife manager for the 360 square miles of tribal land.

The deer population is about twice as high in the surrounding deer management units, according to the state Department of Natural Resources.

*Reprinted with permission from The Daily Press, June 11, 2004. The study by Thomas Rooney and Don Waller was published in the June issue of Conservation Biology.*



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## investment

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General Manager if interested.

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# Field Report

## Learning to Cruise

By Pam Dryer

Have you wondered how foresters estimate board feet or cords of wood from a standing forest? Does it seem a mystery? It did to me until we held in a Living Forest Cooperative Field Day at our place and learned how to conduct a timber cruise. Tom Piikkila, DNR forester, and Charly Ray, LFC Manager, showed us how to make and use a cruise stick.

About 20 people came to the Dryer's home and woods on the clear, but cold morning on October 2, 2004. It was Applefest in Bayfield, but we provided a quiet alternative in southern Bayfield County. Participants included members of the Cooperative, as well as folks who are woodland owners from the area, but not coop members. Two women even came all the way from Spooner!

The field day participants went into our recently logged maple forest and tried our hand at estimating board feet of saw logs and cords of pulpwood using the cruise

sticks we had made in our garage. Tom and Charly first demonstrated how to use the cruise stick and had each of us attempt to use our own. They then helped us work through a simple worksheet that the foresters use (simple for them, but difficult for the math-challenged) to document and estimate timber from standing wood.

Everyone went home with their own cruise stick and some new knowledge. Many people also made new acquaintances or visited with long-time friends.

As always, Charly Ray did an excellent job of advertising, organizing and running the event. Thanks to Charly, Tom and all of you who participated! We were really glad to host you all.



Co-op Member Amy Wilson of Cornucopia, Janine Rueter and Doris Washburn, of Saronia, learning how to use cruise sticks with assistance from Tom Piikkila, DNR Forester (at right) during the LFC October 2 Timber Cruising Field Day.

## workshop

### Chainsaw Safety in January

LFC will sponsor a Chainsaw Safety and Training field day on January 15, 2005. This workshop is conducted by the Forest Industry Safety & Training Alliance (FISTA). The course is open to loggers and non-loggers alike. The class qualifies for credit under SFI training or certification.

Class begins at 9:00 a.m. at the Maple Community Center, located on Hwy. 2 one-half mile west of the junction with County F in Maple, Wisconsin. One-on-one tree cutting will take place following classroom instruction at the site of the Living Forest Cooperative's "Raven's Timber Sale." Directions will be provided at the Community Center.

The registration fee is \$20 for loggers and \$40 for others. Call the LFC office at 715-682-0007 or toll-free 866-995-9663(WOOD) to register. Please mention if you are a logger who qualifies for the \$20 fee. Class size is limited.

If you would like to audit the class as a non-participant, the fee is \$5. There is no limit to auditing participants. **Registration closes on January 7.** Registration is on a first-come first-served basis. Registration fees are non-refundable for no-shows. Pre-registration is required. The class may be cancelled if there is insufficient registration. If so, we will notify participants.

Come dressed for the weather and half a day outside. Bring your own chainsaw and safety equipment if you have it. A limited number of saws and equipment will be available at the site.





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**CALENDAR OF EVENTS**

**JANUARY 15**

FISTA Workshop. LFC Field Day. See information inside.

**JANUARY 19**

LFC Board Meeting. 6:00 p.m. 422 Third St. W, Ashland. All members are welcome to attend.

**FEBRUARY 5**

Living Green Conference, Duluth, 12-5pm 230 E. Skyline Parkway  
info: 218-726-1828 or willow@eagle-ecosource.org

**FEBRUARY 8-9 OR 15-16**

Training for foresters and land managers in watershed health initiatives. Contact Mike Kroenke, UW-ext., Northern Great Lakes Visitors' Center. 715-685-9983.

**FEBRUARY 16**

LFC Board Meeting. 6:00 p.m. 422 Third St. W, Ashland. All members are welcome to attend.

**FEBRUARY 22-24**

Superior Days in Madison. Talking with our legislators about ecological issues in the north. Contact Fariva Pendleton. ces.uwex.edu or 715-395-1363 for more information about attending.

**APRIL 7**

Stopping Aquatic Invasive Species. Lakewoods Resort, Cable. Contact Mike Kroenke, UW-ext., Northern Great Lakes Visitors' Center. 715-685-9983.

**MAY 14**

Water Monitoring Training & Clean Boat Workshop. Contact Mike Kroenke, UW-ext., Northern Great Lakes Visitors' Center. 715-685-9983.

**LIVING FOREST COOPERATIVE BOARD**

Dave Martinson, Bayfield <i>President</i>	779-5055
Jay Cablk, Ashland <i>Treasurer/Secretary</i>	746-2059
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**LIVING FOREST COOPERATIVE STAFF**

Charly Ray	General Manager
Jason Fischbach	Forest Ecologist



HEY! You can now call LFC **toll free!**  
866-995-9663 (WOOD)

Local: 682-0007 Cell: 209-1425

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