

Greenleaves

ISSUE #1 2024

Member Newsletter of **Bruce Grey Woodlands Association**

- Stump Sprouting in Hardwood Trees
- Landowner's Perspectives on White Pine Plantation Thinning and MFTIP Renewal
- Review of Forests Ontario's Annual Conference
- Upcoming Events & Tours
- Meet Your New Board Members



BGWA.CA

Would you like to host a member tour of your woodland property?

Contact:

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Upcoming Board Meetings

May 14th at SVCA

June 11th at GSCA

Members Welcome!

Contact secretary@bgwa.ca for more information or questions

Greenleaves is published by Bruce Grey Woodlands Association (BGWA) and distributed to members to provide information, guidance, instruction, ideas and opinions related to trees, woodland ecosystems, forest management, and recreation in forest settings in or relevant to Bruce and Grey counties.

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BGWA's vision: Promoting healthy forests and ecosystems in Bruce and Grey Counties through education, recreation and sustainable management practices.

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President's Message

By Jim White



Dear BGWA members,

I can't remember an El Nino winter as crazy as this one. We took every opportunity to enjoy winter snow sports. Despite the mild conditions when we had snow on the escarpment, we had great cross-country conditions at Highlands Nordic and Mono. Just way too short a season! We squeezed in four Sundays of classes for JackRabbits learn to ski program at Mono. It is always fun to see how quickly the class improves in their abilities. In late February my sons and I made our first maple syrup taps and have been making a lot of steam and little syrup. With the spring like days this past week we checked our bee hives to find some very healthy colonies. To our surprise the bees had already found a source of pollen from trees and were 'busy as bees' bringing home new pollen supplies.

It was rewarding to see members at our AGM at the Grey Roots Museum and Archives on Saturday March 2nd. Our guest speaker, Heather Zurbrigg shared with us an introduction to the Forest Gene Conservation Association and their programs including the importance of genetic diversity, seed management, climate change adaptation and species at risk recovery programs. In particular, she shared insights on butternut and black ash recovery activities. If Heather's schedule permits, we hope she can join us in other learning opportunities in the future. Thank you, Heather, for all the work you put in creating and delivering your presentation. Your comments created a venue for a healthy Q&A discussion period at the AGM.

We have had several changes on our board of directors with the elections from the AGM. First, I would like to thank the outgoing directors, Anne, Art, Gary, Scott, Valentine for their contributions to the operation of our association. We have new directors joining the board with a purposeful balance between professional forestry training / experience and woodland advocates with a strong interest in contributing and continuing to learn or share knowledge and network. Welcome, Ben Sharpe, David Hartley, Jim Penner, Mike McMorris. Each of the new directors have shared a brief bio that you can read in the newsletter. At our first meeting of the newly elected board, I am pleased to announce that our Executive for 2024-5 is comprised of Mike Fry, Secretary; Larry Cluchey, Treasurer; Kevin Predon, Vice President; and myself as President.

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Committee chairs for 2024-5 are: Jim Coles and Lloyd Holbrook co-chairs for the Events and Education Committee. Ron Stewart will chair Membership and Kevin Predon will chair the Communications Committee. If you have an interest and would like to sit as ex-officio on a committee to volunteer, please let me know or contact the chair directly. We are only as strong as our volunteers. Kevin will also lead us as editor and publisher of GreenLeaves in 2024.

Last year I joined the Canadian Council on Invasive Species mailing list. I am overwhelmed by the rate of new invasive species that are showing up in Ontario and Canada from plants to aquatic invaders. I'll be doing my bit in my war with common buckthorn. If you're interested in joining the ISN their website is [Subscribe - Canadian Council on Invasive Species \(canadainvasives.ca\)](https://canadainvasives.ca)

Last year we held a number of educational events. We offered a wide range of venues and formats from a medical doctor talking about the incidence, impact of the diseases and importance of preventative actions for Lyme disease to a very hands-on chainsaw safety awareness course. The one-day Chainsaw Safety Awareness course will be offered again this spring. After talking with members, a more advanced Chainsaw Safety Certification Course will be planned for 2024. If you want to pre-register for either course, please contact either Lloyd or Jim Coles. Their contact info is listed on the last page of Greenleaves. Spaces are limited.

If it has been a while since you joined us for an event, I encourage you to come and learn and make new friends. Bring a friend and join us for some of the spring events we have planned. Lloyd has arranged for a maple syrup bush tour in early May. Watch our bgwa.ca website and your email for more details.

I trust that you see the thread of the importance of volunteers in my message. Please give it some serious thought and reach out if you have even a small amount of time to volunteer.

I truly hope that you enjoy reading this edition of Greenleaves. Every aspect of this production hinges on the skills and capabilities of volunteers. The number of articles and photographs and variety of topics relies on our local members for contributions. Longer newsletters reflect the more contributions received from you, our members. We had several new contributors join the "authors" list last year. Neil Baldwin won the draw for contributor for GreenLeaves in 2023. He will receive a copy of the book, Forest Walking, by P Wohllenben and J Billinghamurst in recognition of his contributions.

We hope you will find time to contribute this year. For our regular contributors - simply thank you for taking the time and energy to share your knowledge and perspectives with us. Please send your contributions to: newsletter@bgwa.ca.

I hope to see many of you out enjoying the learning experiences offered with our BGWA-sponsored events.

Warm regards

Jim

Stump Sprouts

By BGWA Director Jim Coles

Stump sprouting is a very common occurrence on our hardwood species following logging or severe crown damage from ice, wind or insects. Virtually all our hardwood species readily produce stump sprouts, even though they may also produce large quantities of seed - sort of an insurance policy. Stump sprouts maintain the original genetic makeup of the parent tree whereas seedlings stir the gene pool. There is a lot of variability in sprouting however, from the very prolific red maple to the less so yellow birch. Sprouting is of particular interest in oak dominated stands where seedling regeneration often fails to sustain oak domination. The big advantage of stump sprouts is that the new shoots get access to the root system of the original tree and its accumulated energy reserves - probably an evolutionary adaptation that allow species to reemerge swiftly after a major disturbance. Our native conifers do not produce stump sprouts although some conifers - the coastal redwoods and pacific yew - do produce sprouts. Pictured below are sprouts from a sugar maple (*Acer saccharum*) felled by a bow saw.

Humans have long exploited hardwood's sprouting habit in a practice called coppicing - particularly in Europe. Young trees are encouraged to regrow from stumps and are harvested regularly for products such as firewood and fencing.

Stump sprouts come from suppressed dormant buds at the root collar of the tree - the meeting place of the stem and roots. Dormant buds exist all over the tree, however, they typically have a short life span. Those that do survive give rise to new branches. Dormant buds at the root collar however, have traces all the way back to the pith. They were formed when the tree first put out roots and shoots. These dormant buds grow slowly along with the tree, staying near the surface of the living wood beneath the bark. They are believed to be genetically more juvenile.



There is very little research on stump sprouts in our eastern Canadian hardwood forests. The following generalizations come from studies done in the NE US hardwood forests. The prevalence and vigor of stump sprouts can depend on such factors as the intensity of the harvest or natural destruction, the moisture regime of the site and the diameter or age of the stump. It has been found that the amount of sprouting and the vigor of the sprouts is greater on clear cut hardwood sites and tapers off as more living trees are left on the site. This makes sense as increased competition for sunlight, moisture and nutrients decreases growth potential. A couple studies have found that sprouting is more common on well drained sites than more moist sites.

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Interestingly, the size (or age) of the stump has an impact on the number and vigor of sprouts although there is a lot of variation. With red maple for instance, the number of sprouts and vigor increases with increasing diameter until about 20 cm then drops off rapidly whereas in sugar maple, sprouting falls steadily after about 10 cm as stump size increases. As forest managers, most of us would prefer a good crop of seedlings rather than stump sprouts. If however, you wish to manage sprouts, thinning is usually required. It is best to remove the sprouts growing on the upper part of the cut stump leaving only a couple that are growing from low down at the root collar. If you are managing for wildlife, there is no better deer browse than hardwood stump sprouts.

Pictured below is a coppice clump of basswood (*Tilia americana*).



Seeing the Forest AND the Trees in my Pine Plantation

By BGWA Member Neil Baldwin

One afternoon, late last autumn, I walked out into my white pine plantation and witnessed a sight I hadn't seen before. Having owned the property almost 15 years, and travelled that trail a thousand times or more; well, you know how you mentally get used to something looking a certain way? And when it doesn't appear as your brain expects, it can be a peculiar, unsettling feeling, almost like you are in a different place.

In a way, I was in a different place. Though it was the same location, along the same trail, that both my mind and my soul had come to know well. But what looked and felt oddly different that afternoon was that I could see sky through the canopy of those 40-ish-year-old pines, and that the forest floor below them had an increased brightness to it.

The most striking difference of all was that as I looked around I could readily focus on *trees* rather than just *forest*. That statement may not make a lot of sense, but if your woodlands, like mine, include one of those pine plantations put down in the 1980s with trees spaced 6' apart, you will know exactly what I mean. By 30-ish years onwards, the crowns are starting to crowd, competitive die-off has begun on account of tree density, extensive weevil deformities add to the density and tangle of branches, and even though you can make out individual tree trunks, the whole thing appears as one solid mass of forest.

And that mass of forest is a dark one. Not much sunlight makes it through to the forest floor, which over the years has accumulated a thick duff layer of pine needles, so no big surprise that not a lot is growing in the understory. It's an impressive formation of trees, thousands of them in rows and columns, but neither a natural nor a healthy one. It's a monoculture of even-aged trees if not for the occasional elm that was there before pine were planted and ash that courageously try to grow up between them—or sometimes right beside, threading their way through the pine limbs like a pair of strange bedfellows.

As you might have guessed my walk that afternoon was after a thinning operation, in this instance at the conclusion of the first day of work. You can imagine, as the property owner, I was eager to don my hard hat and get out there to have a gander at the state of things. In addition to the different look of the forest, I was awe struck at the progress: one machine, operated by one human, after just one day, was about a third of the way through thinning 10 acres.

But more on the machinery, and the thinning process later. Let me jump back to the beginning of this odyssey and walk through how it got to the end result along with some of the detours and dead-ends along the way. Be warned, this is more a reflective essay than a technical report. Though it is factual. You'll just have to have put up with a bit of pondering, such is my way in writing and in living. And as one who straddles urban and rural ways but with both feet in neither.

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The Importance of Thinning a Plantation

The first I heard of thinning was while doing a forest walk-through with the late Dave Taylor, a name many of you will recognize. It was the second summer after I took a big leap and sold my suburban house on a 40 foot lot in favour of an off-grid homestead surrounded by 50 acres of woodlands. Having joined GCWA and attended a Grey-Bruce woodlot conference, it didn't take long to learn enough to appreciate that I didn't know much—so figured I should get a professional eye on the state of my forest.

As we were walking through the European larch plantation which makes up about a quarter of the property, Dave identified that it had had a 1:4 row thinning sometime 5-10 years prior. He pointed out the ways in which that had improved forest diversity and overall health, in particular the varied understory, and the already-soaring height of the trees which, like the pine, were planted in the eighties.

As we walked through the white pine plantation he pointed out weevil damage, which seemed to have affected all but the occasional tree somewhere in its growth—not uncommonly at multiple locations on the same tree. He also mentioned the crowns beginning to crowd, and recommended thinning that compartment sometime within the next 5 years. But he told me it couldn't be 1:4 like the larch and instead would have to be removing 2 of every 8 rows due to the spacing of the pine and the size of the machinery.

Delay: Mindblock

My urban-dweller sensibilities didn't much like the sound of removing two rows. I mean, this wasn't just a "woodlot" it was also my residential property, and the idea of big cut swaths didn't seem too appealing—especially near the house, but not anywhere really.

So I took Dave's recommendation under advisement, which is a phrase from where I worked in the pseudo-public sector, and is used when someone understands the point but isn't actually going to do anything. And besides, it didn't seem like there was any big urgency to it. I appreciated the need for thinning, and its importance to sustainable forestry, but figured over the next few years I would explore smaller-footprint options to accomplish it.

I will mention here that, with the benefit of hindsight, I can now see that with the trees spaced closely as they were even if I could have removed just one row in four, it wouldn't have done a whole lot. The remaining crowns would soon have closed in on those out-rows, once again significantly limiting light to the forest floor. And, what's more, the carrying capacity of the land would still eventually have fallen short of the number of trees.

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Dead-Ends: Small-footprint Options

But I did not yet possess that hindsight and, determined to find a way to thin the White Pine rows 1:4, I explored an assortment of small-scale logging options over the next few years.

Seeing that I am in close proximity to an Amish settlement, I was able to get not one, but two different old-order Amish guys who milled pine to come look at it. The first time, I had the notion that we might “trade” and he would give me some credit for lumber in exchange for the trees he got. The basic deal I was proposing was that he would have to cut complete rows but could pick and choose which trees to haul away. If you know anything at all this kind of thing, which I clearly didn’t, you won’t be surprised to learn that one didn’t pan out.

Another old-order Amish fellow from further down the country road had a look the following year. Same basic deal, complete rows must be cut, pick-and-choose what to haul away. But this time I figured I would try offering it up *gratis*... no payment, no expectation of credit, trees for free plain and simple. Once again there was no interest in such a harvest, though in the Amish way it is expressed gently and courteously such that you’re not 100% clear was that a “nope, no way” or a “maybe, sometime”.

In any case, I was guessing that with so much variance in tree diameters, it was just not worth the work of cutting whole rows for the usable logs they would get for free. Though it wasn’t until a couple years later I did a measuring exercise to learn that while diameters ranged from 3-14” almost three-quarters of the trees were in the polewood (5-9”) range and just under one-fifth of them were small sawlog (10-14”) diameter. To note the obvious: do a proper inventory sooner than later in the process.

In the meantime, I also had a guy come by who dressed (and self-identified as) Amish but carried a cellphone and drove a pickup truck, which for whatever reason he parked at the end of my lane at the road. He operated with small equipment, and advertised in the local paper, so I was interested to have him take a look. He had a deal for me: I could pay him upfront to do felling and he would subsequently pay me back a portion of what he could get selling the logs. I took a pass on that one.

The last fellow I had through the plantation on my quest for a small-scale thinning option was a Mennonite logger who I had been given the name of by a local landowner. I was offering the same general notion of cut-full-rows, take-what-you-want at no cost. I walked around with him and his son—it was more a march than a walk really—and they were significantly more direct in communication: too many “garbage trees”, too many small trees, too many hang-ups in the dense spacing, no existing accessible trails, no good haul-away spot. Bottom line: not worth their effort even for free.

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Diversions: Naïveté

Closing in on a decade of property ownership, and concurrent with retiring from my office job in the burbs and its weekly commute between Chatsworth and the GTA, a dangerous stage emerged in the development of my knowledge and skills as a woodland owner when I believed that I knew enough. Certainly not knew it all, and not even that I knew a lot, but at least enough that to make effective forest management decisions and carry them out myself.

If you are a city mouse who has transitioned to country mouse, or if you know someone who is, you will appreciate why I label this a dangerous stage. Because it can be injurious not only to your personal health, but also to the long-term health and well-being of your forest.

So with good intentions—and minus some essential details—I decided that since I was retired and had time, and that I knew “*enough*”, and that I had sufficient skills to harvest all my own firewood the past 10 years, I would get the job done myself. Surely, I can thin an acre or so each year, right?

One of those missing essential details was, what would I do with all of the wood fiber (i.e., a thousand-or-so trees) felled from the operations? Of even more precedence were the specifics of how I would manage the manual felling in a plantation of 40-year-old pines spaced 6 feet apart laden with hang-ups.

But that didn’t stop me from jumping ahead to the engaging part and marking nearly an acre of trees with flagging tape. Mindfully visualizing a future forest, and considering various factors I had read about or learned in BGWA outings, trees were assessed and flagged: orange (lowest quality pine - remove), pink (watch out, dead - remove first), blue (non-pine species & higher-quality pines - retain) or green (ash/elm - retain, but don’t count on them in being around too long). A couple days and a several hundred trees later, the flagging-tape-encircled trunks looked like they were gathering to march in a forest pride parade.

Reality Check Cometh

At least one piece of good judgement I can lay claim to in all this was that I asked one of the forestry folks I was serving with then on the BGWA Board, someone I have a lot of respect for, if he would come have a look at the white pine situation generally, but more particularly at my marking and thinning intentions.

It was worthwhile, with lots of useful suggestions, encouragement on the “what” I had in mind, and some constructive criticism on the “how”. I was particularly pleased that most of my marking choices were generally credible. Toward the end, as we were wrapping up and about to walk out from the pine, he looked at me and said, “so, Neil, what are you going to skid the trees out with, your Subaru?”

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It was meant as a humorous aside, and it was, but it was also highly instructive on several levels. The quip sat with me over the next several weeks as I gradually came to acknowledge to myself that, for one thing, I was in over my head both functionally and technically.

For another thing, I came to the realization that I am not the woodsman I would have liked to think I was. I love trees. A lot. And I am awed by being in any forest—if you joined me for the BGWA forest bathing walk several years ago you know just how much. I also love this particular property of mine which Ken Peacock (long-time local woodlot owners may recall the name) had the vision to return to woodlands from marginal pastureland.

What's more, I really admire the woodsy kinds of folks I'd met through BGWA—you know, the ones who just plug away working in their woodlot and get 'er done—I had always envisioned myself evolving into such a person. But it was time to be honest with myself about where woodlot work sits relative to my other interests, and to be realistic about my level of skill and “woodlot intuition”.

Time for Action

That was all a bit disheartening, but likely all for the better as I've probably saved myself from injury and frustration not to mention a job not-well-done. Best to be satisfied, considering the background from where I came, with being able to harvest and process all the wood to heat my home each year and leave it at that. There was no more time to dawdle. I felt a duty to my MFTIP plan commitment, which included thinning ten acres of white pine, and to honour Ken's vision and work—much of it by his own hand—on this beautiful land several decades ago.

I engaged two Foresters to do walkthroughs last spring and provide me with action plans. One was someone I felt confident asking for a “think outside of the box” perspective. I tasked him with the scenario that assuming there is no prospect for commercial thinning, what work could I do to further the goal of cultivating diversity and enhancing the sustainability of the white pine compartments? I received an innovative plan that centered around creating a network of differently-sized openings, using both natural and intentional regeneration, and outlining concrete methods for making it all happen.

The other Forester was one I knew could offer me a definitive assessment from a more traditional “woodlot-logging” perspective. We had an educational walkthrough, and to my surprise, it sounded like the door to commercial thinning work may not be entirely closed. But only if I could open the door in my head to large machinery and dual-row thinning.

Mission Accomplished

When I use the term “commercial” logging, I'm referring to the notion of the trees being worth something, even if not a lot, but enough that it's worth someone's while to cut them down, haul them away, and ideally leave a bit of money in my pocket.

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The down side of the innovative think-out-of-the-box option was that I would need to pay someone with the necessary clearing machinery a lot of money out of my pocket to do the work. While the commercial option was the more preferable, not only financially but also in completion timeline, in the long run I'll be applying some elements of both the traditional and innovative plans to help my forest prosper.

In any case, with the thinning now done, the move towards a sustainable forest got a jump start after much delay and diversion. It was accomplished efficiently and effectively, and with minimal disruption to considering the scale of the task. I imagine not every landowner reports being pleased with a thinning operation, but I was, and here are contributing factors.

Foresters Listen, Not Just Tell

Both professionals I engaged walked around the pine forest with me and asked questions about my woodlands, its ecosystem, and listened to what I had to say about my land, living on it, and my intentions for it. It's a bit like seeing a Naturopath who wants to understand the big picture rather than the doctor of yesteryear who narrowly diagnoses based on symptoms alone.

Skillful Tree Marking

Thoughtful, consultative tree marking, which integrates the forester's prescription with the landowner's preferences sure does make a difference to a successful outcome. We developed a system of offset out-rows to prevent sight columns from the sideroad through the property as well as an un-thinned buffer around the main residence. It helped to retain my privacy, and resulted in a slightly less unnatural forest appearance.

Every single tree to be removed was marked, so there was no question in my mind as the landowner what was staying or going, and I could visualize the tree arrangement in advance of the work taking place.

Modern Machinery

I live a generally "small" life and like to limit my footprint on the world in whatever ways I can. Living off-grid and solar-powered is one of them. For half the year or more I heat my home with wood harvested sustainably from my property, cut entirely with battery (i.e., solar) powered chain saws, using a biodegradable chainsaw bar oil, and processed with an electric splitter. Truly carbon-neutral heating! *(Editor's Note: Neil's carbon-neutral claim should be considered anecdotal, as he would need some complex calculations such as the volume of carbon released from wood burning vs the amount of carbon stored by tree growth in his woodlot to validate this claim, but his carbon-zero harvesting methods and excluding dinosaur farts as a heat source are definitely helping him to have a smaller ecological footprint than most of us).*

It may not surprise you that I'm not a big fan of large, loud machines and heavy equipment that suck in loads of fossil fuel. I wasn't entirely enthused about the prospect of an enormous beast of a machine trampling through my forest but it was my only option for commercial thinning.

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While I'm always going to be a smaller-is-better kind of person at heart, I must admit I sure did come to see the efficiencies of heavy equipment. Especially when it is new and high-tech like the Swedish Ecolog harvester that turned up here. Twenty-five tons of machine, on six enormous tires, with the power and agility to fell, de-limb, and cut the trunk into log lengths in 60-90 seconds per tree. Yet, mammoth as it was, though I could hear trees crashing down I barely ever heard the machine itself except when it was close to the house. And I guess diesel power is a lot more refined these days because through the whole operation I never sensed exhaust wafting through the forest.

Of course a tool is only as good as the person using it, and the operator of this one was truly a wizard with how quickly, deftly and precisely he worked the machine through the forest with minimal damage to the residual trees. It's really quite unfathomable to me that one machine, operated by one person, thinned about ten acres by almost one-third, and was wrapping up half-way through day three. As a bonus, the operator brought it to the house to snip a few trees for me and was super-generous with his time explaining how it works. The operator cab looked to have more in common with an airliner cockpit than what I imagined as logging machinery!

There was no old-school skidder spinning its way through the forest but a forwarder, another modern Ecolog machine cousin to the harvester, which adeptly picked up the usable logs and brought them out in loads to the sideroad, decking them to be hauled away.

Watching all this happen gave me pause to consider the overall impact of this heavy equipment compared to small-scale logging methods, which are less precise and would take so very much longer time in the woodlot to accomplish the task.



Timing

I guess the best time for such a thinning operation is during winter. The ground is likely frozen, the birds are not nesting, and overall there's probably the least disruption and disturbance to the natural world.

In this case, the thinning took place in late autumn and for my likes that was the ideal time. The operation could take place efficiently. I could see the result. And then it would all get covered over with snow, which meant it would begin to press down the organic matter and introduce dampness to help begin decomposition. It also meant I didn't have the sight of the aftermath at ground level for a while!

The forwarder overlapped with the harvester, starting a day or two after work began. The harvester finished on day 3, the forwarder on day 5. The last of the logs stacked at the side of the road were hauled away within a couple weeks. In, out, done, so much better than having work drag on.

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Local Resources

Another factor contributing to an outcome I was pleased with is being part of BGWA and having attended all but a few of the Grey-Bruce Woodlot Conferences over the past 15 years. Through those presentations and outings I learned elements of tree marking and forest management enough to appreciate the why and how, even if not to carry it all out myself. And it is thanks to woodlot tours that I knew what to expect after thinning and didn't have the shock of my life walking out into the pine plantation that late autumn afternoon.

Another benefit to BGWA is not only that we have forestry professionals in our midst, but also that we have the opportunity to get to know these people and their perspectives through presentations and events and tours—which is why it's good to participate in what your association has to offer you!

We Manage a Forest for Future Generations

Which brings this story back to the present day, spring approaches, and the chaos on the forest floor is revealing itself after its winter slumber. Down at ground level, the aftermath appears to me a bit “worse” than thinnings I observed on tours. In part because there are a lot of log remnants, which I figure is due to all the weeviling and therefore unusable log sections. But there's a mental aspect too—it probably appears worse because it's *my* forest I am looking at rather than someone else's.

But when I *look* down at the jumble of branches on the ground what I *see* are hundreds of little seedlings that will thread their way up from seed which already fell on the ground prior to the thinning. And I *see* hundreds more making starts from new seed which will drop from all the maples, cherry and other hardwoods that line the Sideroad to the south of the thinned area. I *see* an altered ecosystem from brush piles galore and wonder what changes and spinoffs that will bring to the animal population and its effects on the evolving forest. (I hope a few squirrels will forget about some cached seed from the many Black Walnuts and other mast trees in bordering forest compartments!)



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When I *look* up at a canopy which invites brightness into the forest for the first time in a decade or more, what I *see* are many of the remaining white pine that will prosper upwards and thrive now relieved from so much competition for light and nutrient resources. I *see* super-canopy trees that will eventually dot the forest, hosting stick nests for various birds of prey—the brush down below perhaps providing habitat for abundant meals they will enjoy.

When I *look* at all the log cut-offs on the ground in amongst the “slash”, as the tops and branches are called when left after harvesting, what I *see* is them eventually decaying and providing abundant habitat to salamanders and other such creatures of dark and damp spots. And I *see*, further along in time, those decaying logs adding to the quality and of the soil.

When I *look* at open spots here and there, what I *see* are bur oak and red oak that will grow from some of the seedlings and saplings I introduce and tend.

And I also feel like I see Ken Peacock smiling, knowing that this *plantation* he put down forty years ago as his way to give back some of the trees he used as a mold-maker and craftsman is gradually evolving into a genuine *forest*.

I warned this would be more a reflective essay than technical report. An insight that came to me in a time of self-reflection a few years ago was this: “Open your eyes and look. Then close your eyes and see.”

Perhaps it aptly applies to the forests we manage and love. Like Ken, I don’t know how much of my forest’s development I will observe in my lifetime, or even how low long I will be continuing to steward it. But of course, that’s not the point of stewarding a forest, it’s just a minor possible side benefit.

An interesting final piece to share from this meandering story is that the forester overseeing the thinning work recollected being involved in the planting of this very same white pine four decades ago. Wow, full circle. Which, though it all took me longer than it should have to get there, did have me feeling like I had ended up in the right place, and learned what I needed to about both my forest and myself.



Learnings from Updating our Managed Forest Tax Incentive Plan (MFTIP)

By BGWA President Jim White

We are in the process of updating our ten year Stewardship Plan for Natural Areas as part of the MFTIP program. We purchased the woodlot property in 2000 and completed the initial plan and registration in 2003. The forest is predominantly hard maple. The initial plan metrics, tree and plant ID, measuring trees, trail and compartment descriptions, I prepared myself and then had a professional forester review and revise my draft, and then submit the document for registration. Over the initial ten years, we have planted approximately 1000 hardwood trees and a few conifers. I've improved and expanded some trails, started removing diseased and less desirable species, and the unsatisfactory growing stock (UGS) trees for personal firewood use. I've also set up a small apiary and shitake mushroom production site.

With the current renewal, I approached a couple of professional foresters to get a better understanding of their approach. I am very pleased with the continuing education and professional approach provided by the professional forester that I am working with. For those of you who are not familiar with the process, the forester and I walked and talked about the property, my plans for the future of the property, and then he prepared the report and will submit the plan to Ontario's Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry.

So, what were some of my key learnings?

The property was originally deeded from the Canada Land Company in 1877. Based on archived aerial photography the property has been logged periodically since the 1950's.

The height of land runs across the woodlot with a portion in the Beaver River watershed of the Grey Sauble Conservation Authority and the other portion is in the Rocky Saugeen watershed of the Saugeen Valley Conservation Authority. Within the County of Grey's Official Plan (2018), the areas on both sides of the river have been identified as Significant Valleylands and as a linkage within the Natural Heritage System. Significant Valleylands are areas with a valley of at least 100 m wide and at least 2 km long, and have valley banks that are at least 3 m in height. Within the Natural Heritage System Study (2017), the study identified core areas and linkages. The identified linkages are intended to provide seed corridors for plants and safe passage for animals between core areas. There are also good examples of karst formations within the concession.

From my applied learnings in attending the BGWA workshops on forest mensuration, tree marking and most recently the Chainsaw Safety Awareness course, I am removing diseased and sub-optimal trees resulting in a satisfactory diameter density. I am retaining a few standing dead trees as natural habitat for wildlife.

Continued on next page...

I have a dead butternut about 14" DBH that is developing into a hazard, so I will remove it and a few more maples around the butternut in hopes that some dormant butternut seeds will sprout with more sunlight on the forest floor. We found a few more butternut that were not showing signs of blight during our walk.

My attempts with invasive species control are focused on glossy buckthorn. Looks like I am showing some success from cut and treat the stump with Roundup. Most recently, I cut the buckthorn at breast height in year one and then recut at base height in year two. I can pull the new seedlings and spray the rest to clean the infested area. It is very labour intensive.

The forester also recommended that I place 'Red dot' No trespassing Signs along the fence lines at 50-100 m intervals and create a logbook to record wildlife sightings and forest management activities throughout the year.

An exciting side benefit of the walk with the forester through our woodlot was that I had mentioned my plans with my new neighbour. My neighbour has started the MFTIP process also so we will have a much larger block of forest in the program. Financially I get a good break in my tax assessment in addition to my enjoyment of the forest environment.

Maple Syrup Tours

- The Grey-Bruce and District Maple Syrup Producers are participating in Ontario's "Maple Weekend" on April 6 & 7. Here are five local participating businesses that are open for people to see them in operation on those two days.
 - 1) Beaver Valley Maple, 400144, Grey County Road 4, Flesherton
 - 2) Blyth Creek Maple Farm, 42232 Moncrieff Road, Blyth
 - 3) Meaford Maples, 265585 Duxbury Sideroad 25, Meaford
 - 4) Nicholls Farms and Maple Products, 267021 South Line B, Grey Highlands
 - 5) Ziibaakdakaan Maple Syrup, Cape Croker Park, 112 Park Road, Neyaashiinigmiing
- Here is a link to Ontario's Maple Weekend website [Maple Weekend - Ontario Maple](#)
- For those who would like to learn more about making maple syrup, we are having a tour of Meaford Maples, hosted by Steve Smith, on Saturday May 4, starting at 9:30 AM, and ending around 11:00 or 12:00. This tour is for those who may want to start or expand their own syrup operation, there will be plenty of time for questions and discussion, as the equipment will not be in operation. Maximum participants is twenty people, and carpooling is recommended. Contact Lloyd Holbrook to register.

BGWA Woods Walk Saturday June 15

Please join Donna Lacey, Manager of Forestry and Lands at Saugeen Valley Conservation, and Susan McGowan, forest consultant, for an enjoyable and informative field trip on Saturday June 15, 2024. from 10:00 am to 12:00 pm.

Topics covered will be management history of this property, tree identification, use of our inventory field kit, and other topics that may arise.

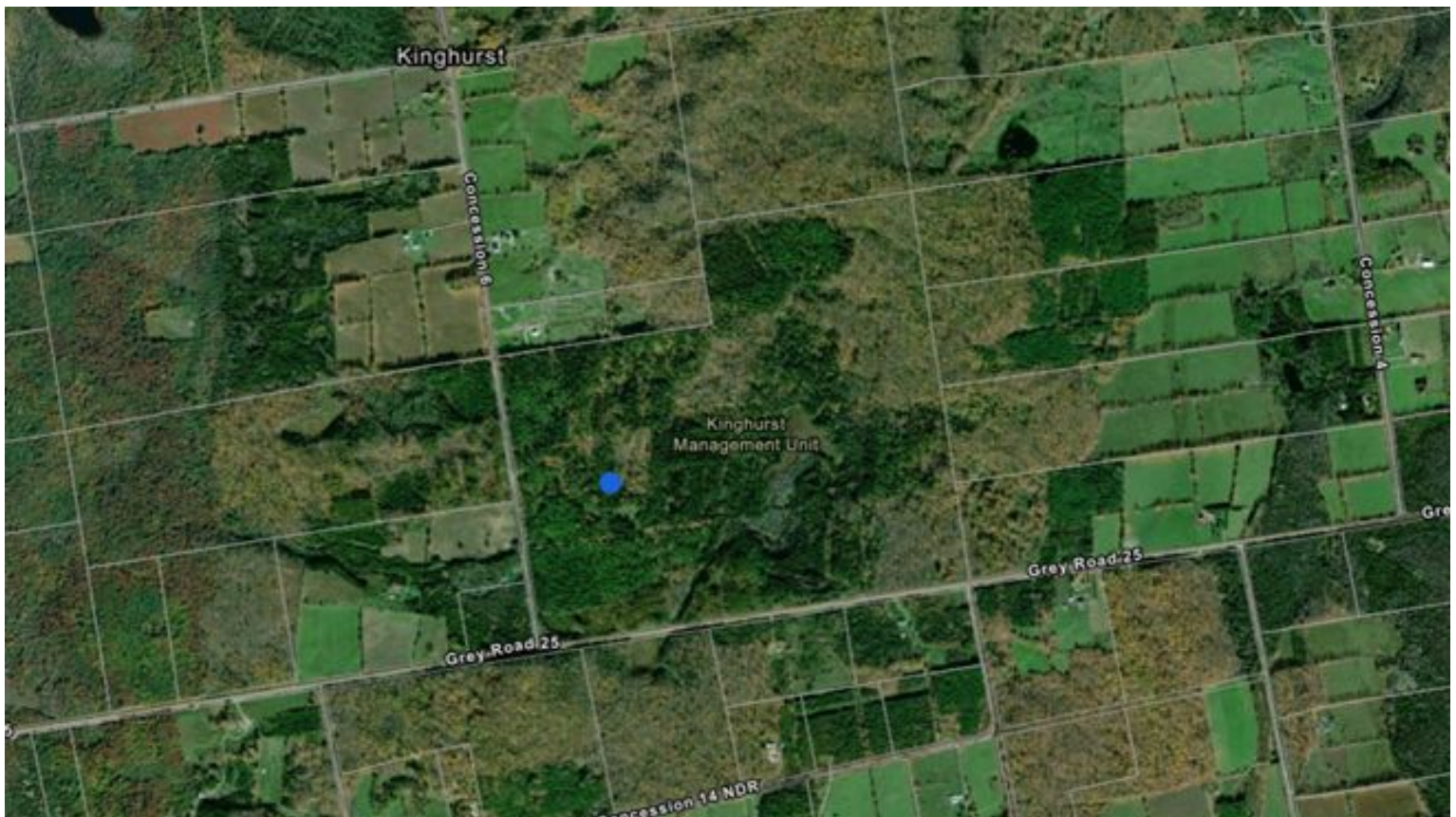
Rain or Shine; Please wear appropriate clothing and footwear, and bring your favourite bug spray. Uneven terrain with minor hills and slight slopes. **NO washroom on site.**

Directions starting from Dornoch (on Hwy 6, north of Durham)

Head west on Grey County Road 25, turn north onto Concession 6, continue past one property access on east side of road to the top of hill where there is a parking area on the east side of the road.

Please note that this is not the Kinghurst Nature Reserve, it is SVCA's Kinghurst Managed Forest.

Saugeen Valley Property: : <https://maps.app.goo.gl/WPF1P2LHanLWtMSn6>



Forests Ontario's Annual Conference

By BGWA Member Rob Shave

The 2024 annual conference for our provinces leading proponent of all thing forestry occurred on Wednesday, February 28th, at the Universal EventSpace in Vaughn. This is the largest forestry conference in Ontario and showcases expert speakers, engaging discussions, and valuable networking opportunities.

Jessica Kaknevicius, Forest Ontario's Chief Executive Officer, began the conference with opening remarks which included an indigenous territorial land acknowledgement and emphasized that the day's focus would be on stewardship and learning. Elder Garry Sault, from the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation, performed a ceremonial smudge accompanied by a song intended to recognize the long history of Canada's forest ecosystems since time immemorial.

This year's agenda included a keynote panel titled "The Power of Youth: Breaking Barriers and Carving New Pathways" which spoke about removing barriers to the involvement of young people in forestry, including BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Colour) undergraduate students and providing opportunities to gain field work experience. The take-home message was that a healthy forestry future relies on more inclusive representation in the industry, and that women and cultural diversity need to be invited and encouraged, and to "pass the torch", those of us already working in forestry need to make time to build those diverse connections.

During the concurrent morning sessions, there was a forest health session where information given on the latest invasive threats to Ontario's forests which are oak wilt, hemlock wooly adelgid aphid, and the spotted lantern fly, as well as updates concerning native infestations.

After a delicious lunch, an afternoon concurrent session, chaired by the Ontario Woodlot Association's Glen Prevost, titled "Calling All Landowners & Forest Managers!" had discussions showcasing new opportunities for landowners such as urban and community forest certification, carbon initiatives in support of improved forest management, and regenerative agriculture through holistic management practices, all of which are novel approaches to forestry.

The conference concluded with afternoon sessions that shone a spotlight on the seriousness of the wildfire in Canada, with testimonies from forest fire-fighters describing an unprecedented situation that is forecasting to become worse, with higher temperatures, higher winds, drier conditions, more lightning and human-caused fires. What the policy makers and forest managers are trying to figure out is how to reduce the incidence and severity of wildfires and how can the impacts be mitigated. Overall, the conference was well organized, highly informative and worth the cost of admission.



Meet the New Board Members



David Hartley

In 1981, my wife Anne and I, having read too many issues of Harrowsmith magazine, sold our Toronto home and moved with our one year old son to a 200 acre farm near Priceville, in southern Grey County. We learned rather quickly that going back to the land, while intensely satisfying, is a tremendous amount of work, for meagre monetary returns. To provide cash flow, we assembled a herd of Jersey cattle to ship cream and transitioned to fluid milk. On the side, we maintained a flock of about 100 Dorset ewes. In the year 2000, the dairy herd was dispersed and the sheep flock expanded to about 300 ewes which lambled on pasture until 2014 when under relentless pressure from coyotes, the flock was sold and we retired. My time is now occupied with hiking, gardening, boat building and travel.

In the 1980s, we had the opportunity to purchase 150 acres which adjoin the farm to the east. Over half of the 340 acre property is comprised of woodland. The farm has about 75 acres of upland hardwood and 35 acres of lowland softwood surrounding Bell Creek, a tributary of the Saugeen River. Both sections of the farm were previously used for pasturing beef cattle. Of the pasture land, about 60 acres was quite unproductive due to steep terrain and a very thin layer of top soil. As a result, through the late 1980s into the early 1990s, that portion of the farm was planted by the MNR in white pine and spruce plantations. It is interesting how much more biomass those fields support as trees, as opposed to pasture.

Meet the New Board Members

Jim Penner

I was born at Madson, Red Lake in Northern Ontario. Our family moved down to a farm southwest of Teeswater when I was 5 years old and therefore, I don't have much memory of life in the north. My childhood life and on into my teens I worked on the farm and worked for the neighbouring farms as well. In my last year of high school, the guidance counsellor was trying to help me figure out what I would like to do after graduation. With my time spent on the farm and especially in the various woods in the area I thought a career in natural resources would suit me. I was able to enroll in the forestry courses at Sir Sandford Fleming college in Lindsay and spent two years there, housed in an old three- story building that was a former convent.



I graduated in 1973 as a forest technician and was able to land a summer job at the Wingham district office of the Ministry of Natural Resources. As this was only a summer job the District Manager at the time encouraged me to apply for a job at the Saugeen Valley Conservation Authority near Hanover. I was successful in getting hired as a forest technician and spent the next forty-four years practicing proper forest management on the Authority owned lands as well as working with private landowners to learn how to improve and manage their woodlots.

My dream was to own my own woodlot to practice my profession, but having over 20,000 acres of Authority forests to manage was the next best thing to being a forest owner. Over the four plus decades I was involved with subsidized landowner erosion control projects, a demonstration nut grove, the planting and tending of several million seedling trees, countless forest management plans for landowners and fostering good stewardship of private lands. There was a time that the Authority operated a Maple syrup production facility at the Saugeen Bluffs Conservation Area along with a maple syrup festival open to the public.

I have enjoyed being involved with numerous committees over the years and specifically the Bruce and Grey County woodlot associations, which we now know as the amalgamated "Bruce Grey Woodlands Association". I have also been a long-standing committee member for the annual Grey Bruce Woodlot Conference. Following my retirement in 2018, I still practice forest management on a part time basis and continue my involvement with various committees and organizations. With the draw of the forest always in one's blood, it remains a pleasure to work within the forest or just simply enjoy a walk through it.

Bruce Grey Woodlands Membership Benefits:

Through membership you will support our vision and objectives, have the opportunity to participate in events, gain access to local woodlot management resources and network with some of the leading experts in the area.

- The Bruce Grey Woodlands Association (BGWA) is a collective force helping to demonstrate the value of privately owned woodlands in the community as a whole. Healthy forests provide clean air, water and offer a myriad of other benefits that support our ability to live on the planet.
- We present an opportunity for property owners to network with other like minded individuals and managers along with local resource management professionals to stay up to date on the latest information regarding threats and challenges to a forested ecosystem.
- We believe in the social contract: if we all do our best to look after our own properties, the collective becomes a healthier and nicer place to live.
- We serve as a voice for the membership with respect to legislation, taxation and regulations as they affect forest property and associated business interests.
- We welcome property owners moving to or purchasing land in Grey/Bruce and offer educational and networking opportunities, promoting best management practices for woodlands, enabling owners to realize their goals in owning a rural property.
- We help to educate by dispelling rumors, myths and misinformation about forest management and proper management practices.

The BGWA provides opportunities to learn from the experiences of others, to find reputable contractors/partners, to stay current with modern and up-to-date policies and practices, to learn about non-timber forest products and alternative management practices.

We act as an educational resource to help guide woodlot owners through effective management practices, helping to potentially increase returns on investments through improved yields, higher quality timber and value added wood products. Well managed forest are an economic asset.

Woodland owners are a key element in prioritizing sound management of a decreasing resource while supporting a balance between agriculture, development and forested lands through effective and informed management.

We socialize, share knowledge and network with other people who are engaged in making their community a better place through healthy woodlands.

Membership offers exclusive members only website, library, quarterly newsletter, events and guided tours by experts in numerous fields with a wide range of subject matter.

We offer a quarterly BGWA members' newsletter with informative articles by members and local forestry experts, upcoming events/speakers and highlights of past events.



Education & Recreation



Forest Management



Healthy Ecosystems



JOINING US IS EASY!

BGWA is made up of local woodland owners and enthusiasts with a vision to promote healthy forests & ecosystems. We believe in doing this through education, recreation and sustainable forestry management practices.

Yearly membership \$30/year or pre-pay for up to 3 years for uninterrupted membership at a fixed price*

Youth membership (under 25) \$15/year

Join instantly online at www.bgwa.ca or mail-in form below with a cheque.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

E-mail: _____

Communication:

- Communication from the BGWA is principally by email. You will receive:
- Greenleaves - A quarterly newsletter
 - Advance notice of BGWA events
 - Periodic local events and woodland news

The BGWA does not share your email address or our membership list.

*Life Membership option available \$750

Connect with us online!

Learn more about BGWA + get links to immediately useful woodland resources

For everyone:

- Local woodlands-related news
- Resource links: woodlot reference, local groups, tree/forest health & more
- Listings for local woodlot tours, workshops and learning events
- Past years newsletters

Members' Pages:

- Sign-up for events/workshops/tours
- Event photo gallery
- BGWA documents
- Slides & handouts from presentations
- Current year newsletters
- Notice board/Trade/Buy/Sell
- Ask-a-Forestry-Professional feature

Bursary Opportunities

The BGWA is pleased to offer a bursary to a graduating student in each of the high schools throughout Bruce and Grey communities. The annual bursary recognizes students advancing in post secondary studies in Forestry, Forest Management or related Biological Science Studies. Interested students can contact their Guidance Department.

Contact Us:

For general inquiries, comments or suggestions
communications@bgwa.ca



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Susan McGowan
Kevin Predon (Chair)
Ben Sharpe

Events & Education

Jim Coles (Co-Chair)
David Hartley
Lloyd Holbrook
(Co-Chair)
Donna Lacey
Mike McMorris
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Jim Penner
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Bruce Grey
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