

# *Illinois Forests*



"The Voice for Illinois Forests"

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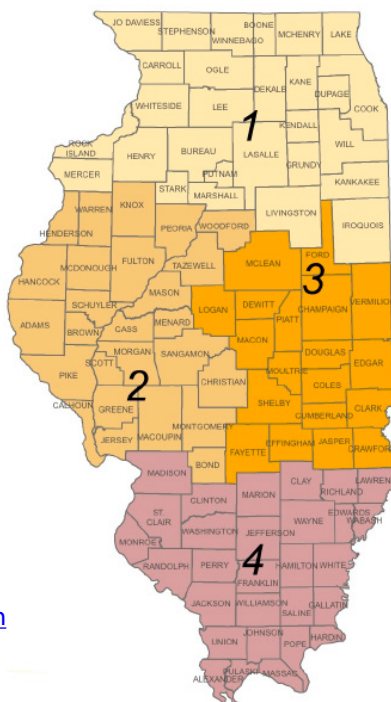
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## Our Mission...

"to act on issues that impact rural and community forests and to promote forestry in Illinois."

## Our Goals...

- Promote forest management and help landowners manage their forests
- Educate members and the general public about rural and community forestry
- Advocate for favorable legislation and policies to benefit/protect landowners managing their forests
- Understand and engage our members, and increase IFA membership
- Govern the IFA efficiently and effectively to better serve our charitable mission

<https://ilforestry.org>



# Illinois Forestry Association Holds the 14th IFA Annual Conference at Principia College

by Zach DeVillez



On September 26th the IFA held its 14th IFA annual conference at the beautiful Principia College in Elsah, Illinois. This year's theme was "Keeping Illinois Forests Healthy and Productive". Attendees were able to learn about current forest health topics from some very knowledgeable professionals through some fantastic lectures and field days.

The IFA could not have asked for a better location to hold this meeting. Principia College's campus sits atop a towering bluff that overlooks the Mississippi River. The campus feels as though it is a part of the natural landscape, surrounded by forest, and rolling hills. The students and staff

were extremely friendly, and helpful.

Special thanks goes out to all the speakers who gave their time and efforts to share their expertise with the conference attendees. We offered a wide range of topics this year, which provided a wonderful learning experience for private landowners, and forestry professionals alike. All of the attendees seemed to be very engaged in the presentations, and had plenty of questions for the speakers.

A lot of preparation and planning went into building this conference. Luckily, the IFA has some really devoted board members who spent

a lot of time preparing for this event.

This conference was one of the best we've had. We had 65 individuals show up to learn about forest management. We could not have asked for a better group of attendees for the annual meeting. It is truly something special that we have so many folks in this state that care about Illinois forests. It is our hope that everyone learned a lot from the program, and overall enjoyed their experience. Through events like these, we can share ideas, grow as responsible forest managers, and continue to maintain the health and prosperity of the forests we cherish.



## *Pere Marquette State Park Field Tour*



### ***Touring the Beautiful Pere Marquette State Park***

The annual conference kicked off Thursday with a tour of Pere Marquette State Park. With the guidance of IDNR District Heritage Biologist Mark Phipps, we were able to view how forest managers are managing the upland forests as well as the unique hill prairies on the site.

The hill prairies on the site are quite fascinating. They occur on southwest facing steep slopes with the exposure to plenty of sunlight and dry winds. Mark Phipps and his fellow forest management team use fire to help them maintain the prairies' species diversity. Periodic fire is considered crucial for this ecotype to continue to thrive.

Attendees were also able to see how fire and strategic cutting of undesirable species are helping to manage Pere Marquette upland forests. Evidence of this could be found on the forest floor where oak regeneration was far more prevalent than invasive species such as Japanese honeysuckle or autumn olive.





## Annual Conference Day Two

### ***Program at Principia College***

The annual conference reconvened on Friday morning at the campus of Principia college. We had 65 attendees come out to learn about forest management from a diverse group of professionals.

The presentations were very well done this year and those in the audience were quite engaged, as evidenced by the amount of questions at the end of each presentation.

### ***IFA Buisness Meeting***

After the main program, the IFA held its 2019 Annual Business Meeting. This year's IFA Achievement Award was presented to Mike McMahan. The rest of the board of directors felt that Mike was extremely deserving of this award, and that he should be recognized for the passion and devotion he has given and continues to give to the IFA.

There has been quite a bit of change in the board of directors that serve the IFA. Mike McMahan has been elected to the role of President. We are also excited to bring in two new board directors. Kevin Bennet, the Central and Southern Illinois Program Manager at Trees Forver will be serving as a director for region 2. Bill Buechel, a Deputy Director, Manpower and Personnel Directorate, United States Transportation Command at Scott Air Force Base will be serving region 4. We are excited about all these gentlemen, and are confident that they will do a fantastic job serving the IFA.



Figure 1: Lindsay Ivanyi, Landscape Maintenance Division Superintendent for the Salt Creek region at the Forest Preserves of Cook County, presenting her talks over forest health and oak tree health



Figure 2: IDNR Forester, Stephen Felt, giving his presentation over walnut tree management



Figure 3: Newly elected President Mike McMahan accepting the IFA Achievement Award



# Tour of Principia Research Sites



## Tour of Principia Research Sites

On the following Saturday, the IFA wrapped up the annual conference with a tour of the exciting research that is taking place at Principia College under the guidance of Dr. John Lovseth, Professor of Biology and Natural Resources at Principia College.



Figure 1: John Lovseth explaining his research at Principia College

John was able to show off his forests that are being managed with different management regimes. Different harvesting techniques are being used to show how these techniques might differently affect the composition of the forest. The tree harvest techniques being used were single tree selection, group tree selection, seed tree selection, shelter wood, and clear cutting. All these cuts have different affects on regeneration of forests. John also talked about using prescribed fire to help manage the forests, which is a powerful tool when trying to reach a specific forest management goal. It will be very exciting to follow this research and see the varying results.



Figure 2: A lookout view across the different harvest techniques being used at Principia College

### ***Silvicultural Cutting Techniques Used in the Research***

**Single Tree Selection -** Removing individual trees of all size classes uniformly throughout the stand.

**Group Tree Selection -** Removing small groups of trees. Openings between groups are roughly 2 mature tree lengths in distance apart.

**Seed Tree Selection -** Removing the majority of trees in a stand, but leaving a small number of high-quality mature trees to provide seed for regeneration.

**Shelterwood Method -** A method for regenerating an even aged class by leaving mature trees where seedlings can develop with increased light and space.

**Clearcutting Method -** The cutting of virtually all trees in a stand creating a fully exposed microclimate for the regeneration of new seedlings.



Figure 3: Taking a look at a group tree selection cut





# Message from the President - IFA Membership Gift Campaign

By Mike McMahan



The very first thing I would like to share with you as President of your IFA is a heart-felt "thank you" for your confidence in me personally. I do appreciate it! I also find myself in a rather unique position – I bring with me the valuable lessons of experience and trust to this responsibility. Having been President before and afterwards seeing how others have performed in this job, I have observed many very strong points of what to attempt to do as well as learning a few approaches that may not serve us as well at this point in time. Probably THE most important thing I bring with me is a strong TRUST in you – the IFA membership. Over the years, we have benefitted from a gradual gain of those who "get it" and a gradual loss of those who are not in IFA for what I consider the right reasons.

This brings me to the major message I wish to present to you as we start 2020 – Membership has always been a goal of ours – each and every Past President did his or her absolute best to grow the IFA. What they did not realize as they each served in their unique ways was that they were planting the seeds of what I am fortunate enough to have an opportunity to work with. Years ago, Presidents would ask the Board of Directors "to each get 2 new members before the next meeting – if we do that we will increase our membership by X members." We tried specific recruitment techniques that had some limited success. Probably our biggest successful program was the joint venture we have had with IDNR where we were able to include an IFA letter in their bi-annual mailing to each landowner who had a Forest Management Plan on file with them.

Combine all these with on-going efforts to educate all of us on proper stewardship of our personal woodlands. Annual meetings have evolved to where extremely valuable and informative presentations are the routine rather than the exception. We truly LEARN about invasives, about the value of controlled burns, about the need for Timber Stand Improvements, about the need to plant a few trees if at all possible, etc. All of these individually are great and collectively, they are even better.

Trouble is – we still are not "there". We still do not have that special feature of what we are trying to do that really captures both new members AND success with our personal management efforts. We do our invasive control on our property; we conduct controlled burns on our property; we invest heavily in proper forest management on our property. Do you see where I am going? "ON OUR PROPERTY!!!!" The problem is our neighbors simply sit there and watch us. What we do helps us for sure but in a year or two, if we don't keep doing it, the invasive problem returns, the forest floor concerns come back.

There is one other idea that developed a couple of years ago that is my last piece of this particular puzzle – IFA Gift memberships. This is a program where any IFA member can give a one year membership to anyone they choose for \$30. I did it with 3 of my friends and am proud to say all 3 have renewed their membership on their own. They are part of the "I get it" group because I knew they were interested and concerned about what was going on in their woods but needed some help making it all happen.

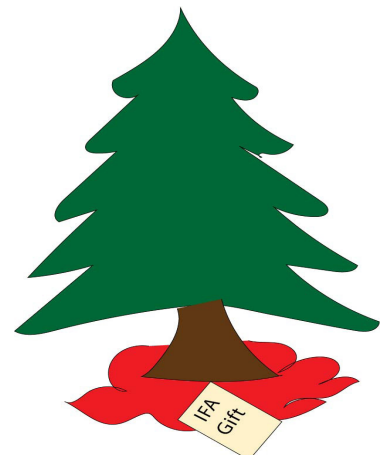
So, you ask "Where do we go from here? Sounds like the Gift Membership may work if more of us do it." Well, that may be true but I have one more idea which ties this all together –

This Christmas, give a gift membership to each of your neighbors who have property bordering yours. In my case, if I did this I would have to send IFA a check for \$120 since I have four properties involved. I could simply consider this a donation to the IFA and leave it at that. If even one of these is successful, then I now have a neighboring property owner willing to cooperate on management practices. We are much more likely have some success.

If you like the idea, simply download the "Gift Membership" form, fill it out properly and send it to Dave Gillespie. He will take it from there. As a side-note, I have also given gift memberships to my kids – in an attempt to expose them in a subtle manner to what I think is important on the ground they will someday be responsible for.

## [Gift Membership Form](https://ilforestry.org/resources/Documents/Forms/IFA%20GIFT%20membership%20form.01-18-18.pdf)

<https://ilforestry.org/resources/Documents/Forms/IFA%20GIFT%20membership%20form.01-18-18.pdf>





# Importance of Forest Stand Improvement and How This Encourages Oaks

by Zach DeVillez

When trying to understand the species composition within a forest, it is important to remember that all trees are technically competing. In a forest canopy, trees compete for space and light. This creates a forest management challenge for land managers trying to maintain a specific species composition in their forests, because certain species tolerate growing conditions at different success levels. For this reason, as land managers we often utilize Forest Stand Improvement (FSI) as a management tool, which encourages specific trees to dominate the forest canopy.

Many species of trees, such as beech and maple are shade tolerant. This means that they do well growing in the shade of larger trees that are already established in the forest canopy. Other species, such as many oak species, require ample amounts of sunlight and space so that they can grow into the canopy. In Illinois forests, this can become an issue. Oak and hickory dominated forests are often what we manage for throughout much of Illinois. One reason why we keep this species composition is because oaks and hickories make fantastic habitat for wildlife. Another reason we prefer oaks and hickories is because they are both very important timber species in Illinois. Historically, the majority of all Illinois forests (68%) were dominated by oaks and hickories. What we are seeing in many of our forests now is shade tolerant species taking an aggressive hold in our forests. This means that when dominant trees in a canopy fail, the next trees in line are the shade tolerant species. A forest dominated by these trees would provide habitat that is far less rich in terms of biodiversity.

To combat our forests becoming less productive, we practice FSI management. This is the act of cutting undesirable species, and poor formed individuals. We minimize the density of trees in the canopy so that we can get sunlight to the canopy floor. This helps regenerate desirable species and provides plenty of space for expansive growth in already established trees. Through this tool we can discourage shade-tolerant competitors of the trees we want to dominate our forests.



Figure 1: Aerial view of a dense canopy with no FSI management



Figure 2: Aerial view of an open canopy after FSI management

While this management practice is very helpful in managing our forests, it is very important to monitor the area for invasive species. All that sunlight hitting the canopy floor can spark an expansion of invasive species' hold

on the forest floor. It is important to eradicate any non-native invasive species that might try to occupy the newly opened space. However, when done responsibly, FSI can help you maintain your forest's productivity and health.



Figure 3: Sugar maples dominating the midstory of the forest canopy in a closed-canopy forest



Figure 4: A closed-canopy forest which provides very little light for herbaceous plants or oak/hickory regeneration

## Common Species to Cut in a Forest Stand Improvement

Sugar maples (*Acer saccharum*)  
American beech (*Fagus grandifolia*)  
American elm (*Ulmus americana*)  
Green ash (*Fraxinus pennsylvanica*)  
White ash (*Fraxinus americana*)  
Sassafras (*Sassafras albidum*)  
Hackberry (*Celtis occidentalis*)  
Eastern red cedar (*Juniperus virginiana*)



# Forestry Challenges in an Urban Jungle

by Melissa Cusic  
Chicago Region Trees Initiative



When the Chicago Region Trees Initiative (CRTI) kicked off in 2014, it was clear that trees in northeastern Illinois were facing steep challenges— invasions of buckthorn and emerald ash borer, low canopy cover, poor species diversity, and dwindling oak ecosystems. Less clear was how ready the region's foresters were to overcome these challenges. CRTI wanted to know who needed resources, so we asked.

In 2014 and 2016, we sent surveys to assess the operational capacity, or ability to manage and improve their community trees, of local land managers in municipalities, park districts, and townships throughout the seven counties surrounding Chicago. The responses were surprising in some cases and confirmed anecdotal laments in others. The sections below detail some of the key results.

## Baseline Concerns

The 2014 survey was meant to provide a baseline on budget sizes, pruning cycles, tree removals and plantings, staff sizes, and more. However, one issue eclipsed everything else: the emerald ash borer (EAB).



Figure 1: Taking apart a chainsaw during an Urban Forestry Basic Training session

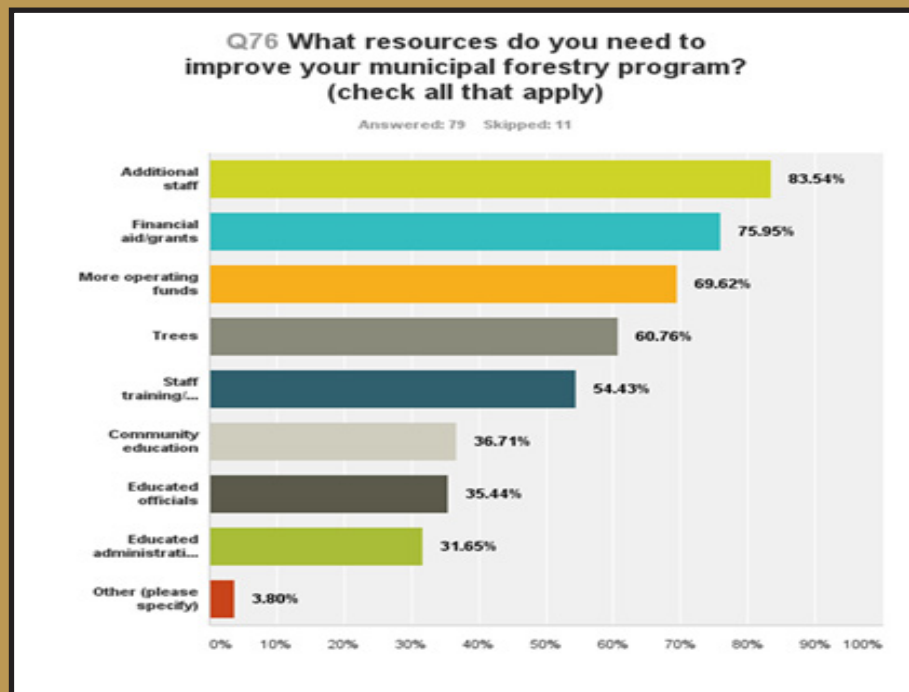
The emerald ash borer was first observed in the United States in 2002 and in Illinois by 2006. By 2014, any of the 13 million ash trees in the CRTI Region that hadn't been treated were in decline or dead. Our survey responses reflected non-standard forestry operations: "before EAB, it was..." or "budget for x has been cut to focus on ash removal". Given this caveat, here are some takeaways:

- Communities (including municipalities, park districts, townships, etc.) spent ~1.9% of their annual budgets on forestry. The average forestry budget was \$6.1 million, but ranged from \$0 to \$18.9 million.
- 71% of respondents had tree inventories, but only 54% were current and only 41% were updated at least annually.

- 97% of respondents reported having at least one tree ordinance, most commonly to allow and/or prohibit specific tree species (74%), regulate removals and replacement (66%), and regulate parkway plantings in new subdivisions (66%).

- In 2014, land managers were removing on average 754 trees and planting on average 446 trees. The four most important factors to respondents when selecting species to plant were 1) tolerance of site conditions, 2) species diversity, 3) height, and 4) required maintenance.

- Land managers ranked their greatest needs as 1) additional staff, 2) trees, 3) financial aid/grants, and 4) staff training/education.



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### Changes Over Time

Two years is not sufficient for major operational changes, so our 2016 survey generated similar answers. So what did change? The average forestry budget decreased from \$6.1 million in 2014 to ~\$790,000 in 2016, likely due to the winding down of EAB programs. Although tree removals decreased to an average 486 per community (from 754 in 2014), tree planting also decreased to an average 366 trees per community (from 446 in 2014). Communities transitioned back to routine operations, but tree planting was not on track to fully replace EAB loss.

Greatest needs also shifted in ranking: 1) trees, 2) financial aid/grants, 3) educated administrative staff, and 4) staff training/education. While land managers in 2014 were understaffed for substantial ash removal, by 2016 they were ready to focus on replanting but reported challenges in finding the trees they needed. In the last decade, tree nurseries and growers were impacted by both recession and shrunken planting budgets due to EAB. At present, most nurseries are actively diversifying their stock and increasing production, but recovery has not caught up to current demand from land managers.



Figure 2: A Community Tree Network session in which we learned about road de-icing strategies that reduce impacts to trees



Figure 3: A tree pruning demonstration from one of our Forestry Basic Training Sessions

### Capacity-Based Solutions

The Chicago Region Trees Initiative, a collaboration to improve the health, diversity, and canopy cover of trees in the seven-county Chicago Region, uses these survey results to develop solutions. Here is how we addressed some of the respondents' needs:

- **Shrinking Budgets:** we provide community forestry grants and hold workshops on ways to reduce costs, including working with volunteers, contract growing, and risk management. Strengthening / expanding tree protection ordinances: we developed Tree Preservation Ordinance Templates and a Tree Management Plan template ([chicagorti.org/OrdinanceTemplates](http://chicagorti.org/OrdinanceTemplates)) for easy implementation.

- **Staff training:** we developed a peer-learning group, the Community Tree Network (ChicagoRTI.org/CTN), at which professionals learn from each other. And our Urban Forestry Basic Training helps non-foresters learn enough about trees to avoid unintentional damage or harm ([chicagorti.org/UFBT](http://chicagorti.org/UFBT)).

- **Finding trees:** we connected The Morton Arboretum's online Tree Selector ([www.mortonarb.org/Tree-Selector](http://www.mortonarb.org/Tree-Selector)) to a list of nurseries that carry the tree species suggested for your site ([ChicagoRTI.org/nurserytreeinventory](http://ChicagoRTI.org/nurserytreeinventory)).



Figure 4: A Community Tree Network session in which we learned about road de-icing strategies that reduce impacts to trees

### Future Plans

Looking forward, CRTI plans to repeat the surveys every five years to coincide with ten-year tree canopy and forest composition analyses. Continuing to track operational capacity will help us to improve the health and extent of the CRTI region's trees by addressing the needs of those charged with their care.

"Unless someone like you cares a whole awful lot, Nothing is going to get better. It's Not."

- Dr. Seuss, The Lorax



# Oak Ecosystem Restoration and Conservation Efforts

by Ross Alexander

Program Coordinator of the Oak Ecosystem Recovery Program



The Chicago Wilderness Region is a unique blend of Prairie Parkland ecoregions from the west and Eastern Broadleaf forests from the east. Within this environment, oak trees act as a keystone species and account for about 20% of the total basal area. Despite their important role in forest ecosystems of the region, oak abundance has been on the decline since the mid-1800's, the period of intense European settlement. Since the first land survey in the 1830's, oak ecosystem land area has decreased by 83%. This has prompted local partners such as the county forest preserve districts and conservation organizations in combination with Chicago Wilderness, The Chicago Region Trees Initiative, and The Morton Arboretum to focus on restoring oak ecosystems in their entirety.

The Oak Ecosystem Recovery Project is composed of private and public entities from across Southeastern Wisconsin, Northeastern Illinois, Northwestern Indiana, and Southwestern Michigan with the goal of conserving oak trees, restoring oak ecosystems on public land, and also facilitating education and encouraging conservation efforts on private land. This group is working towards a physical landscape in which oak ecosystems are protected and managed to restore or maintain biodiversity and ecosystem function, and also a social landscape where the many values and services associated with oak ecosystems are understood and promoted.

It is not possible to achieve the physical or social goals by conserving and restoring only those ecosystems that reside on

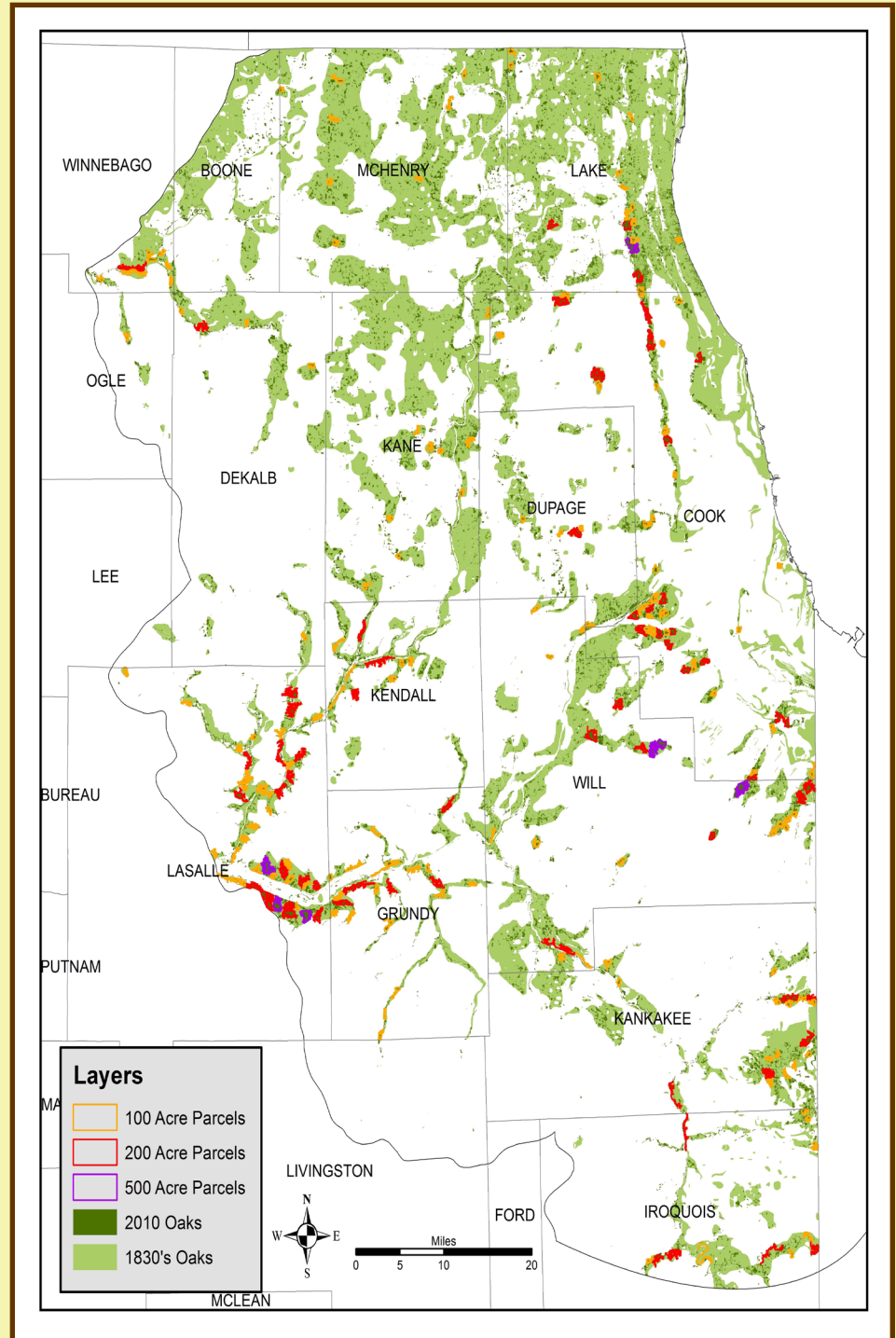


Figure 1: Modern (2010) remnant oak ecosystems with large parcels outlined and size classes (100-199 acres, 200-499 acres, and 500+ acres) indicated.

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## Featured Articles

public land. Only 30% of the remnant oak ecosystems that remain are on publicly managed land, meaning that over 120 thousand acres of oak ecosystems reside in the hands of private landowners. Because of this, a major component of the program is working with private landowners to see, whether they own 1 acre or 100 acres and how they too can contribute to restoration efforts. Invasive species are among the top challenges facing oak ecosystem recovery and restoration. Campaigns such as Healthy Hedges can help identify plants of multiple cover types that homeowners can use to replace invasive privacy fences, such as European buckthorn and Amur honeysuckle, and partners such as Conservation@Home can help those homeowners develop a native vegetation plan that can fit any engagement level.

Across the nation, oak seedlings are having difficulty regenerating and establishing to become the next generation of proud canopy members that are so highly valued. Oak restoration and conservation efforts cannot only occur in sequestered priority areas, but maximum impact can be felt when the entire region, both the natural and urban forest components, are thought of as a single interacting ecosystem. After all, wildlife and wind do not consider property lines and preserve district boundaries when dispersing seeds of invasive species.

October in Illinois has been renamed OAK-tober for oak awareness month. Throughout Illinois there will be oak related activities occurring. Contact your community, county, or state or local natural areas managers to see what activities are occurring near you, or visit the Chicago Region Trees Initiative events page ( <http://chicagorti.org/events> ). If you are interested in learning more about the Oak Ecosystem recovery project, or interested to see if any

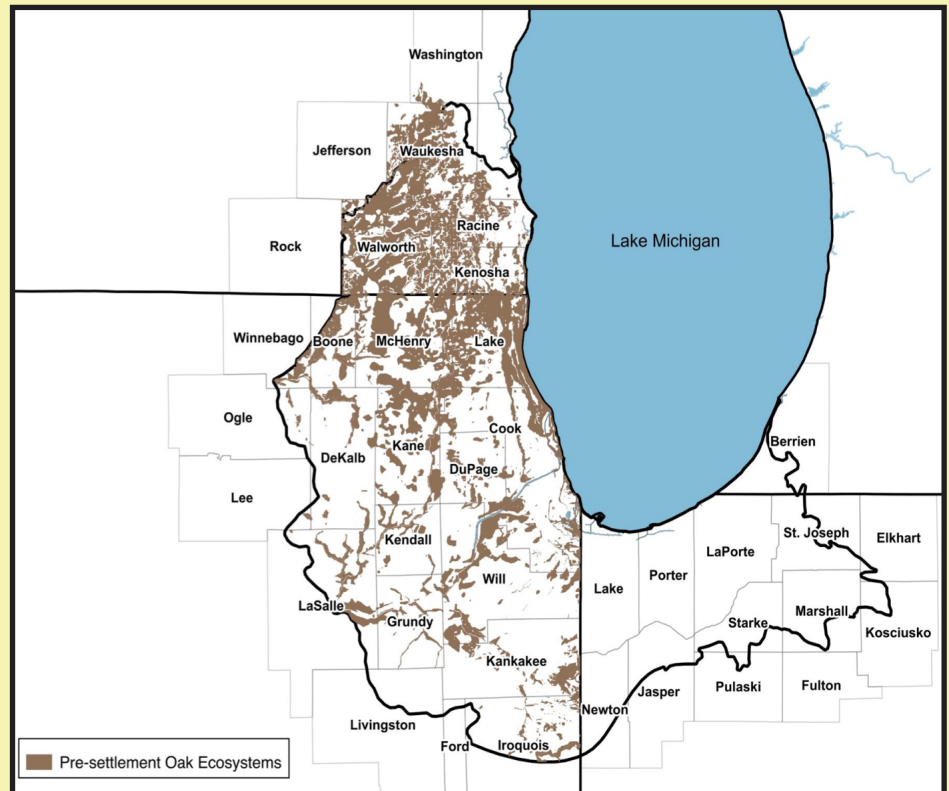
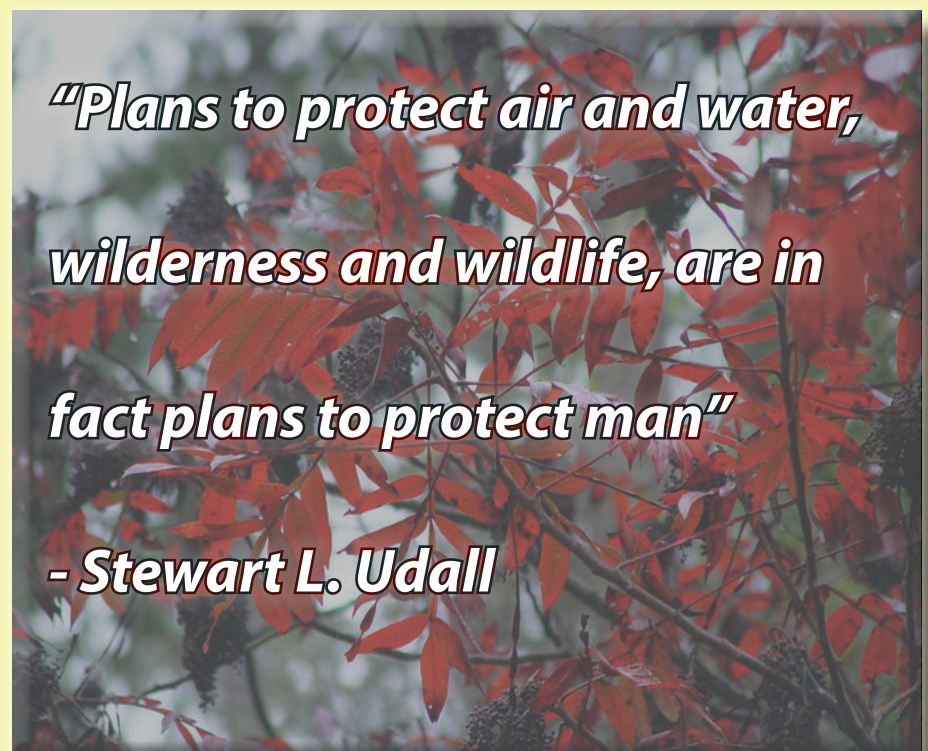


Figure 2: The Chicago Wilderness Region (dark outline) is composed of SE Wisconsin, NE Illinois, NW Indiana, and SW Michigan. Extent of pre-European Settlement oak ecosystems for Illinois and Wisconsin are shaded.

Witness Trees exist in your area,  
please visit the oak section of our  
website at:  
<http://chicagorti.org/OakRecovery> .





# Trends I See in Prescribed Fire in the Fall of 2019

by Dr. Charles Ruffner  
Professor of Forestry at Southern Illinois University



The future of Illinois natural areas depends on repeated application of large scale prescribed fire; fires that will keep invasive brush from taking over the sunlight from natural woodlands, wetlands and grasslands. It is the same fire needed to maintain open oak woodlands and savannas, so important for avian and pollinator habitat across the Midwest. I see so many practitioners exercising their land ethic by applying prescribed fire and thinning in so many degraded and neglected acres.



Figure 2: Southern Illinois Prescribed Burn.

Photo by: Hugo Papazian

When Zach asked me to provide some written comments regarding where I see prescribed fire at this point across the region I jumped at the chance. I had recently attended the 6th Fire in the Eastern Oak Forest Conference, hosted by my alma mater, Penn State University, this past summer in State College, Pennsylvania. I felt buoyed by the positive discussion at the conference which showed off so many advancements in the use of prescribed fire across the East for oak management and wildlife habitat enhancement. I appreciated the focus on increased training opportunities such as TREX (Training Exchanges) which bring multiple agency leadership cadres and trainees together to accomplish landscape level prescribed burns while advancing taskbook training for each attendee. In 2022, we hope to host a TREX here in the Shawnee NF with help from the Nature Conservancy and several IDNR Divisions.

In my presentation there, I spoke of the growing public acceptance of prescribed fire across the east and offered lots of evidence that knowledge of past and current human fire use is increasing across the Eastern US. I told the audience that during my days as a grad student in the 1990s one could track about 175-200 various articles in the literature that featured eastern fire histories or disturbance regimes. Now, over 360,000 journal articles and book chapters have been published regarding the historic oak-fire relationship and managing its various associated woodlands, savannas, barrens, and prairie ecosystems dependent on recurring

fire of variable intensity and severity in so many places across the eastern deciduous biome.

Here at the state and local level, most recognize that for thousands of years landscape scale fire has shaped the habitats and ecologies of Illinois, our Prairie State. Today prescribed fire is the most important management practice in maintaining and restoring healthy landscapes. Indeed, so many agencies and consulting firms now regularly employ prescribed burning as a timber stand improvement, prairie maintenance, or other vegetation management tool affecting millions of acres of fire-adapted landscapes annually from Chicago to the Ohio River bluffs. Since the mid 2000s, so many more opportunities exist for landowners to participate in the burning of their properties with the expansion of the Southern Illinois Prescribed Burn Association (SIPBA) and the concerted efforts of several ecological restoration practitioners and Land Trusts.

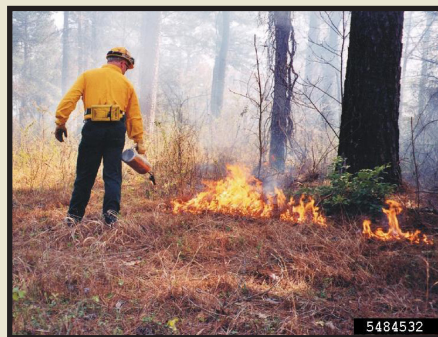


Figure 1: A USDA Forest Service worker lighting a fire with a drip torch during a prescribed burn.

Photo by: USDA Forest Service

As a member of the Illinois Prescribed Fire Council, I want to call your attention to the most recent Illinois Fire Needs Assessment (<https://www.illinoisprescribedfirecouncil.org/summary.html>), our state's first systematic report documenting the number of acres being burned annually and identifying how many more acres need to burn to maintain and restore ecosystem health across the varied landscapes of the prairie state. I would suggest that this review was a call to arms for land managers, legislators and the general public to get more acres burned to build resiliency across our many managed acres.

*Continued on the next page -*





Closer to home here in southern Illinois we have several kudos to be proud of this past year. Namely, over 12,000 acres were burned across the region with cooperation spanning agency boundaries using Federal aerial ignition resources alongside our mixed ground crews which are the hall-marks of the southern Illinois prescribed fire community. In addition, I am proud to say that we trained another 38 Fire Dawgs this past spring with the help of Tom Wilson. Our most recently retired State Forester and Fire and Aviation Officer. I must post a shout out to him as he retires, we will surely miss his leadership and support of fire training opportunities here in Illinois.

In closing, I applaud those many entities experimenting and practicing growing season burns across our region and hope they continue to share their results

which are surely pushing the research forward and calling into question climate change affects on burn seasonality and efficiency. Another point of interest would be assessing the use of prescribed fire to enhance timber rattlesnake habitat for this State T & E species. I have always appreciated this animal and advocate for management of its home rangelands with TSI and Rx fire. One final bright spot is the highlight placed on developing female fire crews across the system. Our own Shawnee NF has secured funding to begin training women for the fireline and of course, we at the Forestry Department think that is a great idea and are working to build this cadre of young fire qualified women. Have a safe fire season and I hope to see you all soon out there practicing your land ethic!

If you're interested in reading more, see the Illinois Assessment Report\* which suggests:

- Dramatically more acres need to be burned annually across Illinois
- Natural areas need to be managed with prescribed fire with a much higher frequency
- Far too many ecologically degraded acres across the state are in need of fire
- Considerably more resources need to be allocated to prescribed fire programs to increase training opportunities and capacity of the wildland fire community.

\*<https://www.illinoisprescribedfirecouncil.org/summary.html>



# Extension Forestry Update

by Chris Evans, University of Illinois Extension Forester



## A new tree disease arrives in neighboring Kentucky

Images courtesy of Abe Nielson, Kentucky Division of Forestry

### Be on the lookout for dead and dying sassafras in southern Illinois:

Earlier this year, a new forest health threat was detected in Kentucky, close to the Illinois border. Laurel wilt is a disease complex caused by the interaction of an exotic fungus (*Raffaelea lauricola*) and the exotic red-bay ambrosia beetle (*Xyleborus glabratus*). The exotic beetles are tiny and do minimal damage by themselves, but they carry the fungus and transmit it throughout the tree and spread it across the landscape. Laurel wilt clogs the vascular system of trees in the Lauraceae (Laurel or Bay) family, including Illinois natives sassafras (*Sassafras albidum*) and northern spicebush (*Lindera benzoin*). Symptoms of laurel wilt include rapid wilting of leaves, red-brown leaves still attached to dead or dying trees and dark streaky staining in wood just under bark.

Sassafras seems to have little resistance to Laurel wilt and will rapidly succumb to the infection. We do not yet know how impactful this disease may be to spicebush but there are indications that it will be vulnerable as well.



Figure 1: Sassafras Leaves

While this disease has been in the deep south for about fifteen years, the recent discovery in Kentucky was a great distance from any other known area. There is great potential to find this disease in Illinois. Be on the lookout for patches of wilting or dead sassafras with the leaves still attached. If you find a suspect patch, please contact either your local IDNR district forester or contact University of Illinois Extension Forester Chris Evans at 618-695-3383 or [cwevans@illinois.edu](mailto:cwevans@illinois.edu). If Laurel wilt is in Illinois, we want to know about it!



Figure 2: Sassafras trees showing leaf wilt indicated by red-brown leaves that remain attached



Figure 3: Dark streaky staining in sassafras bark



Figure 4: Staining of a small sassafras stem

### Program Update

The University of Illinois Extension Forestry Program continues to provide educational opportunities for forest landowners and natural resource professionals. Recent events include several tree and plant identification workshops, invasive species workshops, chainsaw safety trainings, a multi-state forest health workshop, and the southern Illinois conservation workshop.

Some upcoming programs are a winter invasive plant identification course on December 14, backyard maple syrup production workshop on February 1, Chainsaw safety workshop on February 8, and a Winter tree identification workshop on February 29. In addition, we will be giving presentations as part of the Midwest Fish and Wildlife Conference (January 26), the Midwestern Herb and Garden Show (February 14-15), and the Oglesby Spring Seminar on February 22.

To learn more, find us on social media or email [cwevans@illinois.edu](mailto:cwevans@illinois.edu) and request to be added to our email list.





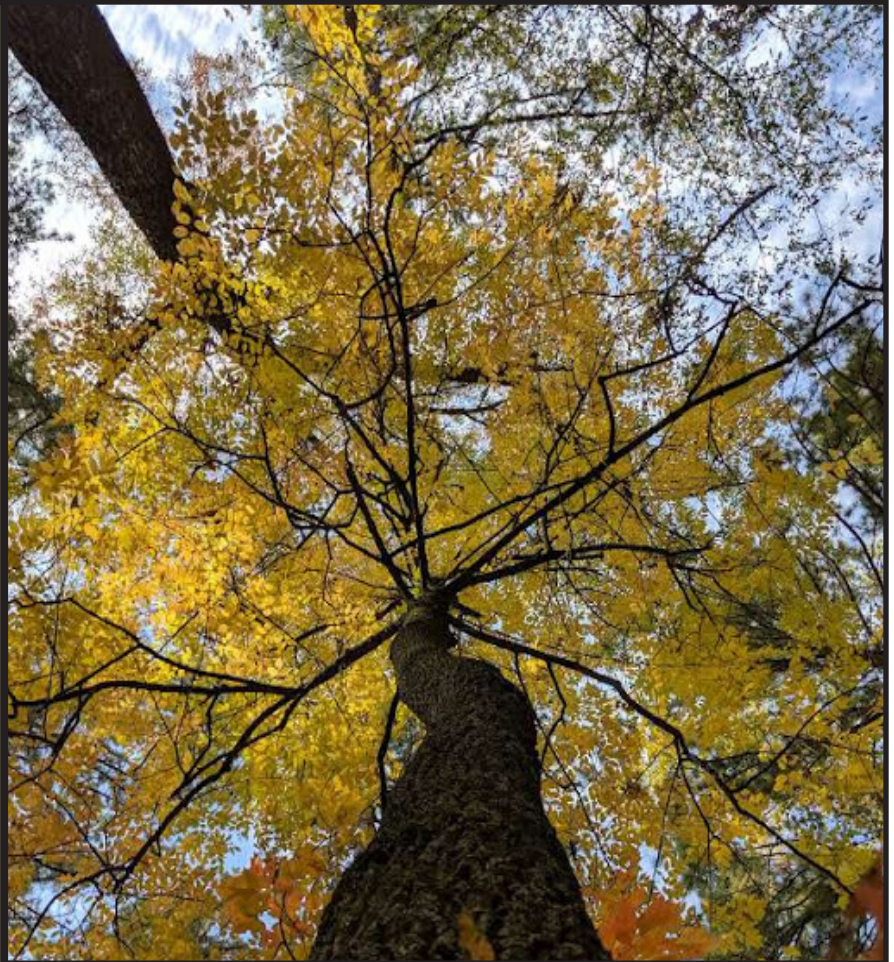
## "The History of Conservation in Illinois"

(Installment # 29)

Contributed By: Dave Gillespie, Secretary

This account of the history of conservation in Illinois was written by Joseph P. Schavilje in 1941. This installment begins where installment # 28 ended.

According to Robert Ridgway, who during the years 1872 and 1894 was written several articles on the trees of the lower Wabash Valley of Illinois and Indiana. He mentions a large number of species represented and magnificent proportions of individual trees. He says that in one square mile of woods there was a grand total of more than 70 trees, not including several of the larger shrubs. Many of them were described and measured by Mr. Ridgway for Professor Sargent's report upon the forest trees of North America for the tenth census and these notes have been published in a series of articles. He was assisted in making the measurements with the tape on felled trees and with the hypsometer on standing trees by Dr. Jacob Schneck of Posey County, Indiana. The number of indigenous trees in the Lower Wabash Valley from the mouth of the White River southward was around 107, while a number of shrubs such as witch hazel, spice bush, and sumac reached the height of 30 feet. The largest trees were the sycamore, tulip poplar, pecan and sweet gum, all of them being over 175 feet tall and one tulip even reaching 190 feet. Mr. Ridgway in 1875 measured a sycamore on the Indiana side of the White River within three miles of Mt. Carmel, Illinois, which had a height of 38 feet and a crown spread of 134 feet. This was undoubtedly the largest tree east of the Rocky Mountains. (Miller, 1925)





## Find Illinois Forestry on Facebook:



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**Illinois Walnut Council**

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As I write this, we are almost into September. Very soon, leaves will start showing their autumn colors and our hardwood forests will blaze with glory before settling down for five or so months of what I call "naked trees". It is a good time to walk the woods for a couple of reasons. First, at this time of year walking in the woods will allow a person to really contemplate nature in all of its beauty. Second, it allows the forest owner an opportunity to plan what needs to be done next to improve the forest. Is it time to have a selective harvest? Perhaps a prescribed burn is in order? Are there patches of noxious plants that can still be sprayed etc.? Some things that can be done before autumn, really turn into winter, and other things might have to wait, but at least the thought is there. For most landowners however, the real worry is the harvest of this year's crop; the woods will have to wait.

This has not been an easy year for farmers, both those who are landowners and those who rent. We have seen rain after rain, flooding fields which could not be planted and fields where only partial planting could happen. Markets have changed and prices have lowered to reflect this change. This brings up the question "Will landowners elect to put some of their ground into the Conservation Reserve"? If so, will they plant more trees, particularly in areas prone to flooding? Certainly, this is an option, but there are other options available to them which might be better. It all depends upon individual circumstances which are unique to each individual landowner. I bring this to the readers' attention as something to consider when you plan for the next year. Check with your local Soil and Water District as well as ASCS if you are interested, as they may have other programs which you can use to offset some of the cost of tree planting.

For those who are non-farmers, or who are retired, it is not too early to be planning for next Spring. Plant and seed Catalogs seem to arrive earlier each year. If you are considering tree planting on your property, whether for conservation purposes or landscaping your yard, please explore the pros and cons of which trees you are considering. My own experience has been that no species is without fault. For example, many species drop seeds all over the lawn and into flower beds, roofs and gutters. Others send roots partially above ground. Oaks and hickories will drop acorns and nuts which in turn, will attract squirrels and other rodents. Frankly, I have more squirrels here at my home in the city than I ever had in the yard at the farm in Southern Illinois and I enjoy their antics, but be prepared to have small trees pop up in your garden flower beds or near the foundation of your house. It will keep a person busy pulling sprouts.





## Shawnee National Forest

We are  
**Closer**  
than you think.

Chicago - 338 miles  
Peoria - 222 miles  
Effingham - 130 miles  
Belleville - 64 miles



### New IFA Instagram Account!

Get Connected

Learn With Us

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Find Us @  
[illinois.forestry.association](https://www.instagram.com/illinoisforestryassociation)

# WARNING PURPLE PAINT

## Purple Paint Sign Order Form

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Street Address \_\_\_\_\_

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E-Mail Address \_\_\_\_\_

# of Signs \_\_\_\_ x \$12 (Member Price) \_\_\_\_\_

# of Signs \_\_\_\_ x \$18 (Non-Members) \_\_\_\_\_

Shipping & Handling \_\_\_\_\_

TOTAL \_\_\_\_\_

Shipping: 1 sign - \$8.00 | 2 signs - \$9.00 | 3 signs - \$9.00 | 4 signs - \$10.00 | 5 signs - \$11.00

Orders in excess of 5 signs must be shipped in two mailers

Mail Order Form to: (Check or Money Order made payable to Illinois Forestry Association)

Stan Sipp  
Director, Region 3  
P.O. Box 111  
Mansfield, IL 61854

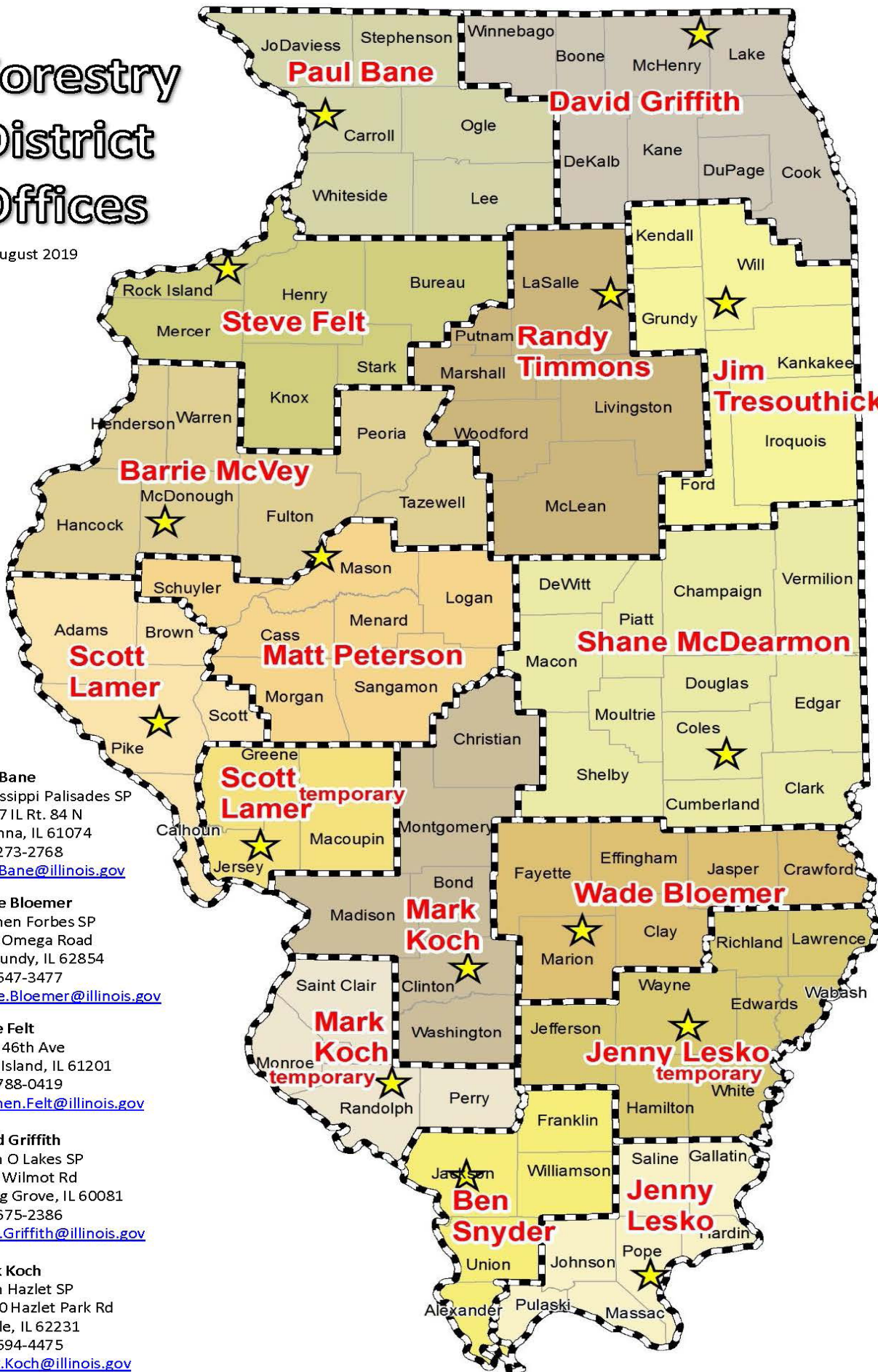
Signs are shipped via U.S. Postal Service  
Invoice will be included with signs

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August 2019



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