



# The Voice for Illinois Forests

*Acting on issues that impact rural and community forests and promoting forestry in Illinois*

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## **\*\*Inside this Issue\*\***

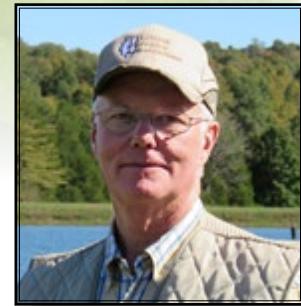
President Message	1
Association News	2
Annual Meeting	5
Tree Farm Field Day	7
Partner News	8
Featured Articles:	9
Don't Fence Me In	
Oak Recovery Plan	
Oak Awareness Month	
Impacts of Invasives on Oak	
Not Your Grandfather's Timber	
Commentary	13
Walnuts & Acorns	
History of Conservation	
Quarterly Features	14
Cutting Edge: You Are Here	
Invasive: Bush Honeysuckle	
... and more!	

**IFA Website**  
[www.ilforestry.org](http://www.ilforestry.org)

## **Message from the President**

*By Mike McMahan*

I was checking my retirement account the other day, and a thought crossed my mind. What would my life be like today, if I hadn't invested for the future years ago?



"Buy low and sell high." "Save for a rainy day." Advice that truly pays off when you are in it for the long haul. Sure, there are ups and downs. Markets fluctuate. We have some rainy days. But, generally, if we make wise investments, they pay off in the long run.

Investing is something we all do, in more ways than one. We spend many years in school before we ever make a dime. We invest time helping our kids grow up to have successful lives. We invest in homes, land, and in the communities where we live. Some of us even invest in tree planting and forest management!

I joined the IFA Board 6 years ago because I thought the investment of volunteer time would pay off in knowledge and advice about my land – and it did! Then something special happened. I realized how much my time and efforts and financial support meant to this organization. Seeing IFA from the inside out helped me realize how even modest investments by volunteers and members can make a difference.

Last week a small group of us got together in Springfield for an envelope stuffing party. We sent a letter, membership application, and survey to former members – people who, for whatever reason, did not stay with us. We cheerfully donated our time and travel expense. One of our most faithful Board Directors, Carol Bryant, donated \$300 to pay for the postage! We all believe the investments we have been making in IFA will pay off, and help the organization grow to reach its potential.

If you appreciate the value of investing, please think about how you could make a difference in the future of the Illinois Forestry Association. Consider volunteering – you can learn a lot by being better connected to the technical experts and veteran landowners on our Board and committees. You don't have to "know-it-all" coming in – we need more landowners to get involved that are still learning. Like our mothers told us, "Many hands make light work!"

Too busy? Consider increasing your membership level to Supporting or Sustaining, or making a tax-deductible contribution. At the very least, hang in there with us while we make the necessary improvements that will grow our numbers to the point that we can truly make a difference in Springfield – and throughout Illinois.

I'm humbled by the chance to serve this organization as President, and plan to continue for another year, if you'll allow me the privilege. I want to see my investment – and yours – lead to a long and fruitful life for IFA!

As always, thanks for your membership and support.

*Mike McMahan*

## Executive Director Notes

by Stephanie Brown



Summer may be winding down, but things are heating up in terms of fall activities associated with the IFA. Final preparations are underway for our

10th Annual Meeting. We have a great program lined up for September 25th.

Attendees have two options for pre-tours – the first being Heartland Hardwoods north of Effingham. Craig Willenborg, co-owner and former president of the IL Wood Products Assn will guide attendees through this commercial sawmill and discuss the many products they make - from pallet lumber to oak flooring and trim, to composted mulch.

The second option will be a Tree and Plant ID Walking Tour on the grounds of the Ballard Nature Center. This is sure to be popular, so we will have multiple instructors and divide into smaller groups for a more enjoyable learning experience.

Both pre-tour groups will converge for a boxed lunch, as others begin arriving to register for the main event at the Center. If you haven't been to the Ballard Nature Center before, you are in for a treat!

We have a terrific slate of speakers confirmed for the afternoon – see the full schedule on Page 5. We even built in a little social time at the KC Hall near the hotel where many will be staying.

The next day, Tree Farm will be having its Annual Field Day at Tony and Jill Kreke's place South of Effingham. Check out their event flier on Page 7. Hope to see you there!

October will be bringing more than beautiful fall colors this year. Plans are underway for the first-ever Oak Awareness Month, dubbed OAKtober. This should be a wonderful opportunity to raise awareness about the need for forest management to maintain oak ecosystems.

We are hosting an oak restoration session during the Illinois Arborist Association's Fall Conference at Tinley Park, October

21st, and also look forward to facilitating an encore to a workshop we participated in last April at Trail of Tears State Forest. Stay tuned for updates, as our plans for OAKtober events continue to unfold.

You may notice this issue contains several articles related to oak trees and forests. We are grateful to all of the authors, and plan to further share this content in a Special OAKtober Edition of the IFA Newsletter.

It's part of our ongoing effort to be more open and accessible to potential members and contributors. We'll use the special issue to reach out beyond our membership so that more people learn about the IFA and what we do.

Subscriptions are starting to come in from participants in IDNR's Forestry Development Act (FDA) program. If you have a District Forester-approved plan, you should be receiving a renewal mailing from IDNR. In it there is an insert from IFA. We are offering a free electronic newsletter to those FDA participants that opt-in, and we are also inviting everyone to join our association.

The new FDA newsletter will be much different than what you are reading now - shorter and more focused on content specific to the FDA program. Information that District Foresters would like to convey that will help landowners stay in line with program requirements.

There are a myriad of issues that have arisen from the state budget impasse. Soil & Water Conservation Districts are still in crisis mode. The Mason Tree Nursery will close at the end of September, as all of the employees received lay-off notices and instructions to apply for other state jobs. Union Tree Nursery, previously shuttered, was already a concern. The Illinois Forestry Development Council's new Executive Director has received his layoff notice, as well, leaving the status of the Council and its funding in question.

These are serious issues for our Legislative/Policy Committee to examine and address. Stay tuned for a belated State Forester Report, and more, in the special amended OAKtober edition. Now more than ever, we need everyone with an interest in forestry to band together and join The Voice for Illinois Forests!



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## Secretary Comments

by Dave Gillespie

I want to bring to your attention some items of concern that will be happening soon.

One – the IFA Annual Meeting is coming up soon (Sept. 25 & 26). The IFA Board of Directors has approved some changes to the IFA By-Laws. These proposed changes have been sent by e-mail to all active IFA members with an e-mail address, and via U.S. postage to those active IFA members without an e-mail address. Please watch for the proposed changes to the By-Laws. The changes will be voted on during the IFA business meeting at the Annual Meeting.

Two – I received some very disturbing news a few days ago. Due to budget cuts in the IDNR, lay-off notices have been sent to the personnel at the Mason State Tree Nursery. The notices are effective September 30, 2015. Potentially this could be devastating to reforestation efforts and cost share programs sponsored by the IDNR and the NRCS.

To my knowledge, there is no private nursery in Illinois that can produce the quantity of seedlings needed for the state and federal tree planting programs,

plus the thousands of seedlings routinely obtained from the Mason Nursery for wildlife plantings and programs sponsored by the Wildlife Division of the IDNR, and other wildlife oriented agencies. Seedlings grown at the Mason State Tree Nursery are grown from Illinois seed.

For example, seedlings to be planted in Northern Illinois come from seed gathered in Northern Illinois, and so on throughout the State. With seedlings purchased from an out-of-state nursery there is no guarantee the seed source was from Illinois. Therefore the quality of seedlings goes down and plantations are doomed to fail. Also, the Mason Nursery is unique in that it produces thousands of prairie plants that are planted annually by the state and private landowners in the effort to restore prairies throughout the prairie region of Illinois. I have contacted Senator Sullivan and informed him of this tragedy, and asked that he look into the matter. More to come later.

Three – The IFA Membership Committee hosted an envelope stuffing party on August 18, 2015 at which about 300 envelopes were stuffed with material that asked members who recently has let their IFA dues lapse, to come back to the IFA. Included in the material was a letter from IFA President Mike McMahan, a membership renewal form, and a survey asking for their input regarding the IFA. There was also a stamped return envelope included in the mailing. We certainly want to welcome these former members back in the association.

Please contact me if you have any questions.

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## State Forester Fighting Fires Out West

*At press time, Tom Wilson was leading a crew of Illinois firefighters in response to the unprecedented wildfire season in the Western US. Our thoughts and prayers are with all of the brave men and women in harm's way.*

*Type 2 Initial Attack Crew members, all of whom have specialized training in wildland firefighting, typically use hand equipment including shovels and chainsaws to dig fire lines and clear brush and fallen trees that could provide fuel to the advancing wildfire.*

*Watch for the return of the State Forester Report in the next issue.*

# IFA Addresses High School Students at the 87th State FFA Convention

### "So you want to be a Forest Ranger? What foresters REALLY do."

That was the focus of a career development session offered by the Illinois Forestry Association during the Illinois FFA Convention this year.

"Most people confuse foresters with loggers, or think they lead a romantic life riding around in a pickup truck and taking care of campgrounds. Learn about the diverse range of careers that are part of the forestry profession. Scope out some tools of the trade used to measure trees, fight wildfires, and manage forests. Find out what it takes to be a successful forester in today's world, and why people choose this path in life."

The IFA team of presenters included Chris Whittom, Paul Deizman, Jim Kirkland, Roger Smith, Susan Romano, Tom Desulis, and Stephanie Brown.



In keeping with the others, Dr. Susan Romano donned some clothing representative of an academic career path. She also brought a few cool tools and talked a little about how the forestry profession uses advanced technology - including programs that the students could access on their cell phones.



"So you want to be a forest ranger?" That was the title of the career workshop that IFA put on for this terrific group of FFA students. We shared information about career possibilities and dispelled some common misperceptions about forestry.



Chris Whittom was first up - representing field forestry. Before recently accepting the position of Forest Stewardship & Legacy Program Manager with IDNR, Chris spent many years as a consulting forester. He is a member of our Technical Advisory Committee.



Jim Kirkland, from the Forest Resource Center at Dixon Springs, talked about career aspects related to wild land firefighting and prescribed burning. Jim is an IFA board member from Southern IL



Tom Desulis, the latest IFA member to join the Board, rounded out our group. Tom was formerly a high school ag teacher, so he gave us a great send off.

*Time to Register...*

## **10th Annual Meeting of the Illinois Forestry Association**

### **“Woods, Wildlife, and Wildflowers”**

**Friday, September 25, 2015**

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9:30a	Optional Pre-Tour 1 – (ends at 11:30a) Heartland Hardwoods, N. of Effingham	5:15p	Break – Silent Auction Bidding
10:00a	Optional Pre-Tour 2 – (ends at 11:45a) Tree and Plant ID Walk – Ballard Nature Center	5:30	Catered Dinner
Noon	Boxed Lunch for tour participants – Ballard Nature Center	6:30	IFA Business Meeting
12:30	Registration – Ballard Nature Center, Altamont, IL	7:30	Meeting Adjourns/Silent Auction Closes
1:00p	Welcome and Opening Remarks – Mike McMahan, IFA President	8:00p	Social Time – KC Hall – Across the street from Comfort Suites on Fayette Avenue
1:15	Forest Restoration and Charismatic Megafauna – Mike Reichenbach, Associate Extension Professor, University of Minnesota		
2:00	Break – Silent Auction Bidding		
2:15	Deer Population and Hunting Regulation Trends in Illinois – Tom Micetich, IDNR Deer Project Manager		
3:00	Wood ID Basics and Other Fun Facts – John Phelps, SIU/IL Wood Products Assn, retired		
3:45	Break -- Silent Auction Bidding		
4:15	Insights on the Ecology, Characteristics and Propagation of Some Common Woodland Wildflowers – John C. Marlin, University of Illinois		

#### **Silent Auction**

Please consider donating an item for the Silent Auction. Handmade wood crafts, wildlife prints, gift baskets, and tools have all been popular with attendees in the past. Contact Stan Sipp in advance so he can prepare the bid sheet, then bring your item to the meeting. Cash donations are also welcome, and go to support our charitable mission. Send the name and/or short description of the item, name of the donor, and suggested minimum bid (if desired) to [skipp@illinois.edu](mailto:skipp@illinois.edu). Many thanks!

#### **Lodging**

A block of rooms has been reserved for Friday night at Comfort Suites, 1310 W. Fayette Rd., Effingham, IL 62401. Call 217/342 3151, Mon-Fri, between 7a and 3p, and request the IFA/Tree Farm group rate of \$89, plus tax. Comfort Suites is located near Exit 159 off I-57/I-70. Driving east on Fayette Ave., it will be on your left, just past Niemerg's Steak House.

**Saturday, September 26, 2015**

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**Tony and Jill Kreke Tree Farm**

#### **List of session topics will include:**

- Timber Stand Improvement**
- Control Forest Burns**
- Quail Habitats**
- White Oak Regeneration**
- Deer Habitat and Food Plots**
- Professional Timber Buyers and Loggers**
- Invasive Species Control**

### **2015 Tree Farm Field Day**

8 – 9 a.m.	Registration
9 – 11:30 a.m.	Morning Session
11:30 a.m.	Lunch and Prizes
1 – 3 p.m.	Afternoon Session

**Sawmill demo and home tour of hardwood flooring,  
trim and furniture produced on farm**

# **Annual Meeting Registration for Members \***

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Spouse/Guest \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

**Address** \_\_\_\_\_

#

<input type="checkbox"/> Friday Afternoon/Evening (includes materials, breaks, dinner)	X \$30 =	
<input type="checkbox"/> Friday Afternoon/Evening – Spouse/Guest	X \$25 =	
<input type="checkbox"/> Friday All Day (includes above, plus Pre-Tour, lunch)	X \$40 =	
<input type="checkbox"/> Friday All Day – Spouse/Guest	X \$35 =	
<input type="checkbox"/> Non-Members – add \$20 to above per person rates	X \$20 =	
<input type="checkbox"/> Saturday Tree Farm Field Day	X \$ 0	(no charge**)

**If registering for Friday a.m. Pre-Tours, please select:**

Pre-Tour 1 @ Heartland Hardwoods                              **TOTAL DUE:** \_\_\_\_\_

Pre-Tour 2 – Tree/Plant ID Walking Tour @ Ballard Nature Center

*\* Non-members add \$20 to applicable per person rates, or join IFA to receive the member rate*

**\*\* Tree Farm's Field Day lunch is on your own (not included in the meeting registration fee). A local food vendor will offer hamburgers, pork burgers and other items for sale at a reasonable price.**

**Clip and mail your registration, with check made payable to IFA:**

Illinois Forestry Association  
P.O. Box 224  
Chatham, IL 62629

**Prefer to register online? [CLICK HERE](#)**

## **Taking Care of Business...**

IFA will hold its Annual Business Meeting at 6:30 p.m. on September 25th at the Ballard Nature Center. Included on the agenda will be approval of the minutes from last year's meeting, a Treasurer's Report, consideration of proposed bylaws changes, election of officers and board members, and awards for those who have excelled in their volunteer support of the Illinois Forestry Association.

In order to save space in the newsletter, the proposed bylaws changes are being sent to members [in a separate email](#), or in the case of members with no email, via US mail. The changes brought forth have been carefully considered

and recommended by an Ad Hoc Committee consisting of Dave Gillespie, Jim Hynes, Dan Schmoker, and Stan Sipp – then subsequently discussed and approved by the board. A 2/3 vote by the members present at the Annual Meeting will be needed to approve the proposed changes.

Kurt Bobsin will deliver the report of the Nominating Committee. Mike McMahan and John Edgington are seeking to extend their terms as President and Vice President, respectively, by one year. Bill Gradle has agreed to extend his service as Immediate Past President to help bring the stability and continuity needed at this juncture in IFA's ongoing development as a non-profit organization. Dave Gillespie

will run for an additional two-year term as Secretary. Tom Desulis will be nominated as Treasurer, replacing Susan Romano, who has done an outstanding job during her many years of volunteer service to IFA. Candidates for board director include Joe FitzSimmons (Region 1), Carol Bryant and Jim Hynes (Region 2), John Dickson, Jim Kirkland, and Roger Smith (Region 4).

**Find IFA  
on Facebook!**



Members and their loved ones who use Facebook are urged to "Like" and "Share" the Illinois Forestry Association page, as well as our occasional posts.

[www.facebook.com/ILForestry](http://www.facebook.com/ILForestry)



# **Tony & Jill Kreke Tree Farm Field Day**



**Saturday, Sept. 26, 2015**

**9:00 am - 3:00 pm**

**Registration starts at 8:00 am**

*Coffee and Donuts at Registration*

**Lunch: Hamburgers and Porkburgers will be sold**

## **Presentations:**

**Timber Stand Improvement • Control Forest Burns • Quail Habitats**

**Professional Timber buyers and Loggers • White Oak Regeneration**

**Deer Habitat and Food Plots • Invasive Species Control**

## **Also:**

**Sawmill Demo**

**and Home tour of remodel with our own Hardwoods**

**Location: 7725 N. 1600<sup>th</sup> St. Effingham, IL**

South on US Rte. 45 out of Effingham, turn Left (East) onto 875<sup>th</sup> Rd. (aka Old State Police HQ Rd.), go 2.1 mi., turn R (South) and go 1.1 mi., will be on your Right!

**RSVP: Tony and Jill Kreke 217-536-5601 or 217-821-1644**

# Floyd Pagel Receives 2015 Outstanding Forestry Contribution Award

IFA Charter Member and Effingham County Tree Farmer, Floyd Pagel, was honored during the Association of Illinois Soil and Water Conservation Districts 67<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting held July 27-28 in Springfield. The award was presented by Mike McMahan, President of the IL Forestry Association.

Floyd has been practicing forest management on his property for over 35 years - or since his first land purchase in the 1970's. Tony Wagner, District Forester at the time, wrote his first management plan, recommending a timber harvest followed by timber stand improvement. Once Floyd got started, there was no stopping him. He has been guided by forestry staff, but it is fair to say that he has also guided foresters and other landowners along the way.

In 2000, Floyd was chosen as Outstanding Tree Farmer of the Year by the Illinois Tree Farm Committee for properly managing his 324 acres in Effingham County by following an IDNR approved forest stewardship plan. Floyd completed TSI on the entire acreage, cutting out competing and inferior tree

species. In his words, "You've gotta give 'em room to grow."

Floyd is happy to point out that his best trees are still standing, and he never cuts a bur or swamp white oak, preferring to leave those for wildlife. He now includes control burning as part of management to help control shade tolerant sugar maple and invasive plant species.

Floyd is a proud member of the Southern Illinois Tree Farm Committee established in 2002, has hosted two landowner field days, and also belongs to other landowner groups like the Illinois Forestry Association and Quail Unlimited. He's also a supporter of the Ballard Nature Center.

This award nomination was a team effort, led by a group of foresters who have clearly been inspired by Floyd's spirit and level of sustained accomplishment. They said that "if given the chance, talking one-on-one with Floyd about forest or wildlife management, he will teach you something every single day." And with pride he can look back at what he has created, and say "I did that."



Floyd Pagel and his proud entourage of supporters. Left to right: Wade Bloemer, IDNR District Forester; Bart Pals, Effingham SWCD Resource Conservationist; Guy Pagel, son; Shane McDearmon, IDNR District Forester; Janet Pagel, wife; Doug Pagel, son; Floyd Pagel, award recipient; Jill Kreke, Southern IL Tree Farm Committee Chair; Samantha Chiderson, Effingham SWCD; Tony Kreke, Tree Farmer and IFA Board Director; Mary Grapperhaus, IL Tree Farm Committee, and Mike McMahan, IFA President.

## Partners in Conservation: Exciting Line-up at the 2015 Farm Progress Show

The 2015 Farm Progress Show is promising to be exciting for show-goers when they visit the Partners in Conservation exhibits. Our theme this year is *"Conservation Around the World – How are YOU Making a Difference?"* We have 22 partners' exhibiting with hands-on activities and demonstrations.

During the three day event, we will hold two farmer panel discussions each day. The 10:00 am panels will discuss their experiences with conservation cropping systems such as cover crops, no-till and other practices.

The afternoon panels start at 1:00 pm with *Women in Agriculture* on Tuesday, *Beginning Farmers* on Wednesday, and *Wildlife/Woodland in AG - A Win, Win* on Thursday. Each panelists will tell their personal experiences working in agriculture and trying new ideas. We will be drawing for a Tablet after each panel discussion, so come register and listen to what farmers are saying.

Inside the tent you can see a live observation beehive and walk away with valuable pollinator ideas. On the science front, you can monitor, with on-line tools, for water resources data—groundwater and river level data, and rainfall data; learn how wildlife habitats benefits us all; calculate costs of cover crops with the new estimator tool; and more.

Outside the tent, visitors can view a soil pit, pollinator and cover crop raised beds, experience a rainwater simulator. You won't want to miss the IDNR Conservation Police trailer with stuffed animals and learn more on hunting safety.

The dates are September 1-3, 2015 located in Decatur, IL. Partners in Conservation is located on the east side of the show grounds on East Progress Avenue just off Fourth Progress Street (E26-E30).

So come and visit our site!

### Don't Fence Me In: The impact of deer exclusion on oak regeneration

by Eric J. Holzmueller and Kálmán K. Csigi  
XIV, SIU Department of Forestry

As many IFA members are aware, concern over reduced regeneration of oak and hickory species is a common theme in Illinois forests. Much of the decline has been attributed to a shift in land management practices (e.g. fire suppression, reduced harvest intensity) that favor shade-tolerant species at the expense of hard mast species. Further complicating the issue however, is the increased abundance of white-tailed deer in the United States over the past 100 years. In states with high deer densities such as Pennsylvania and West Virginia, deer have been reported to have a negative impact on forest regeneration based on their browsing preferences when in large numbers.

We wanted to examine the effects of deer in southern Illinois, an area where deer populations are not as high and hunting pressure is relatively strong. To do this we examined the vegetation inside eleven deer exclosures and compared it to vegetation outside of these exclosures (control area). The five foot tall exclosures were located at Dixon Springs Agricultural Center and had been in place for eleven years at the time of sampling.



Kálmán Csigi recording data at a deer exclusion plot.

Our results showed seedling density was similar between deer exclusion plots and control plots for all species tested. There was no statistical difference in white oak height between deer exclusion plots and control plots, however, red oak and hickory had greater height inside the deer exclusion plots compared to control plots.

While seedling densities did not significantly differ, our results indicate that deer may have a negative effect on the regeneration success of woody species in Illinois due to the decreased heights observed outside of the exclosure plots. Of particular concern is the reduced height of red oak and hickory species given the decline of hard mast species in Illinois. While density is statistically similar, the reduction in height further reduces the competitive advantage of these species and may be enough to prevent hard mast species from reaching the overstory. In addition, while not significantly different, the smaller size of white oak seedlings outside of the deer exclosure plots may portend to problems for regeneration of this species as well.

While other studies have shown reduced success of hard mast regeneration, these results have typically occurred in states with high deer densities. Our study showed similar results despite lower deer densities and relatively high hunting pressure in the area indicating that deer may be hindering development of hard mast species regeneration at a population density lower than previously thought was acceptable.

Across the region, regeneration of oak and hickory is failing due to unfavorable conditions, caused by understory shifts from both direct and indirect effects of deer browse. Proper management of these woodlands is required if oak/hickory mast wish to be regenerated and must include the reduction of deer populations as well as creating conditions in which oaks and hickories are preferred.

However, reductions in deer density are not always easily implemented. In any given area there are multiple stakeholders, e.g. hunters, farmers, foresters, and motorists that can have conflicting perspectives on the 'ideal' deer density. For example in Illinois, DNR biologists recently announced statewide populations levels are currently at desired objectives, but 41 counties within the state are below objective populations levels and populations could be increased. These comments reflect the need for wildlife biologists and foresters to continue to work together in order sustainably manage the forest ecosystems and mitigate the effects of deer in Illinois forests.



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Illinois Forestry Association - The Voice for Illinois Forests

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3 signs = \$9    4 signs = \$10  
5 signs ship for \$11  
Over 5 - requires 2 mailers

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*Send payment with name,  
shipping address, phone, and  
email, clearly describing order:*

**Stan Sipp, IFA Region 3**  
**P.O. Box 111**  
**Mansfield, IL 61854**  
**[sksipp@illinois.edu](mailto:sksipp@illinois.edu)**

### Oak Recovery Plan

by Lindsay Darling, The Morton Arboretum

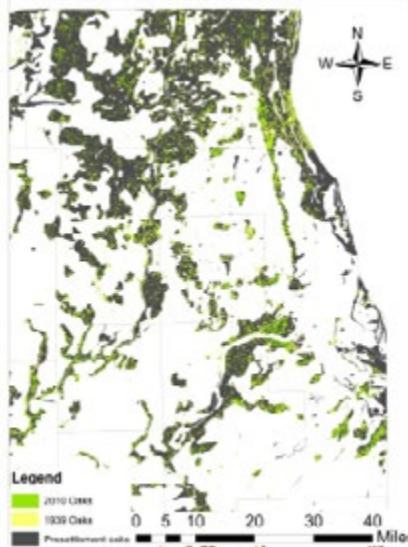
Historically, oak ecosystems were the most abundant forest type in the Chicago region, but in the last 150 years, development, changes in fire regime and the prevalence of invasive species has caused dramatic reductions in their abundance. In the 1830's, oaks made up 60 percent of the region's trees, but currently they account for only 5 percent. Oaks are not regenerating in our natural areas, and without action we could lose our oak dominated forests.

In order to restore oaks across the region, The Morton Arboretum, The Lake County Forest Preserve District, and Chicago Wilderness worked together to research and write a comprehensive oak recovery plan for northeastern Illinois. The plan aimed to create widespread understanding about the importance of oaks in our region, and to give management recommendations across land use types: from natural areas, to private property, municipal plantings and nurseries. While most of the management recommendations were created through collaborations with forest managers in this region, they can be broadly applied to oak forests across the Midwest region.

A key part of the Oak Ecosystems Recovery Plan (OERP) was mapping out the location of remnant oak ecosystems. To do this, we compared records from pre-settlement surveys with 1930's and current aerial imagery. We found that only 17 percent of the regions oak ecosystems still remain. One of the most important findings of this mapping-project was that 70 percent of the remaining ecosystems are located on privately held property. Protection and management of these privately held properties is paramount to the long term persistence of our regional oak ecosystems.

The OERP details a wide variety of management goals, and gives recommendations on how to implement them.

Below are a few of the recommendations that the plan makes for natural areas, both publically and privately owned:



- Eradicate invasive species such as buckthorn and honeysuckle
- Reintroduce regular fires or fire surrogates
- Remove some canopy level trees to increase light to the forest floor
- Manage deer populations to sustainable levels
- Promote conservation easements and conservation reserve programs focused on privately owned oak ecosystems
- Offer property tax relief to encourage the retention and good management of oak ecosystems

The OERP is written and currently in press (check the Chicago Wilderness webpage for further updates), but the work to restore oaks and oak ecosystems is just getting started. Our efforts are now shifting towards engaging land managers and the wider public in order to get the word out about why oaks are important. One of our first events is OAKtober. Governor Rauner will soon declare October to be oak awareness month, and we are encouraging groups across Illinois to plan oak related events. The Chicago Region Trees Initiative will promote your event on its webpage and together we can show that Illinois is dedicated to protecting its oak heritage.

The OERP is still growing and changing. Check back often for more updates. If you'd like to register an OAKtober event, contact Melissa Custic ([mcustic@mortonarb.org](mailto:mcustic@mortonarb.org)), and feel free to contact me with more questions about the OERP ([ldarling@mortonarb.org](mailto:ldarling@mortonarb.org)).



### OAKtober: Oak Awareness Month

by Melissa Custic, Morton Arboretum

Oak ecosystems have been a significant part of the Illinois landscape for more than 5,000 years and are now in a state of threat and decline across the entire State of Illinois.

Oaks represent strength and stature. In fact, the white oak is the Illinois State Tree! Majestic oaks create a sense of awe and wonder. These trees work for us by cleaning our air and water, reducing ambient air temperature and usage of energy. They reduce flooding and support our native wildlife. Our oaks, and trees in general, improve our well-being and support a sense of community.

That's why organizations and individuals across Illinois petitioned Governor Bruce Rauner to sign a proclamation designating October 2015, "Oak-Awareness Month." With support from 42 partners across Illinois, including forest preserve districts, commercial associations, conservation groups, state forests, and municipalities (partners listed here: <http://chicagorti.org/resources/oaktober-oak-awareness-month>), the proclamation was sent to Governor Rauner with hopes that state-level support would bolster efforts to conserve, protect, and restore threatened oak ecosystems. He signed the proclamation on August 21st!

Oak Awareness Month - known by many as OAKtober - is a chance for Illinois residents, organizations, communities, park districts, forest preserve districts, private landowners and managers, and commercial entities to celebrate our oak woodlands.

Oak-related events will be hosted across the state of Illinois this fall to boost awareness for the beauty, utility, and needs of our oak ecosystems.

## Featured Articles

### How can you be part of OAKtober?

There are many ways your organization, community, friends and neighbors can facilitate OAKtober—Oak Awareness Month—and help create awareness of the value of oaks across Illinois. Here are some suggestions:

- Host an oak workday. Individuals can help to remove invasive species to improve growing conditions for an oak ecosystem. Or plant, water, and mulch oak trees.
- Sponsor a campout. Individuals and families can camp under the oaks and learn about the history of our region and the importance that oaks play.
- Lead a walk through an oak woodland. Help participants notice all of the wildlife and plants that make up the oak ecosystem.
- Host a talk. Have a local oak expert give a public talk and invite your organization's members, and their friends and neighbors.
- Collect acorns and plant them in pots. Plan to plant them out into the community or parks in a few years.
- Find your largest oak. Identify the largest oak tree in your community or park, determine its approximate age and introduce community members to the tree and its history.
- Host an OAKtober beer or wine fest to benefit a local conservation effort.
- Engage the local schools. Encourage students to write essay or create posters on the importance of oaks to our communities and our ecosystems.
- Hug an oak tree!

Join the effort- Register your event with Melissa Custic, Chicago Region Tree Initiative Coordinator at [mcustic@mortonarb.org](mailto:mcustic@mortonarb.org) to have it posted on the Chicago Region Trees Initiative website. Happy OAKtober!



### Invasive Species Impacts on Oaks

by Chris Evans

We are learning more and more about how invasive species impact wildlife, native plant communities, and habitat, but with October being the first Oak Awareness Month in Illinois, it is a great time to take a close look at invasive species and what we know about how they impact oaks.

There are several invasive plants common in Illinois that directly impact tree species, including our oaks.

Bush honeysuckle is such a good competitor for water and nutrients that a dense stand can impact the growth rate of mature overstory trees by up to 50 percent. It is amazing to think that a 15' shrub can have that much of an impact on mature trees! Besides the competition factor, bush honeysuckle infestations cast a very deep shade, which basically eliminates all tree seedling survival, including oaks. So honeysuckle has the potential to both slow your oak trees' growth and prevent them from regenerating. This double-whammy on oaks can have significant impacts on forestlands across Illinois. Other dense-growing invasive shrubs, such as buckthorn and autumn olive, may have similar impacts.

We know that some of our invasive vines can have big impacts on our trees. Species like Japanese honeysuckle and Oriental bittersweet twine tightly around trees. This can lead to truck deformation and girdling. This is especially a problem with young saplings or in tree plantings. Other vines, like kudzu, can completely overwhelm trees by growing over them and shading them. Even mature overstory trees can fall victim to a kudzu infestation.

A couple of invasive grasses could impact oak seedling regeneration. Both Japanese stiltgrass and reed canarygrass can form very dense stands in bottomland forests. The thatch mats in these stands can keep acorns from coming into contact with the soil, and any acorns that do happen to make it to the soil and germinate have to battle with the invasive grass for space and light.



*The dense thatch produced from the invasive Japanese stiltgrass can impede tree seedling establishment and survival.*

Invasive plants aren't the only threat. Feral hogs, which already occur in Illinois in a few counties, are aggressive rooters and have been known to completely devastate tree plantings or ruin the seedlings in established forests. Luckily, the feral hogs in Illinois are being heavily managed and no large populations exist currently.

There are several invasive species that are not yet in Illinois but, if they arrive, could be devastating to our oaks. One is Sudden Oak Death, caused by an invasive pathogen. Sudden oak death has been found in the western United States and is a risk of introduction through infected nursery stock. Although this pathogen can kill oak trees, many other woody species can serve as a host and spread the disease.

The golden spotted oak borer and the oak splendor beetle are both closely related to the emerald ash borer but feed on oaks. Luckily neither has been found in Illinois. If they were introduced, we could potentially see impacts to our oak species equivalent to what emerald ash borer has done to ash trees.

Oak Awareness Month is a great reminder of how important it is to recognize threats to these trees that are vital to our ecosystems and economies. Managing existing invasive species and preventing new ones from being introduced is essential to protecting and preserving our oak species.



### This is Not your Grandfather's Timber

by Matt Peterson, IDNR District Forester

There are basically two ways for people to become timberland owners. The property is inherited or it was purchased. There are also two types of owners - active or passive.

Historically, forest ownership in Illinois has been passive. There are very few stands of timber that have not been harvested at least two times since European settlement – and almost no stand of truly “virgin timber” that has never been harvested. That may not sound like a passive approach, but it was. The passive approach was, and still is, that timber just takes care of itself.

Decades ago, if the timber was considered to be overgrown, livestock were put in the woods to “clean it up”. There were some trees cut on an as-needed basis, for personal use around the farm and for firewood. The “level ground” was cleared for pasture and farmland.

Great grandparents or grandparents just left the trees growing on the “rough ground” or “wasteland” for a generation or two, and then at some point they were approached by a timber buyer, and it was harvested. That same cycle was then

repeated until, possibly, another harvest took place a generation later.

The average parcel of land owned by an individual today is getting smaller, as larger single-owner tracts are divided prior to being sold. These days, many people are the first person in their family to own property other than the ground under their house. More land is being purchased for recreational uses, and this lends itself to the passive approach again.

The property is visited a few times a year, mostly during deer and turkey hunting seasons. Often, the number one concern for the owner is what I refer to as food plot mania. There are so many products available to plant which promise that all you need to do is put in a half-acre food plot and you can hold large numbers of big bucks.

As a trained professional, I beg to differ. The passive approach of owning timber needs to become a thing of the past. More than ever, active forest management is required to maintain a healthy timber that also provides quality wildlife habitat. Landowners need to think beyond food plots if they want to reap the full benefits their property has to offer.

This presents a problem because as a society we have become much busier with our families, jobs and all the social activities that go along with them. But, as a result, we have become much less connected to the land.

All the while there are very serious problems developing that often go unnoticed until the wild game becomes noticeably scarcer and you hardly recognize the property that you were once so proud to own. You can't see through the timber or enjoy a leisurely hike through the woods.

The problem is exotic invasive species! In the last 15 years this has quietly become the number one issue facing Illinois forestland owners. The species are screaming at us now, and are too numerous to list them all.

There are four which cause the majority of the problems in upland hardwood timber types that I help manage. Some species were encouraged - such

as multiflora rose, planted for living fences -- and autumn olive, which was planted for wildlife habitat. Another, bush-honeysuckle, was introduced as an ornamental but has now invaded the timber in epidemic proportions across Illinois. Garlic mustard is the fourth one.

Once established, these exotic species change the vegetative components of the timber by out-competing the native species of trees, shrubs and wildflowers, for the available growing space, sun light, water and nutrients. The exotics prevent regeneration of the more desirable native species by literally choking them out.

Doing nothing is no longer an option to maintain a healthy forest for the long term. The exotic weed problem will not stop on its own, and should be addressed - whether or not cost share assistance is available. The abundance of seed will continue to regenerate, no matter what.

The active, rewarding and valuable approach for landowners is to have a Forestry Development Act (FDA) Management Plan written for their wooded property. After meeting with your Department of Natural Resources District Forester, or a professional Consulting Forester to discuss your ownership objectives, scientific data is collected from the forest to write a plan that will identify and address all of the resource concerns on your property.

A schedule of activities in the plan will help guide implementation, along with periodic assistance from your District Forester or Consultant. Cost share monies may be available to help with some of the expenses for scheduled activities such as exotic species removal or Timber Stand Improvement (TSI). Acres managed under an FDA plan enjoy the lowest available property tax rates, too.

There are organizations for landowners to join, such as the Illinois Forestry Association, the American Forest Foundation's Tree Farm program, The Walnut Council, and others. These groups can help landowners learn from each other's successes, as well as what they may have tried that did not work as well.

*continued on the next page -*

### NOT Your Grandfather's Timber - continued from Page 12

A healthy, well-managed forest provides many rewards, including valuable timber products. By selectively harvesting only those trees that have reached their maximum potential, you can reap these benefits on a sustainable basis. Practices like TSI can increase desirable regeneration of hardwoods while reducing poor quality and low value timber species. A managed forest can also provide many non-timber forest products, such as edible nuts, mushrooms, maple syrup, and ginseng production.

Forest management also yields quality wildlife habitat - food sources for through increased hard mast production from trees such as oaks and hickories, soft mast from species such as persimmon and paw paw, and various species of berries. These food sources will be available every year without planting food plots. Wildlife bedding and nesting areas will also increase.

It won't happen by accident. Proper timber management requires commitment. The time to reconnect with your land by actively managing your timber has come. To quote a lyric from a song by Neil Young "This ol' world keeps spinning round, it's a wonder tall trees ain't layin' down. There Comes a Time." This isn't your Grandparents' timber anymore.

For more information on proper forest stewardship, contact your IDNR District Forester and get started on enjoying your land again and providing quality timber resources and wildlife habitat for generations to come.

Matt Peterson, IDNR District Forester  
700 S. 10<sup>th</sup>, Havana, IL. 62644  
Ph. 309-543-3401



### Walnuts & Acorns

by Lee M. Rife

As I said in an earlier Walnuts and Acorns, I call myself a conservationist, not an Environmentalist. Recently, an article from the *Washington Post* reinforced that view. The June 2 edition carried an article with the headline "*How Europe's climate policies led to more U.S. trees being cut down*". In the article the author pounded the wood pellet industry which has built several plants in the Southeast. These plants are moving pellets through ports in North Carolina and Georgia to Europe, where they are replacing coal. Incidentally, there are power plants in the U.S. that also burn wood pellets to produce electricity.

What I can gather is an attack on the use of biomass for energy. According to the opponents, burning wood pellets is much worse than burning coal and we know that coal is terrible for the environment! Not so fast, counters the wood pellet industry. Envina, a major producer of wood pellets says that it must certify that a ton of its pellets produces 60 percent less carbon than a ton of coal. Envina says that one ton of its pellets will produce 80 percent less carbon. Further, the American Forest Foundation (AFF) recently released a report to counter the *Washington Post* article titled "*Vanishing pieces of the puzzle*". In it they say that by harvesting and replanting hardwood forests, particularly in bottomlands, more wood can be produced, over time. This is due to reducing disease and increasing growth of hardwoods in a sustained manner.

Another threat pointed to by the report is the conversion of much hardwood timber land to housing. I personally have seen this here in Illinois, although it is more on upland sites than in bottomlands. Who wants to build where it is bound to flood every two to three years? Frankly, I am in agreement with the AFF. Young trees take more CO<sub>2</sub> out of the air and are less likely to have problems with insects and pathogens. It just makes more sense to do selective harvests in a sustainable manner.

Unfortunately, there are newspapers and journals which publish articles advocating otherwise, and they have a wide following. We in agriculture, forestry and agroforestry have our work cut out for us. We must get our side of the story out unless we want to have those on the outside dictating how to manage our woodlands.

### History of Conservation in Illinois

by Dave Gillespie, IFA Secretary

(Installment # 13)

This account of the history of conservation in Illinois was written by Joseph P. Schavilje in 1941. This installment begins where the twelfth installment ended.

Blane also writes about the burning of the prairies by Indians and hunters each autumn, compelling the game to take shelter in the woods where they were easier to get. Many settlers on the edge of the prairies experienced great losses as a result of the fires which burned their fences, crops, etc. Apparently, there was a law concerning the setting of fires in those days, according to Blane, who says, "travelers very often set fire to grass for the sake of seeing the grand spectacle it presents when burning; but if detected, are liable to a fine and must pay for all the damage they may occasion." Back-fires were set by the early settlers when travelling along a road in wagon or on foot to save themselves when a large raging fire swept toward them.

Blane writes, "I was always forcibly struck by the melancholy appearance of a burnt prairie. As far as the eye could reach nothing was to be seen but one uniform black surface, looking like a vast plain of charcoal. Here and there, by the roadside, were the bones of some horses or cattle which had died in passing through, or the home of some deer which had been killed. These, bleached by the alternate action of fire and rain, formed by their extraordinary whiteness, a most remarkable contrast to the black burnt ground upon which they lay." (Quaife, 1918)

(To be continued in the next issue of "The IFA Newsletter".)

# CUTTING EDGE

## You Are Here: Using Google Maps

by Dr. Susan Romano

Tracking our way through the woods is now easier since smartphones have become part of our everyday lives. According to Pew Research Center, 64 percent of American adults now have smartphones. For forest landowners, this internet access - from just about anywhere - can provide important aerial photo and location information. The bird's-eye view delivered by your smartphone, can help you find your way to your deer stand, tree planting, favorite hiking trail, or your way out of the woods after a long day of timber stand improvement.

The most common and easily accessible phone app for smartphones is Google Maps. This free smartphone application may have already been installed on your phone when you purchased it, or you can download it through the App Store on your phone. Other map apps may be available on your smartphone to provide driving instructions as GPS navigation resources.

Once Google Maps is active on your smartphone, it will initially provide a road map. When in use, you will see a blue dot with a moving arrow that marks your current location. The dot and arrow will continuously follow your movements

as you walk or drive. To access an aerial photo, you will need to change the setting by touching the triple bar symbol (≡) to view the menu. This symbol is located on the left side of the Google search bar at the top of the screen. Choose "Satellite" from the menu, and an aerial photo will appear along with the road map. To zoom in or out, place 2 fingers on the screen and move them apart or together.

Some considerations when using map apps are wireless availability, dense crown cover, and phone battery usage. There are bound to be pockets of "dead zones" where phone service is not available due to wireless tower locations and the type of phone service coverage (Sprint, US Cellular, etc.). Dense crown cover may be a problem, but moving to the forest edge or an opening in the canopy, and often a little patience, will likely resolve the issue.

Finally, Google Maps uses a lot of juice, so be prepared with a charged phone and an extra charged phone battery on hand if you plan to use it for more than several hours.

Google Maps and similar smartphone applications provide a bird's-eye view of your woodland, guide you through the property, and can be a useful land management tool. And, if you are truly lost, you can (almost) always call for help.

*Products and other innovations featured in the Cutting Edge are not necessarily endorsed or recommended by the author or the Illinois Forestry Association.*

**SAVE THE DATE**  
2015 Farm Progress Show  
September 1-3

More than 20 partners with unique and fun exhibits. A soil pit, honey bees, pollinator garden, fishing pond, and more.

Farmer panels - 10 am & 1 pm daily cover crops, conservation cropping systems, wildlife, new and beginning farmers, and women farmers.

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We are located on East Progress Street, just off Fourth Street!

Check out our Site by mapping your show here:  
<http://farmprogressshow.com/>



## Oak Forest Restoration on the Rural-Urban Interface



### IFA to Offer Special Session at Illinois Arborist Conference

As part of our ongoing effort to strengthen partnerships, IFA will be participating in the Illinois Arborist Association's Annual Fall Conference, October 20-21, at the Holiday Inn Convention Center in Tinley Park. We'll have an exhibit booth and offer a special session from 1 to 3 p.m. on the 21st, focused on the restoration of oak forests along the rural-urban interface.

Participants will hear from two leading experts who have conducted extensive research in forest and avian ecology. Dr. Dan Dey is the Project Leader for Sustainable Management of Central Hardwood Ecosystems and Landscapes with the Forest Service. He will help explain why oaks are losing their dominance in central hardwood forests and how various management practices can make a difference. Dr. Jeff Hoover is an Avian Ecologist with the Illinois Natural History Survey. His research has involved the impact of land management activities on bird populations.

Session attendees will learn how our understanding of oak-hickory forests has evolved, and what kind of management techniques can be used to reverse the trends we are seeing in forest composition, while providing optimal habitat for birds and other wildlife species.

We'll cap it off with a short talk about OAKtober – Illinois' first ever Oak Awareness Month – the inspiration behind this new conference session. IFA members will be offered the IAA member rate to attend the day's programming, which includes meals, breaks, and the exhibit hall. For more information, visit the IAA website at:

<http://illinoisarborist.org/agenda>

### Featured Invasive: Bush Honeysuckle

(*Lonicera maackii*, *L. morrowii*, *L. tatarica*, and *L. xbella*)

Perhaps the greatest invasive plant threat to forests in Illinois is bush honeysuckle. This invader is actually a complex of several species, all of which look similar and have comparable impacts, though Amur honeysuckle (*Lonicera maackii*) is by far the most common.

Bush honeysuckle is an extremely aggressive invasive shrub in Illinois. Stands can crowd out native plants, restrict tree seedling establishment and survival, and slow the growth rate of mature trees. Infestations have been shown to impact bird nesting success and even change the chemistry of streams that it grows adjacent to.

Fall is the best time to identify bush honeysuckle because it often stays green when our native shrubs and saplings

lose their leaves. In fact, you can often identify bush honeysuckle easily in late fall after most of other species have dropped their leaves by simply driving down the road and looking for color within the woods. In the fall, honeysuckle also has bright red berries (for Amur honeysuckle, other bush honeysuckle species might also have orange berries).

If you think you have a honeysuckle plant, look for the red berries, opposite leaves with pointed tips, and light tan stringy bark. This is a plant that you do not want to leave alone. As soon as you identify this as being on your land, you should start controlling it. Waiting even a year can result in a drastic increase in its population size.

Once a suspected bush honeysuckle plant is found, a great way to verify its identification is to cut open a small stem. Honeysuckle stems have hollow piths. Keep an eye out for this species in woodlands and forests throughout Illinois.

**Save the date!**

ILLINOIS RIVER CONFERENCE

A Watershed Partnership

Discover what's been happen' on the river and the land! Partnerships working towards Improving the Illinois River Ecosystem

For more information go to: <http://ilrdss.sws.uiuc.edu/govconf/>



Illinois Forestry Association  
P.O. Box 224  
Chatham, IL 62629-0224



***Join Us in Effingham - September 25-26 - for the 2015 IFA Annual Meeting and Tree Farm Field Day***

ACORN  
BARREL  
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REGENERATION  
RESTORATION  
SCARLET  
SHADE INTOLERANT  
SHINGLE  
SHUMARD  
SOUTHERN RED  
STAVES  
SWAMP CHESTNUT  
SWAMP WHITE  
WHITE  
WILLOW

### ***Forestry Word Search -- "Oak"***

S R K F M Z B R F C D N T D T W T C W L
K T E C Q G K A E O O R U N W U E H R U
G H A G A Q O D J R L O A R L A L E E M
X F I V E L Y Q T K V R P M I Q R S S B
V M Y T E N B H C O E B B E U Q A T T E
I F S M A S E A K L S X A W R H C N O R
G O A T L R J R O E E G Y I Z A S U R E
P A Z W N K O T A L T P C J Y Q G T A A
L P D R C E N D G T C I I F R Q Z E T U
J P E A F I Z N J Z I Z H N Z U X E I Y
O D L Q E W I K W D G O O W K S R J O K
B B S D C H I N K A P I N X P G B H N R
X T A N S S U C R E U Q B U Y M A X W A
N H S W A M P C H E S T N U T R A I C B
S D E R N R E H T U O S N D D D L W O Y
B A R R E L X G H T Q D R W R L O L S R
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E T I H W Z H O N N D P A B U R D K O H
A S L F Q E C H U C W X M K U Q S T E C