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# Woodland Leaders News

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## News and Notes

from the Director's Chair



Happy Spring to one and all! The Maple syrup season has passed and I suspect that many of you are busy planting trees or cleaning up the dead-falls that winter often leaves behind. As the seasons change so does our focus from one activity to the next. As many of you have heard or seen over the past several months

the Department of Natural Resources has had auditors in state taking a look at the Managed Forest Law Program to provide program participants with the opportunity to participate in a recognized "third-party" certification system.

So with that in mind the focus of this issue will be on forest certification and some of the opportunities that exist for family forest owners to participate in recognized "third Party" Certification Systems. So, I guess the first question that many of you are asking is what is third party certification and naturally the second question is why should I be interested? To find the answers to these questions and more please read the article "An Introduction to the MFL Group Certification Idea" as well as the frequently asked questions which will, I hope, help you to understand the options and opportunities that exist for formal certification of family forest lands enrolled in the Managed

Forest Law Program.

I would also like to introduce to you the graduates of the Woodland Leadership Institute's Class of 2004. Starting with the back row (left to right) is none other than my smiling face, Bill Helm of Portage; Ed Moberg of Nekoosa, Luke Saunders of Prairie Farm; Gary Edinger of Kennan; John Krause of Phillips; Dave Callewaert of Franksville; and in the front row Lee Delcore of Cudahy; Cindy Gaskill of Washington Island; Donna Johnston of Oconto Falls; Ruth Johnson of Juneau; Jason Fischbach of Ashland; and Tom Gaertner of Wauwatosa. Now that you have met then and know where they are from take the time to get to know them better and the things that they are doing to help their communities grow strong.

Finally, this issues marks, no pun intended, the inaugural column by an alumni. I have been encouraging graduates to send in articles that they think will be of interest. I am sure you will en-

### Inside this Edition

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## An Introduction to the MFL Group Certification Idea

The DNR's MFL program has applied to the American Tree Farm System (ATFS) for an evaluation of its operations using the Tree Farm's sustainable forestry standards.

Certification of the MFL program would represent a first of its kind. It is the first time a statewide forestry program for private woodland owners has pursued forest certification.

Forest certification is a voluntary, marketplace approach to encourage responsible forestry.

Products from certified forests can be tracked from the forest to final product and labeled so customers know they came from a forest that has been inspected and found to meet sustainable forestry standards.

"Certification shows the rest of the nation that Wisconsin is a leader in balancing environmental, social and economic demands on our nation's forests, said DeLong. "We have a great story to tell about progressive forest management here in Wisconsin; third party certification provides a forum for us to tell that story and for others to verify it."

The DNR has designed a unique approach for having the MFL Program certified. The MFL Group Certification has been set up so that it is free to owners of 10 to 10,000 acres who have site-specific MFL forest stewardship plans. The MFL lands would be able to be certified as one large group of individually managed forests. This arrangement is called "group certification". Group certification is a third-party auditing process for evaluating groups of landowners and

certifying their well managed forests under a single certificate held by the group organization. If successful, the MFL Group Certification will be the largest group certificate in North America with the potential of 29,000 members and 2 million acres.

After evaluating the available options, the Wisconsin DNR decided to pursue a "group certification" structure for the MFL program through the American Tree Farm System (ATFS).

After a preliminary audit by the certifiers in 2004, including a review of the MFL policies and operations and field visits to about 100 MFL forests across the state, the American Tree Farm System provided the DNR feedback on how the MFL program fits with their forest standards.

The DNR reviewed this feedback and, with a great deal of input, the decision was made to apply to Tree Farm for a full assessment of the program in 2005. The outcome of this assessment will determine the MFL's eligibility for recognition as an American Tree Farm Certified Group. Landowners already enrolled in the MFL are automatically eligible for group certification membership.

Group membership would entitle MFL landowners to market their trees and forest products as "ATFS Certified". This type of certification can be an important marketing advantage. Even so, some forest owners might prefer not to participate. Anyone can opt out of being certified for whatever reason, all he or she needs to do is send in a "departure" form, which will have no effect on the statutory MFL benefits or requirements.

## Woodland Leadership Institute accepting applications for the Class of 2005

The Woodland Leadership Institute is currently in the process of accepting applications for the Class of 2005. Wisconsin's Woodland Leadership Institute is designed to educate and equip woodland owners to become leaders in their local communities on issues related to forestry, sustainable forest management, and public policy and to help them become active in these issues at the local, regional, and statewide levels.

Participants learn through classroom presentations, field assignments, and field trips. Three seminars are held each year with each focusing on a different aspect of sustainable forest management and skills development.

The first seminar will be held on August 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> where the objectives will be to gain an understanding of the history of forest management in Wisconsin and its ecologic, economic, and social impacts; and to gain an understanding of non-industrial private forest landowners and the role they play in managing Wisconsin forest lands.

The second seminar will be held on September 23<sup>rd</sup> through the 25<sup>th</sup> where the objectives will be to gain an understanding of the trends and issues affecting the management of private woodlands in Wisconsin and of the resources, both technical and financial, available to forest landowners and the role they play in the management of Wisconsin's forests.

The third seminar will be held on October 28<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> where the focus will be on examples of citizen led conservation and leadership in landowner organizations. The objectives of this

seminar are to have participants learn the skills that leaders must employ to gain citizen/membership involvement in decision making on natural resource management issues through examples of citizen led conservation efforts. Participants also gain insights on managing conflict and finding opportunities for collaboration and partnerships.

Application for this year's Institute must be received by July 22<sup>nd</sup> and candidate selections will be announced by August 2<sup>nd</sup>.

Seventy graduates have now successfully completed the Woodland Leadership Institute and are currently involved in their community or a woodland owner organization. Please consider whether this program can help you to reach your goals or help you to reach out to your community or an organization you belong to.

For more information about Wisconsin's Woodland Leadership Institute contact John DuPlissis at (715) 346-4128 or by e-mail at [john.duplissis@uwsp.edu](mailto:john.duplissis@uwsp.edu),



Mike Mossman, WNDR, discusses the unique features of the geology of the Baraboo Hills during a field trip to the Badger Army Ammunition Plant.

## Making do with what is available leads to family fun

by Mark Lindh

The following article was written by Mark Lindh, WLI Class of 2003, this article originally appeared in the Burnett County Sentinel.



Depression era families didn't just learn to "make do" in tough times. They also learned how to live off the land.

My Grandfather had been a famous cross-country ski racer in Sweden and had taught my Father and his older brother how to ski at an early age. However, since there were no races in Saskatchewan as there had been in Sweden, the boys came up with their own unique way to use their skiing skills.

What you do is find a fast horse and a long rope and you have the cross-country version of water skiing. But when you're a teenager, you've got to find a twist to make it more exciting. You head to the woods and zoom through the trees!

The ultimate test of skill was to go on the opposite side of the tree that your horse went on. The trick was to flick the rope just right at the precise time you go around the tree, catch it on the other side, and keep going. If you missed the rope, you had to call the horse to return, and you started over. If you concentrated too much on your timing and not enough on the approaching tree, well, I'll leave that result up to your

imagination.

You might get two other surprises. If there were fresh drifts after a snowstorm: there just might be a dozen or more prairie chickens burrowed into one of those drifts. Their sudden exit, like that of a grouse taking flight but multiplied a dozen times, might spook your horse or scare you to death.

The second surprise was sometimes the family dog. Just when you reached peak speed and needed your greatest concentration, he might playfully come racing along and not understand that you had skis strapped to your feet. Over you go in one jumbled mess of dog and snow and skis and skier.

On a sweeter note, the whole family looked forward to the berry season. You just didn't have the cash to buy much store bought goods, and those pies and other goodies were a real treat. Picking the berries was often a fun time, a break from the regular chores of the farm, with maybe even a "who can pick the most the fastest" contest thrown in.

When the Saskatoon's, or June berries, were in season, you could pick them by the gallon. They were the favorite of many, as they were sweeter than blueberries. They made great pies, and were also delicious canned with rhubarb. Others preferred gooseberries for a tart pie, or he



## MFL and Tree Farm Group Certification

some answers to Frequently Asked Questions

by Paul Pingrey, WDNR

Question: Why would a landowner want to be part of the MFL Certified Group?

Answer: Perhaps the most immediate benefit will be that raw materials and products from MFL group member land can be sold as "certified" and will be able to gain access to the certified product marketplace. While that may not seem too important at present, major forest products companies here and around the world are fast developing goals for certified content. Landowners who are members can take satisfaction in knowing that their forestry management is endorsed and recognized by a respected certification system.

Such assurance is exactly why many landowners turn to professional resource managers in the first place. Promoting confidence in management will lead

Question: Who will be allowed to participate in the MFL Certified Group?

Answer: MFL landowners with 10 to 10,000 acres total that have parcel-specific forest stewardship plans.

Question: Is participation in the Certified Group mandatory if you are in MFL?

Answer: No. Participation in the group will be entirely voluntary and have no effect on statutory MFL benefits or requirements. Landowners in the certified group can elect to depart at any time without cost or penalty.

Question: How much will group members need to pay?

Answer: Nothing. Participation in the MFL Certified Group will be free to eligible landowners. Any related fees to the American Forest Foundation, State Tree Farm Committee or for auditors will be paid by DNR.

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Question: Can landowners be in the traditional Tree Farm program run by the Wisconsin Tree Farm Committee (WTFC) and in the MFL- Tree Farm Certified Group?

Answer: Yes, a landowner can be in more than one Tree Farm program. However, it may be simpler, in some respects, for a parcel to be in the MFL Certified Group since the DNR MFL mandatory practice schedule replaces the rigid five-year Tree Farm reinspection requirement. The MFL -Tree Farm Certified Group also has the advantage

## Sustainable Woods Network Provides Important Connections

A new resource is being developed that will make it easier for landowners to locate resources to better manage their woodlands and for consumers seeking products from sustainably managed woodlands.

The Sustainable Woods Network ([www.sustainablewoods.net](http://www.sustainablewoods.net)) is a website portal highlighting four key areas:

- Ø Locations of woodland owner groups across the country, detailing their respective missions, members, services and products.
- Ø Landowner Resources, which will list a range of educational and service providers in participating states.
- Ø Forest Products, which will make it easier for buyers to locate directly from the sellers sustainably sourced wood products, ranging from standing timber to logs, milled products, character wood and non-wood forest products.
- Ø Artisan Gallery, which features artists and crafts makers using sustainably sourced wood.

Throughout, it will be clear to the user if products are certified, whether FSC, SFI, Master Logger, Tree Farm or others that might emerge. And behind the scenes in the website design, the participating landowner groups will be better able to track and manage the inventory from their members.

The website and database designs were born from the needs and experiences of several of the sustainable forestry cooperatives in the Upper Midwest.

The Network,



whose development is being supported by a grant from the US Department of Agriculture, is in a beta version today and can be viewed at [www.sustainablewoods.net](http://www.sustainablewoods.net)

Information from three cooperatives (Kickapoo Woods Cooperative in SW Wisconsin, Prairie's Edge Sustainable Forestry Cooperative in NE Iowa, and Headwaters Forestry Cooperative in central Minnesota) are being used in the development stage. The website design is complete and the database and user control panels are expected to be finished by July 1 or earlier, said Warren Gaskill, project manager.

Once all elements are properly functioning for these three pioneers, we will then move to expand the number of participants, Gaskill said. And once it is more fully populated with useful information and detail, the Network will then be marketed to grow awareness

## Wisconsin's Master Logger Program

by Bob Hess

Choosing a logger to conduct a timber sale on your property can be a confusing and worrisome process. Without conducting an extensive background check, how can a landowner have any assurance that a logger is experienced, ethical, and respectful of the land and water resources? How do you know if the logger is dedicated to working in a manner that achieves the your objectives for your woodland? Choosing a Certified Master Logger may be the answer.

Certification programs in the forestry sector have become more and more popular during the last decade. Until recently all of them have focused on certifying lands for their management programs or for the products removed from the land. However, Master Logger Certification certifies the individual loggers as professionals who consistently perform to high standards in the woods.

The American Logging Council approved the Master Logger Certification<sup>®</sup> program in 2000. MLC<sup>®</sup> is based on the premise that a land management plan for a property, and the products removed from that property, are only as environmentally friendly as the logging operation that performs the harvest of the trees.

Master Loggers provide that high level of performance. They do this by adhering to a rigorous set of standards and practices known as the Seven Areas of Responsibility. Those responsibilities are based on existing government regulations, sound business practices, and scientifically sound practices for silviculture, water quality, and soil protection.

Loggers interested in becoming Master Loggers first go through a detailed background check of their business practices to ensure compliance with state and federal employment, insurance and safety regulations. They are then investigated in the field by a certified auditing team. That team evaluates the installation and maintenance of roads and trails, use of best management practices for aesthetics, and compliance with landowner's objectives. The team also checks stream crossings and equipment operations near wetlands and in riparian management zones. Cutting and utilization practices are compared to contract specifications. On-site safety procedures and equipment are also assessed.

Recertification is required for Master Loggers after two years. Complaints against Master Loggers are investigated and if violations of the Standards and Practices are confirmed, the logger may be expelled from the program.

### How to get in touch with a Master Logger

A complete list of Wisconsin's Master Loggers is available from the Wisconsin Professional Logger Association. You can view it on-line at [www.wpla.org](http://www.wpla.org) or call the WPLA office at 1 (877) 819-9908.

There are a lot of good loggers out in the woods. Choosing a Master Logger to harvest your woodlot will help assure that you find one of those good ones.