

# *Timber Talk*



## *Newsletter of the Iowa Woodland Owners Association May 2011*

### **IWOA: An Update from our President**

**By Dave Bartemes**

The Iowa Woodland Owners Association has been busy, busy, busy. Our current major interests have been centered on legislative issues.

Over the past three years, the Iowa DNR Division of Forestry budget has been cut by 30%. We have lost two District Forester Positions, and several programs have been cut or eliminated. IWOA has taken a leadership role to organize and develop a legislative strategy to stop the bleeding and go on the offensive to try to recover the lost funds.

I and members of the board of directors, as well as members, have been instrumental in developing a Coalition for Iowa's Woodlands and Trees. The coalition has banded together with 16 organizations to propose goals and legislative actions that we believe are vital to protect Iowa's woodlands and trees. The coalition now represents in the neighborhood of 10,000 Iowans as a group, rather than each organization approaching the legislature on its own. Members of the coalition raised a total of \$7,500 to hire a professional lobbyist to advocate for our goals.

The coalition established the following goals:

- **Woodland Health:** With the presence of Emerald Ash Borer, thousand cankers disease, and invasive weeds like garlic mustard and bush honeysuckle, our woodlands are under a serious threat in both rural and urban settings.
- **Education and Public Awareness:** Communities and private landowners need guidance and training on managing their woodlands and trees.
- **Increased Funding:** Iowa's forests and trees need more state investment to protect and increase jobs and boost economic growth.

What Legislative Action is needed:

- Establish a Woodland and Tree Invasive Protection Program and Advisory Council to develop and enact strategies and methods to protect the state's trees from invasive species

through detection, surveillance, eradication, removal, and replacement.

- Invest in the Forest Land Enhancement Program, which funds needed conservation, plantings for reforestation, wildlife habitat establishment or enhancement, forest riparian buffer establishment and timber stand improvement.

The coalition is requesting \$3,800,000 to accomplish these goals. The outcome is expected to provide protection for 2,500 acres of rural woodlands, ensure that public lands are managed, help an additional 500 woodland owners with forest health threats and protect 75-100 communities.

Iowa's wood products industries generate over **3.9 billion dollars annually and employ almost 18,000 people with an annual payroll of \$916,000,000.**

The coalition emphasizes these figures at the outset of each presentation in order to educate the legislators on the importance of Iowa's woodlands and trees. Numerous presentations have been made to the critical legislative committees and to individual legislators.

The following are members of the coalition:

- Trees Forever
- Iowa Woodland Owners Association
- Iowa Nut Growers Association
- National Wild Turkey Association
- The Iowa Tree Farm Committee
- Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation
- The Nature Conservancy, Iowa Field Office
- Iowa Urban and Community Forestry Council
- Midwest Chapter of Arborists
- Society of American Foresters
- NE Iowa Forestry Advisory Council
- Iowa Nursery and Landscape Association
- Soil and Water Conservation Districts
- Iowa Christmas Tree Growers Association
- Prairie Edge Woods Corporation
- Society of Municipal Arborists

# **IOWA Board Meeting Minutes**

**April 16, 2011**

## **OxYoke Inn, Amana, IA**

***Prepared by Dave Hannon, IWOA Secretary***

President David Bartemes called the meeting to order at 10AM. Members present were Vice President Al Wagner, Secretary Dave Hannon, Membership Secretary Cathy Wilkie, Board Members Chuck Semler, Linda Rouse, Bob Jefferson, and Alan Rathje. Guests present were Paul Tauke, State Forester/Chief, Iowa DNR Forestry Bureau, and Jesse Randall, Asst. Prof. & Ext. Forester, Iowa State University.

The minutes of the January 15, 2011 meeting were approved on motion by Al and second by Bob. The treasurer's report was reviewed and approved on motion by Bob and second by Al.

Pres David gave the coalition report saying there were very active lobbying efforts including setting up a display in the capital which was toured by many legislators.

Chuck reported the June Field Day will be June 15th in Story City starting in the morning at the Fairview Lodge.

Al provided a handout showing the annual meeting will be held September 10, 2011 at the Hurtsville Interpretive Center near Maquoketa, Iowa. Details will be available on our website and in the next issue of Timber Talk.

Cathy gave the membership report showing we have 331 members, representing 35,195 acres of forest land. There was discussion about offering free memberships to persons showing real interest such as attending field days.

In the Timber Talk discussion only 63 people were willing to receive it electronically. Since Cathy will be doing Timber Talk from now on, Al moved and Chuck seconded that Cathy's monthly pay be increased from \$135 per month to \$150. Motion carried.

Paul told us that due to budget cuts, he may have to reduce some services such as the Loess Hills Visitors Center and/or close some trails. He also said there is some hope to get Forest Health funding in the next two years.

Jesse explained that due to budget cuts, he now has the duties that had been done by three people. He also lost secretarial help. For the next two years his priority has to be on research. He also informed us the Master Woodland Owners classes he has attempted to set up recently have been canceled due to lack of interest. Since there was agreement that Extension service to woodland owners is very important, we asked that he make us a proposal of what we can do to assist him. He agreed to do so.

On previously tabled business, Linda agreed we should back off of cooperating with Farm Bureau, but instead

educate IWOA members about the forestry/agriculture interface.

Under new business, there was discussion about filling the open board seat. Al will contact Greg in Iowa City re: his interest. It was also mentioned it would be nice to have someone in the Decorah area. Cathy is to send a membership list to each board member so we can look for potential candidates.

The 2011 Events were identified as WoodFest in Amana, All Iowa Horticultural Show in Ottumwa, and the Kirkwood College Garden Show.

It was decided the next meeting will be at the OxYoke Inn in Amana, IA on July 16th at 10:00AM. The meeting was then adjourned on motion by Bob and second by Al.

## **Iowa State Forest Nursery Sells Out of State**

***By Aaron Lumley***

***Private Lands and Nursery Supervisor***

Effective February 1 this year, for the first time, the state forest nursery begun accepting orders for conservation seedlings from people out of state. Selling out of state was a measure that was needed to allow the nursery to keep providing seedlings for the cost share programs that require large volumes of bare root trees. Essentially the nursery is supported by seedling sales and as the overall nursery sales have dropped, the budget has been reduced to a point where we are running on a shoe string, Iowan landowners do always get first pick.

Long term planning and anticipating cost share programs like CRP are important to all conservation nurseries. The state nursery is trying to diversify offerings while making sure the major species needs are met. Keep your eye out for species like Redbud in the catalog, while species that are non-native and are not big sellers will be reduced. Threats like EAB, Gypsy Moth, Bur Oak Blight, and Thousand Cankers also keep the nursery busy making sure they produce the best stock to help keep our woodlots diversified and healthy.

At one time the nursery was selling 5 million species and had 2 tree farms, Ames and Montrose, running full production with over 8 full time staff and 20-40 part time/seasonal staff. Today production is mainly at the Ames site, about 5 acres of seedlings remain in Montrose, operated by 1 part-time supervisor, 1 forester, 3 technicians, and 1 office manager with about 25-30 offenders on a seasonal basis.

Iowa landowners can purchase seedlings beginning August 1<sup>st</sup> while out-of-state sales will be accepted beginning February 1<sup>st</sup> each year. The Iowa State Forest Nursery seedlings order information can be found at [www.iowatreeplanting.com](http://www.iowatreeplanting.com) or by calling 1-800-865-2477.

## **A Word from Jesse Randall**

***Asst. Prof. & Ext. Forester, Iowa State University***

For this installment of the Timber Talk I was asked to write a short piece on the changes to ISU Extension, letting folks know that ISU Forestry Extension is still here and working closely with the DNR and other groups, like IWOA, to provide education to all Iowans. It truly seems that the only constant in today's world is change, and Extension reflects this statement perfectly. As budgets tightened, ISU Extension was forced to refocus and reevaluate its core mission and operations. This self-evaluation was difficult and painful at times, as it brought about changes to a network that, for years, provided unbiased, timely information from professionals that formed long-term partnerships within the community. Restructuring resulted in the loss of personnel through early retirement and redistricting and this placed new responsibilities and strains on the resources and personnel that remained. We are, to say the least, a much leaner Extension agency, but one that is still committed to serving all Iowans. Our county Extension offices are still our front lines and primary contacts, but leadership for those counties now rests with 19 Regional Extension Education Directors (REEDs).

ISU Forestry Extension was not immune to the wave of retirements and downsizing! Over the last 5-10 years, Forestry Extension has had retirements and transfers, reducing our ranks from three full-time, 100% Forestry Extension specialists, to one, 75% Forestry Extension specialist. Over the same time period, requests for information and event programming continued to increase and, as a result, response times to phone and e-mail questions are now longer, several existing forestry programs had to be put on hold or cancelled, and new programming requests are now evaluated as to their fit in existing programming and regional applicability. Due to rising costs associated with printing and mailing, Forestry Extension is transitioning all printed extension publications to online PDF versions. This will allow for updates to occur in a timely and cost effective manner. All electronic Extension materials can be found online at [www.forestry.iastate.edu](http://www.forestry.iastate.edu) under the All Publications link in the left column. Upcoming field days and educational classes are posted on the website, as well as county specific information (click on the county of interest at the website address above and you will be linked with your DNR Forester, County Extension contacts, and

other local resources). A new tree identification website will be up and running early this summer that will help users identify trees, give general characteristics such as canopy height and width, soil preference etc., and common insect and disease management issues will be discussed.

I have learned through this whole process that both the folks working in Extension and those folks who rely on Extension for answers to everyday problems are some of the most compassionate, caring, and hardworking individuals in Iowa. It is truly a pleasure to come to work each day because of the folks I meet and talk with across the state. I look forward to meeting you at our upcoming field days and please call with questions (515)294-1168, I enjoy hearing from all corners of Iowa!

## **Safety Corner**

***By Larry Wiley, Former IWOA President***

Spring is here, and summer isn't far behind. It's the time of the year when severe storms become more likely. Every household needs to be aware of their safe place and be ready to get there if a storm should occur. It's also important to have a meeting place established for family members to gather after the storm has passed.

Then comes the clean-up. Trees downed by wind are likely to be very different from those felled with a chainsaw. Many twists and stresses may be built up, requiring extra caution if sawing is necessary.

Start by wearing appropriate safety gear. Approach every cut with caution, paying close attention to any movement of the tree or limb. If stresses are present, the saw may be pinched or the limb may release violently. Using a wedge may help avoid pinching the saw. Be very careful if the tree is uprooted. When you cut a tree (as if to leave a stump) the root may flop back into the hole. Make sure no one is in that area. I witnessed this and it would have crushed a person had they been in the hole or on the root watching. Also be extra careful of "widow makers". Don't take any chances with these. I have used my power pole pruner to reach in for the final cut so I can be as far away as possible. It is an impressive experience when a large limb comes down with a sudden thud.

Let's hope you don't have storms to deal with, but if you do, Be Safe so you can enjoy the woods.

**BE SAFE OUT THERE!**

**Always wear safety gear  
when working in your woods.**

## **Love It or Hate It, Black locust is Here to Stay.**

**By Dave Bartemes**

The black locust, (*Robinia pseudoacacia*) is not native to Iowa, but is native to the southeastern United States. It is easily recognized by its deep furrowed bark and the long odd pinnate leaves with many leaflets. Over the years it has been an easily transplanted tree, as it will grow on most any ground. It was often used to reclaim strip-mined lands and it spreads its seeds on the wind.

My first encounter with this tree was in my home state of West Virginia, where the tree is native and is highly sought as firewood. The tree has also been used in fine furniture and for fence posts. The hard, heavy wood is naturally resistant to rot, and fence posts made from black locust will sometimes last for 100 years. At one time it was considered by lumbermen to be among the most prized trees for timber.

Unfortunately, the usefulness of this tree has been reduced to almost nothing because of the post borer insect and a number of diseases that attack the trees as they approach maturity. We would all be better off without a tree that seemingly has no value. This is why, when I bought my farm in Wayne County, Iowa, I went on a rampage to try to eradicate the two patches of black locust. It would be a lot more profitable to replace the black locust with walnut or oak. Or so I thought!

I spent three years axing, girdling, and poisoning every black locust I could find. The problem was, for every tree I "killed," 20 replaced it within one growing season. After cutting and, or, girdling the tree, I applied Tordon to the cut surface. Within a few days the area surrounding the tree would send up a plethora of suckers. It didn't matter if I did this in the spring or the fall, the result was the same.

New tactics were needed! I decided that if I couldn't eradicate these invaders, I would learn to live with them. Before this endeavor could take place, however, I needed to do some research. Google is a wonderful thing!

What I learned is that black locust is a very fast growing tree. It can top 30-35 feet in just a few years. It is a legume, so it provides valuable nitrogen, not only for itself, but for the surrounding trees as well. A cord of black locust contains 27.9 million BTU's compared to 22.2 million for black walnut and 24.6 million for red oak. In addition, black locust splits easily, and burns easily and

cleanly. Once seasoned, black locust will burn even when wet.

I checked out some of my findings on the farm, and sure enough, bur oaks, red oaks and black walnuts that were growing next to the black locusts were taller and had greater trunk diameter than the others planted in the same row where there were no locust trees. With this information I formed my new strategy.

Instead of trying to eliminate the black locust, I decided to use my chain saw and cut them at breast height. This was a lot easier than trying to girdle them at ground level. Instead of using Tordon or Roundup, I left the stump in place. This allowed my established poles of walnut and oak to get plenty of light while utilizing the nitrogen fixed in the soil by the black locusts. This also allows the locust stump to re-sprout aboveground rather than sending up so many suckers. Last growing season, some of these grew as much as ten feet on their old stumps. I will have to cut them every year, but this is easier than girdling and buying Tordon that doesn't work.

It will be several years before I will know for sure if this method of controlling black locust works as well as I anticipate, but if it does, I'm going to be one happy tree farmer.

Note: Black locust will replace itself in about ten years, yielding either firewood or two to three eight-foot fenceposts per tree. It usually takes about ten years for the tree to be attacked by the post borer or the other diseases that have limited its usefulness in the past. With bio-fuels on the rebound, the black locust may be a moneymaker.

Treated southern pine fence posts will last about 30 years, and they are much more expensive because of the chemicals needed to treat them and the travel and energy cost needed to get them here.

### **Our current board members:**

Dave Bartemes, IWOA President	DWBartemes@msn.com
Al Wagner, IWOA Vice President	wagneraj@netins.net
Dave Hannon, IWOA Secretary	dlhannon@dhannon.com
Allan Rathje	alrathje@mchsi.com
Larry Briney	brineylarry@ImOnMail.com
Chuck Semler	chucksemler@gmail.com
Linda Rouse	rouse@mchsi.com
Robert Jefferson	bandbj@dunkerton.net

### **IWOA Support Staff**

Cathy Wilkie, Membership Secretary  
Joanne Mensinger, Treasurer

## Beyond the Flood

*By Larry Wiley, Former IWOA President*

It's hard to believe nearly three years have passed since the devastating floods of 2008. Some may be wandering how the trees fared after such an event. Our tree farm is located on the banks of the Cedar River near Palo, Iowa. The Cedar River reached a level over eleven feet above the previous record.

Fortunately, our house was spared, but the remainder of the farm along, with outbuildings and the woods, were inundated with water. Water was several feet over the top of some of the more recent plantings. The majority of these trees are swamp white oak. The flood came in June, so the trees were flushed with leaves. My first visit to the planting was not very pleasant. The leaves were brown and covered with dried mud slime. Not pretty. On closer inspection, I could see new buds beginning to form. Maybe there was hope. With all the rest of the cleanup I didn't get back to this planting until fall. What a surprise! The leaves, by this time, had turned to their normal fall yellow. It was so beautiful I came to the house and got the camera and took a picture. These trees have continued to do well.

The other big concern was sand. Some seedlings were completely buried, others were bent over and required some effort to dig around and straighten up. Others managed to stay upright, but had a foot or more of sand around the base. Some seedlings that were buried were not found, fortunately there were only a few. Those that were straightened up and those with sand around the base are doing okay. They seem to have been set back some, but are still surviving and some are doing very well.

More mature trees, walnut, bur oak, hackberry, silver maple, ash and cotton wood seemed to be unaffected. The next year there were a larger bur oak and a big silver maple that died for unknown reasons, but there has been no die-off as a result of the flood.

The woods are now very much as it was prior to the flood. There is still an issue with the sand in the north end, but it mostly affects my ability to access the woods on that trail rather than an impact to the trees.

I'm very impressed with the ability of the swamp white oak to tolerate these conditions and still do well. Like a Timex, they take a licking and keep on ticking.

## ISU Extension and IWOA Spring and Summer Field Day Schedule

- June 9, 12:30-4pm, Ringgold County at Bob Martin's, 2759 Pleasant Ave., Ellston, IA. Topics: timber stand improvement demonstrations, tree felling, girdling, and chemical treatment, crop tree release, cost share program enrollment.
- June 15, 8:30am-3:30pm, Story County, IWOA Field Day at Fairview Lodge, Story City, IA. Topics: When to thin your woods, using a wedge prism, stocking guides, and marking trees for removal, tree pruning, and new insect problems.
- June 16, 12:30-4pm, Washington County at Stan and Tony Tate's, 13802 County Line Rd., Ainsworth, IA 52201. Topics: forest management to improve wildlife, prescribed fire and oaks, deer habitat, stand conversion to hardwoods, direct seeding
- June 17, 11:30am-4:30pm, Butler County, at Neil and Chris Schrage's, 27651 290<sup>th</sup> St., Parkersburg, IA. Topics: Prairies, windbreaks, river bottom hardwoods, lumber storage, kiln drying lumber.
- June 23, 8:30am-4pm, Fayette County, at Leon Dutch's, 13421 D Ave., Wadena, IA. Topics: A timber sale from start to finish, developing a plan, timber sale options, felling methods, log yard decision, post-sale TSI.
- June 24, 9am-12pm, Dallas County, at Maxine Davis Trust Farm, ½ mile north of Redfield, IA on P46, 1 mile west on Linden Rd. Topics: Establishing and improving wildlife habitat, CRP tree plantings, timber stand improvement, native grass seeding.

**Know someone who you think would be interested in the Iowa Woodland Owners Association and the networking opportunities that come with membership?**

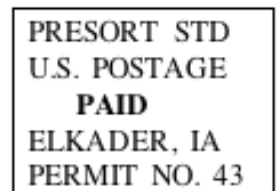
**Direct them to our website at [www.iowawoodlandowners.org](http://www.iowawoodlandowners.org) and have them click on the Membership Link. Better yet, buy them a one-year gift membership!**

## From Jim Dunphy from the Poison Ivy, Oak, and Sumac Information Center

Poison ivy is a harmful vine or shrub in the cashew family. It grows plentifully in parts of the United States and southern Canada. Poison ivy usually grows as a vine twining on tree trunks or straggling over the ground. But the plant often forms upright bushes if it has no support to climb upon. Species related to poison ivy include poison oak, which grows in the Pacific Northwest and nearby regions of Canada, and poison sumac, which grows in the Eastern United States. Poison oak and poison sumac both are shrubs. The tissues of all these plants contain poisonous oils somewhat like carbolic acid. This oil is extremely irritating to the skin. It may be brushed onto the clothing or skin of people coming in contact with the plants. Many people have been poisoned merely by taking off their shoes after walking through poison ivy. People can get poisoned from other people, but only if the oil remains on their skin. The eruptions themselves are not a source of infection. Appearance - the leaves of poison ivy are red in early spring. Later in spring, they change to shiny green. They turn yellow, red or orange in autumn. Each leaf is made up of three leaflets more or less notched at the edges. Two of the leaflets form a pair on opposite sides of the leafstalk, while the third stands by itself at the tip of the leafstalk. Small greenish flowers grow in bunches attached to the main stem close to where each leaf joins it. Later in the season, clusters of poisonous, berry-like drupes form. They are whitish, with a waxy look.

Control and treatment: Efforts have been made to destroy these plants by uprooting them or by spraying them with chemicals. But poison ivy and poison oak are so common that such methods have not been very effective in eliminating them. Contact with the plants should be avoided. After the oil has touched the skin, it usually takes some time for it to penetrate and do its damage. Before this happens, it is wise to wash the skin thoroughly several times with plenty of soap and water. Care should be taken not to touch any part of the body, for even tiny amounts of the oil will cause irritation. If poisoning develops, the blisters and red, itching skin may be treated with dressings of calamine lotion, Epsom salts, or bicarbonate of soda. Scientists have developed a vaccine that can be injected or swallowed. But this is effective only if taken before exposure.

Scientific Classification. Poison ivy, poison oak, and poison sumac belong to the cashew family, Anacardiaceae. Poison ivy is classified as *Rhus radicans* or *Toxicodendron radicans*. Poison oak is *R. diversiloba* or *T. diversilobum* and poison sumac is *R. vernix* or *T. vernix*.



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