



Partners News

May 2011

Contact us at:

Partners in Forestry
Landowner Cooperative

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PIF Board

- Alvin Hogenmiller
- Joe Hovel
- Jim Joyce
- Joe Koehler
- Charlie Mitchell
- Tom Navratil
- Jeff Niese
- Margo Popovich
- John Schwarzmann
- Rod Sharka

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UPCOMING EVENTS...

Terrestrial Invasive Species Survey Update

As you know from my previous reporting in the last two issues of *Partners News*, Partners In Forestry has been working with the Wisconsin Headwaters Invasives Partnership (WHIP) to conduct a voluntary terrestrial invasive species survey on private forest lands in Vilas County, in cooperation with the Vilas County Land & Water Conservation Department. So far, 13 PIF members who own woodlands in Vilas County have agreed to participate in the survey. The survey will take place between approximately May 31 and August 31, 2011. Not only will the participating members benefit from information learned about invasive species that may potentially be threatening their woodlands, but be able to obtain free advice about other forest health and management issues.

At this time, I am very happy to announce the hiring of the intern who will be doing these surveys. Her name is Callie Bertsch and she comes with very impressive credentials. She earned her Bachelor's of Science at John Brown University in 2004, received a "Certified Naturalist" designation in 2005 from the Au Sable Institute of Environmental Studies, and recently completed her Master's of Science in Forestry at Michigan Technological University. As a part of her Master's program, Callie served a two year stint with the Peace Corp in Garmen, Bulgaria. I feel that Callie has a lot of valuable information to offer our PIF members and that you will enjoy meeting and talking with her about your forest concerns.

I would also like to remind PIF members who have NOT returned their membership information update forms that it is not too late to participate in this survey. Remember that all membership information submitted is confidential and there is no obligation on your part to do anything but to provide permission for Callie to enter and survey your land for the purposes of this study. Also, if you have neighbors or know of anyone who also owns 10 or more acres in Vilas County but is not a PIF member, please talk to them about joining and participating in this study. The more area that we can survey, the better our data will be. Remember that this is a short term study. We will only have Callie for 12 short weeks beginning May 31, so time is of essence. If you have misplaced your PIF membership information update form and would like to receive a new copy, or if you have any questions about this study, contact Rod Sharka, 715-547-6493, email resharka@gmail.com.

I would like to thank Carolyn Scholl, Conservationist with the Vilas County Land & Water Conservation Department, and Ted Ritter, Vilas County Invasive Species Coordinator for their cooperation and assistance in making this project a possibility. I would also like to thank The Conserve School in Land O' Lakes (also a WHIP partner) for generously providing housing for Callie for her 12 week internship. This is an awesome contribution to the project.

Rod Sharka

...AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

BIRDING WORKSHOP ANNOUNCEMENT

Calling all birders from novice beginners to advanced experts. PIF is hosting a birding workshop on Lee and Margo Popovich's property in Land O' Lakes on **Saturday, June 11th at 7:00 a.m.** We know this is early, but if you're an experienced birder, you know this is when the birds are active. We will have an expert birder present to help in the identification of birds seen and heard, as well as to answer your birding questions. The Popovich's 60 acre property was recently placed in a conservation easement and borders the Sylvania Wilderness area.

What to bring: Binoculars, bird field guides, bug repellent, camera, rain gear (if you are prepared, you'll be less likely to need it, right?).

Directions: 6386 Spruce Meadows Lane, Land O Lakes, WI. Spruce Meadows Lane is about 2 miles west of the intersection of Rt. 45 and Co. Hwy B (about a mile west of town). Go north on Spruce Road and continue straight to where it sharply curves to the right and becomes Spruce Meadows Lane (approx. ½ mi.). Continue another ½ mile on Spruce Meadows Lane to the intersection with Sylvania Lane (a grassy fire-break). Look for the log home on the left.

So come on out and join the camaraderie. This is the time of the year to enjoy our feathered friends at their best.

Note from Joe Hovel:

“Also on **June 11** is a **Field Day** sponsored by *Central Sands Chapter of the Wisconsin Woodland Owners Association (WWOA)* at the Joe & Wendy Koehler & Frinak Tree Farms in SW Waushara County adjoining Adams and Marquette Counties. (SW of Coloma, WI). Joe is a PIF board member managing part of his woodlot for oak regeneration. The topic is to cover oak harvest and regeneration and is titled ‘*Oak Management on Central Sands Sites*’. The program is 8:30 AM to noon, and has a small fee of \$5 per family. This is an interesting area; the region of transition from the flat sand agriculture of Adams County to the rolling oak covered hills of western Waushara and Marquette Counties. Questions? **Contact:** WWOA Central Sands, Secretary, Marcia Frost Vahradian at 920-787-4686 ext. 3026. If you would like to attend, please register with Marcia by sending your name, complete address and number of people attending by **June 8, 2011** to:

Marcia Frost Vahradian * W6849 Bighorn Court * Wautoma, WI 54982

Make check payable to: Central Sands Chapter

If you would like a pdf copy of the WWOA invitation, you can contact Wendy, at wendy.koehler@gmail.com and she will email one to you.

PARTNERS IN FORESTRY COOP PREVAILS IN APPEAL ON THE OTTAWA NATIONAL FOREST

Partners in Forestry Coop (PIF) has prevailed in an appeal with the Ottawa National Forest over a decision which would have traded away Wildcat Falls and approximately 66 acres of old growth forest featuring hemlock and cedar. The decision notice signed on February 4, 2011 by acting Forest Supervisor Keith Lannom for the Delich land exchange, would have resulted in an increase in total acreage of the forest. However, PIF was very concerned about the comparison of the quality of the parcels to be traded. After examination of the parcels involved in this project, the group was convinced that a significant loss of public values would occur. Thus, PIF filed their Notice of Appeal on March 20.

The PIF appeal covered several points, including: the loss of the unique feature of Wildcat Falls, the loss of rare hemlock and cedar communities with old growth characteristics, a net loss of perennial stream, and the impacts of future development on the public parcels to be traded. In our original comments from January 2010, as well as in the appeal, PIF did not object to Forest Service acquisition of the Delich parcel, which is just south of the Porcupine Mountain State Park, but did express caution on several points.

The appeal included arguments such as: “Due to its rarity, hemlock forests should not be exchanged for ubiquitous aspen and second growth hardwood stands...in no way can the diminishment of this rare resource be considered insignificant. In light of the threat of extinction from an introduced insect pest, the Hemlock Woolly Adelgid, the Forest Service must make every effort possible to retain and protect these rare forests,” and “Old growth forests are an extremely rare feature in the upper Midwest, and by trading away these parcels, the Forest Service would demonstrate that it has no sound policy for maintaining or enhancing these special features.”

While the loss of Wildcat Falls and development impacts were very important to PIF and emphasized in the appeal, it was the concern over the rare hemlock and old growth features which resulted in the reversal of the decision by the regional forester, who stated: “...I find the Ottawa should have more clearly documented and disclosed the analysis regarding hemlock and potential old growth.” PIF considers the acknowledgement of this old growth area as an important step in recognizing the value of unique forest features.

Partners in Forestry is a land owner cooperative, and while our primary mission is in private land and forestry issues, we cherish our role as public land advocates. We recognize the value of the public-private land partnership within the greater forest landscape, and in turn, we encourage members and the public to be involved in public land management.

For more information on PIF, please call Rod Sharka at 715-547-6493 or Joe Hovel at 715-479-8528, or visit www.partnersinforesy.com.



Old growth features with hemlock was common on part of the federal properties to be traded.



PIF argued successfully that old growth features like this are becoming a diminished resource. While PIF believes in vibrant local forest economies, these features possess an intrinsic value that is irreplaceable.



POPOVICHES
PRESERVE
THEIR
LAND
FOR
POSTERITY

BY CHARLIE
MITCHELL

Last December, Lee and Margo Popovich established a conservation easement that commits their 58.69-acre parcel in Land O Lakes, on the Michigan border, to remain unspoiled forever. The Popoviches live in a charming log cabin which was built last year on their heavily forested land.

Adding to its secluded and peaceful charm, the property borders the Sylvania Wilderness Area, a pristine forest in Michigan which is part of the Ottawa National Forest. At the same time, the Popovich land is a buffer that protects the flora and fauna of Sylvania.

This delightful circumstance is the result of Lee and Margo's lifelong love of the outdoors, which drew them to the North Woods, and their perception that natural land is a commodity which is being consumed by rampant development.

Lee's migration to the North Woods began early in life. His father had come to the North Woods on vacation with his family as a child, and fond memories drove him to continue the tradition with his young family. Living in Glen Ellyn, Illinois, Lee's father would go to the Sports Show in Chicago, where, in 1954, when Lee was 4 years old, he made an agreement to rent a cottage on a lake in Conover in the summer. By 1957, Lee's father, an engraver in the printing business, had identified a parcel with 200 feet of shoreline on North Twin Lake which he bought (for \$17.50 a foot).

A few years later, Lee's father acquired a cottage by swapping his land with a neighbor, a carpenter who had built a cottage with knotty pine paneled walls. Now they could come up more often and Lee fell in love with the woods, fishing, nature. Lee's father passed away in 1994 and he and his two brothers inherited the cabin. Lee came up most weekends in good weather and spent many happy hours fishing.

Lee came across a log home built by Joe Hovel in 1993 and it made an impression on him. It was love at first sight. 1996 was a good year and Lee got a good bonus from Structural Preservation Systems, the concrete construction company in Elgin, Illinois, that has employed him for 25 years. Lee sold his interest in the cottage to his brothers and contracted with Joe to build a log cabin for him on Spectacle Lake in Phelps.

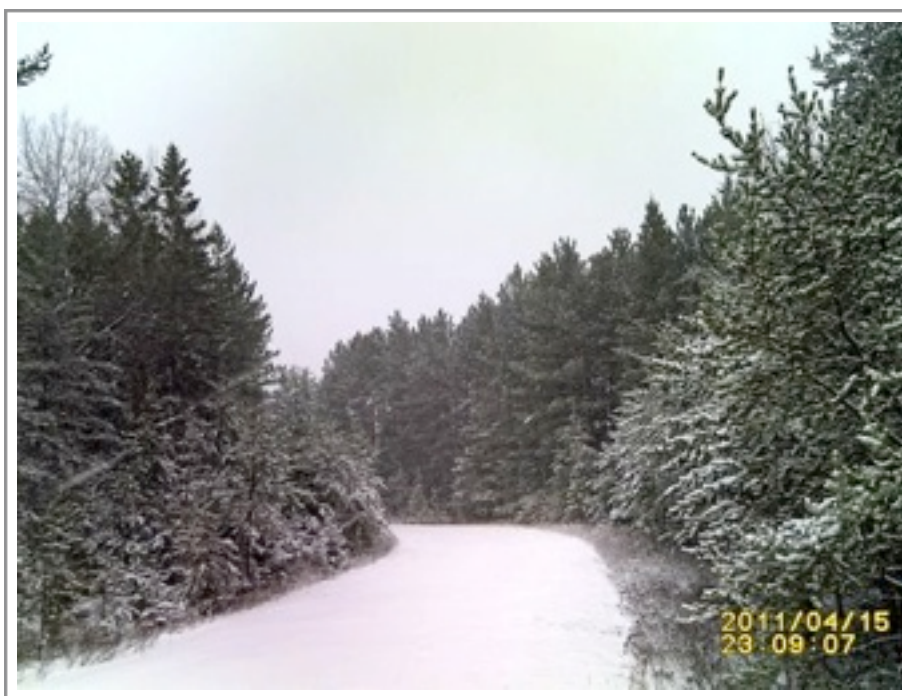
Lee and Margo enjoyed the new lake home for a few years, but gradually negative factors set in and wore them down: the steep hill to the lake from his house, the hectic commotion of kids on jet skis on the lake, and, the last straw, people constantly coming up to his house to have a close look at the fetching architecture.

Margo had worked at Structural in their headquarters in Baltimore. Lee met her one year when he came out there for an annual meeting and she was assigned to pick him up at the airport. They saw each other in subsequent meetings and they became good friends. They married in 2002, both of them with two children. Their primary home became Rockford, Illinois, convenient to Lee's Structural customers.

Lee introduced Margo, who had lived in Los Angeles before working for Structural, to the Northwoods and she loved it. She remembers an early winter snowfall one November and it struck her as gorgeous in the quiet beauty of the woods.

They began looking for a more convenient and peaceful Northwoods home site and about two years ago they acquired the northern half of their parcel and the southern half about a year ago. In so doing they ran counter to two trends in real estate: preference for lake property, and settling for one recently subdivided plot of land.

At the middle of the decade, around 2005 and 2006, back lands were becoming scarce and prices were going up (before the real estate bust). This gave them impetus to find that land - it made them think how rare it was becoming and they started to think about how not only to acquire it, but how to preserve it.



As soon as they had a peaceful spread of beautiful forest, they wasted no time in selling both of their homes, in Rockford and in Phelps, and contracting with Joe to build them another log home. Construction began about one year ago.

Hearing Lee and Margo talk about preserving the land for the future, Joe suggested a conservation easement and introduced them to Bryan Pierce of Northwoods Land Trust.

With Bryan's help, setting up the trust was easy and it went quickly. Under the trust agreement, the land

cannot be subdivided, nor developed in any way, not even for agriculture or raising animals and it must remain forested. The land will remain as habitat for the wild animals that they have become used to seeing: deer, bears, coyotes, foxes, eagles and wolves (wolves' tracks, at least).

The land and cabin are serving their purpose. When Lee gets back from a long four-day work-week in Illinois on Thursday evening, relaxation immediately sets in and he is mentally restored and regenerated. Lee says that in fact the Northwoods, by providing him relaxation, contributed greatly to his success in the concrete business.

Partners in Forestry has been influential and helpful to the Popoviches. The organization has provided them knowledge and information. The meetings and seminars have been educational and they enjoy the social aspects. They have met people who have provided knowledge of birds, trees, invasive species and forest management. The annual meetings have been fun and the food, prepared under the supervision of Mary

Hovel, has been scrumptious. Margo contributes to the success of PIF by serving as secretary and doing the “minutes” of the board meetings, and most importantly organizes and produces Partners News.

They have had a forest management plan prepared and are beginning to put it into effect.

Their new cabin is a triumph of various shapes of wooden logs put together in a way that pleases the eye and harmonizes with the forest. The sloping roofs of cabin and garage do not emerge above the trees but allow for the spaciousness of cathedral ceilings inside. Natural wood surfaces appear throughout - on walls, ceilings and in bathrooms and kitchen – with different species of wood providing interest. The Popoviches have selected furniture to match, including a massive dining room table with large burls as feet under the legs, and a bedstead with a headboard of carved logs.

Practically all the wood used to build the cabin came from forests in Vilas County in or near Land O Lakes, harvested sustainably by Nordine Land Management (a PIF member). The cabin’s framing was certified under the Local Lumber Use Law, a law that PIF was instrumental in pushing through the state legislature. The lumber was cut or milled to size at Hovel’s Conover saw mill, including white and red pine logs as well as cedar, spruce and fir, all local native species. Thus the cabin gave a significant boost to the local economy.

Lee and Margo look forward to periodic visits from their grandchildren, of which there are 4, so they can experience the woods. Margo, who saw more houses go up each year in the farm fields along

the road from Illinois, said it is important for children to understand what the great natural environment looks like. Lee, citing a fond memory of his granddaughter picking wild raspberries, said that children won’t know what they are missing unless it is saved. “This land is staying this way.”



BIRDS EYE MAPLE

Charley MacIntosh, Kretz Lumber Company

Birds Eye maple is a sugar maple (*Acer-saccharum*) which is believed to have a genetic characteristic of an unknown origin. Much research has been done by different universities but cannot uncover the cause of the unique bird's-eye characteristic.

This extremely rare figured wood is in demand world wide and has been for over 150 years. It is especially sought after in the European countries, but particularly in Italy and Germany, and more recently has become popular in the rest of Europe as well Japan, Taiwan, Hong Kong, China and Korea. In many foreign countries bird's-eye maple is considered a status symbol and ranks among the most expensive woods in the world. In addition to the uniqueness of the figure, it is only found in limited areas in the United States and Canada which adds to the demand for this rare maple tree.

The best location to discover this bird's-eye characteristic is in the Lake Superior watershed, with the primary areas being in the northern half of the Upper Peninsula of Michigan. The secondary is in the northern New England area, particularly upper New York, Vermont and Maine. Also New Brunswick and Quebec are sure spots to find the prized timber. However, the vast majority is found in the Upper Michigan region. Buyers and their agents make several trips during it's long winter months to compete for the high quality bird's-eye logs. Winter time is bird's-eye time, and this is when competition becomes fierce. This is the time of year when the trees are dormant, the wood is stable, and the logs are not subject to deterioration as they are in the summer months. Identifying birds-eye in standing trees can be difficult for the novice but, if heavily figured, is

relatively obvious to a trained individual. Every maple tree in which birds-eye occurs is different from the next. No two bird's-eye trees are identical; and a section of the same tree is not identical to the next section of the same tree. A bird's eye tree can have large eyes or small eyes in it, or both. Some could have curl in it also. The eyes could show up on the inside of the tree and not the outside, or the eyes could show up on the outside of the tree and not the inside, or they could only show up on half the tree and not the whole tree. I like the old saying about bird's-eye.....The only thing you can say for sure about bird's-eye is that you cannot say anything for sure about bird's-eye.

Future Articles

PIF members are encouraged to submit articles, announcements, photos, and items of interest for future newsletters. Submissions may be forwarded to Margo Popovich at margo122050@mac.com or mailed to:

**Partners In Forestry
6063 Baker Lake Rd
Conover, WI 54519**

Please pay your dues in a timely manner as we wish to keep working for you, networking and providing you valuable and timely information.

GOD TALKING TO SAINT FRANCIS ABOUT GARDEN AND NATURE

GOD said:

"Frank, you know all about gardens and nature. What in the world is going on down there on the planet? What happened to the dandelions, violets, milkweeds and stuff I started eons ago? I had a perfect no-maintenance garden plan.

Those plants grow in any type of soil, withstand drought and multiply with abandon. The nectar from the long-lasting blossoms attracts butterflies, honey bees and flocks of songbirds. I expected to see a vast garden of colors by now. But, all I see are these green rectangles."

St. FRANCIS:

It's the tribes that settled there, Lord. The Suburbanites. They started calling your flowers 'weeds' and went to great lengths to kill them and replace them with grass.

GOD:

Grass? But, it's so boring. It's not colorful. It doesn't attract butterflies, birds and bees; only grubs and sod worms. It's sensitive to temperatures. Do these Suburbanites really want all that grass growing there?

ST. FRANCIS:

Apparently so, Lord. They go to great pains to grow it and keep it green. They begin each spring by fertilizing grass and poisoning any other plant that crops up in the lawn.

GOD:

The spring rains and warm weather probably make grass grow really fast. That must make the Suburbanites happy.

ST. FRANCIS:

Apparently not, Lord. As soon as it grows a little, they cut it-sometimes twice a week.

GOD:

They cut it? Do they then bale it like hay?

ST. FRANCIS:

Not exactly, Lord. Most of them rake it up and put it in bags.

GOD:

They bag it? Why? Is it a cash crop? Do they sell it?

ST. FRANCIS:

No, Sir, just the opposite. They pay to throw it away.

GOD:

Now, let me get this straight. They fertilize grass so it will grow. And, when it does grow, they cut it off and pay to throw it away?

ST. FRANCIS:

Yes, Sir.



REMINDER

Saturday,
August 6, 2011

Forest Fest
at
Trees for
Tomorrow

A Celebration of
All the Forest Has
to Offer

GOD:

These Suburbanites must be relieved in the summer when we cut back on the rain and turn up the heat. That surely slows the growth and saves them a lot of work.

ST. FRANCIS:

You aren't going to believe this, Lord. When the grass stops growing so fast, they drag out hoses and pay more money to water it, so they can continue to mow it and pay to get rid of it.

GOD:

What nonsense. At least they kept some of the trees. That was a sheer stroke of genius, if I do say so myself. The trees grow leaves in the spring to provide beauty and shade in the summer. In the autumn, they fall to the ground and form a natural blanket to keep moisture in the soil and protect the trees and bushes. It's a natural cycle of life.

ST. FRANCIS:

You better sit down, Lord. The Suburbanites have drawn a new circle. As soon as the leaves fall, they rake them into great piles and pay to have them hauled away.

GOD:

No!?! What do they do to protect the shrub and tree roots in the winter to keep the soil moist and loose?

ST. FRANCIS:

After throwing away the leaves, they go out and buy something which they call mulch. They haul it home and spread it around in place of the leaves.

GOD:

And where do they get this mulch?

ST. FRANCIS:

They cut down trees and grind them up to make the mulch.

GOD:

Enough! I don't want to think about this anymore. St. Catherine, you're in charge of the arts. What movie have you scheduled for us tonight?

ST. CATHERINE:

"Dumb and Dumber," Lord. It's a story about....

GOD: Never mind, I think I just heard the whole story from St. Francis.



As a service to PIF members, contact Joe for special pricing on your needs for:

- Napoleon wood stoves
- wood finishes and preservatives
- garden and tree amendments
- grass seed for trails

Submitted by Rod Sharka

Bird photographs taken on Popovich property.

BIRDING WORKSHOP ANNOUNCEMENT

Saturday, June 11, 2011

See Page 2 for details



If you have not been receiving email announcements or correspondences from PIF, please give us your current email address.



PARTNERS IN FORESTRY
6063 Baker Lake Road
Conover, WI 54519

"This institution is an equal opportunity provider."

Protecting your wooded land for the future is essential to clean water, clean air, wildlife habitat, sustainable wood supply...all things that are necessary to society and health, and that are gone forever if the land is developed.