

THE MANITOBA WOODLOT

Issue Number 83

April/May 2010

Clones leading to return of healthy elms

By Sheilla Jones

Elm trees may be making a come-back.

When Dutch Elm Disease (DED) hit the Prairies, people in charge of planting trees on city and town boulevards turned to ash trees as a replacement for the gracious elms. Unfortunately, with the slow, westward march of the Emerald Ash Borer, that hasn't worked out so well, and now ash trees have become a liability.

This spring, some Manitoba nurseries are offering new, DED-resistant elm trees, such as Prairie Expedition and Triumph.

"When we cease to plant ash," said Philip Ronald, who is in charge of Research and Development at Jeffries Nurseries near Portage la Prairie, "elm will be the first thing we go to."

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*Courtesy of North Dakota State University
This lone elm, still flourishing on a riverbank near Fargo, is the source of the cloning material for the Prairie Expedition Elm.*

Outlook rosy for wood pellet fuels



A worker, centre back, is dwarfed by the wood pellet processing equipment in the community-owned Naashwaak Valley Pellet Fuel Plant near Sussex, New Brunswick.

Bob Austman is our Manitoba Rep on the Canadian Federation of Woodlot Owners. While on Model Forest business in New Brunswick recently, he was able to arrange a side tour to one of the new wood pellet plants springing up across the country. He toured the Naashwaak Valley Pellet Fuel Plant near Sussex, New Brunswick, a 100% community-owned co-op venture that produces high quality wood pellets for use in wood stoves.

These pellet plants are springing up across the country, especially in eastern Canada. It has been a boon to the forest industry as there is now a market for low-grade pulpwood logs. The market for hardwood and softwood pulp logs has all but dried up with the downturn in newsprint demand.

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News from WAM's 2010 AGM: see page 5, page 8

The Manitoba Woodlot is published six times annually as a service to the membership of The Woodlot Association of Manitoba (WAM).

WAM seeks to promote an understanding of sustainable woodlot management, increase income and employment potential for the woodlot sector, promote the use of woodlot products in the place of non-renewable and imported products, and develop human resources in woodlot management.

WAM represents the interests of our members within the Canadian Federation of Woodlot Owners (CFWO). The CFWO makes those interests known to forestry ministers at both levels of government.

WAM also has a representative to the Manitoba Model Forest, another organization that promotes sustainable management of Manitoba's wooded areas.

WAM is a non-profit organization led by a volunteer Board of Directors, which meets monthly. Our Annual General Meeting (AGM) is held each year before the end of March and is open to all members in good standing.

The WAM directors for 2009/2010 are as follows:

- Len Riding, President, (204) 347-5082
- Mike James, Past President
- Allan Webb, Secretary-Treasurer,
(204) 467-8648
- Bob Austman, Director
- Tom Dykstra, Director
- Jeff Lord, Director
- Daryl Neustater, Director
- Christine Webb, Director
- Ken Fosty, Technical Advisor,
(204) 453-3182

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Editor: Sheilla Jones
Email: wameditor@shaw.ca

Woodlot Association of Manitoba
900 Corydon Ave., Winnipeg, MB R3M 0Y4
Tel: (204) 453-7102
FAX: (204) 477-5765

Lumber prices going down... and up

By Gene Wengert

The past two years or so have been very rough on the lumber industry, with at least a third of the commercial hardwood sawmills in the US having gone out of business in the last two years.

Nobody has the perfect crystal ball to predict the future. But it does seem, based on a lot of indicators, including the number of 18-wheelers at truck stops to housing trends moving positive, that the economy is improving.

Certainly, the number of persons reaching the age of 20 and forming new households in the US is just short of two-million a year. So, there is a backlog of people that want or need housing... and furniture, cabinets and flooring. This sounds good and means more wood products manufacturing for most of us.

It seems to make sense that if there is an increasing demand for hardwood lumber, and with the decreased production capacity of the sawmill industry, that the outlook for lumber prices is going to be upward. In fact, it is likely that prices will rise quite rapidly for those highly desired species such as cherry, oak, hard maple and hickory/pecan. It is likely that supplies of kiln-dried lumber will be very tight, with delivery times being many months, and possibly quality being questionable in some cases.

With this outlook, it might be prudent to have discussions and make plans from lumber producers and suppliers to assure future lumber supplies. The so-called "Good Ol' Boy Network" will be active and can be effective if you are on the inside.

In some cases it would be prudent to build up substantial supplies of kiln-dried lumber in anticipation of price increases and short-term shortages. If a wood products manufacturer has access to credit, it might be time now to consider investing in dry kilns in order to be able to purchase green lumber and then dry it yourself, saving money indeed.

Dr. Gene Wengert is president of The Wood Doctor's RX, LLC, in Madison, Wisconsin. He teaches over 30 practical wood-processing classes and seminars a year for the wood products industry, including sawing, edging, grading, drying, machining and gluing.

Daisies, daisies and more daisies

By Lloyd Church

When I purchased my woodlot property in 1996, there was not an ox-eye daisy to be seen, but that has certainly changed.

In 2005, I noted a few of these flowers in my neighbour's meadow across the road. The next year, hundreds could be seen in this meadow, and by 2008, they had spread onto my property. Now they have multiplied by the millions, moving miles away long the ditches and open spaces.

Controlling the daisy on my property has failed. I've been using a dandelion fork to remove them from my one-acre wildflower/grass prairie, along with touching the leaves with a small paint brush dipped in Round-up. This method has controlled the dandelions, but certainly isn't controlling the daisy. Each year, hundreds more crop up.

The hairball root of the daisy is almost impossible to completely remove, as leaving only a few short hair roots will produce a new plant in a few days.

This introduced notorious weed will become a bigger problem in my woodlot than dandelions because it spreads by both root and seed.

No doubt early European settlers brought this flower over to Canada as a bedding plant. I can see why, as I found a very large one in the woodlot. I put the flower under my shop magnifying glass, and it was magnificent.

I can only suggest that if you find a daisy in your woodlot, get rid of it... and certainly don't plant any in your flower beds.

Selling up

Lloyd Church is selling his woodlot, daisies and all. The sale of woodlot equipment and many other items, conducted by McSherry Auction Services, will take place at 10:00 am on June 20, 2010.

For more details, visit www.mcsherryauction.com/sales/10Church.html.



A truism for trees

This reader board posted outside a Winnipeg locksmith shop caught the editor's eye.

Legal Locksmith employee Rob Charlesworth said the message is part of the company's acknowledgement of Earth Day, celebrated around the world on April 22.

"We wanted to put something up for Earth Day," said Charlesworth. "Our owner is a great fan of trees, and we thought we'd pay homage to both."

All-electron newsletter available

WAM members have the option of receiving the full-colour version of *The Manitoba Woodlot*, which is made entirely of recycled electrons. According to the laws of thermodynamics, electrons are freely available in the universe and fully recyclable, and that makes the newsletter more affordable to members.

Members can help reduce both the printing and postage costs of the "dead tree" version of the newsletter by receiving it in the electronic format, if they have a high-speed Internet connection.

If you would like to switch to the all-electron version, simply contact the editor at wameditor@shaw.ca and provide your email address.

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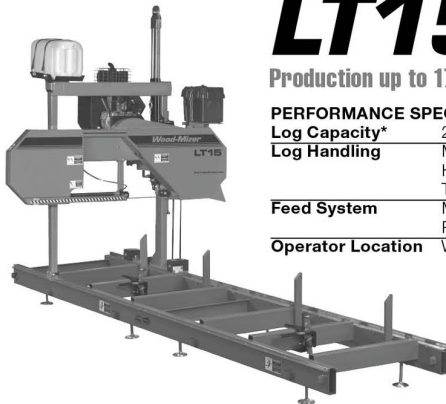
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WAM board reports on a busy year

2010 AGM

By Allan Webb

It's been a busy year for the Woodlot Association of Manitoba.

President Len Riding kicked off the 2010 annual general meeting on March 27th with a recap of WAM's activities in 2009. This including the Friends of St. Malo Provincial Park spring event, hardwood seedling sales, forest health field tour and participation by our members in field days hosted by the Manitoba Forestry Association, Manitoba Agro Woodlot Program, Mountainside Community Forest program and Manitoba Model Forest.

Len emphasized to the twenty members and guests at the Lower Fort Garry Nursery near Lockport that the Association is constantly looking for new members and new people to serve on the Board of Directors. We would also welcome suggestions for fund raising, field day activities and interesting locations to tour. Since many new members learn about WAM by word of mouth, we hope that each member will introduce some friends and neighbours to our organization.

Secretary-Treasurer Allan Webb presented a financial summary for 2009. Membership was almost unchanged from 2008 and the expenses of the Association were similar to previous years. Thanks to ongoing financial support for the newsletter from the Manitoba Forestry Association and donations from the Manitoba Agro Woodlot Program and Wood-Mizer Canada, WAM ended 2009 slightly in the black.

A projected budget for 2010 was presented which assumes that our operations and memberships will be similar in the coming year. The need to increase our membership numbers was emphasized as many of the expenses of the organization like phone bills, postage and the cost of field days is largely paid out of membership revenues.

MacLeod returns to board

For 2010 Len Riding will continue as interim President, his normal 3-year term being up. There were no members present at the meeting willing to assume the role of President. Former director and WAM founder Bruce MacLeod returned to the board as a director.

The WAM board will continue to plan economical field days and other events which have the potential to be self-supporting. We also hope to partner with related organizations to offer our members a chance to tour other landowners' woodlots and related facilities like sawmills and nurseries. For this fall, we are considering a tour and members' picnic in the Birds Hill area.

Ken Fosty, MFA's Extension Officer for Private Land Stewardship, summarized his busy year, which included a bus tour to the Indian Head tree nursery, numerous chainsaw safety workshops, field days, tree-planting demonstrations, tree health, maple syrup and mushroom production seminars. He also talked about the "Trees for Tomorrow" initiative which planted 820,000 spruce, pine and poplar seedlings on 1280 acres last year and aims to plant 1 million trees per year for five years on previously unforested private land. Ken also did 57 new woodlot management plans and follow-up visits for 36 owners. MFA's Woodlot Program has now completed 1244 initial management plans across the province and done 390 follow-up visits.

Forest Communities Program

Bob Austman, Education Coordinator for the Manitoba Model Forest (MBMF), detailed MBMF's activities in 2009 and outlined the new "Forest Communities Program" which will promote economic opportunities in the MBMF region, facilitate education and promote wise land use. Although the current decline in the forestry industry has reduced MBMF's budget, ongoing major programs like youth education, watershed management and woodland caribou research will continue. Bob also outlined some of the activities of the Canadian Federation of Woodlot Owners in 2009 which is continuing to seek tax reforms which would benefit woodlot owners and encourage better long-term management of their properties.

CFWO is also launching a pilot program to financially reward landowners who sequester carbon and improve water quality on their properties. Bob also talked about the potential for a local plant to manufacture fuel wood pellets from low quality or recycled waste wood.

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Trees For Tomorrow - Let's Get Planting "New Tree Planting Program Information Seminar"

Tuesday, May 25, 2010

*****AGENDA*****

- | | |
|-------------------|---|
| 6:45 pm - 7:00 pm | Registration - View Display, Hand-out Information |
| 7:00 pm - 7:05 pm | Opening Comments with Shawn Sexsmith - District Manager, Kelsey Conservation District <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Welcome |
| 7:05 pm - 8:30 pm | Indoor PowerPoint Presentation with Ken Fosty, Extension Officer-
Manitoba Forestry Association -Woodlot program <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Let's Get Planting - General Information• Trees for Tomorrow Program - General information• Who can apply?• Planting categories• What seedling species are available• Cuttings and container seedlings• Shelterbelts & plantations• Landowner requirements• Timing of planting• Planting assistance• Questions/Discussion |
| 8:30 pm | Depart. |

Presented by:

**Kelsey Conservation District
Manitoba Forestry Association - Woodlot Program
Manitoba Conservation - Forestry Branch
Sustainable Development Innovations Fund**

Tax deferral plan in the works

By **Bob Austman**

The Canadian Federation of Woodlot Owners has made a pitch to Revenue Canada to help landowners defer tax on woodlot revenue.

The Silviculture Savings Plan, if adopted by the CRA (Canada Revenue Agency), will help woodlot owners by putting money into a tax-sheltered plan. The money can earn interest while in the plan, and will only be taxed when withdrawn for forestry work at some point in the future, such as tree planting or pre-commercial thinning. Hopefully, the money can be withdrawn to do such work at a time when the landowner is in a lower tax bracket, perhaps when retired.

So, how does this work? Let's assume that the landowner harvests some wood and earns \$10,000. Normally, when declaring this income, the owner would pay income tax on the highest marginal tax rate, which could be as high as 42 percent if he (or she) is in the highest tax bracket.

Now let's suppose the money sits in the Silviculture Savings account for 10 years until retirement, and earns 3 percent interest. That's an extra \$3,000 more in interest that is tax free. And let's say the landowner retires and is in the next lowest tax bracket of 34 percent. When he withdraws the money, now with \$13,000 in the account, he pays tax on the lower amount.

Funds withdrawn must be used for forest improvement. If it withdrawn early, or spent on a new truck, it will be taxed at the normal amount.

This proposal was reviewed by the CRA but they did not make a decision on this in time for the most recent Federal Budget. At this point we are assured

that it will be considered for the next budget process. All we can do now is "hurry up and wait".

Let's hope that the bureaucrats in Ottawa understand that woodlot owners need help in planning for the future sustainability of their forest resource, which, when well managed, benefits all Canadians with healthy landscapes, wildlife habitat, oxygen production, cleaner water and less soil erosion.

By the numbers: Ken Fosty

MFA's Ken Fosty has been very busy this past year. Here's what he reported to the AGM.

- 5 Let's Get Planting and Trees for Tomorrow seminars in Dauphin, Swan River, Arborg, Benito and Gilbert Plains (208 landowners attended)
- 2 Proper Pruning Trees seminars in The Pas and Pine Falls (88)
- 5 Woodlot Man. seminars- Arborg, Dauphin, Swan River, Rolling River First Nation and Bel Air (94)
- 3 Field Days in Mars Hills, Grandview and Steinbach (258)
- 6 Maple Syrup and Trees for Tomorrow seminars across MB (85)
- 2 "What's Bugging my Tree" seminars in Selkirk and Riverton (26)
- 1 bus tour to SK (30)
- 5 Non-timber Forest Products seminars in Beausejour and Southport, and in Black River, Brokenhead, and Hollow Water First Nations (120)
- 2 Safe Chainsaw courses in Black River First Nations and Grand Marais for cottage owners/landowners (40)
- 6 Junior Rangers chainsaw, non-timber forest products and tree-planting session, twice (40)
- 32 Trees for Tomorrow seminars across MB (955)

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Wood pellet fuel production has promising future

Continued from page 1

Landowners average about \$35/tonne for logs sent to a typical pellet mill. The logs are debarked, chipped and then extruded into small pellets. After drying down to about 9% moisture, they are bagged and ready for delivery. Bags retail in the \$6 to \$7 dollar range, and cost about \$2-\$3 to produce, depending on freight costs for delivered roundwood logs.

The mild winter this past year right across Canada, along with the recent drop in oil prices has caused a setback in new mill construction. When oil is in the \$80/barrel range, there is less incentive to move away from fuel oil heat and other forms of fossil fuels. As oil prices drift yet higher in the future, there will be more incentive to burn wood pellets, which come from a 100 percent renewable resource.

Wood pellets are easy to handle and load into stoves, clean burning, and inexpensive compared to other sources of heat. With so many baby boomers getting on in years, they may wish to move away from the strain of heavy lifting and splitting that traditional firewood requires.



Employees at the Naashwaak Valley Pellet Fuel Plant bag wood pellets for the market. The plant is located near Sussex, New Brunswick.

***To advertise in The Manitoba Woodlot,
contact the editor at wameditor@shaw.ca.***



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—Access to the Woodlot Library, which is stocked full of woodlot-related information.

—Opportunities to Participate in Field Days/Demonstrations, Conferences and Meetings about topics related to woodlot management.

—Free Ads in our WAM member classified section in The Manitoba Woodlot.

—If you operate a commercial woodlot or agro woodlot, the WAM membership fee is a tax deductible business expense. WAM provides a receipt and member card for membership payment by request only.

Membership in WAM is open to individuals and businesses. Dues are \$30.00. Those interested in membership can telephone (204) 453-7102, or you can simply fill out the form on page 12 and mail it in with your dues.

Healthy elms making a come-back

Continued from page 1

The Triumph Hybrid Elm will be making its entry on the Manitoba landscape this spring, although Ronald said the supply is limited. Customers are likely to be restricted to five each.

The Triumph is a fast-growing shade tree that is disease- and drought-resistant, and can handle Prairie winters. However, the tree's "messy" growth has disappointed growers seeking the grand, cathedral-like proportions of the traditional American Elm.

It's fortunate, then, that a graduate student at North Dakota State University spotted an unusual elm growing along the banks of the Wild Rice River, not far from Fargo. All the other elms around it had died, and it was the only one left standing. It was a big, healthy tree which had, somehow, developed a natural resistance to DED.

Since that tree was discovered in 1990, NDSU researchers have been clonally propagating trees from the healthy elm, which still grows happily on the bank of the river. So far, the propagation program has resulted in trees that appear to have sustained the "mother" tree's high degree of resistance to DED.

Although the Prairie Expedition Elm, or *Ulmus americana* 'Lewis & Clark', may seem like the answer to an urban forester's prayers, Ronald said that it's not that simple. The elm cuttings suitable for boulevard planting are not easy to come by, and it can be planted only in areas that are already affected by Dutch Elm Disease.

"These elms can't be shipped out of the province to the west," said Ronald, "because Saskatchewan and Alberta aren't infested with DED. But they can go anywhere in Manitoba, Ontario, North Dakota and Minnesota, basically anywhere south and east."

Ronald said Jeffries has an inventory of the Prairie Expedition Elm suitable for the retail market and has been shipping stock to Manitoba garden centres, where they will be available for the public to buy.

Old Ontario elms promise DED resistance

The University of Guelph has also been working on developing DED-resistant elms. Since the Elm

Continued from previous page

Recovery Program began in 1998, scientists have been ranging far and wide to find big, old elm trees around Ontario to see which ones have survived simply because they are too isolated to become infested, or whether they have a built-in resistance to DED.

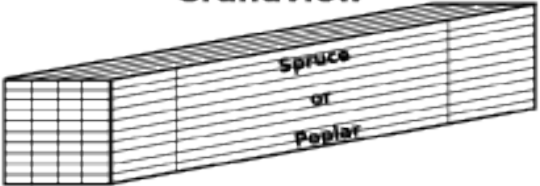
It turned out that some of the elms, many more than a century old, do indeed possess a natural resistance to DED.

Since 2004, researchers at the Elm Recovery Program has been taking cuttings from the big elms and grafting them onto local elm root-stock. Once the saplings are large enough, they are injected with the fungus that causes DED, and those that are relatively unaffected by the fungus are being used to establish an elm orchard.

Scientists hope that once the elm orchard trees are sufficiently mature to flower, the seed-stock "children" of the orchard elms will be even more disease-resistant than their parents.



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