

**CANADIAN INSTITUTE OF FORESTRY
SOUTHERN ONTARIO SECTION
NEWSLETTER**

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YOUR NEWSLETTER

This issue is my 75th, and completes my 17th year as your editor. Over that time I've done most of the work of editing, writing, printing, and mailing. (In modern times, many members have got their newsletter by e-mail, which has been handled by Mike and Caroline). With the winter issue, it was a huge help that Section Secretary Caroline was "more than happy to" do the printing and mailing—when she already does so much us, for other forestry organizations, for the stewardship network, and for Dufferin County. We continue to strive to time newsletter mailing to coincide with notices of section events, so the two items go with one mailing.

YOUR COUNCIL MET

Most members of your section council: Bruce, Mike, Caroline, George, John N., Mack, met for most of the day at the Kortright Centre for Conservation (KCC) on Saturday, January 17.

Bruce reported on the CIF's strategic initiatives aimed at encouraging future forestry practitioners and maintaining competency, such as having a careers section on the CIF web site www.cif-ifc.org, and by investigating the merit of copyrighting the "R.P.F." designation.

In recent years we have shared a display with OPFA at the International Plowing Match, whenever it occurs within our geographic area. This year due to rising costs, and other priorities for our limited resources, we will not participate at the IPM at Meaford. It is noted Ontario Forestry Association will likely be there, so that forestry will have a presence.

Final touches were made for the Section's winter meeting about forestry and the internet, held in Barrie, and reported elsewhere in this issue.

Plans were laid for our spring meeting and our annual general meeting, planned for Saturday, May 29, somewhere near Aylmer. Assuming all

goes as planned, the meeting notice will accompany this issue.

Bruce has copies of the National Forest Strategy and the Canada Forest Accord, and signed the latter for the section.

For several years the section, due almost solely to Caroline, has distributed a member directory every two years. This will be discontinued due to the work involved, and as CIF National Office can now supply Council with up to the minute information. We can each help by ensuring the CIF office and Caroline have our correct mailing address, telephone, e-mail, etc.

Bruce circulated a copy of a letter from CIF President Richard Macnaughton to Prime Minister Martin about the threat to Canadian forests from invasive pests like Asian Longhorned Beetle and Emerald Ash Borer, urging the government to make available the resources to help keep such threats under control.

Bruce noted some admin changes at CIF, among them changing the membership year to match the calendar year.

Future CIF annual meetings: 2004: Edmonton (joint with Society of American Foresters); 2005: Prince Albert, 2006: Whitehorse?? 2007 open, 2008: Fredericton (Maritime Section bid for this several years ago to celebrate their forestry faculty's 100th anniversary and also the CIF's 100th anniversary).

BIG QUESTION: is Southern Ontario Section and its membership interested in, and capable of, hosting the 2007 annual meeting, probably somewhere in Southwestern Ontario?

Some brainstorming was done about several items, including our continuing role at the CIF ring ceremony at Sir Sandford Fleming College, our continuing role at the Kortright Centre, a fall meeting for the section, continuing education credits for attending our section events, and (does this sound familiar?) how to engage members in the section's program, and how to recruit new members.

KORTRIGHT CENTRE AND OUR SECTION

Harvey Anderson joined us on Jan. 17 to discuss the role of our section at the Kortright Centre. Ongoing activities include participation in the maple syrup festival and in the fall colour festival, a forestry trail, and various publications done for the Centre.

Bruce discussed his drawings for a permanent forestry display case, to be located at a window so the display content can be seen against the natural hardwood forest setting, to be movable as the Centre needs the space for many events, and one with changing themes, e.g. seasons. Harvey is continuing to take pictures in a Simcoe County Forest location, for intended use in this display.

There have been significant staff changes at the Centre, and a meeting will be sought with current staff to discuss our role.

MEETINGS

As time goes by, it seems more difficult to attend and cover the various events, meetings, conferences, etc., that I would like to learn from and report on. For example, your section met in Barrie for an evening on the internet in forestry, hosted by Mike Clarke. That was on February 5; the next day was the annual conference of the Ontario Forestry Association took place at the Kempenfelt Centre outside Barrie, with their field trip on the Saturday to a wood-using industry (Miller Lumber) and to nearby forest areas. Arising from my own interest in the Oro Moraine, where my forest property is located, I had hoped to attend an event held by Couchiching Conservancy, described below, as well as the AGM of the Huronia Woodland Owners Association.

COUCHICHING CONSERVANCY

Over the past few years Couchiching Conservancy conducted an ecological study of the Oro Moraine, in Simcoe County. They visited many wooded properties and made many contacts with landowners, aimed partly in encouraging good stewardship. They selected a number of owners to receive their Oro Moraine Stewardship Award at a special ceremony on February 7. As one of the owners so honoured, I was sorry not to be able to attend

TREES & FORESTS IN UNUSUAL PLACES

The Elgin & Winter Garden Theatre Centre in downtown Toronto was built in 1913, before WWI, during vaudeville times. It is one of few double decker theatres in the world.

The Winter Garden, located several storeys above the Elgin, is the smaller and more elegant of the two. It was designed to resemble a forested rooftop garden. Its several large pillars are made to look like large tree trunks, with large limbs spreading out and blending into a ceiling made up of a solid canopy of thousands of both real and artificial leaves, with small lights made to shine through this foliage.

When vaudeville gave way to movies, then to movies with sound, the Elgin became a movie theatre, and the upper floors, including the Winter Garden, fell into disuse and were boarded up, where they remained amazingly intact, until about 1981. The Elgin, on the other hand, had been used, but had gradually fallen into disrepair.

The Ontario Heritage Foundation acquired the Centre in 1981, and took on the largest theatre restoration ever on this continent. This involved quite different sets of challenges for the two theatres. In the Elgin, paint (up to 27 layers) had to be removed, major repairs made to plaster, and opera boxes replaced.

In the Winter Garden, things had stayed pretty much undisturbed, but needed massive removal of dust, and replacement of the live foliage that formed the ceiling. The Centre's souvenir book notes that over 5,000 real beech branches were harvested, preserved, painted, fireproofed and woven into wire grids suspended from the ceiling. Once again, one gets the impression of being in a beautiful forest garden, in the heart of downtown Toronto.

CANADIAN BOREAL INITIATIVE

I kept hearing hints from a number of sources about something called Canadian Boreal Initiative. Turns out it is a partnership of a number of conservation organizations, first nations, and timber companies that has made a commitment to conserve the Canadian Boreal Forest. They include World Wildlife Fund, Canadian Parks & Wilderness Society, Ducks

Unlimited, Forest Ethics; four large timber companies, Suncor, Tembec, Alberta-Pacific, Domtar; three First Nation communities, Deh Cho, Innu and Poplar River first Nations, . The companies either have or are seeking FSC certification for their forestry practices.

It is a region which they say, including transition areas to north and south, embraces half of Canada's land mass, extending from Newfoundland to the remotest tip of Yukon. It embraces a mix of forests, wetlands, river systems, and an incredible number of lakes. It is home to vast numbers of wildlife including migratory songbirds, waterfowl, the world's largest remaining population of woodland caribou, and other large migrating mammals. Seems that many of the small birds we see summer and winter spend part of their lives in the boreal; in fact some might not exist but for the boreal (all those black flies, mosquitoes, etc., must provide them with quite the banquet!) It also seems that to have vast areas of these kinds of land is an advantage to animal species---e.g. if a breeding pair can't find a site to their liking in one place there's lots of room to move on.

It is home to over 4 million Canadians in over 600 communities, (yes, we don't all live in the deep south!), a million of whom are in First Nations communities; many actively engaged in forestry activity. Most have their own unique set of resource use values, ideas and priorities. Most can be said to have holistic or multi-use forestry objectives, including wildlife habitat, traditional food and medicine gathering, protection of furbearers, clean adequate water supplies, development of some areas for recreation and tourism, as well as timber, pulp and paper, and other products. Also spiritual values.

The Canadian boreal forest is one of the last large areas relatively undisturbed by humans, along with the Amazon forest and parts of the boreal forest in Eurasia. The boreal forest is described as circling the earth like an immense halo. In Scandinavia it is no longer intact. In Russia much of it is fragmented by development. Only in Canada is it still relatively intact.

One of the ideas is to set aside about half of the boreal forest's 600 million hectares to be excluded from full logging, and the rest to be managed to various levels of intensity under strict guidelines.

Key values for protected areas include old growth forest, connectivity, water and wetland values, rare ecosystems, key species core habitat.

NOTE: this seems to resemble the mid-Canada corridor visualized by Richard Rohmer about 30 years ago. Also, it connects to the Y2Y corridor, the loose corridor of wildlife habitat sites in the mountainous region between Yukon and Yosemite National Park. This also connects to other wildlife habitat areas that appear to connect the Y2Y corridor with the mountainous area of Northwestern Mexico.

In Eastern Canada, it is not far from the boreal to Algonquin Park, and there are organizations & individuals who visualize, and are working toward, an Algonquin to Adirondack (A2A) corridor connecting Algonquin and Adirondack. Within the Eastern Ontario Model Forest, a B2B corridor connects bogs in eastern Ontario with one another and with A2A. Beyond Adirondack, there is visualized the Appalachian corridor which extends along the mountainous areas of the eastern US from Adirondack southward.

Here in S. Ont. a few years ago, people in the Carolinian Coalition and others visualized the NOAA corridor, a mostly wooded corridor extending along the Niagara Escarpment, the Oak Ridges Moraine and connecting to A2A.

Cameron Smith, in Toronto Star December 20, notes a widely held belief (which he does not share) that the boreal forest must be opened up to logging, partly from pressure from First Nations badly in need of jobs, and from industry's understanding that it would gain access to new areas to compensate for lands lost to park expansion under Ontario's Living Legacy.

It is this, he says, that led to the formation of the Canadian Boreal Initiative, or the Boreal Forest Conservation Framework. It calls for protection of at least half the entire boreal region. He, along with a number of environmental organizations, sees a problem: a widely held assumption that the rest will be open to logging.

FROM THE CAROLINIAN LIFE ZONE

From Carolinian Canada's newsletter, four conservation awards are announced for leaders in progressive environmental protection. Among them:

1. The Natvik family near Highgate, near Chatham, has swine and crop operations, and have restored extensive parts of their farms to native species and have a native plant nursery. It is noted that this area has under 4% forest cover, and that this family is vital to protecting that 4%.

2. Ron Tiessen founded the Pelee Island Heritage Centre which works closely with the islands' tourist industry. He has developed a Green Vision to make the island a leader in eco-friendly economic development.

3. Patricia Rhoads helps Essex County landowners who want to protect or extend or re-establish natural areas; she has a native plant nursery and has organized conferences on habitat restoration to provide owners with access to expertise. To learn more about restoration, she has worked with Association for Canadian Educational Resources (AER) to monitor various stages of restoration.

Nature Conservancy of Canada has secured many key natural habitats across the Carolinian zone including species-at-risk habitat, wetland, old growth forest and other.

A Toronto Star gardening page in December describes the trees of the Carolinian region, and mentions ecologist Gerry Waldron's book *Trees of the Carolinian Forest* (Boston Mills Press, \$24.95) It is noted that there are 90,000 known tree species in the world, that Waldron's book describes the 73 found in the Carolinian zone.

AN UNUSUAL OPPORTUNITY TO SPREAD THE FORESTRY WORD

In January, Toronto's Mayor David Miller and several councillors held a series of seven round table discussions with citizens to seek input to some of the difficult budget and other decisions the city must make. By all accounts this was a real breath of fresh air for many people.

Ontario Urban Forest Council (OUFC) took advantage of this opportunity. A representative at one of the sessions made a presentation concerning Toronto's trees and forests.

1. It complimented the city on naming one of its councillors as Tree Advocate, and on the continuing choice of Councillor Joe

Pantalone (now one of several deputy mayors) for that position.

2. It complimented the city on its hope to extend the tree protection by-law from the old city to the larger amalgamated city.
3. It outlined some of the challenges facing Toronto's forest: aging, insect invasions, climate change, urban infill and sprawl, abuse and neglect of trees by some people, some loopholes in the by-law.
4. It offered quite a number of constructive suggestions:
 - a. raise citizen awareness of the importance, vulnerability and needs of the city's forest.
 - b. place the forestry service in a department with an environmental focus.
 - c. funding and staff to implement the by-law.
 - d. funding and staff for new plantings and for their after-care.
 - e. more rigorous site planning aimed at enhancing the effectiveness of trees.
 - f. official plan recognition of the value and protection of nature in the city.
 - g. promotion of the urban forest and other green areas as tourist attractions.
 - h. involve citizens in the care and protection of ravines, parkland and other wooded areas.
 - i. provide post-secondary students with opportunities to gain work experience.
 - j. Inventory of city trees, including heritage trees.
 - k. Engage volunteers in getting message to citizens of the conservation and other values of trees.

I felt this was an unusual opportunity for city council members to hear from citizens, and that OUFC should be warmly complimented for taking such advantage of the opportunity—and for the quality of ideas put forth.

Earlier Councillor Pantalone had sent a message to a number of interested parties:

As a Toronto Councillor I have been interested in preserving and enhancing our neighbourhoods, including greening the city. Our urban forest has been aging, faced increased development threats, and then recently has been attacked by the Asian Longhorned Beetle.

To respond to these concerns City Council appointed me as its first Tree Advocate in 1999. In the past few years we have planted over 200,000 trees and shrubs, implemented legislation to preserve our trees and published

communications to educate the public on urban forest issues.

I expect to be reappointed (he was) as Tree Advocate and would like to begin further initiatives for our city. For this I need your assistance.

About 50% of our urban forest is on private land. We do not have a city-wide private tree by-law to protect these trees. North York, Etobicoke and Scarborough do not have bylaws to protect privately owned trees. I believe the former City of Toronto's private tree bylaw should become the bylaw for the whole city. You can view this bylaw at <http://www.city.toronto.on.ca/trees/pdfs/municipalcodechapter331.pdf>

To get support for this bylaw I ask your thoughts as to the need for it. I also ask your thoughts on individuals and groups in North York, Etobicoke and Scarborough who might of assistance in getting City Council approval. If you belong to a residents association please consider gathering their input and if possible their support for the bylaw. (A contact person in Councillor Pantalone's office is named).

Finally, thank you for your efforts in Toronto; I look forward to working with you to create an even more vibrant and healthy community.

Councillor Joe Pantalone,
Deputy Mayor and tree Advocate.

I got this letter indirectly, and, feeling it a good opportunity, wrote the following:

Dear Deputy Mayor Pantalone:

Warmest congratulations on your pending reappointment as Tree Advocate and your appointment as Deputy Mayor.

I have lived in Toronto since 1946, in my present Ward 16 house since 1955. I also own a 100-acre property north of Barrie, which was a semi-abandoned farm when I bought it in 1946 at age 22, and which I reforested over the next 10 years. I have seen quite a transformation over 58 years.

I am 80 years old, a forester, retired 20 years. I am a member of several forestry, environmental and naturalist organizations, among them North

Toronto Green Community, and Federation of Ontario Naturalists. I stay in touch with several other groups, among them Evergreen, LEAF, and Ontario Urban Forestry Council.

For nearly 17 years I've been editor (actually have written, edited, and published almost single-handed) of a newsletter for one of the forestry organizations, an effort some have described as outstanding. This has helped keep me pretty aware of forestry in Southern Ontario's rural and urban forests. I am also familiar with a growing body of literature on permaculture, community forestry, forest gardening, ecocities, and more. There are so many seemingly wonderful case histories and ideas that one might scarcely know where to begin.

I have always felt Toronto has the capacity for excellence, building on the many good aspects of its past. With you as Tree Advocate and Deputy Mayor, I dare to hope that Toronto's forests, street trees, trees in parks (AND school yards) and trees on private property, will be a part of what makes Toronto wonderful, as part of its economic, environmental and social fabric.

I hope you are able to get Toronto's Tree By Law extended, to protect trees on private property, without needless limiting of property rights. These trees are part of the forest of Toronto and need to be protected and managed. Perhaps in time property owners may be persuaded to work alongside the city to manage these trees in the overall interest.

With warmest wishes, J.R.M. (Mack) Williams,

AFTER THE STORM IN HALIFAX

A Toronto Star column in January notes that Halifax is still cleaning up after Hurricane Juan in September. Buildings are being repaired, fallen trees cut up and removed. One huge task is in the city's Pleasant Park, described as 75-hectares of rocky forest at the end of a peninsula, a rare and cherished place for a wide variety of recreation and relaxation for residents. Here, four months after the storm, which destroyed an estimated 70% of the Park's trees, the wreckage was so far largely untouched and fenced off from the public, except for a day last fall when people were allowed in to see what had happened.

One of the big shocks described by the writer was the amount of sunlight in places that had always been shaded.

Little had been done, apart from clearing trails through the debris, said to be higher than the largest trucks. However work was scheduled to begin shortly. For the cleanup, tractors, excavators, cranes, harvesters and skidders were assembled. Horses may be used in places to take fallen trees without harming survivors. Much of the smaller material—branches, etc., will be chipped for mulch for the park. Larger material will be taken to a mill, debarked and utilized.

The park is expected to reopen by this summer, with many fearing that the park's spirit is no more. Others feel that the spirit will continue, though the park experience may be quite different. The shoreline, on three sides of the peninsula, has been badly polluted; this will be corrected as Halifax proceeds to modernize its outdated sewage treatment capabilities.

HURRICANE DAMAGE TO WOODLOTS

As mentioned in an earlier issue, damage from Hurricane Juan was extensive and concentrated in a belt between Halifax and Charlottetown. An article in Atlantic Forestry Review looks at the Antrim Demonstration Woodlot, a 173 acre area about midway between Halifax and Truro. The hurricane damaged about 60 acres of this woodlot.

The article begins: There is a horrible beauty in the scene of destruction---. Where huge root mats have been torn from the earth, bedrock is exposed like bone in a gaping wound; smaller trees have been levered way up and suspended horizontally.

Years of observation at Antrim have led to a belief that the better the mix of age classes in such a woodlot, the better the woodlot's chances of resisting such a hurricane with minimal damage.

The size of the salvage operation leads to concerns about how in long-term management to cope with the likelihood of a large and unexpected spike in sales and revenue, followed by drastic reduction in availability of timber for harvest. One approach includes spreading out the salvage revenues as much as possible.

FORESTRY THEN AND NOW

The Beeton Record Sentinel publishes frequent articles by colleague Doug Skeates. In its Jan 21 issue, Doug wrote about hosting a reunion of Class of 53 Forestry U of T, and the many memories refreshed, including life in the forest.

Doug wrote of the class logging trip in third year, still in the era of horse logging. Forest workers lived in 100-man camps. Logs were forwarded from the bush along ice roads on horse-drawn sleighs, across large cutovers, swamps and rivers. Sleigh runners were restricted to the ruts cut in the ice.

His memories of early career days are of limited access to forest areas. Doug worked at the MNR (read Lands and Forests) district office in Geraldton. Marathon's license was accessible only by rail or air. He recalls 160-man camps in Caramat, Stevens and Hillspport along the CNR line. Two memorable camps west of Nakina: Kowkash and Cavell, were log buildings heated by Quebec heaters which were kept stoked through the nights. They gave off quite a heat and were often red hot. Humidity from the sleeping workers would condense on the log walls, forming a thick frost layer. As the worker slept, one side scorched while the other side froze. He describes the "outdoor facilities" as gruesome. (I can recall thinking of having to choose between making a very quick trip outdoors and hoping for an early spring).

The key person in any camp was the cook. Doug recalls "three hearty meals a day with as many steaks or whatever as I could handle. I love bacon and had no trouble with ½ pound or so with a plate of scrambled eggs, fried potatoes and toast." Coffee break at 10 am provided large supplies of breakfast leftovers, Coffee at 3pm included cake or pie, and at 9pm hot muffins and more desserts, all in all 6 meals a day.

He notes the changes. The camps are gone. Workers commute from town. Automation and mechanization are making cutters superfluous. Shrinking work forces are not enough to support an aging population in northern communities.

Doug notes the world is moving toward community forestry, and feels the need to do so here. For the kind of forestry this entails, he feels that the county and conservation authority forests in counties like Simcoe and Dufferin provide a

good example. He feels that if observed trends are an indication, the future will be holistic, community-based, natural resource management, that ecological and economic sustainability will ensure community sustainability; Part of this change will be new businesses in forest towns based on a wide range of natural products available from nature's bounties. He concludes "It can't happen soon enough for me!"

PLANTING PROJECT IN GUELPH

As noted in Grand Actions, newsletter of the Grand River Conservation Authority, a number of planting projects of trees and other plant material have gone on over recent years, as part of a program to beautify the city, in its industrial areas and elsewhere. One such project is planned for along Edinburgh Road in the industrial area, responding to a desire to correct a shortage of greenery, especially along the street. Initially a nursery will be set up, and a demonstration site established and maintained by "Trees for Guelph", Blount Canada and the Grand River Conservation Authority.

This is the largest in a series of planting initiatives by "Trees for Guelph", which has planted about 72,000 trees across the city.

FIRE!

In recent years we seem to hear with distressing frequency about forest fires that approach, then threaten, communities of various sizes, then, too often inflict serious damage, distress and inconvenience on those communities, sometimes large cities. It happens in Australia, California and in this past year in BC and Alberta, and over a few decades communities in Northwestern Ontario, and in 1988 Yellowstone National Park.

Each time I've wondered if there were ways that the destructive and disruptive effects of these fires might have been lessened beforehand.

Last fall, in Ecoforestry, Brian Horejsi, forester-ecologist, looks at last summer's Lost Creek fire in Southwestern Alberta, and offers some thoughts about the last 70 years in that area.

Fire has traditionally played a strong role in the development and diversity of many forests, including in that region. Those fires strongly

influenced species makeup, and helped control the amount of combustible material present—after each fire you start with a clean(er) slate.

About 70 years ago, fire prevention and suppression became the norm, having since consumed major amounts of funding. (The writer makes some suggestions of excessive use of the fear factor, so fires have to be suppressed even though they are a long way from any human activity. He feels that timber management has replaced forest management as the main focus).

Meanwhile, normal succession trends are altered, and combustible material on the forest floor builds up well beyond normal levels. So when a fire does start and get out of hand, it can be much more destructive of the forest ecology, hotter, larger, far more difficult to manage, and much more likely to disrupt communities.

Added to this is the growth of human settlement toward the forest. When outbreaks like Kelowna and Lost Creek happen, it can be disastrously costly or impossible to protect property.

Guy Dauncey, an outspoken champion of sustainable development, in Eco News, a newsletter he regularly produces in Victoria BC, notes a sharp increase in forest burned over the past few years, in Canada, Russia, Arizona, Portugal and elsewhere. He links this at least in part to climate change, noting that the 10 warmest years on record worldwide are all since 1990, that the three hottest are in the past 6 years. He also notes several extremely warm summers recently in Europe, where human mortality from heat became abnormally high. (He also has some blunt thoughts about how urgent it is that the world take climate change seriously enough to start doing something).

I reflected on some of these forest fires as each dominated the news, crossing my fingers (when perhaps I should have been on my knees) for the safety of the threatened communities. I wondered if there is any practical way the fire risk could be reduced beforehand. Can the amount and combustibility of combustible material on the ground be reduced in any practical way. During dry spells I observe how frighteningly dry the pine litter appears in my own plantations, and feel thankful that the deciduous understory (mostly maple) in the stands seems to provide enough cooling and moisture to lessen to some extent the level of danger.

A STUDY OF THE B.C. FIRES

In October, B.C.'s Premier Campbell appointed former Manitoba Premier Gary Filmon to review B.C.'s response to the 2003 fires, and to recommend future actions. That report, made public in February, can be seen on www.2003firestorm.gov.bc.ca. Click onto firestorm report. A wide range of communities, individuals, and others, were consulted, and over 400 presentations received.

In B.C., 2003 was the worst year ever for forest fires, with 2,500, mostly in the dry interior. There was a record number of interface fires, i.e. fires at the interface between human settlement (e.g. subdivisions) and the natural forest were at a record high. These fires destroyed 334 homes and many businesses, and caused the evacuation of 45,000 people. (How many more homes were damaged, and how many more lives were seriously disrupted, and what costs were incurred by the affected people?) The cost to the province was \$700 million, and three pilots lost their lives.

The report notes that given the circumstances, things could have been far worse, that many communities are not immune to such fires, especially in the hot dry interior.

The report's 42 recommendations have to do with reducing the level of fuel buildup in the forest, making the most susceptible communities more fireproof, development of fire-smart communities well prepared to handle emergencies, public education so that citizens have a better idea in future of what to do, and can contribute to reducing the fire risk level.

A successful fire prevention and suppression program over 80 years has helped cause the current problems. A policy of no logging in provincial parks has added to the problem. Also, in parts of B.C., there are growing areas of older forest subject to insect attack, raising abnormally the numbers of standing insect-killed trees.

Also: the time to prepare for the next one is now. Given the pattern of changing climate, weather conditions, and dry conditions, expect the fire risk to increase. Discourage development in direct contact with the forest. Do controlled fires aimed at reducing fuel amounts. Do strategic cuttings. Greatly improve communications among all parties, including affected residents, during an emergency.

A LARGE PRIVATE FOREST IN BC

A group of four woodlot owners received awards from BC's Private Forest Landowners' Association. Three were individuals, one was "the Tembec Sparwood Team." It manages 105,000 hectares of privately owned forest land in the Elk Valley in the SE corner of BC.

They have developed a forest management style that considers and respects three communities (Sparwood, Cranbrook, Fernie?), 5 active coal mines, a "blue ribbon trout fishery", a very active environmental group, high wildlife values, and profitable guiding businesses.

The owner has developed a diverse resident management team of dedicated professionals, interested in good management and in public involvement. Many team members are outdoor enthusiasts with a good understanding of community concerns. These people are good ambassadors for the owner in the community. From their openness in the community has arisen the "Elk Valley Forestry Task Force", which is in effect a forum for discussing issues.

Their on-the-ground management practices reflect a commitment to continual improvement and serve the needs a wide range of concerns (forest, habitat, environmental protection and more). They set a good example and provide education and training leadership.

FOREST AS WILDLIFE HABITAT

In a letter in Toronto Star, Feb. 16, Andy Houser, former Director, Fish & Wildlife of MNR (and before that a former colleague in MNR's Ontario Land Inventory and Land Use Planning), expressed some thoughts about the future of the Algonquin Park wolf population.

That this is a controversial matter is illustrated by the tone of parts of Andy's letter, and of a response the next day from Jean Langlois, of Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society (CPAWS), Ottawa Valley, and in a number of letters, editorials, etc. over the next few weeks.

The controversy is at least partly between those who would conserve the Algonquin wolf as a "species at risk" and others, such as the hunter who did not get his deer this year and blames the

wolf, or the farmer who lost several sheep and many who wonder what good is a wolf anyway.

Andy suggests that to manage the forest to recreate the historic climax forest will lead to demise of the wolf population within the Park. The wolf, he suggests, is not a natural part of that climax forest, its favoured prey are deer and beaver, which were abundant in the habitat created by logging, leading to growing abundance of the predator wolf.

As this “historic forest” returns, Andy continues, as it has done since the 1960’s, so do the moose, while deer and beaver decrease, as do the wolves, because deer and beaver are preferred by them over the moose. As this happens, he says, the wolves begin to behave differently, making more frequent winter forays into deer yards of surrounding forest.

He says it is recognized that to retain a wolf population requires a shift in forest management to recreate and maintain habitat for abundant deer and beaver.

He suggests that without this kind of management other efforts will matter little, that the Algonquin wolf population might disappear, possibly to be replaced by the larger northern timber wolf or gray wolf, described as a top predator in a moose-dominated ecosystem.

Andy notes that an ecosystem is not static but continually evolving, in ways that include substantial shifts in wildlife populations, both in numbers and species composition. He says that if you want wildlife you must actively manage for whatever you want. To maintain the Algonquin wolf population means maintaining the deer and beaver populations, which means the kinds of logging that maintain their habitat.

From these letters it seems a choice is needed. Langlois sees the need for a policy for both kinds of wolf. Andy focuses on habitat needs in the park; Langlois notes the need for a permanent ban on killing wolves in the 39 townships surrounding the Park.

VALUE ADDED

An article in “Working Forest” asks “what if” the value-added sector were more developed. Living Legacy Trust commissioned a study “Ontario’s Value Added Wood Products Market

Potential in the US Great Lakes States”, suggesting that those states, with their proximity and wealth are a major market for timber products from Ontario. It suggests that expanding the value-added sector could boost Ontario’s economy, by several billion dollars. The amounts of wood involved could not change greatly, but the values of product would rise.

The report suggests a shift in focus beyond lumber and construction materials towards structurally engineered building components.

It is noted that in Southwestern Ontario is a rapidly growing value-added wood products sector, and is suggested that ways be found to make the link between northern timber supplies and this sector.

This raises the question: to what extent should Southern Ontario forests, with higher growth rates, proximity to markets, and potential for producing quality material in relatively short times, benefit from all this?

DOES MY WOODLOT BENEFIT SOCIETY?

In the Eastern Ontario Model Forest’s newsletter “Forestry Forum” Gary Nielson, Stewardship Coordinator for Leeds County, reflects on his 200-acre woodlot in Canadian Shield country near Charleston Lake. (He also has a smaller woodlot on the property where he lives). It is a rugged mix of swamp and rock outcrop that is impossible to cross in a straight line. It is a mix of oak and pine, with “works of art” on the exposed ridges and “logs-in-waiting” elsewhere. As productive land, it is not great.

Why does he own it, he wonders. Why would anyone own land if they are not going to farm it. He gives some of his own reasons, reasons having to do with himself and family, reasons having to do with the nature of the specific land area. He notes a growing attachment, and that “It was, and is, perfect for us.”

He enjoys birding in the spring, hunting in the fall, knowing where he’ll find the wood frogs, heating the house and cottage with (his own) wood, the year-round exposure to the outdoors, the odd sales of Christmas trees and maple syrup, and the social life that can be centred around a house or cottage in the woods.

I suspect many woodlot owners have their own answers to why own a woodlot. For myself, with no building on my place and living 120 km. away, and with the place in a very different landscape, the personal benefits gained are quite different, but potentially just as compelling.

He notes that his home woodlot is in the local demonstration areas catalogue, and that the Charleston Lake woodlot is used for long term forest bird monitoring. He notes the enjoyment of being stewards, and also notes the considerable benefits to society.

For example, he lists wildlife habitat, protection of species (with seven “at risk” species he believes are on his land), ground water protection, air quality enhancement, and others. He notes that the (forest) of Southern Ontario is very largely in private hands, which means that our environmental health rests heavily on the stewardship ethic of landowners. If, for example, we accept that 30% of our landscape should be forested, are we willing to accept conservation measures needed to make that happen.

He notes too the economic benefits, like our taxes, our investments, and the products sold are often more local in their effect. (When my own plantations were in 1995, and hopefully again this year, I could see quite clearly the economic benefits from that kind of activity).

He says he likes being a woodlot owner. If doing what he likes to do provides economic and environmental benefits to the people of Ontario, it's fine with him.

(My own question continues: if my woodlot, Gary's, and the other 100,000 or more in Southern Ontario have anything like the societal potential that most of us believe they do, what is a realistic sharing of the costs and other burdens between us landowners and us as a society?)
PROTECTING WATER COURSES DURING LOGGING

S&W Report, Fall, 2003, has an article on the need to protect water courses from damage during logging, and on portable bridges of two sizes to help give this kind of protection, in places where something more permanent is not called for. Such bridges are available for loan to woodlot operators in Southwestern Ontario. Contacts are named for more info on these

bridges: Terry Schwan at 519-826-4933 and Peter Williams at 519-856-1286.

THREE ITEMS FOUND IN THE INTERNET (www.earthfuture.com)

A Cherokee prayer:

May the warm winds of heaven blow softly on your house.

And may the Great Spirit bless all who enter there

And may your moccasins make happy tracks in many snows

And may the rainbow always touch your shoulder.

Every mountain, every valley, every creek on this Earth is home to creatures, organisms and spirits that have roamed this earth for longer than we have. And yet it is we that have been gifted with the power to preserve, destroy, restore. We are the ones who must choose. What will we create, as our legacy to the future? (My thought: what will our grandchildren think of us 50 years from now?)

A Chris Maser 1990 quote: It is easier to put a person on the moon than it is to manage an acre of forest. Putting a person on the moon is a process in black and white: you either hit it or miss it. But managing an acre of forest is all shades of grey.