

Fall Newsletter

2017

UW-MADISON FORESTY CLUB



The Trek to SAF

Sean Fischer

The Forestry Club had another great year at the Society of American Foresters Convention! Although not in our backyard like last year, the trip to Albuquerque, New Mexico proved to be an adventure in and of itself. Six club members attended, and four chose to camp out among the juniper, cholla, and pinyon of the high desert of Cibola National Forest. All took the opportunity to increase their knowledge of forestry, gather new ideas, and meet forestry folks from all over.

The SAF Convention was held in the Albuquerque Convention Center in the heart of the downtown's beautiful business district. Companies, non-profits, the US Forest Service, and many more filled the booths of the Management Expo. Tutorials for state-of-the-art equipment such as the latest laser rangefinders and GIS programs sat alongside booths with recruiters for companies like Weyerhaeuser and Bartlett Tree Experts. Many souvenirs were to be had as well, with raffles and books on sale as

well as numerous free bags, water bottles, and keychains bearing company logos to ensnare booth visitors. To those considering attending next year in Oregon, be sure to bring resumes, many companies use the convention expo to reach out to prospective employees. The Management Expo was only a small part of the convention in comparison to the many seminars, plenary sessions, student events, and the all-important quiz bowl.

Seminars on silviculture, hydrology, entomology, pathology, ecology, and many other topics were held, disseminating thought-provoking ideas and new research, as well as broad reviews of regional forestry initiatives. Being only thirty minutes each, these were "quick and dirty" exchanges of ideas, but highly thought-provoking.

More in-depth discussion could be found at the plenary sessions, which featured a talk show-like discussion between experts in the field, all discussing a central conservation issue in the United States today.

One plenary discussed problems foresters face when the land that supplies water to large cities is owned by many people, who may be uncooperative with management goals. Presenters discussed their own experiences in diverse regions across the country, from the Catskills of New York to the Rio Grande Watershed of the southwest.

And lastly, our quiz bowl team fought valiantly, only to be eliminated in the first round of questions, losing our esteemed trophy. Hopefully we can win it back in the years to come! Outside of the convention, the US Forest Service held a hiring event for student interns and recent graduates. It's a great chance to polish those resumes, practice your interviewing skills, and try to further your career. Any of those thinking of attending next year's convention should come prepared!

In all, the trip to the SAF Convention was a huge success, and we hope even more club members will attend in the future.



Chainsaw Safety

Shea Rettler

On first weekend in November, 12 forestry club members had the pleasure of heading up to Kemp Natural Resources Station up in Woodruff to complete chainsaw training the following day. We earned level 1 chainsaw certification certified by SAWW (Safety and Woods Workers). After a comfortable evening at Kemp accompanied by a warm fire, cards, and stories, we awoke to a beautiful few inches of fresh snow cover. After a quick but hearty breakfast, we headed over to a gorgeous property on Tomahawk Lake. Mary and Mike were extremely generous to host our chainsaw training inside their stunning lake house and property. The training was taught by Ken Lallemont, a certified SAWW trainer with a wealth of knowledge and experience. Ken is an industry veteran, who recently retired after a very successful career with Timber Resources. We spent the first portion of the training inside, learning about safety, chain sharpening, chainsaw maintenance, and more. After a delicious chili lunch, it was out to woods to get some hands on training. Ken took

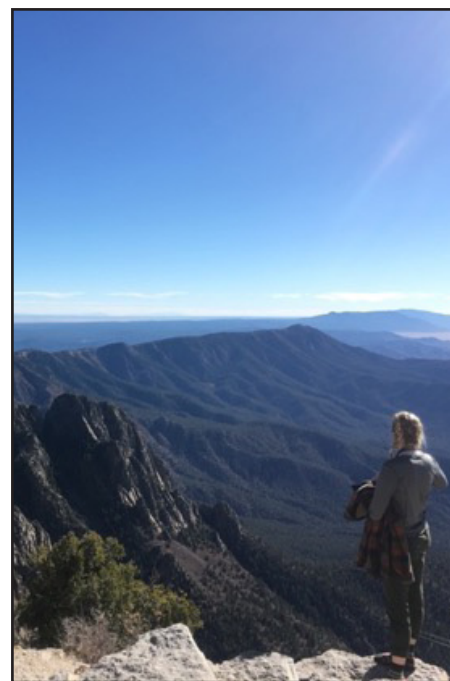
a very creative approach to the training by keeping a score sheet (just for fun) in which everyone was graded for each exercise. Ken teaches the plunge cut method, which is fascinating because it allows the operator to have complete control of the tree until the end of the cut. By the end of the day, we were cutting down our own trees. We had the privilege to cut down fairly large red pine trees, and had a blast doing so. In the end, it was a race against daylight and while we didn't get to do quite everything we had hoped, we were still able to complete the majority of the exercises and everyone earned their certification. I had a blast earning my certification, and it's great to see forestry club members learn these skills, boost their resumes, and get out into the woods together.

I would like to recognize Mary and Mike for their extreme generosity in letting us use their facilities, cut down their trees, providing us with a delicious lunch, and all the little things that went along with it. Also to Ken Lallemont, who did an excellent job as a trainer. It was clear Ken has been instructing for a long time, and we were very grateful to have him teach us. Lastly, a huge thank you to Scott Bowe for allowing and helping us

to stay at Kemp, accompanying us at training, and for some fantastic coffee. These people did wonders to make this event happen and help it go smoothly. I hope to build on this event with level 2 training next semester, as well as level 1 training for more members. It's great to see more members acquiring skills that will be invaluable in their futures.



Sean Firscher works on practicing his plunge while instructor Ken Lallemont carefully watches.



Explore Badger Day

Nate Chotlos



The Sauk Prairie Conservation Alliance held Explore Badger Day September 23rd to celebrate the release of a new visitor guide for Sauk Prairie State Recreation Area and show the public the results of their hard work.

Located on the former site of the Badger Army Ammunition Plant, just south of Devil's Lake State park, the 3,385 acres open to the public provide space to hike, ride horses, bicycle, or bird watch. The Sauk Prairie Conservation Alliance has been working hard to mark trails and create maps to make the property more accessible to the public. Additionally, the group wants to return native grassland plant communities that existed before European settlement. "The eventual goal is to restore the remnant prairie to historical conditions," said Bob Schwartz, the alliance's volunteer coordinator, "healing the scars on the landscape."

In preparation for Explore Badger Day, the alliance marked 12 miles of trails with the help of volunteers. The visitor guide includes a map of the three different loops and interesting points to check out along the way.

One of these points is Hillside Prairie. The native vegetation on the steep grassy slope was never plowed and still reflects the plant life found there before settlement.

Historically, frequent fires either caused by lightning or purposely set by Native Americans maintained open grassland ecosystems at Sauk Prairie. Without fires woody shrubs and trees would invade the site and block the sun that the prairie plants need. The DNR now conducts occasional controlled burns on the site to simulate past conditions and maintain the diverse plant and animal life found there.

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As part of the Explore Badger Day festivities, volunteers removed brush from around Hillside Prairie. Schwartz explained that the work will expand the area that can be burned and eventually link with other restored areas nearby.

Regular workdays, held on Saturday mornings at 9 am twice a month, provide a great opportunity to get experience with restoration work. Schwartz, who earned bachelor's degrees in forest science and political science from UW-Madison, was an active member of Forestry Club as a student and has continued to support the club since his graduation in 2016.

Meet the New Officer



Riley Aschenbrenner

Position: Photographer

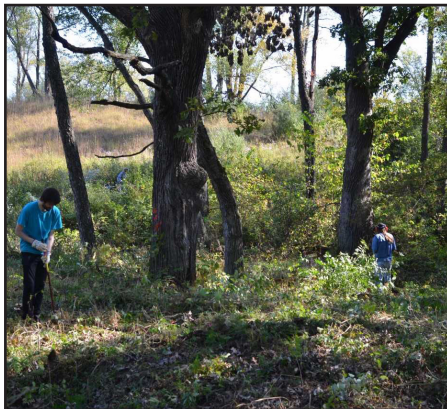
Year: Junior

Academic Interests: I am a forest science major with a certificate in environmental studies. After two years of exploring my interests in other disciplines, I've landed in this major and am excited to see where I can go with it. I am particularly interested in the anthropogenic forces that change forest ecosystems, including the active management of public and private lands. I learn something new that interests me almost every day in class, so my academic interests are always expanding.

Other Interests: When I'm not inside, I'm outside. My interests and favorite activities include cycling, playing the piano, outdoor photography, exploring new places, skiing, finding new music, and spending time with family and friends.

Favorite Trees: Red pine (*Pinus resinosa*) and northern white-cedar (*Thuja occidentalis*)

Random fun fact: The giant river otter (*Pteronura brasiliensis*) grows up to six feet long and must eat at least six to nine pounds of food every day.



Post Forestry Fun Fest

Nate Chotlos

Several Forestry Club members helped burn a patch of remnant prairie on the Zweifel family farm October 1st after the Forestry Fun Fest.

Five people stood at the ready, armed with rakes and shovels, while club alumnus Brian Zweifel lit the dry grass starting on the downwind side. A mowed buffer already surrounded the roughly 1/10 acre patch eliminating the need for prep work. The shovels quickly beat out any finger of flame that tried to creep into the mowed grass.

Brian has never burned the area in the fall before but deemed it a success. The fuel burned hot and evenly except for one spot under an open grown black oak along the

north edge. The shade and shorter fuels there reduced the flame intensity and caused some patchiness.

Brian hopes that repeated fires will reduce the non-native plant cover, allowing fire adapted native species to expand into the open space. Three previous burns at the site all occurred in the spring.

A number of large rocks poking through the hillside probably kept previous generations from plowing up the remnant. However, plant diversity in the remnant is relatively low due to the small size and heavy grazing in the past. Brian has been reintroducing more prairie species as he gradually works to improve the site.

The impromptu fire crew initially stayed late after the club event to clean up and finish pressing the last batch of the cider apples but eagerly volunteered to help with the burn once Brian suggested it.

Full Value Forestry at Timbergreen Farms

John Joutras

In mid-November, I toured the Timbergreen Farm, a small business based in rural Spring Green, Wisconsin. Nestled in the hills at the edge of the Driftless Area, the farmhouse at Timbergreen is a showcase of their work. Large aspen beams support the roof and walls, and the flooring is a mosaic of species, laid with wood panels crafted from the community of hardwoods in the surrounding hills. Great slabs of polished wood decorate the mantle, the zone lines of mycelium – fungi once hard at work breaking the tree down – captured underneath a polished finish. The entire place appears to be made out of wood.

The operation at Timbergreen is headed by Jim Birkemeier, who supports a small crew of full-time employees off of the 200 acres of Birkemeier family forest around the farm. As part of the tour, Jim invited me into his home, made delicious burgers grilled over cherry planks (cut right there at the farm), and showed me his whole process, from touring the woods themselves to the laser-engraving shop and retail store in Spring Green.



Jim practices what he calls “full value forestry.” Local wood, harvested primarily from dead or dying trees, put to use with minimal waste. The forestry itself is closely aligned with Dauerwald principles of management.

Dauerwald is a German term that translates best as “continuous cover” or “close to nature” forestry. Harvest of live trees is limited, and reserved primarily for suppressed trees, trees with poor form or in heavy competition. It’s a method that allows for a continuous and gradual supply of wood with minimal impact on the harvest area. Jim keeps detailed records on his family forest. He estimates that Timbergreen harvests an average of one tree per acre annually on their land.

The timber is milled and dried on site, with a WoodMizer mill and two solar kilns – large sheds with sliding doors, greenhouse plastic and fans that dry the wood gradually, all with sunpower. A significant portion of the timber is planed into flooring planks on a Logsol planar-molder, which the Timbergreen team installs themselves. The rest finds its way into other value-added wood products – engraved cutting boards, lasercut snowflake ornaments, end tables and more.

Jim views Timbergreen’s process as part of something bigger than converting trees into a regular paycheck. He sees Timbergreen as part of a movement toward a mosaic of communal, local management of natural resources. Where the harvest and processing of the trees provides work for the local community, and the wood products find their ways into the homes and businesses where they were grown.



Outdoor Education

Alden Laev

On a sunny day in early November, the club led an outdoor education lesson at Picnic Point for a group of local elementary school kids. As in past semesters, we worked with 40 fourth and fifth grade students from the Verona New Century School, a K-5 charter school that aims to, “help students become resourceful problem solvers in a global world that demands flexible, innovative, and critical thinking.”

The students study ecology in the classroom, so they were surprisingly knowledgeable about the woods. Our group of eight undergrads moved the students through four forestry-related stations: tree identification, diameter measurement, height measurement, and an ecology walk. Along the way, they learned about logger’s tapes, Biltmore sticks, snags, and more. There was plenty of running and screaming through the Picnic Point forests, but there were also curious questions and eager answers.

It was an engaged bunch, and they seemed to enjoy the time outside just as much as the college kids. We all appreciated the chance to share our excitement about forestry and the natural world with the next generation. However, they may need some more training before they’re ready to go timber cruising- we still haven’t been able to find the 48 inch DBH sugar maples that they measured. Current club members, stay tuned for two similar events in the spring!

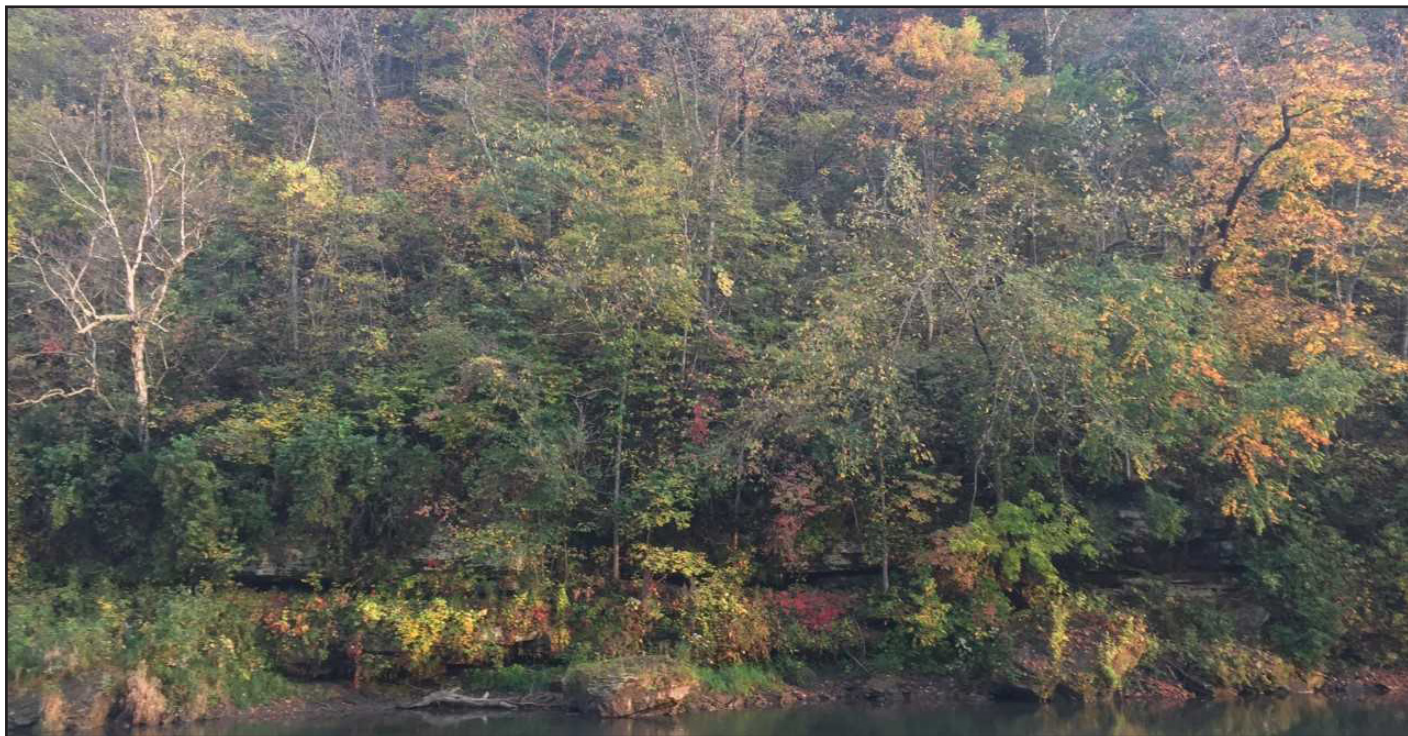
Capstone

John Joutras

This year’s capstone course project was conducted on a section of private and state-owned forest land bordering the Root River in Fillmore County, Minnesota, in the heart of the Driftless Area.

The goal of the capstone course is to develop a comprehensive set of management recommendations for a forested property, from start to finish. Students this year designed and then carried out a natural resource inventory over a rainy fall weekend, cruising 300 acres of woods by day and camping out at the Eagle Bluff Environmental Center by night.

The success of the project depends on integrating the data gathered in the field into a creative, practical long term plan. Students draw from years of forestry coursework, work experiences and individual skillsets to develop the plan and communicate it through a report and presentation. This year’s capstone presentation took place Friday, December 8 in room A228 Russell Labs.



Forestry Fun Fest

Rachel Kirchner

The day began with clear skies, rays of beautiful sunshine, and the roar of a chainsaw. It was a wonderful Sunday morning in early October—a perfect day for learning some forestry skills and having a good time. Another Forestry Fun Fest was upon us, and we spent the next half-day learning about various topics, including invasive plants and chainsaw safety. There were three stations we rotated between in the morning: invasive types and management, forestry hand-tool usage, and chainsaw safety and demonstration.

I began at the invasive species station, where we learned about common invasive species in Wisconsin, including Buckthorn and Garlic Mustard. We also gained experience using a brush cutter, and got to identify and chop down buckthorn.

The next station was the hand tool station, where we got to try out some axes, a two-person saw, and a pee-vee. The pee-vee, a tool which allows you to roll a log by extending your moment arm, was a little harder than we all had anticipated, and we all got a workout from chopping a log in two with our axes.

We even got to have a hat-chet-throwing competition, but only a few people could wedge their hat-chets into the nearby stump.

The last station was the chainsaw station, where we were taught the basics of safety and shown different methods for felling trees and cutting logs. We even got to try it once after putting on all our safety equipment. After everyone had gotten to each station, we hiked back up to the barn and we were taught how to make apple cider with an old wooden press. The resulting cider was a refreshing treat after a morning of cutting brush and swinging axes, as well as learning valuable skills and enjoying ourselves.



Tree Talk

Nate Chotlos, Forestry Club President

Between club meetings, chainsaw training, Forestry Fun Fest, the Christmas tree sale and much more, this semester has been a busy one for the Forestry Club. My fellow officers deserve recognition for their roles organizing these events. The club would never have accomplished as much as we did without their hard work.

The officer team will look a bit different next semester.

Since I am graduating in December, we held an election at the final club meeting which resulted in some shuffling of the current officer roles and a new officer for spring semester. Alden Laev, the former vice president, will bring his creativity and leadership skills to his new role, president.

In the year I have known him and the semester we spent together on the officer team, Alden has constantly pushed me to expand my standard of what is possible. I look forward to seeing how his ambitious vision will continue to improve the club. Shea Rettler showed an incredible ability to do whatever was needed this semester and will make a perfect vice president for Alden. Shea took charge of ordering merchandise and coordinating chainsaw safety training in addition to his photographer duties this semester. I don't know where he found the time to do everything but am extremely grateful for his contributions. Riley Aschenbrenner, elected as the photographer, is the new face on the officer team.

Despite being new to the major and club, Riley came to the SAF national convention where I had the pleasure of getting to know her. Riley's endless motivation and adaptability will make her an excellent officer.

Kyle Schansburg (treasurer), Haley Knight (secretary), and Rachel Kirchner (technology coordinator) will continue in the same roles next semester. Between the three of them they made being president a breeze. I never had to worry about having food at the meetings, sending out club emails, or updating the website.

I want to thank all six of them for their dedication to the club and wish them the best of luck in the new semester. I am confident that the club will continue to be wildly successful with such outstanding people in charge.



Contribute to the newsletter!

If you have a story that is forestry related send it to uwmadforestryclub@gmail.com!

Those who submit a story will receive a FREE mug!

Have a great break!